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# **Diaspora Communities and Civil Conflict Transformation**

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## **Executive Summary**

This working paper deals with the nexus of diaspora communities living in European host countries, specifically in Germany, and the transformation of protracted violent conflicts in a number of home countries, including Sri Lanka, Cyprus, Somalia and Afghanistan. Firstly, the political and social role and importance of diaspora communities vis-à-vis their home and host countries is discussed, given the fact that the majority of immigrants to Germany, as well as to many other European countries, over the last ten years have come from countries with protracted civil wars and have thus had to apply for refugee or asylum status. One guiding question, then, is to what extent these groups can contribute politically and economically to supporting conflict transformation in their countries of origin. Secondly, the role and potentials of diaspora communities originating from countries with protracted violent conflicts for fostering conflict transformation activities are outlined. Thirdly, the current conflict situation in Sri Lanka is analyzed and a detailed overview of the structures and key organizations of the Tamil and Sinhalese diaspora worldwide is given. The structural potentials and levels for constructive intervention for working on conflict in Sri Lanka through the diasporas are then described. Fourthly, the socio-political roles of diaspora communities originating from Cyprus, Palestine, Somalia and Afghanistan for peacebuilding and rehabilitation in their home countries are discussed. The article finishes by drawing two conclusions. Firstly, it recommends the further development of domestic migration policies in Europe in light of current global challenges. Secondly, it points out that changes in foreign and development policies are crucial to make better use of the immense potential of diaspora communities for conflict transformation initiatives and development activities in their home countries. How this can best be achieved in practice should be clarified further through intensified action research and the launch of more pilot projects.

## Introduction

According to the Global Conflict Panorama 2003 by *Heidelberg Institute on International Conflict Research* (HIK), there were 218 political conflicts worldwide in 2003, of which 35 conflicts were carried out with a massive amount of violence. More than 90 % of these violent conflicts were intra-state wars, of which the large majority has so far not fallen under any UN Security Council resolution requesting UN-led or UN-backed peacekeeping intervention. Taken together, there are more than 20 highly violent conflicts - most of them in Africa and Asia - worldwide that produce large numbers of refugees regionally and internationally.

In many cases, external conflict transformation initiatives exist with little prominence in the international public arena. As diplomatic initiatives, they are often based on bilateral or multilateral consultations with former colonial powers or with selected Western governments (i.e. Norway, Switzerland) and in fewer cases are based on regional country consultations. Additionally, a number of dialogue and problem-solving interventions on track 1 ∞ and track 2 by NGOs, INGOs, political foundations and development agencies inside and outside the conflict region have frequently emerged. These peacebuilding initiatives by non-state actors have a less visible impact and receive far less funding than military approaches to peacekeeping in the Western world. The challenge for advancing civil conflict resolution lies in designing more strategically focussed approaches and combining the available resources from all levels constructively. Therefore the connection between civil conflict transformation initiatives in conflicts which are politically below the external (UN) intervention level and diaspora groups living in various host countries needs to be explored further. The underlying assumption is that there is the potential to make better use of the capacities of specific diaspora communities for supporting conflict transformation in their home countries.

Given this background, this article aims, first, to discuss some general insights into the political and social role and perceptions of diaspora communities towards their home and in Western host countries. Secondly, it tries to foster the

understanding of the role and potential of diaspora communities originating from countries with protracted violent conflicts for contributing to processes of conflict transformation.<sup>1</sup>

For normative and empirical reasons, what the cases selected in this study have in common is that the positive potentials of diaspora communities for conflict transformation in their home countries outweigh their negative potential to become spoilers. This assessment is based on recent research and may change over time as political processes at home and abroad enter highly dynamic phases. However, the positive aspects are mirrored by inhibiting factors in some cases, even though the conviction remains that the dominant research paradigm in disciplines such as security studies is too focussed on potential threats from diaspora communities. The threatening or inhibiting factors often stressed by representatives of the majority population in the host countries should not be ignored, but cannot be sustained by empirical research and practice in these cases.

## **1 Challenges for social research and the role and concept of diaspora**

Policy-making and social research in Western industrialized countries have mostly focussed on the impacts of refugees on their societies, on asylum and on ways of strengthening integration in the host countries. With respect to processes of economic and social globalization, there has been substantial research on the role of voluntary migration. This research has focussed on the concept and consequences of 'brain drain' or, more rarely, on how migrants continue to interact with their home country, especially through economic remittances from labour

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<sup>1</sup> A significant background for writing this article was the Loccum Workshop on the role of diaspora in the Kurdish-Turkish, Israeli-Palestinian and Sinhalese-Tamil conflicts (see Calliess, Joerg (ed.): When it is a Matter of War and Peace at Home... The development of exiled/diaspora communities in the development of crisis and civil conflict management, Loccumer Protokolle, 2004, [www.loccum.de](http://www.loccum.de)). The Sri Lanka case is key in exemplifying the arguments of this article, albeit with additional evidence from cases like Cyprus, Somalia and Afghanistan.

migrants (see Koser, van Hear, 2003). Given this background, there is some empirical knowledge on economic migrants but very little data are available on the role, attitudes and activities of refugees and asylum seekers vis-à-vis host and home countries. Another reason for this lack of knowledge is that research and policy - not only in Germany - have for a long time tended to frame refugees as 'problems' rather than considering their potential.

One aim of this document is to contribute to narrowing this gap by further developing the concept of diaspora as a research approach and bridge-building model. In public debate, the term is increasingly being used as a metaphor for expatriates, expellees, refugees, alien residents, immigrants, displaced communities and ethnic minorities. With respect to many abstract, postmodern definitions, focussing on shared imaginations of space, time and culture, the following definition seems especially suited for application in empirical research and policy: "(...) that segment of people living outside the home land" (Safran 1989). This can be further exemplified by the Tamil-Sinhalese conflict, as the majority of Tamils and the LTTE, in the course of official peace talks in Sri Lanka and abroad, has made reference to their concept of a traditional homeland in the Northeast of Sri Lanka. More specifically, the term denotes functional elites in different host countries, experts and politically pro-active citizens of Sri Lankan origin.<sup>2</sup>

In Germany, the majority of diaspora communities with protracted wars in their home countries arrived as refugees / asylum seekers. Even though different groups face different legal situations in other European countries, the general pattern of war at home as a major factor for being accepted into the EU and an unclear residence status for a medium time-frame seem to be the common situation for them in most European countries. The key question is this: to what extent can they contribute politically and economically to their countries of origin? This is important as sustainable solutions in a medium time-frame are often intangible and many members of diaspora communities are staying in the host countries for increasing lengths of time, frequently even after the end of the conflict at home. Under these circumstances, it is crucial to consider how and to what extent

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<sup>2</sup> To gain an adequate understanding of the conflict, the affiliation of diaspora members to larger groups of actors - often ethno-political groups - in their home country needs to be taken into account. In the Sri Lankan case, these are Tamils, Sinhalese und Muslims.

economic migrants and involuntary migrants with strong connections to their home country can contribute to peacebuilding, post-conflict reconstruction and, in the longer run, socio-economic development.

## **2 Political debate on and importance of diaspora communities in Germany**

Beyond the ongoing political wrangling over the reform of migration law in Germany, public attention has been drawn to creating the conditions for attracting highly skilled labour from abroad, such as India or Eastern Europe. The more expert public has also paid attention to underlying government policies in countries like India and China, which do not only support the qualification of their workforce for migration but give support for the return of migrants on a time-limited basis as well as for investments from the diaspora in their home countries. From this, many insights may be gained for the debate on reforming governance structures and immigration policies in Germany; however, in terms of the major challenges facing foreign and development policies, this functional economic perspective seems quite inadequate.

