

# Human Security

REPORT  
2020

## A first sketch of Italian peacebuilding.

HUMAN SECURITY n.12 - June 2020

Since the end of the Cold War, peacebuilding has emerged as a widespread practice within the international community. Adopted by the UN since the early 1990s, the concept of peacebuilding has found an increasingly broad application, and in 2016 the UN General Assembly and Security Council adopted two substantially identical resolutions that introduced the concept of [‘sustaining peace’](#). Rather than redefining peacebuilding, the twin resolutions broadened its scope, putting in words what was – at least to some extent – already happening in practice: peacebuilding is a priority across all phases of conflict (and not only ‘after the guns fall silent’) and as such must take place along with humanitarian assistance and development cooperation activities: ‘sustaining peace is a shared task and responsibility’ of the entire UN system, the international community at large and all societies.

As highlighted by the ECDPM’s study *Supporting peacebuilding in times of change*

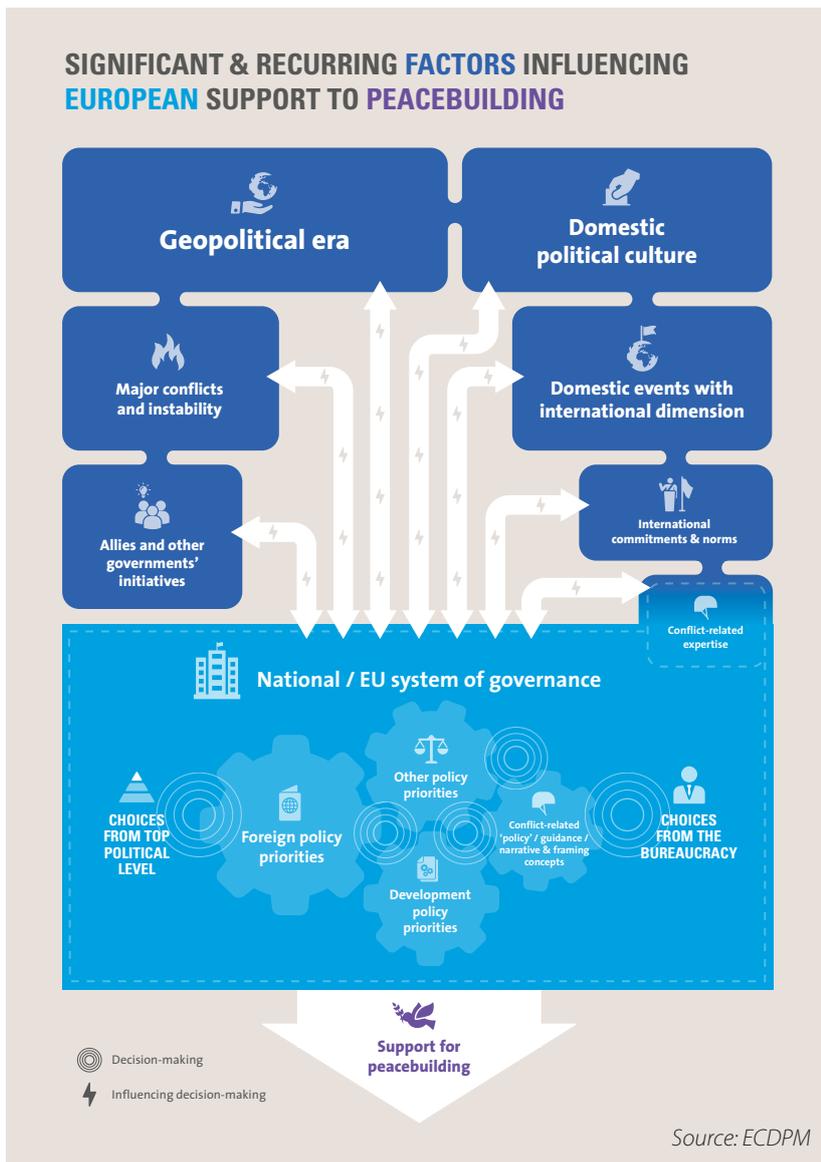
(2018), ‘responding to violent conflict or the threat of violent conflict, either through support to peacebuilding or by other means, is both a political and a bureaucratic choice by government’. As such, it is influenced by several different factors that go beyond political will or the availability of resources. The impact that these factors have on the behaviour of governments, however, is seldom the object of thorough analysis. This is particularly true in Italy, where the information most readily available to the general public about peace, security and conflict is limited to sporadic geopolitical news or – worse – reduced to barren propaganda, with little or no reference to peacebuilding. In Italy, the latter seems indeed to find its place solely in insular talks among academics and experts, at the margins of public discourse and political debate.

