Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
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Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA

Directorate of Political Affairs DP
Human Security Division:
Peace, Human Rights, Humanitarian Policy, Migration

Peace, Elections and Democracy

Supporting democratisation

Switzerland supports states in their reform efforts after an authoritarian regime has come to an end or in the aftermath of armed conflict. It provides expertise to local actors in order to strengthen democracy and separation of powers.

Preventing and resolving conflicts

The Peace, Elections and Democracy thematic approach of the Human Security Division (HSD) aims to prevent and mitigate violence and conflict by strengthening democratic processes (electoral, constitutional and parliamentary) for a peaceful, inclusive and democratic sharing of power.

The specificity of this approach is to combine peace policy tools (dialogue facilitation, preventive diplomacy and mediation) with technical expertise (legal expertise, support to political parties, deployment of experts in democratic processes) to promote human security.

Elections to Peace – E2P

In April 2018, in collaboration with the Graduate Institute and swisspeace, the HSD organised the "**Senior Level Exchange Elections to Peace – E2P**" in Geneva. This retreat brought together numerous international and national experts to promote dialogue among them on how to integrate conflict prevention, mediation and technical assistance to support peaceful elections. In order to build on these achievements and in the perspective of a new edition in 2020, the HSD will publish a compilation of articles on the dynamics between democracy, elections and peace as well as on political and technical tools to prevent electoral violence.

Supporting electoral processes

As part of its conflict prevention activities, the HSD supports peaceful resolution of conflict throughout the electoral process. Its activities include dialogue facilitation between political parties and electoral authorities to help them reach an agreement on the modalities of elections.

Signing ceremony of the Abuja Peace Agreement (13 February 2019, Abuja)

Nigeria

Switzerland has worked to prevent violence in the run-up to the last two presidential elections in Nigeria. The HSD supported the National Peace Committee, composed of statesmen, traditional leaders and members of civil society, which organised the signing ceremony of the Abuja Peace Agreement. By signing this agreement, the main candidates renewed their commitment to conducting peaceful presidential elections.

" *The [2015] Code of Conduct was very important. They all signed and it really played a role. It was a great relief, and a great day for Nigeria to have democratic change of leadership* "

Kofi Annan, Nobel Peace Prize laureate and UNSG (1997-2006), at the Senior-Level Exchange E2P

Zimbabwe

In 2018, Switzerland supported the negotiations that led to the validation of a code of conduct between political parties which was warmly welcomed by international observers. The election campaign was the most free and peaceful in the country's history, although numerous challenges remain.

Georgia

At the request of the Georgian Central Election Commission, Switzerland supported the negotiations on ethical principles for candidates in the 2018 presidential elections. These were aimed at creating a favorable campaign environment and prevent the escalation of tensions during the elections.

Myanmar

Switzerland facilitated a voluntary code of conduct for peaceful elections and a fair electoral campaign during the first free parliamentary elections in Myanmar in 2015. The parties' agreement on the code was a historic event after decades of military dictatorship marked by restricted civil liberties and armed conflicts.

Signing ceremony of the Code of Conduct adopted by 89 political parties (26 June 2015, Yangon)

Supporting constitutional and parliamentary processes / federalism

The HSD also supports constitutional and parliamentary processes, in order to help authorities build a national consensus on democratic values and reforms. Its experts provide legal and technical support to improve efficiency of legislative processes and inclusiveness of reforms, offering comparative examples and dialogue facilitation.

In this context, the HSD collaborates with the different stakeholders including state institutions and civil society. Additionally, the HSD coordinates with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the Swiss Parliamentary Services in the framework of the tripartite collaboration.

Tunisia

In 2011, the HSD started to support Tunisia in its efforts towards reforming the country's constitution, supporting the development of democracy in this country. HSD's activities helped the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) find compromises to ensure a majority vote in favour of the country's new constitution which came into force on 27 January 2014.

More information

Website: Peace, Elections and Democracy

Resource: Dialogues on Voluntary Codes of Conduct for Political Parties in Elections

Urs Beer, Head of Section
Tel.: +41 (0)58 480 05 10
urs.beer@eda.admin.ch

Sébastien Coquoz, Adviser Peace, Elections and Democracy
Tel.: +41 (0)58 483 97 64
sebastien.coquoz@eda.admin.ch