A question which seems to be of critical importance is how qualified and politically pro-active members of diaspora communities living in Western democracies could be integrated to a far greater extent into foreign policy initiatives. Functional elites, especially those living in Western countries and who have an interest in finding non-violent or violence-reducing solutions to social and political problems in conflict or post-conflict situations in their home countries, are one important diaspora potential which has been tapped in the past, albeit inadequately so far. One recent positive example was the broad-based involvement of the Afghan diaspora in the Petersberg Talks on a peaceful transition in post-war Afghanistan in 2002. Another reason for strengthening the involvement of diasporas in foreign and economic policies is to improve trade relations. Yet security issues as the basis for human and political development continue to prevail in public and expert circles. Current foreign, security and development policies all give priority in principle to

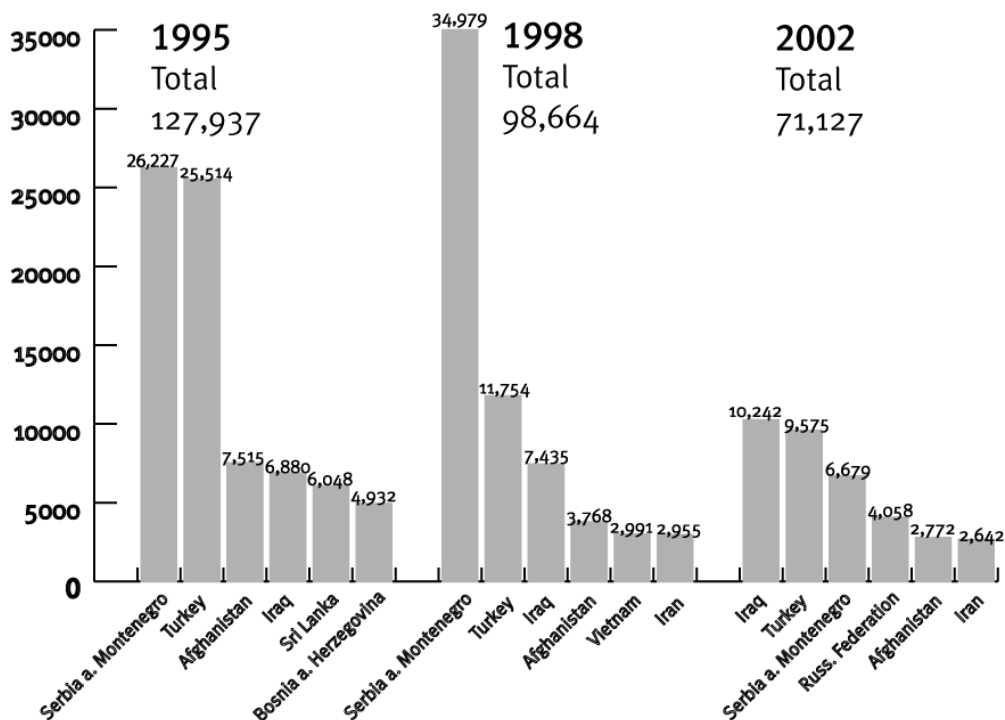


conflict transformation in countries of origin and the establishment or improvement of democratic governance structures and the rule of law in civil war or post-conflict countries and regions.

The majority of larger groups of immigrants arriving in Germany over the last 15 years originate from countries which are affected by civil wars or other violent conflicts. They have come as refugees from political persecution or humanitarian catastrophes. This includes larger groups of former Yugoslavs, Kurds, Iranians and Afghans (see Migration Information Source 2003).

In the absence of a systematic migration law in Germany as well as in some other European countries, the main way to get here and possibly stay for some time has been to apply for asylum. The subsequent effect of this migration regime is that the patterns of countries of origin largely equate to patterns of worldwide conflicts. This becomes apparent if one looks at the six most important countries of origin of asylum seekers in Germany since the mid 1990s.

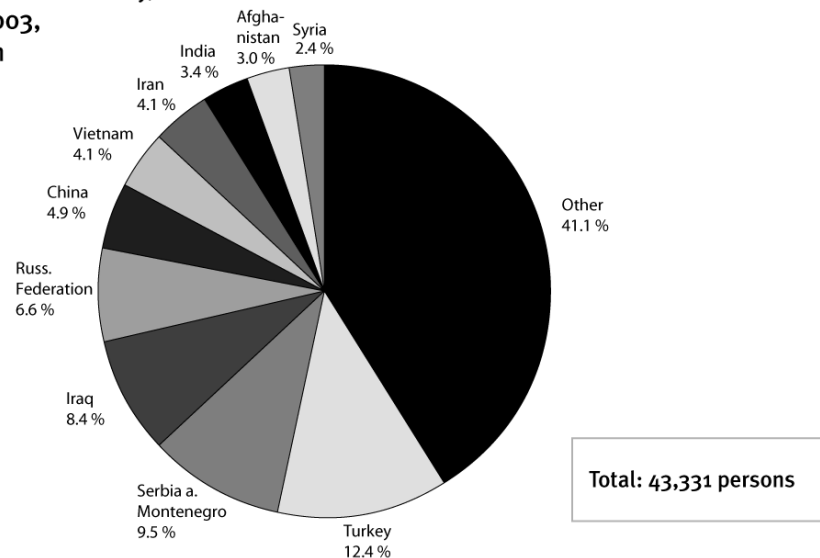
### Asylum seekers in Germany: the six most important countries of origin in 1995, 1998 and 2002



*source:* Martin Zwick: Asylbewerberzahlen: Spiegelbild weltweiter Krisenherde, in: aid. Ausländer in Deutschland, 04/03, p. 18

Serbia and Montenegro, Turkey, Iraq, Afghanistan, which have all faced or continue to face protracted civil wars, are continuously in the top ranks. The same is true for Sri Lanka, Bosnia-Herzegovina, parts of Iran (Kurds) and Afghanistan. The most important reasons given by asylum applicants are war, civil war, internal state and non-state violence, and human rights abuses.

**Asylum applications in Germany,  
January-October 2003,  
by country of origin**



**source:** Martin Zwick: Asylbewerberzahlen: Spiegelbild weltweiter Krisenherde, in: aid. Ausländer in Deutschland, 04/03, p. 18

In 2003, only Syria and Vietnam did not have open internal civil wars, while all the other six larger countries of origin are facing open violence in at least some part of their territory. These numbers do not include the time-limited special status groups of recognized war and civil war refugees or groups which have been accepted under special agreements for humanitarian purposes, e.g. in response to environmental disasters. Therefore the real number of immigrants from conflict-prone countries must be assumed to be even higher in Germany.

Political attitudes and behaviour of diaspora groups are not predetermined and vary significantly. Given the current state of research, there is no evidence that diaspora communities structurally develop a more conservative perspective on politics in general or on the state of affairs in their home country. Assuming that there are differences in political attitudes of *economic migrants* and *refugees* /

*asylum seekers*, Sri Lankan researcher Dr. Darini Rajasingham says that there is no indication that Tamil asylum seekers are more politically radical and supportive of the freedom struggle than economic migrants, as many of the political refugees are very disillusioned with the national past.<sup>3</sup> Current research on the four largest Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora communities in the West (Canada, UK, Germany, Switzerland) shows that no significant pressure is exerted on the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam or Tamil parties in the Sri Lankan parliament to adopt more conservative or more extremist positions.

Given the fact that there are other diaspora communities, segments of which may have developed a far more conservative world view over the years than their compatriots back home, and assuming that this is an inhibiting factor for improving the conflict situation in the home country, the crucial question is this: how does the social situation of the diaspora communities in the West impact on their political attitudes and activities vis-à-vis the home country's polity? One aspect is the diaspora communities' access to the culture, social fabric and politics of their immigration country. Members of migrant communities face a phase of transition in their social status and individual identities, the outcome of which is less predictable than the impact of social change for the majority community; they face more risk. The process of integration into societies based on individualism and freedom within a social, legal and political framework provides the opportunity to develop an independence from inhibiting social and political conditions of their former societies and political systems. This individual and political independence can be an asset for the development and democratization of their home countries (see Melchers, Peltzer, Wurstner 2003). Prerequisites are ongoing contacts with their homelands and an opportunity for learning to perceive the objective independence in the host countries as something desirable and subjectively valuable. The latter point depends largely on the social, cultural, and political openness of receiving countries and the abilities of the majority and minority not only to tolerate each other but to find some opportunities for constructive engagement.

For developing a subjective appreciation of one's individual and political independence and decision-making opportunities, policies of integration in receiving countries matter. This again is a prerequisite for individual engagement, not only for

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<sup>3</sup> Personal discussion with the researcher in Colombo, March 2003.

social development but also for democratization and conflict transformation work in the homeland.

### **3 Civil conflict transformation and diasporas' potentials**

Conflict transformation relates to protracted civil wars. These are often asymmetrical conflicts, in which violent phases recur and thereby influence or force many citizens to leave their homeland. Civilian conflict transformation approaches are intended to support processes to overcome the causes of conflict and the establishment of conflict mediation and management mechanisms within society.