Yet both the Italian Constitution and the current regulatory framework on development cooperation list peace promotion and conflict prevention as

fundamental and defining components of Italian foreign policy. Italy actively contributes to relevant agenda-setting and policy-making processes at the international level and is one of the main donors to the [UN Peacebuilding Fund](#). Adding to its long-standing commitment to multilateralism, Italy also maintains a well-established presence in contexts affected by or prone to violent conflict, thanks to the work of an assorted group of actors, governmental and otherwise. In practice, therefore, an ‘Italian peacebuilding’ seems to exist, despite being little understood and even less valued.

Against this backdrop, this special issue of *Human Security* looks at Italian peacebuilding efforts from the perspective of different stakeholders, moving from the point of view of think tanks to that of institutional and diplomatic actors, civil society and non-governmental organizations.

Pauline Veron and Andrew Sherriff, respectively Junior Policy Officer and



Head of Programme at ECDPM, open this issue of *Human Security* by outlining the findings of the 2018 ECDPM study mentioned above. Based on their analysis, the authors of the following six contributions were asked to reflect on the Italian case and consider four guiding questions: 1) What are the strengths and limitations of Italian peacebuilding? 2) Why is the impact of Italian peacebuilding relatively small, or perceived as limited at best? In the absence of greater availability of resources, how can its (real or perceived) impact be enhanced? 3) Which factors, among those identified by Veron and Sherriff, contribute to Italy's efforts to sustain peace and which do not? 4) Who are the peacebuilding actors in the Italian context, and what limits the synergies between them?

**Luisa Del Turco**, Director of the Italian study centre Centro Studi Difesa Civile (CSDC), is the first author to address these questions. From her vantage point, she offers an overview of the normative, political and institutional context surrounding peacebuilding in Italy, focusing on the value added by a plural and active civil society like that of Italy – one that is able not only to commit itself to peace work but also to organize and give life to new initiatives and innovative experiments, such as the Civil Peace Corps. Among the 500 young people serving the Civil Peace Corps is **Riccardo Toso**, who in this issue of *Human Security* draws on his own volunteering experience to reflect on the distinctiveness of the Italian approach to sustaining peace in Colombia. The last voice from civil society is that of

**Emanuele Russo**, President of Amnesty International Italy. In highlighting a 'progressive disengagement of the country from what is happening around it' and a relentless split between politics and economic interests, Russo warns of the risks arising from the weakening of Italy as a key player in international peacebuilding.

Against mounting sovereignty and tense geopolitical dynamics, Italy has so far maintained its traditional propensity towards multilateralism. Back in the 1990s, the term 'peacebuilding' found its institutional home within the UN. In order to engage in a well-rounded discussion on the Italian approach to peacebuilding, it is therefore necessary to look at Italy's role at the UN. Ambassador **Mariangela Zappia**, Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations, gives us an insight into the different ways in which Italy seeks to contribute in the UN context. Italian leadership in preventing conflict, building and sustaining peace also unfolds at the regional level, as pointed out by **Mario Alberto Bartoli**, Head of the VI Office (OSCE) at the Directorate General for Political Affairs and Security at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MFAIC). Interviewed by Stefano Ruzza, Embassy Counsellor Bartoli recounts how during its chairing role in 2018 Italy succeeded in carving out enough political space to strengthen OSCE's commitment to preventing and managing threats to peace and security, as well as to promoting stability in Eastern Europe. Nonetheless, Bartoli highlights how it remains a difficult task to acknowledge and promote the peacebuilding efforts of institutions focused more on security, such as the OSCE. The same challenge applies to the work of armed forces, which are seldom perceived as peacebuilding actors even though they can in fact contribute to the human security of individuals and societies. In the Italian case, this preconception can indeed be detrimental given the positive role the Italian Armed Forces play in conflict-affected settings – a role that should be further enhanced and better valued, according to the

Permanent Representative of Italy to NATO, Ambassador **Francesco Talò** in conversation with Lorraine Charbonnier.

What is clear from the words of the contributing practitioners and stakeholders is that peacebuilding is not an easy field. Yet, despite all the political, economic and cultural challenges, Italy has nevertheless managed to distinguish itself on the international scene through its approach to peacebuilding and sustaining peace, as is also stressed by the commentary

of **Valentina Bartolucci** and **Bernardo Venturi**, respectively Board Member and Director of the Agency for Peacebuilding (AP).

