

SAVE THE DATE

29 - 30 JUNE 2021

14:00 - 18:00

ONLINE/VIRTUAL

BUILDING PEACE IN THE MIDST OF A PERFECT STORM

WHAT IS TO BE DONE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA?

Southern Voices Network for Peacebuilding (SVNP) Southern Africa Regional Policy Conference – Pretoria – South Africa

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How do we achieve sustainable peacebuilding in Southern Africa? This is a key question for the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and its 16 Member States. The international community and intergovernmental organisations in Africa have, in the past decade, focused their efforts on sustainable peace building and the development of resilient societies. A variety of actors have engaged in efforts to advance this agenda: local actors, civil society national governments, regional and sub-regional organisations as well as international organisations. Southern Africa, however, still experiences many peace and security challenges and is now also faced with the threat of violent extremism. There, for example, continues to be armed conflict in the DRC, civil unrest in South Africa and Zimbabwe, electoral related unrest in Malawi, maritime insecurity in Southern Tanzania, Northern Mozambique and Mauritius, transnational crime throughout the region, especially along porous borders and, and high levels of gender based violence and femicide. The growing threat of violent extremism in Northern Mozambique and the military interventions in politics in Zimbabwe and Lesotho remain disconcerting. These security issues are deepened by ailing economies, poverty, unemployment, corruption, abuses by the security sector, lack of respect for human rights, lack of infrastructure including that of health which was recently magnified by the COVID-19 pandemic.

SADC has established the structures, strategies and processes for advancing development, conflict management and peacebuilding. The SADC Organ is tasked with peace and security and has created conflict prevention, peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding capacity. SADC has also developed a number of strategies to enhance regional complementarity as a means to achieve a more inclusive and equal regional integration model. However, sustainable peacebuilding approaches are uneven and ad hoc in their implementation and the mechanisms that SADC has put in place may be dated for the new conflict context it increasingly has to confront, especially the threat of violent extremism. Sustainable peacebuilding has to be holistic and promote human centred approaches. It has to be able to confront hard security threats, build a peace infrastructure and simultaneously address the social, economic, political, environmental and health challenges that are the underlying drivers of conflict. The promotion of inclusive governance and the development of effective, efficient and legitimate security sector institutions and conflict management structures and processes are key. In how far has SADC been able to meet this peacebuilding challenge? How is SADC responding to the growing threat of violent extremism? How can it deal with increasingly complex regional challenges and identify opportunities for new ways of building and sustaining peace?



This regional conference will reflect on key peacebuilding priorities in Southern Africa, focusing particularly on assessing trends, challenges and opportunities. The conference will reflect on how the region can fulfil its goals of building resilient societies and communities capable of sustaining peace and development on their own, within an ever changing and dynamic environment. By assessing specific case studies, for example, DRC, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Lesotho, the regional conference will provide the space to reflect on some of the main lessons from the region.

WHY THIS CONFERENCE

This regional policy conference is part of the Southern Voices Network for Peacebuilding (SVNP) series designed to bring SVNP, local and regional stakeholders and policymakers for a policy-oriented dialogue on an issue or set of issues of importance to that region – in this case, Southern Africa. As the SVNP has matured and strengthened its credentials as a network of peacebuilding organizations, there are opportunities to deepen its engagement with policymakers and SVNP members leading peacebuilding work in their region. This policy workshop will allow for a more focused examination of a policy issue with key stakeholders and SVNP organizations to develop analysis and recommendations to inform policymaking on peacebuilding in the region.

OBJECTIVES

- Deeper understanding, analysis and thought leadership on the current state of peace and security and requirements for peacebuilding in Southern Africa;
- A particular focus on the growing threat of violent extremism;
- Identify actionable recommendations to be shared with targeted policy makers and practitioners in the region, and
- To connect SVNP member and create a space for collaboration amongst the SVNP network in Southern Africa.

EXPECTED OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES

- Outcomes statement of the conference
- A book on the conference proceedings
- Contributing to policy advice to SADC and its members states on sustainable peacebuilding pathways

STRUCTURE

This regional policy conference is organised as a partnership between the Southern African members of the Southern African Network for peacebuilding (SVNP), under the auspices of the Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars. The conference's planning, organisation and implementation is led by the Human Science Research Council (HSRC), the Institute for Security Studies (ISS), the University of Pretoria, the Institute for Global Dialogue (IGD) and the Centre d'Etudes pour l'Action Sociale (CEPAS).

KEY AREAS TO BE COVERED IN THE CONFERENCE:

- Overview of the state of Peace and Security in Southern Africa
- Understanding violent extremism in Southern Africa
- Peacebuilding Case Studies: Mozambique, DRC, Zimbabwe
- Role of regional, national and local institutions in countering violent extremism
- Role of international actors in peacebuilding in Southern Africa
- Future of peacebuilding in Southern Africa

ABOUT SOUTHERN VOICES NETWORK FOR PEACEBUILDING (SVNP)

The SVNP is a continent-wide network of African policy and research organizations that works with the Wilson Center's Africa Program to bring African knowledge and perspectives to U.S., African, and international policy on peacebuilding in Africa. Established in 2011 and supported by the generous financial support of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the project provides avenues for African researchers and practitioners to engage with and exchange analyses and perspectives with U.S., African, and international policymakers in order to develop the most appropriate, cohesive, and inclusive policy frameworks and approaches to achieving sustainable peace in Africa.