In essence, it means supporting the conflicting parties as they argue about ways to achieve a negotiated settlement and empowering them, in the medium term, to initiate a sustainable process for overcoming the conflict causes by themselves. This in turn means that conflict prevention and conflict transformation activities are interdependent and must involve key state and civil society actors (see Zunzer 2004).

Central features for conflict transformation interventions, as pursued by the *Berghof Foundation* in Sri Lanka, are:

- building local capacities for conflict transformation through cooperation with local partner organizations
- supporting activities aimed at improving the political system with respect to effective power-sharing and finding a negotiated settlement between the parties to the conflict
- supporting conflict-sensitive socio-economic development planning
- facilitating links between actors and activities for civil conflict transformation at grassroots level (track 3), the middle level of decision-making (track 2) and the highest level of political and diplomatic negotiations (track 1).

The consultation, problem-solving and training activities follow a number of central principles:

- upholding the principles of inclusivity and transparency, which means cooperation with all politically relevant actors having an interest in a peaceful settlement of the conflict
- safeguarding the principle of constructive engagement, which means taking legitimate interests, the quality of personal relationships and efforts to achieve win-win solutions into account
- ensuring the principle of multiparty, which means developing empathy (not sympathy!) for the concerns of all politically relevant actors.

In many countries, for example in Africa and Asia, it is not only diaspora communities in the neighbouring countries which play a role; diaspora communities in Europe, America, Australia and Asia also have an important socio-economic and sometimes political role to play. This is the case in Somalia and Sudan. Another long-term example of effective support and influence from fellow citizens living abroad is the case of Tibetans in their struggle with the Chinese government. Furthermore, the example of Sri Lanka can be used to qualify the assumption that persons in the diaspora communities can play a significant role for politics and development in their homeland. Generally, all conclusions drawn from literature or hands-on research on the role of diaspora communities have to be identified and assessed within the context of the specific political conflict dynamics.

## **4 The case of Sri Lanka: conflict transformation and diaspora**

The conflict in Sri Lanka can best be characterized as an ethno-political conflict but it cannot be reduced to a Tamil versus Sinhalese struggle. At least three additional interrelated and currently latent conflicts have to be taken into account: the radical-revolutionary youth uprising in the South, a labour-related and social-structural

conflict in the plantation sector, and the tensions between Muslims and Tamils in the Eastern Province.

The last major outbreak of violence affecting the civilian population happened at the beginning of the 1990s. Ever since, the division of the state into an LTTE-dominated North and a South dominated by the government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) has been reinforced. The last major attempt to initiate a peaceful settlement of this most conflict-prone schism was launched in 2002 under the newly inaugurated Prime Minister Ranil Wickramasinghe and with the support of Norwegian facilitators. Its outcome was the currently still operational ceasefire agreement and an initial series of negotiations between September 2002 and March 2003.

On an international level, there is no particular interest in Sri Lanka on the part of any superpower - even though some post-September 11 speculations about a possible extension of anti-terrorist measures have surfaced in the press. Since the mid 1990s, Norway has taken the lead in facilitating a conflict settlement by diplomatic means. Regionally, India is very interested in the developments in Sri Lanka, but due to the defeat of the Indian Peacekeeping Forces in 1987, it is not able to intervene openly - by political or military means - in Sri Lankan affairs. In national politics, a new situation has occurred, as the social democrats (PA) under President Chandrika Kumaratunga together with the Marxist-nationalist JVP won the elections in April 2004 with a very small majority of votes against the then Prime Minister, Ranil Wickramasinghe (UNP), who had signed the ceasefire agreement in February 2002 and relaunched negotiations with the LTTE. A moderate economic boom due to increased international trade had taken place since 2002 but many Sri Lankans experienced increasing income differences and there was a growth in poverty-affected populations. The military and political stalemate (“mutually hurting stalemate”) between the LTTE and the GOSL, which has developed over the last ten years, continues. This in turn explains why the socio-economic situation and the ability to continue the peace process became key issues during the run-up to the elections. Sri Lanka is still in an interim or post-ceasefire phase. Having been in place for two years, the CFA has lasted much longer than all previous agreements, and it has created a unique opportunity for achieving a lasting peace. Even though the framework conditions have become worse since the parliamentary elections on 2 April 2004, the vast majority of people living in Sri Lanka do not want to risk any re-

escalation of the ethnic conflict. The elections have resulted in a hung parliament, as neither the PA nor the UNP and their coalition partners have gained a clear majority of seats in the parliament. As the *Tamil National Alliance* (TNA) has become the third largest force, and both the Sinhalese nationalists from the JVP and the newly found monk's party (*Jathika Hela Urumaya – JHU*) have gained massively, the ethno-political polarization has strongly increased. Instead of achieving a power-sharing between the main parties in the South on the basis of bi-partisanship, a minority government was created. There is a risk that there will be a permanent political crisis in the South, which in turn will make the resumption of the peace process with the LTTE very difficult. The essence of the conflict resolution process so far has found expression in the *Oslo Declaration* in 2002, aiming at a genuine federal Sri Lankan state. To attain this goal, a fundamental restructuring of the Sri Lankan state would be required. Given the current political framework conditions in the South and the ongoing tensions in the Tamil community in the Northeast, it seems rather unlikely that major progress can be achieved in this respect in the coming months.

An important background factor in the political and military conflict is the segregation of politics and society along the lines of the three larger ethnic groups, i.e. Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims. External actors play an important role in peacebuilding as well, which means that conflict transformative engagement in Sri Lanka needs to look first at the three levels of domestic politics and then look beyond, taking influential external state and non-state actors into account. India, Japan and to a much lesser extent the USA have trade- and security-related interests in the region. The international donor community as well as many members of the Sri Lankan diaspora communities dispersed worldwide have interests in its internal affairs and to some extent exert influence. The Sri Lankan diaspora comprises mostly Tamils and, in much lesser numbers, Sinhalese, while Muslims are largely absent. Both diaspora communities not only react to what the larger political actors give as input; they also exert influence themselves, at least on the level of formal and many informal networks and in providing economic support. There is a dialectic relationship between diaspora communities in the host countries, the home country, the LTTE and the GOSL.

While the first generation of refugees and economic migrants still hopes to return to Sri Lanka some day, the second and third generation only want to return on

a time-limited basis. The younger and often better educated second generation of Tamils has the greatest potential for supporting the development of the still devastated North and East of Sri Lanka as well as for supporting the transformation of the LTTE from a purely military organization into an important political player. The same holds true with respect to modernizing political institutions and development administration in the South.

Regarding the possible political impact, there is a difference between civil society activism in the Sri Lanka diaspora communities worldwide and key politically influential figures who have an institutional function, such as the staff of embassies or TRO offices in Europe. The less formalized civil society groups have somewhat limited political influence, especially as they do not have such clear access to powerful actors in the domestic political arena. Depending on the agenda-setting in the broader popular public discourse, which they can hardly influence, they often only become influential on an irregular and time-limited basis.

### ***Overview of the structures of the Tamil and Sinhalese diaspora worldwide***

The Sri Lankan diaspora communities all over the world have been created in several migration waves since independence from British colonial rule in 1947. Since the beginning of the civil war in the mid 1970s, the largest numbers of refugees and migrants have originated from the Tamil communities. The *Berghof Foundation* began to commission small-scale research on the structure and role of the Sri Lankan diaspora and to organize expert meetings, as there were hardly any research findings available. These activities aimed to obtain an overview of the structures of the Tamil and Sinhalese diaspora in Europe and Canada.<sup>4</sup> Besides the Indian state of Tamil Nadu, which is home for a number of refugee camps for Sri Lankan Tamils, large numbers of refugees and migrants have gone to Europe, North America and Australia, and more recently to the Gulf states. Host countries in which a substantial number of Sri Lankans live are: Canada (approx. 300,000), Great Britain (approx. 110,000), Germany (approx. 60,000), Switzerland (approx. 40,000), France (approx. 40,000) and Norway (approx. 10,000).