A recent [peer review](#) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) pointed out that Italy has maintained its commitment to development cooperation despite its recent economic hardship and the challenges that result from increasing migration flows. The COVID-19 pandemic

will necessarily compel Italy to reassess its priorities and come up with a post-pandemic world vision. While much may change in the near future, it is sadly clear that conflicts and insecurity will not disappear. Our hope is that the reflections contained in this issue of *Human Security*, and the synthesis offered by Stefano Ruzza and Lorraine Charbonnier, provide a useful cue to apply wider, more inclusive and more structured reasoning to the Italian path to peacebuilding.

**Lorraine Charbonnier** and **Stefano Ruzza**

**Looking at Italian peacebuilding through the eyes of its protagonists**

**Pauline Veron** and **Andrew Sheriff**

**Supporting global peacebuilding in a changing Europe**

**Luisa Del Turco**

**Italian peacebuilding: Opportunities, challenges and prospects**

**Riccardo Toso**

**A new Italian peacebuilding initiative: The experience of Civil Peace Corps in post-conflict Colombia**

**Emanuele Russo**

**Writing 'peacebuilding' with a blunt pen**

**Mariangela Zappia**

**The birth and development of peacebuilding at the UN: The perspective of Mariangela Zappia, Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations in New York**

**Mario Alberto Bartoli** interviewed by **Stefano Ruzza**

**Italy's contribution to OSCE's initiatives to support peace: An interview with Mario Alberto Bartoli, Head of the VI Office (OSCE) at the Directorate General for Political Affairs and Security at the MFAIC**

**Francesco Talò** interviewed by **Lorraine Charbonnier**

**Italian peacebuilding initiatives between practices and perceptions: Considerations from a conversation with Francesco Talò, Permanent Representative of Italy to NATO in Brussels**

**Valentina Bartolucci** and **Bernardo Venturi**

**The role of Italy in the future of peacebuilding**

**Stefano Ruzza** and **Lorraine Charbonnier**

**Italian peacebuilding: A first sketch and two possible trajectories**

# Health and human security.

**HUMAN SECURITY n.13 - June 2020**

**O**n 23 March 2020, as the COVID-19 virus was rapidly spreading around the world and the lockdown was keeping Italians at home, the UN Secretary-General António Guterres called for an immediate global ceasefire. As with the feeling of solidarity and community that

entered our homes from our balconies and made us imagine, naively, a better post-pandemic world, the Secretary-General hoped that, if heeded, his plea would allow the international community to focus on the challenges posed by the pandemic and perhaps even

provide an opportunity for diplomacy to end ongoing conflicts worldwide. However, this has not happened. And in some contexts the ceasefire has been accompanied by an increase in violence and a worsening of conflict dynamics, as explained in the first article of this



Source: Joe Piette/Flickr

issue of *Human Security*. In fact, **Kieran Mitton**, Senior Lecturer in International Relations at King's College London and co-founder of the [Urban Violence Research Network](#), points out how both the temporary nature of 'corona-ceasefires' and the difficulties in reining in violence around the world underline key findings from decades of research on armed conflict and shed light on some of the main shortcomings of negotiation and peacebuilding processes.

If the images of war and poverty that the media bring us most often have us turning our eyes to the so-called 'failed states' in the Global South, the current pandemic has forced us to reorient our gaze, unveiling the weaknesses of the international system as a whole but also, and above all, the shortcomings of those 'strong states' that in 'normal' times boast a position of economic, military and cultural leadership. Discussing the case of the United States of America and in particular the relationship between the federal government and the Native American nations, the article by **Charles Geisler**, Emeritus Professor at Cornell University, encourages readers to reflect

on the meaning of 'state failure' and the link between national security and public health. **Francesca Fortarezza**, PhD candidate at the Scuola Normale Superiore in Pisa and author of the next article, also questions this link. She does so by focusing on the 'side effects' of the 'extraordinary' measures that government around the world have put in place to deal with an 'exceptional' threat and on the role of human rights defenders as antibodies against the social crisis we are going through.

