



Public Lecture “The Significance of Civil Society Involvement in Peace Processes”

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A growing body of research indicates that civil society involvement in peace processes results in more sustainable outcomes. Peace agreements are 64% less likely to fail when civil society is part of the negotiations compared to when only combatants are at the table. Furthermore, studies show that when women are part of the peace process, the probability of an agreement lasting 15 years or longer increases by 35%. However, even when civil society is given a space to participate, women and youth remain prominently absent. Between 1990 and 2017 only 2% of mediators and 8% of witnesses and signatories in peace processes were women. Youth participation is likely even lower because young people's experience in armed conflict is usually perceived in a false binary of being either victims or perpetrators of violence but not as agents for positive change.

While it is true that women and youth are traditionally marginalised groups which are disproportionately affected by armed conflict, this illustrates only the importance of developing an inter-sectional understanding of peace and conflict dynamics to serve the entire population and not only a privileged part of it. In reality, both women and youth are playing an important part in peacebuilding and their contribution has been taken for granted for too long.

Benedikt Hielscher works in the Peacebuilding and Mediation Support Programme of the Peace Action, Training and Research Institute of Romania (PATRIR). He will provide an overview of the latest research with regards to the significance of civil society participation, especially youth and women, in peacemaking, stabilisation, and post-war recovery. Building on his own experience of peace support in the Middle East and North Africa, he will explore the added value of inclusive peace processes in an interactive session together with the audience. At the end of the presentation there will be time for discussion and questions.

November 30 at 17:00

Ilia Chavchavadze Ave. 8, TSU Building #6

Room: 303

Working Language: English