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<sup>4</sup> It is carried out by the Resource Network for Conflict Studies and Transformation (RNCST), which is jointly funded by the Swiss Federal Department for Foreign Affairs (EDA, PA IV) and the German



The vast majority of Sri Lankans living in these countries are Tamils; however, there is a smaller Sinhalese community in all four countries as well. The larger Sinhalese communities are so-called guest workers in the Gulf states (approx. 700,000), and approx. 100,000 Sinhalese living mostly in the South of Italy. The Sinhalese communities abroad are very much influenced by mainstream currents of the Southern polity and do not play any visible part at the level of political decision-making in relation to the peace process.

#### **4.1 Germany**

More than 50,000 Tamils live in the Federal Republic of Germany, of which more than 50 % stay in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia. The official German statistics do not differentiate between ethnic groups or peoples on a sub-national level, but give a figure of 60,330 Sri Lankans living in Germany (Statistisches Bundesamt 1998). It can be assumed that many Tamils, especially members of the first generation of migrants, feel attached to the struggle for an independent Tamil state in Sri Lanka.

##### ***Key Tamil Organizations***

The *Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam* (LTTE), which hardly appear in the German public arena, have become a major representative of the Tamil cause by establishing a far-reaching network of so-called front organizations, mostly aimed at collecting revenue for humanitarian purposes. Unlike the situation in the 1980s and 1990s, when other Tamil political groups (such as “*People’s Organisation of Tamil Eelam*”, PLOTE; “*Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation*”, TELO; or “*Eelam People’s Revolutionary Liberation Front*”, EPRLF) were also active in Germany, the LTTE and its affiliated organizations have become the dominant factor in many respects within the Tamil community in Germany.

The most important organization is the *World Tamil Movement* (WTM), which has its office in Wuppertal, North Rhine-Westphalia. WTM was founded on 17

October 1990. It has groups and offices in many European countries and North America. It distributes political publications in line with the official positions of the LTTE. Activities include organizing political meetings and cultural events. Entrance fees are substantially higher than average and the surplus is officially used for working with Tamil war refugees in the Northeast of Sri Lanka.

Another key organization is the “*Tamil Refugee Organisation*” (TRO) in Mönchengladbach in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia. It supports rehabilitation and reconstruction in the North and East of Sri Lanka. Offices in Australia, Canada, France, Switzerland, Denmark, Norway and the US support the work of the headquarters in Kilinochi, which is closely embedded in the LTTE’s civil administration through funding and expertise.

Furthermore, there are various Tamil cultural associations, Tamil language teaching seminars, sports clubs and Hindu temples concentrated in West and South Germany, as well as in Berlin. Even though the Tamil community in Germany is geographically dispersed, its underlying network is densely knit and largely maintained through organizations which are politically close to the LTTE.

### ***Other groups and dialogue initiatives***

It is estimated that only a few thousand Sinhalese live in the Federal Republic of Germany. These figures can only be approximations as the official statistics largely exclude ethnic and other sub-national groups. Many Sinhalese have come to Germany to work or study. Others have come as political asylum seekers, as is the case for the majority of Tamils. A densely knit social and political network based on organizations and associations, as is maintained by the Tamils in Germany, does not exist. There are a few small groups such as the *Sri Lanka Association Berlin* which have only Sinhalese members.

Beyond these largely mono-communal endeavours, there are two smaller associations in Germany trying to build bridges, combining both Tamils and Sinhalese through membership: the Sri Lanka Friendship Circles in Munich and Berlin. Both aim to promote joint cultural practices and political dialogue.

## 4.2 Switzerland

Currently, there are over 30,000 Sri Lankans living in Switzerland. Even though the ethnic distribution is not clear, it can safely be assumed that more than 95 % of the asylum seekers are Tamils. All asylum seekers who submitted their applications before 1993 as well as their spouses and children have received residence authorization. Some of the second generation youth have already received Swiss citizenship. Taken together, there are approximately 25,000 citizens of Sri Lankan origin who do not have to return to Sri Lanka.

The conditions are very different for the asylum seekers who arrived after 1993. Even today, this relatively small group is still threatened by forced return to Sri Lanka. In 2000, one of the more extreme years, 7095 negative rulings were handed down by Swiss courts.

Since the mid 1980s, Tamils have gained a very good reputation in hotel and restaurant services. This has made it comparatively easy for Tamil asylum seekers to obtain a work permit. Even though strongly preserving many aspects of their own culture, the majority of Sri Lankan Tamils have chosen to stay permanently, which is manifest in the strong increase of Tamil marriages in Switzerland. As forced return became increasingly unlikely for the majority of the community, more and more Tamil shops were opened at the beginning of the 1990s. They sell food items and spices as well as Tamil videos and newspapers. At the beginning of 1994, the first Hindu Temple was opened in Bern-Bethlehem. In September 1994, another was opened in Adliswil. There are dance schools, Tamil language classes, cricket clubs and Tamil restaurants.

As in most other countries with a substantial Tamil diaspora, the *Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam* (LTTE) is the organization which undisputedly ranks first in terms of political and social influence. The size, number and influence of other political groups have shrunk significantly over recent years. The LTTE is not only present as a political group but gains significance by sending members to Temple committees, women's organizations, sport clubs, local Tamil media, and Tamil language teaching. Other groups almost exclusively only comment on cultural affairs.

### ***Key Tamil organizations***

The LTTE started to have representatives in Switzerland from a very early stage. The TRO opened its Swiss office in the same year as its office in India and even before it opened an office in London. That triggered discussions amongst the Swiss political elite but several attempts by right-wing politicians to ban the LTTE in Switzerland did not succeed. In the 1990s, the LTTE became the strongest political force of the Tamil community in Switzerland. One reason is the changed social composition of Tamils in Switzerland through the arrival, at the end of the 1980s, of many Tamil refugees from a lower social and educational background. This group was more receptive to political lobbying by the LTTE.

There have been reports and rumours about money collections by the LTTE using illegal means since the mid 1980s. Due to lack of evidence, none of the accused members of LTTE and LTTE front organizations were convicted in a 1996 trial. After violent incidents between Tamils in Switzerland increased in number and severity, a special law was passed in 1996 prohibiting the carrying of weapons for all persons of Sri Lankan origin. In November 2001, the parliament passed a law prohibiting the LTTE from collecting money or embarking on propaganda activities, e.g. to mark Heroes Day (2 December). Since then, the LTTE has become much less publicly visible, focussing on cultural and religious festivals.

The LTTE and many of its front organizations, such as TRO or the Swiss Federation of Tamils Associations, have a far-reaching influence on the life of the Tamil community in Switzerland. They run their own businesses, the so-called People's Shops, and their own restaurants, they sell telephone cards, organize dance competitions, cricket and football matches and, less frequently, political demonstrations. They run certain Hindu temples by themselves, such as the Sivan Temple in Zürich-Affoltern, or have a presence on the board of directors. Other Tamil groups still have a small number of members, such as the *People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam* (PLOTE), the *Eelam People's Democratic Party* (EPDP) and the *Democratic People's Liberation Front* (DPLF) but hardly feature in the Swiss public arena.

### ***Other groups and dialogue initiatives***

There are smaller groups which are trying to be neutral on political and religious issues, such as the “Ohm” project in Basle or “Palmyra” in Zurich. Run by Tamil asylum seekers themselves, the former has offered legal advice services for Tamil asylum seekers since 1986. It also aims to support impoverished people in Sri Lanka by sending money that has been collected, and supports Tamil self-help groups in the North and East. There are a number of independent women’s groups offering advice in Tamil on every-day questions and legal matters.

There are about 20 Hindu temples in Switzerland. On their boards of trustees, there is a strong presence of persons close to the LTTE. Other representatives of the Tamil community and Swiss citizens are board members as well. As 15 % of the Tamils in Switzerland are Christians, there are strong Catholic parishes. Furthermore, there are a few Buddhist temples supported by the small number of Sinhalese living in Switzerland. Given this background, more inter-religious dialogue events are in a preparatory phase, comprising a Kovil/Temple guardians’ meeting.