The words of Geisler and Fortarezza make it clear that, as a matter of fact, pandemics are much more than purely health problems and thus require the articulated action of a number of actors. Along these lines, the One Health approach promoted by the [Global Health Security Agenda](#) initiative acknowledges the interconnections between humans, animals and the environment, and fosters a collaborative, multisectoral and transdisciplinary approach to achieving optimal, systemic health for the planet. In their article for *Human Security*, Micol Fascendini, Daniela Rana, Elena Cristofori and Elena Comino share the experience

of the NGO **Comitato Collaborazione Medica** (CCM) in Kenya's Marsabit County, where CCM is engaged in nurturing the health and resilience of pastoral communities. As shown by the findings of the interdisciplinary research conducted by the CCM team, preventing and managing infections and epidemics requires us to understand not only the medical aspects of human health but also its sociocultural dimensions. A similar argument is put forward by **Jerome Ntege**, PhD candidate at Makerere University, who delves into the relationship between national and human security from an anthropological perspective. In his article, Ntege recounts the experiences and perceptions of the people who were living in the borderlands between Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo when the Ebola epidemic hit in 2007.

The thirteenth issue of *Human Security* ends with the testimony of those who have been dealing with health emergencies in contexts of conflict and widespread insecurity for years, and well before the outbreak of the COVID-19

pandemic. **Giovanna De Meneghi and Edoardo Occa**, from the NGO **Doctors with Africa CUAMM**, highlight how the efforts of health workers have to be understood as embedded in relational

and social contexts that cannot be overlooked. **Anna Maria Abbona Coverlizza and Erika Vitale**, both working for the NGO **MedAcross**, provide a concrete example of how development

cooperation in the health sector demands a high degree of flexibility and adaptability, even more so when the operational reality turns into that of a global pandemic.



Source: MedAcross

**Kieran Mitton**  
**Building peace in the pandemic: Prospects and pitfalls**

**Charles Geisler**  
**The COVID-19 crucible: Health and national security in failed states**

**Francesca Fortarezza**  
**Antibodies against the crisis: Human rights, health and security in times of pandemic**

**Micol Fascendini, Daniela Rana, Elena Cristofori and Elena Comino**  
**One Health, a transdisciplinary approach to promote global health security**

**Jerome Ntege**  
**Ebola at the frontier: A new dimension of human security threat on the Uganda-DRC border**

**Giovanna De Meneghi and Edoardo Occa**  
**Providing essential services amid the low-intensity conflict in the Cabo Delgado province of Mozambique: The ongoing experience of Doctors with Africa CUAMM**

**Anna Maria Abbona Coverlizza and Erika Vitale**  
**MedAcross: The right to healthcare for all**

# Democracy between ballot boxes and squares.

HUMAN SECURITY n.14 - June 2020

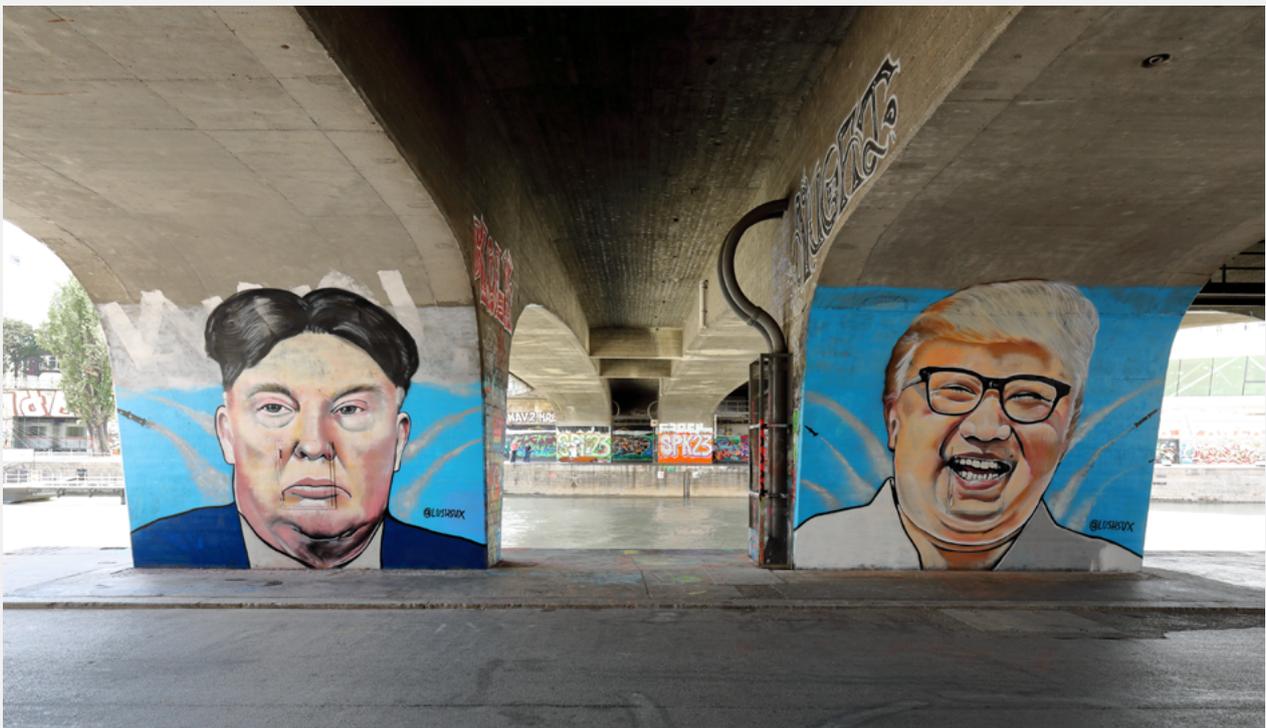
We will undoubtedly remember 2020 as the year of the global pandemic, the 'state of exception' and the restrictions we had to face to deal with it. The year that is just coming to an end, however, was also marked by other important political events – not least the presidential elections in the United States of America, which is where this issue of *Human Security* begins. Joe Biden's victory seems to herald the 'end of the Trump era' and, by extension, new lifeblood for the promotion of the liberal order at a global level. In his article, **Gabriele Natalizia**, Lecturer in Political Science at the Sapienza University of Rome, traces the history of the US's answers to the 'dilemma of democracy' from the Cold War to the present day. In doing so, he reveals a counterintuitive continuum grounded in the strategic approach of

