

# Around Europe

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## The EU and Pirates at the Horn of Africa: Putting the Cart before the Horse?

While the European Union is conducting operation EUNAVOR Somalia, also referred to as operation Atalanta, to fight piracy off Somalia's coast, concerns of Somalis living on the ground go beyond safeguarding one of the international community's most important maritime trade routes. Acknowledging the tenuous situation of several million Somalis ashore, the EU, in co-organization with EPLO, hosted a civil society consultation meeting on the EU's involvement in Somalia in March. The composition of participants representing EU institutions, international NGOs and Somali civil society made the exchange of opinions and ideas very fruitful.

During this meeting, the EU, which has been involved in Somalia for 18 years, began to put forward its analysis of the situation. It highlighted the strategic importance of the Horn of Africa region and reported

on its current involvement of supporting governance efforts and rural development in Somalia via UN agencies and international NGOs. It explained that it is classifying piracy as a business with gains of EUR 120 million per year, while development aid in Somalia amounts to EUR 45 million a year only.

Representatives of Somali civil society stressed the importance of non-state actors in the absence of a state and their potential role as monitors of aid delivery, particularly in rural areas. On the other hand, they also drew attention to the precarious security situation and the risks of active civic engagement as evidenced by reported killings of over 60 civil society actors within the last two years.

Somali civil society expressed its need, desire and rationale of being involved in the peace process, including the setting up of the Somali constitution and Security Sector Reform. They articulated their view that the Atalanta mission was not felt to have any effect on the security situation on the ground. They underlined the fact that piracy is just a symptom of poverty, a lack of governance and the aftermath of former external interventions in the country and commended the addressing of the root causes of the problem.

Explaining the situation further, Somali civil society urged participants to acknowledge the fact that Somalia consists of three different regions - Puntland, Somaliland and South Central - calling for a shift of peacebuilding and development initiatives towards a decentralized approach. They recommended supporting the current transitional government not only with cars and computers but also with governance and skills.

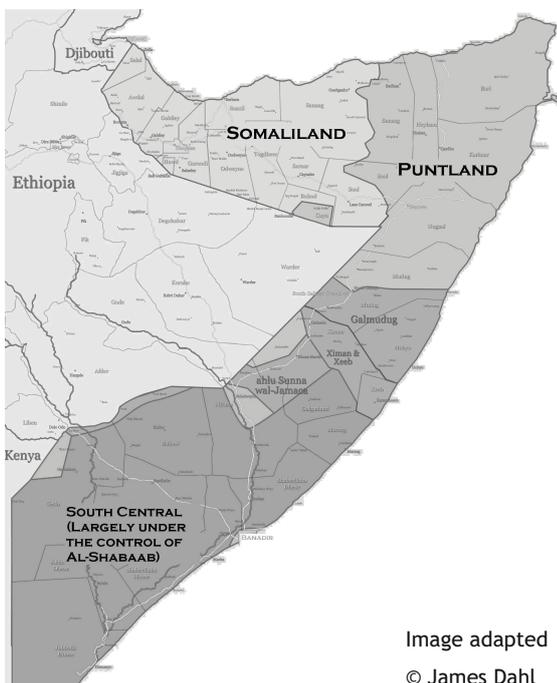


Image adapted  
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AMISOM, the African Union Mission to Somalia, was sent to keep peace but essentially has been criticized for protecting only the airport and governmental institutions while leaving civil society unprotected. Somali participants at the meeting called for the international community to pay more attention to the protection of civilians in Somalia. They, however, also predicted that a withdrawal of AMISOM in Mogadishu would have the jihadist movement *Al-Shabaab* take over the city in days.

To contribute to improving security in Somalia, the international community has been involved in the training of 14,000 Somali security forces in the past. Since Somalia itself was considered too insecure a place to conduct such training it has been carried out in other African countries. The EU has just decided to train another 2,000 Somali security forces in Uganda within the framework of EUTM Somalia.

Those 14,000 security forces, who had been trained in previous bilateral arrangements, have not, however, exactly contributed to improving the security situation on the ground. Often due to a lack of payment and/or the powerful role of militias, these security forces were reported to have abused human rights themselves, to have defected to the militia or to have simply sold their weapons after returning from their training. Somali civil society representatives therefore strongly encouraged the EU to conduct a study of why former security training failed before investing more time and resources into training of a similar kind again. Though the EU confirmed that the salaries of troops trained by the new mission are guaranteed until January 2011 and

that the training will contain a human rights module, the question of the sustainability of such training at this point in time remains.

Studies by international NGOs found that two of the three regions of Somalia, Somaliland and Puntland, are more stable than the third one, South Central, as their regional governments appear to be accountable. They called strongly for a political settlement of the conflict first, before security in the region is strengthened. They also stressed the role and importance of local systems for settling violent and non-violent conflicts.

All participants at the meeting concluded that there was a need for local civil society to be supported and brought to the forefront. Recommendations included the inclusion of young people, women and the Diaspora, job creation and economic growth, involvement of non-criminal business actors in peace initiatives, improving respect for human rights, tackling the culture of impunity, stressing local ownership and improving governance across the region by a common agenda of all external actors involved. The Commission stressed it is currently working on projects in governance, education, employment, economic recovery and food security and welcomed specific recommendations to improve its work on the ground.

It is to be hoped external stakeholders will continue to listen to those ultimately affected by their policies in the future.