## **4.3 Great Britain**

Given that Great Britain was the last colonial power to run Sri Lanka before independence in 1947, there have always been special relations between the two countries. The UK was the country with the earliest established Sri Lankan immigration and took in many of the early Tamil refugees from Sri Lanka. A first type of Sri Lankan immigrant dominated the diaspora community from the 1950s to the 1980s: it consisted of a very settled group of people who followed a migration model of a single journey with a settled home at the end of it. Many of these people are well-educated and very well off economically and have become established in British society. For example, during the 1960s, understaffing in the UK’s National Health Service opened up the opportunity for many Sri Lankans to become doctors and consultants; others managed to secure other white-collar jobs. A second type consists of mostly young men who left Sri Lanka in the late 1980s and 1990s and who are less educated, often traumatized by their experiences from the war zones and remain on the fringes of British society. London was usually a first choice

destination during the 1980s as it formed an attractive living environment with an established Tamil community and the English language. There is a smaller but growing third group, consisting of young people living in the second or third generation in Great Britain, who are comparatively well-educated and have experienced today's democratic pluralism and a more middle-class British society. Tamils live mainly in Greater London boroughs such as East Ham, Southall, Wembley, Tooting and Croydon. Before 1983, the estimated Tamil population was 30,000. In 2002, it was estimated that 110,000 Sri Lankans live in the UK, including 60,000 refugees.<sup>5</sup> As in Switzerland and Germany, it can safely be assumed that more than 95 % of them are Tamils. Before 1983, social spaces for a Sri Lankan elite existed, with ethnic boundaries hardly playing a role: for example, all ethnicities attended Sri Lankan High Commission receptions and the frequent intra-school sports competitions organized by Sri Lankan schools alumnae. Up to that point, the public perceived the Sri Lankan community as one of the most successful immigrant communities in the UK. Especially during the 1970s, political organization increased among both Tamils and Sinhalese. Left-wing politics were generally popular and many groups emerged in the diaspora as well. By 1990, the LTTE achieved hegemony over the Tamils' military and political struggles for self-determination at home and abroad.

The much smaller Sinhalese diaspora, mostly situated in London, has been much more focussed around High Commissions and embassies. The larger Sri Lankan parties UNP and SLFP have branches in London and are especially active around election time for fundraising purposes. In 1995 and 2000, Sinhala nationalists in London became more politically active and made their voices heard at public discussion meetings on Sri Lanka. The anti-terrorism campaign by the Sri Lankan Foreign Ministry, the intensification of activities by the conservatives amongst the diaspora Sinhalese in London and finally the passing of the Anti-Terrorism Act by the British government in 2000 had some impact. All activities of the LTTE in Great Britain were banned and the profile of the organization's representatives is now much lower. They often now present themselves as the representatives of one of the LTTE's front organizations (TRO etc.). Only Anton Balasingham, who is a political adviser to the LTTE and the LTTE's chief negotiator at

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<sup>5</sup> Figures from the Refugee Council, London, and the Home Office, 2002

the last round of peace talks, has a more prominent profile in the British public arena.

Generally, Tamils have a large number of organizations for the size of the population. They are well networked in the UK and have links to various parts of the North and East of Sri Lanka. Ethnic, caste and political identities form major cleavages in the diaspora community.

### ***Other groups and dialogue initiatives***

Apart from organizations ideologically close to the LTTE, there are still a small number of members of political organizations such as PLOTE or *Eelam People's Democratic Party* (EPDP) in London but they do not exert any significant political influence. Others such as the Tamil Information Centre have only a limited outreach. Welfare organizations include the Refugee Council and the Tamil Relief Centre supporting Tamil immigrants, and the Tamil Orphans Trust. Religion-based organizations such as Hindu temples and Sri Lankan Christians are active. School and university alumni organizations form an important space for exchanging information, and for transferring resources for the development of schools and universities in the North and East. As well as educational infrastructure, alumni organizations also support primary healthcare centres, IT training facilities, the procurement of medical equipment and the establishment of eye clinics. Others such as TEEDOR-UK (*Tamil Eelam Economic Development Organisation*) are professional organizations which closely cooperate with the TRO and contribute expert knowledge and finance to infrastructural development in the North and East. Until 2002, most of the Muslims in the Sri Lankan diaspora in the UK identified themselves with either the Sinhalese or Tamil community, depending on their mother tongue. As a specific Muslim identity is emerging in the course of political events in the peace process, a growing number of Sri Lankan Muslim organizations in the UK are being formed. Given the size and spatial concentration of the Sri Lankan diaspora in Britain, it is likely that some shared social and sometimes political spaces still exist. At present, there is no information about larger initiatives for fostering intercommunity dialogue.

## **4.4 Canada**

The largest and, at the same time, spatially most concentrated Tamil community exists in Toronto, Canada. A few thousand Muslims and Sinhalese can be found here as well. There are many Tamil businesses, charities and political organizations. One could say that both the political status of the Tamil community in the Canadian polity and the internal social and political group differentiation make it the most vibrant and possibly most advanced Sri Lankan diaspora community worldwide.

According to “Statistics Canada (2001)”, 92,010 Tamil-speaking persons were living in Canada in 2001, of which 72,715 lived in Toronto. The Tamil community is the fastest growing population group in Canada as it grew by 38 % between 1996 and 2001 (see Radtke 2004). There is no agreement on the exact number of Sri Lankan Tamils living in Canada. Estimates range from the afore-mentioned 92,010 to 250,000 for the Greater Toronto Area of Ontario alone (Balakrishnan 2004). The emergence of the Tamil diaspora community is closely connected with the civil war in Sri Lanka. Although a small number of Tamils lived in Toronto before the war, the majority of the migrants arrived after the war had begun. Three different categories of the Tamil population in Toronto can be distinguished: immigrants, refugees and family members. These groups have emerged in different migration phases. Before the civil war, immigrants who came to Canada with the intention of settling down were by far the largest group. Most of them came to Canada to study or work, had a wealthy family background and belonged to one of the higher castes in Sri Lanka. During the war, thousands of refugees arrived at the beginning of the 1980s, most of them young men from different social backgrounds who were highly politicized and eager to return to their homeland. Generally, their level of education, caste status and income were lower than that of the immigrant group. This was a challenge for the social fabric of the diaspora community and resulted in a medium-term adaptation process. When the refugees gained their permanent status in Canada, they began to sponsor marriage partners and other family members, including elderly parents. Likewise, pre-war immigrants brought other members of their families to Canada as well. The resultant Tamil community has maintained its ties with the home country, Sri Lanka, and their places of origin in the North or East. Relations with colleagues, friendships at the personal level and links through



various organizations, such as schools, are being maintained by many. A very important factor is the property that was left behind, either inherited or owned, regardless of its present status, whether damaged or destroyed, which has kept them in contact. The pre-war population has similar links to the homeland, often additionally motivated by nostalgic memories.

Compared with other groups in Canada, the number of Tamil organizations is very high. Many organizations were originally formed for local networking during the settlement process in the host country. This allowed them to improve their socio-economic living conditions in Canada rapidly. Later these organizations began to provide financial assistance for the rebuilding and rehabilitation of their former schools and colleges in the Northeast of Sri Lanka, which were either destroyed or damaged due to war. This trend became widespread amongst the Tamil diaspora and led to the formation of new organizations, at least one per each village, in order to assist primary and secondary schools (see Balakrishnan 2004).

Apart from the self-help village organizations and the “Old Boys’ Associations” of former schools, many Tamil sports clubs exist. There are more than 100 Tamil groups and associations registered in Toronto. The Tamil diaspora in Toronto runs a variety of different media. More than ten different Tamil newspapers and a number of radio and television channels in Tamil have been established.