the Obama, Trump and (in all likelihood) Biden administrations.

Also in 2020, state–society relations in many parts of the world have been shaped by (bio)securitization, and this trend has been accompanied by emerging and enduring protest movements. The presidential elections in Belarus kept 'Europe's last dictator' at the helm of a country torn apart by the economic, health and social situation. The elections also brought thousands of people into the streets and squares of Belarus to support the all-female leadership of the political opposition, giving a bottom-up boost to the democratization process. **Mara Morini**, Lecturer in Political Science at the University of Genoa, reviews the events that characterized Belarus's political life in the last few months and

outlines the reactions of the European Union and Russia to the 'Lukashenko crisis'.

The squares and streets of Hong Kong also continued to serve as a stage for rallies and riots. On 1 July 2020, the new national security law came into force, de facto delegitimizing and criminalizing the protest movement born in spring 2019. As argued by **Gaia Perini**, sinologist and Lecturer at the University of Bologna, Beijing's iron fist has so far put a damper on political activism in Hong Kong, but over time this can only feed protests and dissent: as the socialist adage goes, 'where there is oppression, there is revolt'. Next, **Devparna Roy**, Lecturer in Sociology and Anthropology at the Nazareth College of Rochester, shifts the focus of this issue of *Human Security* to the world's



Source: Bwag

largest democracy: India. Roy describes the light and shadow that result from the delicate relationships between religion, nationhood and political tolerance in a country with an extraordinarily rich and varied cultural heritage.

The last two articles bring the African continent into the discussion on democracy and elections. Starting from the re-election of Ivorian President

Ouattara (in power since 2010), **Andrea Cassani**, Lecturer in Political Science at the University of Milan, addresses the question of the consolidation of democratic institutions by analysing patterns of respect and manipulation of presidential term limits in sub-Saharan Africa. With equal rigour, **Anna Myriam Roccatello** and **Iliaria Martorelli** – respectively Deputy Executive Director

and Program Expert of the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) – offer an analysis of the difficult process of reconciliation and democratic transition in Ethiopia, broken by the political and armed clashes triggered by the unilateral management of the elections at the national level (postponed) and those in the Tigray region (held despite the ban by Addis Ababa).

**Gabriele Natalizia**

**Where eagles dare: Rise and fall of US promotion of democracy after the Cold War**

**Mara Morini**

**Uncertainties and political repression in Lukashenko's regime**

**Gaia Perini**

**Law crushing politics: Hong Kong's new national security law**

**Devparna Roy**

**Nation-building and democracy-building: The role of political tolerance in India**

**Andrea Cassani**

**The 2020 presidential election in Côte d'Ivoire and the question of term limits in Africa**

**Anna Myriam Roccatello and Iliaria Martorelli**

**Ethiopia: A broken transition**

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