*Simone Görtz*

## What works in reducing re-offending: A European Perspective

At the end of April, as part of QCEA's ongoing research into the social reintegration of ex-prisoners in Council of Europe member states, I attended the first conference of the EU-funded STARR project, held over three days in the neo-classical splendour of Downing College, Cambridge. The (almost obligatory) acronym stands for Strengthening Transnational Approaches to Reducing Re-offending, and the conference was the first opportunity for the project to feed back to both academics and practitioners alike.

The title of the conference - 'What Works in Reducing Re-offending' - unsurprisingly captures only a small part of the diversity of discussion that ensued. It is not possible within the confines of such a short article to provide a thorough review, and thus I will attempt to keep my enthusiasm in check and instead simply offer a flavour of the debates. Suffice it to say, the addition of a question mark to the title at the opening of the conference was an appropriate point of departure.



The talks and workshops covered a whole range of topics and countries: from global perspectives on promising practices to micro-studies on restorative justice programmes in Roma communities in Bulgaria. The transfer of successful programmes from one jurisdiction to another do not always transfer well, and sometimes the stumbling blocks are unexpected: Professor Martine Herzog-Evans of the University of Reims raised a laugh as she noted the particular difficulties Electronic Monitoring schemes are facing from the beaches of Cannes during the summer months. In Sweden, the frequent mention of the word ‘pub’ during situational role plays in British programmes was always one of the first adaptations necessary.

As the conference unfolded, however, it became increasingly clear that the questions we should be asking are even more fundamental than ‘What Works?’. Professor Fergus McNeil of Glasgow University provoked significant discussion as he questioned whether reducing re-offending is a suitable mission statement at all. If probation is a justice agency we need to look at how justice is best served and the differing priorities reflected in the term. A concept of community justice looks beyond the confines of the criminal justice system to look at

how the collective interest is best served: in the interest of the victims, communities, as well as the offender. Change is crucially important to the process of ‘justice’, and Professor McNeil concluded, ‘one of the best ways of paying back [society] is turning your life around’.



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QCEA’s current research recognises that the social reintegration of ex-prisoners is not directly synonymous with target-driven reductions in re-offending. If the conference confirmed nothing else, there is no single ‘magic bullet’ or gold-standard programme. For that reason, further opportunities for pan-European discussion can only be a good thing. The STARR project is a great opportunity for academics and practitioners from across the continent to pool their ideas and talents. For my part, I hope Friends and Quaker organisations will continue to contribute significantly to this dialogue.

*Joe Casey*

## A Call to Global Transformation

### Diana Francis challenges peacemakers everywhere

Diana Francis, a British Quaker and conflict transformation professional, in her new book ‘From Pacification to Peacebuilding’ (Pluto Press, 2010) reflects on both the practice of conflict transformation as practised over the last two decades or so and the connection between that practice and ‘big politics’.

She argues, effectively and in a language that makes the book a page-turner, that the basic premise of the peace movement and of governments and intergovernmental organizations diverge right from the point of departure and that therefore the global trends are not supportive enough of real

peacebuilding but rather support what she calls pacification.

For me, the most important page in the book comes in Chapter 4 on page 74 of the paperback edition where she sets out in schematic form these different approaches. She sets out two different points of departure: one that bases its approach to peace on the notion of interdependence of people everywhere and of people and the planet; the other that bases its approach on an ‘eat or be eaten’ view of the world. She argues that this influences the resulting notion of security, the values, and the approach to power, reality, process, outcomes, people, conflict



and change and influences the notions of peace.

The resulting notions of peace are defined as:

- Just relationships, mutual care, shared economic and political power and responsibility; a demilitarized world; constructive conflict culture and systems; a view of the planet as home;
- Stability and hegemony; top down political and economic control; a strong military as guarantor of control; the planet as a resource to be exploited.

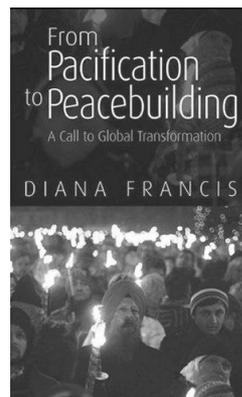
Of course, she knows and argues that these two models are extremes and that there are positions taken somewhere on a spectrum between them. But having them set out as clearly as this, as an either/or choice, makes it clear that there are some fundamentals in terms of the point of departure and in terms of the renunciation of violence which are essential to move forward towards real peacebuilding.

Francis also reinforces the view that conflict is a normal part of any society and needs to be approached constructively; and for this to happen, a demilitarization of the world (not just of a few conflict-affected regions) is necessary, because so long as there are military forces available to respond to conflicts, and so long as non-military resources for responding to conflicts are not well developed or well

funded, there will always be the inclination to use military forces to do what appears necessary: be it invasion, be it 'peace enforcement', be it peacekeeping.

She quoted Gandhi, who said 'When [violence] appears to do good, the good is only temporary - the evil it does is permanent.' (p. 100)

This book is encouraging to those who take a principled pacifist stand; but it is also uncomfortable because it calls on all those who see themselves as peacebuilders (pacifist or otherwise) to make some very radical choices about challenging the dominant paradigm about what peace is and how it can be built. In the face of frustration within the peacebuilding community about the enormous amount of work to be done and the apparent lack of real progress at the higher political levels, (and therefore ongoing violent and frozen conflicts not apparently susceptible to any lasting solutions,) it is a call to political action we cannot ignore.



*Martina Weitsch*

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