### ***Groups and activities***

The first political organizations of the Tamils were the “Tamil Eelam Society of Canada” (TESOC), which was founded at the end of the 1970s. Its founding members came from the Sri Lankan upper class and the Society’s composition reflects the Tamil community prior to the immigration wave of the 1980s. The main reason for establishing the association was closely related to the political dynamics in Sri Lanka. The electoral success of the *Tamil United Liberation Front* (TULF) in 1977, which demanded the establishment of an independent Tamil state (*Tamil Eelam*), as well as increased restrictions on freedom of expression in Sri Lanka led to the forming of the first political Tamil group in Canada. Their main activity was to gather information about the situation in Sri Lanka, subsequently drawing it to the attention of a number of national governments worldwide. During the 1980s, the newly arriving refugees took over the TESOC. Then there is the *World Tamil*

*Movement* (WTM), founded by refugees, who had a broad variety of social backgrounds. The relationship between the two organizations was quite problematical. While the first generation of immigrants perceived themselves as independent of political parties in Sri Lanka, the refugees arriving in the 1980s preferred to represent the political position of the LTTE through the WTM. The WTM developed a large number of sub-organizations which specialized in different political topics. Over time, the TESOC changed its political position and came closer to the LTTE. There is hardly any political organization left which currently does not represent the political position of the LTTE. Radtke (2004) distinguishes five different types of organizations in the Tamil community:

1. clubs and associations which aim to preserve Tamil culture, such as the *Academy of Tamil Arts and Technology* (ATAT) or the *Chencholai Tamil Kids Club*
2. groups which have specialized in giving social support to Tamils living in Toronto and supporting their further education, such as *Canadian Tamil Youth Development* (CANTYD) or the *Tamil Eelam Society of Canada* (TESOC)
3. groups which mainly aim to inform the Tamil community about the political situation in Sri Lanka, such as the *World Tamil Movement* (WTM)
4. organizations which aim to influence Canadian politics with respect to issues pertaining to the situation of the Tamil migrants and Canadian foreign policy vis-à-vis Sri Lanka, such as the *Canadian Tamil Congress* (CTC)
5. organizations which concentrate on supporting the socio-economic reconstruction and rehabilitation of the Northeast of Sri Lanka, such as the *Tamil Eelam Economic Development Organisation* (TEEDOR) or the TRO.

Although politically very close to the LTTE, the TRO and TEEDOR are perceived as having high relevance and legitimacy as they are the only organizations supporting the socio-economic development of the Northeast of Sri Lanka, thereby transcending the boundaries of village, school, and issue-based associations.

## 4.5 Existing social structures and pro-peace initiatives of diaspora communities

There are large numbers of Sri Lankan civil society organizations in selected European countries and Canada which do not orient themselves exclusively towards the political discourse in Colombo or Kilinochi but have some cultural, socio-economic and political influence vis-à-vis the home country:

- there is a large spectrum of Tamil organizations with a clear political self-perception, ranging from the *Tamil Eelam Development Organization* (TEEDOR) in Canada, the *Tamil Rehabilitation Organization* (Europe, North America) and the *Tamil Information Centre* (TIC) in London to University Lecturers for Human Rights, who criticize the LTTE, often anonymously
- there is a large number of Tamil welfare organizations and associations, especially in Canada and Britain, which support the rebuilding and rehabilitation of schools and village infrastructure
- a small number of politically active Sinhalese and Muslim organizations, especially in Britain, Australia and North America
- a small number of ethnically mixed and politically active associations, such as the Sri Lanka friendship circles in Munich and Berlin and others in Switzerland

In order to assess the ability of Sri Lankan diaspora communities in the West to contribute to development and peacebuilding in the home country, at least three dimensions have to be taken into account: firstly, the historically evolved social structures of the communities in Germany, Switzerland, Great Britain and Canada; secondly, the political rights and capacities of the communities in the host countries as well as vis-à-vis the political processes at home; and thirdly, the level of current activities for trust-building between the ethnic communities, for promoting flexible, “win-win”-oriented thinking inside the community, and for socio-economic development at home. Taken together, a more complete, contextually adequate picture of diaspora-homeland relationships emerges, which explains why, for example, inter-religious dialogue events are taking place in Switzerland, or large sums for development support are raised by Tamil associations to support schools

and villages in the North and East of Sri Lanka. And it is a useful heuristic for further empirical research, not only aiming at a better understanding of the socio-political formation of the diaspora communities but also providing new entry points for strengthening pro-peace forces in conflict transformation processes.

When scrutinizing the dimension of the political capacity of the Tamil diaspora vis-à-vis the political discourse in Sri Lanka, some authors have placed too much stress on feelings of guilt amongst refugees and the dominance of the political ideology of groups such as the LTTE in major host countries in the past (i.e. Shashi Tharoor 2001). It goes without saying that the political perspective taken by the LTTE exerts a strong political influence in all Tamil communities as it has emerged - sometimes by non-legal means - as the single most important political force amongst Tamils both at home and abroad. But stressing the perception of a purely negative political dominance of the LTTE throughout the Tamil diaspora networks runs the risk of overemphasizing the latter's homogeneity. In reality, the social formations of Tamil communities abroad are very diverse. There are cleavages along lines of caste, class, village or town of origin, education, religion, gender and differences in the process of migration such as time and quality of integration. The same holds true with respect to the diversity of political views within the diaspora. And Sriskandarajah (2004) has pointed out the importance of the dialectic relationship between diaspora, LTTE and the homeland Tamil population: "Diaspora politics cannot be disassociated completely from other stakeholders: just as the LTTE propaganda has mobilized the diaspora, so too must diaspora sentiment impact on the LTTE" (Sriskandarajah 2004, p. 9). Furthermore, international politics and conflict transformation theory perceive the freedom / insurgent movement LTTE as one principle stakeholder, which is a major part of the problem and has to be an important part of any solution to the protracted conflict in Sri Lanka. More structural potentials and entry points to foster conflict transformation with and through the Sri Lankan diaspora will therefore be elaborated in the next section.

## **4.6 Working on conflict in Sri Lanka through the diasporas: structural potentials and levels for constructive intervention**

Activities by many groups and individuals in the diaspora communities can be seen as a strategic potential for working on the causes of the main conflict between the LTTE and the government of Sri Lanka because:

- Remittances are a major part of the gross domestic product of Sri Lanka. It is estimated that more than 25 % of GDP are due to the influx of small sums of private capital and goods.<sup>6</sup>
- A large number of Tamil organizations and individuals support the population in need in the Northeast, as well as the organizations affiliated with the LTTE, through substantial money transfers.
- Tamils as well as the smaller group of Sinhalese who have been living in Western countries for a long time have gained a very high level of qualifications and some have accumulated large private assets. Since the ceasefire, some activities of this group in Sri Lanka, such as the acquisition of property, have increased.
- There is a comparatively high number of diaspora members who are well-informed and politically pro-active, and due to the Internet are continually updated on the situation in Sri Lanka.

On a conceptual level, some researchers (i.e. Collier 2000, Duffield 2001) have taken the large number of diaspora members sending high levels of remittances as well as the channelling of funds through welfare organizations close to former insurgent / terrorist groups as indicators that diaspora activities tend to be conflict-increasing than contributing to constructive conflict transformation. If one looks at the Sri Lankan context in a detailed way, such hypotheses cannot be sustained. Firstly, the largest share is sent by Sinhalese guest workers from the Gulf and Singapore on a family-to-family member level and is received in the poorest region of the South by the most socially disadvantaged of the majority populations. As Sri Lanka has

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<sup>6</sup> Other major sources of income for the national economy are tea, tourism and the textile industry.

multiple latent violent conflicts below the level of the conflict between the GOSL and the LTTE, these transfers make a positive contribution to the stabilization and transformation of the social or class conflict of the economically disadvantaged South. During the 1980s and 1990s, the extreme social and economic imbalances of the deep South had ended twice in bloodshed with deaths outnumbering the victims at peak times of the Sinhalese-Tamil civil war. Secondly, remittances sent to the war-ravaged North and East are also sent on a family basis or through non-political associations. The TRO or organizations close to the TRO collect money in a systematic way but at least for the last couple of years, no non-legal activities such as extortion have been heard of from Western countries with large Tamil populations. At the same time, both the Norwegian facilitators of the peace talks since 2002 and all co-chairs of the peace talks such as Japan, the US and the European Union support attempts to normalize the socio-economic situation of the Tamils in the North and East. These Tamils and their affiliated development organizations have increasingly perceived the TRO as a key actor for rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts in the North and East. There is the hypothesis by a number of authors (i.e. Collier 2000, Gunaratna 2003) that a certain percentage of the money collected by the TRO or TRO sub-organizations is currently made use of by the LTTE. To our knowledge, the largest share is used for development work and for paying the overheads to sustain the embryonic institutional structures of the quasi Tamil state in the North and East.

In practice, the above-mentioned four key potentials of the Sri Lankan diaspora to contribute positively to conflict transformation have shown some impact. This can be illustrated by activities of key and influential figures of the Sri Lankan diaspora in the framework of the official peace negotiations in 2002/2003. The character of the peace negotiations between the LTTE and the GOSL in 2002/2003 has differed substantially from the 1995 and 2000 peace talks. First of all, this time the international community has a strong interest in a constructive and peaceful settlement of the conflict, and high willingness to engage in its practice. Norway as the official facilitator of the peace talks, supported by the co-chairs Japan, the US and India, as well as many activities by Great Britain, Switzerland, Germany and the Netherlands, have internationalized the conflict. Functional elites serve as bridges between the Sri Lankan political actors and the international political and

socio-economic support structure. One example was the last socio-economic needs assessment for the North and East, for which all specialists sent by the LTTE came from Tamil diaspora communities. Situated in the densely knit support structures of the British Tamil community, the chief negotiator for the LTTE, Anton Balasingham, lives and works in London. On the government side, almost all political consultants have spent much of their lives working and studying in Western countries. They additionally and frequently use the expertise of specialists of Sri Lankan origin now living in India, Great Britain or Switzerland.

Looking beyond the involvement of key figures and specialists from the diaspora who are very closely involved in the diplomatic negotiation process, the crucial question remains: what can be done by the diaspora communities to support the peace process?

It may be helpful to look at one central lesson learned from prior research on the conflict transformation process. John Paul Lederach's famous triangle with its three "tracks" for political interventions has been validated in many other conflict areas (see Lederach 1997): to reach a sustainable peaceful settlement in ethno-political conflicts, it is essential to support activities from the diplomatic level down to the grassroots level in an interlocking way.

Applied to the case of the diasporas' involvement in peacebuilding and development processes, one could say that supporting more and deepened activities on all of the following three levels in an interlocking way would be highly desirable:

1. identifying skilled members of the diaspora for peacebuilding, development and rehabilitation work *in Sri Lanka*, and providing opportunities for a time-limited engagement, particularly in the former conflict areas
2. identifying and supporting pro-peace and development activities *directly related to Sri Lanka on the level of the different host countries worldwide*, for example village help societies or alumni associations in Toronto, supporting reconstruction in the Northeast of Sri Lanka
3. identifying and supporting general activities *in the host countries on the level of communal or intercommunal social, cultural and political (pro-peace) activities*.

In principle, all three levels would have to be taken into account equally and the number and intensity of activities would have to be enhanced. Such a comprehensive approach is currently not being pursued in a systematically planned way in the case of Sri Lanka, as there are no large-scale funds available for such an empowering of specific diaspora communities.

All these activities would basically aim at involving Tamil, Sinhalese and Muslim diaspora members interested in a peaceful settlement of the conflict and able to contribute to the political peace process, as well as to the reconstruction and development of the war-affected and marginalized areas in Sri Lanka. Given past experience, it can safely be assumed that the majority of the diaspora will not return, but will instead participate in this process on the basis of “circulation”. That means they will go back and forth, either to share their specialized knowledge or manage their own or another’s trade and investment. A number of activities and aims can be formulated to change the policies both of the host countries and of the Sri Lankan state. Dual citizenship, the granting of legal status to non-resident Sri Lankans, improved consular services and the establishment of a comprehensive infrastructure for mobilizing the skills and investment potential of the diaspora are some options to be mentioned. A more detailed account of these can be found in Dr. Cheran’s (2003) research report for the Berghof Foundation Colombo Office (<http://www.berghof-foundation.lk/publications.htm>).

## **5 Different conflict situations, challenges and potentials for conflict transformation: Cyprus, Somalia, Palestine and Afghanistan**

The population of Cyprus consists of approximately 80 % Greeks and 18 % Turks. The island witnessed cycles of civilian unrest with increasing violence between 1963 and 1974. The territory was divided after military intervention by the Turkish army in 1974. The border regime has been safeguarded by an UN mission ever since.



Besides Australia and Canada, as many as 100,000 Cypriots either of Greek or Turkish origin have settled in London, mostly in Green Lanes. The situation in their home country appears not to have any dividing effect here. That is quite remarkable, given, for example, that the Greek-Cypriot government has followed a strict policy of not referring to a diaspora at all but rather using the term “Greek-Cypriot migrants abroad”, so as to continually project an image of their imminent return to the Greek part of Cyprus (see Anthias 1998, p. 569).

But divisive politics at home have not resulted in more social divisions abroad. A walk along Green Lanes in North London reveals many Turkish-Cypriot shops sited next to Greek-Cypriot ones. Greek-Cypriot community centres welcome their Turkish counterparts and vice versa. If differences of opinion exist, both sides have learned to live together regardless. In a way, the community lives in the good old days of Cyprus here in London. Whether they speak Greek or Turkish, whether they go to a Greek Orthodox church or to a mosque, they are Cypriots first. Both groups in London want to see the island of their origins reunified.

There have been many activities in the past which have influenced the political process in Cyprus. With regard to the recent defeat in a referendum amongst Greek Cypriots of the peace proposal which was worked out by all stakeholders and facilitated by the UN and the EU, one can at least safely assume that the “near diaspora” of Greek Cypriots living in Greece has played a conservative role that has maintained the status quo. But there have been many interesting cases of pro-active diaspora involvement over recent years which have not attracted as much media coverage as the interim cessation of the diplomatic peace initiative. One case in point is that of a Cypriot woman from the diaspora who only a few years ago dared to appeal to the European Court of Human Rights against the Turkish Cypriot law which prohibited the restitution of land and housing belonging to her in the Northern part of the island. This put the almost forgotten Cypriot conflict back on the public agenda at European level. Another important factor was the Greek lobby in the US House of Representatives, which was an important pressure group for pressurizing US foreign policy to act pro-actively with respect to the Cyprus conflict. Another example would be the German-Cypriot Forum, which was actively involved in lobby work on the level of the German and European Parliaments to sustain the dynamic of the peacebuilding efforts in the last couple of years. Something similar

was undertaken by a British group of parliamentarians, who lobbied for constructive solutions and foreign policy engagement vis-à-vis Greece and Turkey in Great Britain. Even though they were not of Cypriot origin, the main motivation for them was to cater for their constituencies, which consist to a large extent of Cypriot diaspora members. Taken together, many initiatives were launched by the Cypriot diaspora communities in Europe and elsewhere to internationalize and Europeanize all conflict resolution attempts through lobbying and gate-keeping in all important multilateral and supranational fora.

Another case is the Palestine diaspora, which is part and parcel of the longest ongoing protracted conflict, the Middle East conflict with Israel and Palestine at its heart. Changing military offensives and affiliations amongst armed groups over the last 40 years as well as a completely deteriorated socio-economic situation in the Palestinian areas have prompted waves and waves of Palestinians to leave for neighbouring Arab countries such as Lebanon, Jordan and Syria, and have created long-distance communities living in European countries such as England, France, Germany and the US. The socio-economic situation of some of the communities is quite bad and relations between, for example, groups in Lebanon and other groups living in Western countries have deteriorated. Given the intensified struggle between Israelis and Palestinians and the non-functioning diplomatic set-up, the prospects of mobilizing the Palestinians abroad to become a more pro-active factor in peacebuilding seem rather unlikely. Given that fundamentalists have established strong positions in many parts of the home country and in Palestinian diaspora communities, a much more realistic goal seems to be to support liberal forces in sustaining their position in the diaspora communities. One could say that the structural circumstances only allow improved “working in conflict” than working directly on the causes of the conflict through diaspora support (see Margret Johannsen 2004).

The case of Somalia is particularly interesting, as remittances are of very high economic importance domestically and much of the expertise and resources for sustaining the ongoing peace process come from the diaspora communities in the West (see Koser, van Haer 2003, p.9). After the SIAD BARRE regime was ousted in January 1991, factional fighting and civil war followed for twelve years in Somalia. In

the same year, Northern clans declared an independent Republic of Somaliland. Although not recognized by any government, this entity has maintained a stable existence, aided by the overwhelming dominance of a ruling clan and economic infrastructure left behind by British, Russian, and American assistance programmes. There is another self-declared autonomous state, Puntland, which has been self-governing since 1998, but does not aim at independence. Puntland disputes its border with Somaliland. Beginning in 1993, a two-year UN humanitarian effort (primarily in the South) was able to alleviate famine conditions, but when the UN withdrew in 1995, having suffered significant casualties, order still had not been restored. Numerous warlords and factions are still fighting for control of Mogadishu and the other Southern regions. Suspicion of Somali links with global terrorism further complicates the picture (see CIA Factbook 2003 / Smith 2003). The mandate of the Transitional National Government (TNG), created in August 2000 in Arta, Djibouti, expires in August 2003 and a new interim government was created at peace talks held in Kenya. Eight major internal parties to the conflict were present at the peace talks in Nairobi, representing the Transitional National Government, different clans, warlords and regions. The international community, particularly the USA, EU, Italy, Germany, Canada and Norway, supported this 14<sup>th</sup> round of peace talks. Many Somali participants at the conference came from Western diaspora communities in Australia, Canada, England, Italy and the USA. All factions brought their experts from the diaspora to advise them politically on all issues on the agenda, from questions of power-sharing to approaches to rural development. Many interim Ministers from the Transitional National Government receive their income from their families living in Western countries. There is a great gap between first generation refugees and second generation migrants: while the first generation is still highly politicized and interested in Somali affairs, the second generation has hardly any interest in even visiting the country. Yet the diaspora is currently a very important political factor, providing expertise to all factions and functioning as a bridge to the international actors supporting the peace process. Currently, the implementation of the agreements reached in Nairobi in 2003 is still pending, and empowering this process through enhanced participation of diaspora members would certainly be desirable (see Schlee 2003).

Since the 1970s, Afghanistan has seen a continuing series of internal factional fighting, direct intervention by the Soviet Union, the dissolution of state structures and the impoverishment of the majority of the population. A significant disruption of the vicious cycle of factional fighting and increasing impoverishment took place in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks on the United States, which resulted in the American-led Nato intervention in Afghanistan against the Taliban. This first major activity in the “war on terrorism” included the sending of a German Bundeswehr contingent as well as diplomatic and development efforts by the Federal Republic of Germany. Part of this endeavour was the organization of the “Petersberg Talks” together with the UN at the end of 2001, in which a pluralistic spectrum of Afghans from major factional groups, both from Afghanistan and from different diaspora communities, were present. This series of meetings resulted in the formation of a transitional government, which came to power in 2002 under President Karzai, and an ongoing diplomatic initiative by the UN with strong support from the German government, the so-called “Bonn Process”.

As progress has been made mainly on reconstruction, areas of stability have been established and normal life resumed mainly in Kabul, in important regional centres and along the major interconnecting roads. However, many zones in the South and East of the country still have high security risks, the drugs-based economy is growing, and many pledges made earlier to the transitional government by international actors are still not being fulfilled. Politically, the constitutional *Loya Jirga* in 2003 has been a success in so far as a constitution has been adopted, which seems well-balanced given the circumstances in Afghanistan. Some kind of fragile political consensus amongst the majority of influential groups currently exists (see interview with Joschka Fischer 27.3.04). Whether and how elections can take place as planned for the end of 2004 is to some extent still an open question.

Structurally, the centuries-old antagonism between Kabul and the rest of the country continues to exist even today. The internationally connected city of Kabul has always felt detached from the world of farmers and nomads, while the rural population sees Kabul as the morally corrupt centre of power, which it is better to stay away from. National reconciliation and integration are still inhibited by the line of conflict between Kabul and the rest of the country. The regions do not have homogeneous social or political structures either, but have a structure of centres

and peripheries. Regional centres are the cities of Herat, Kandahar and Mazar, as well as Jalalabad and Bamyan. The power of the governors of the regional hubs far exceeds the mandate given to them by the national government and they are trying to expand it further. The governor of Herat, Ismael Khan, for example, is in control of more financial and military resources than the central government. Furthermore, there are regional peripheries, so-called “hinterlands” of the regional centres, in which local rulers fight for control. These areas are reached by the Kabul government to a much lesser extent than the regional centres. The result is unequal economic and political reconstruction which is adding to perceived historical injustices, thus creating a breeding ground for radical and antidemocratic intrigues.

Even though a fragile consensus amongst the political elites was created during the *Loya Jirga* convened to draft the constitution, one of the main lines of conflict still runs right through the interim government of Kabul. On the one hand, there is a well-organized small minority of a few families from the Panjshir Valley north of Kabul. They control the three most powerful ministries (Foreign Ministry, Ministry of Defence and major parts of the Ministry of the Interior), including the army, the police and the secret service. On the other hand, there is President Karzai with representatives of different political groups and parties which have been involved in factional fighting with changing loyalties over the past decades. Over the last two years, they have lost coherence in pursuing a common strategy and are no longer able to counterbalance the immense power of the Panjshiri group (Shora-ye Nizar). This political landscape has stopped many people from placing trust in the new central government, whose legitimacy remains low (see Glatzer / FriEnt 2003).

In Afghanistan, violent conflicts have created a huge diaspora of refugees since the late 1970s. Most people left during the fighting between the Mujaheddin and the Soviet-backed Kabul regime, but the exodus continued as the fighting among the Mujaheddin groups increased. Initially, most Afghans went to neighbouring countries such as Iran and Pakistan. The latter became a centre for political and military resistance. The diaspora was originally dominated by various Mujaheddin groups, which took control in Afghanistan after the departure of the Soviet forces and the fall of the Soviet-backed regime in 1992. Similarly, the Taliban later emerged from the Afghan diaspora in Pakistan, sweeping away the split Mujaheddin groups and controlling the country from 1996 until late 2001. There

were up to six million Afghan refugees in foreign countries in the 1980s and perhaps four million returned in the 1990s during quiet periods, even though some left again due to renewed fighting (see Van Hear 2002). Until the defeat of the Taliban in 2002, an estimated 2.5 million Afghans remained in Pakistan and Iran. Since 2002, a large-scale return has taken place, with millions returning to Afghanistan, especially from Pakistan, Iran and Tajikistan.

Given this situation, and excluding the remaining Afghans in neighbouring countries, attention must therefore focus on the post-9/11 Western-based Afghan diaspora communities. The main groups are the Afghan-American diaspora and Afghans living in the United Kingdom, Australia and Germany. The latter consists of approximately 100,000 persons, making it the largest Afghan diaspora community in Europe with a large sub-group of 22,000 living in Hamburg. They are comparatively well-organized in a number of associations, fostering their exchange online via platforms such as “Afghan German Online” (<http://www.afghan-german.de/>). From all major Afghan diaspora communities, major contributions have been made to peacebuilding and reconstruction in Afghanistan and key politically influential figures amongst them were involved in the talks on the transitional government in Bonn. At the talks at the end of 2001, four important political factions or groupings from Afghanistan and abroad were present, although they did not represent all of the highly differentiated worldwide Afghan diaspora. These four factions were the Northern Alliance, or United Front, controlling Kabul and much of the rest of the country; the delegation of the former king, Zahir Shah from Rome; a Cyprus grouping of exiled intellectuals, who were supported by Iran and who had been discussing ways out of Afghanistan’s impasse for some years already; and the Peshawar grouping, with its constituency mainly among Peshawar’s Pashtun refugees. Not only had the current President Hamid Karzai lived in the US at various times, but diaspora members were given key positions in the newly formed administration at the end of 2001 (see van Hear 2002). Current examples of influential political figures who were part of Afghan diaspora communities for many years are Dr. Ghani, Minister of Finance for the transitional government of Afghanistan, Mr. Farhad Ahad, Economic Adviser to the government, and Mr. Abdullah Sherzai, Director of Planning, Ministry of Health. There are also many

Afghans in different positions who attended the German Amani School in Kabul in the 1970s and received tertiary education at German universities.

According to Homira Nassery, an expert on Afghan-American diaspora involvement, there has been broad engagement for Afghanistan and a willingness to return in the aftermath of the US-led military intervention: “Afghanistan is experiencing a similar renaissance of returnees, particularly among the youth who have given up lucrative careers in the West to work for pittance in government and NGO offices in Afghanistan.” (Nassery, 2003, p. 20).

Since 2002, there have been at least four initiatives by international organizations for involving diaspora members. Firstly, a trust fund was set up by the World Bank, for which US\$ 1.5 million were allocated, aimed at hiring professional expatriate trainers and experts and providing money for their salaries. Major delays arose as the government of Afghanistan could not agree on usage in the first instance. Secondly, the *World Bank Afghanistan Directory of Expertise* (DOB) facilitates the identification of Afghan professionals, as well as non-Afghan professionals with significant experience in Afghanistan, to be employed in the reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan. This directory lists voluntary information about individuals who are interested in contributing their skills and talents to rebuilding Afghanistan, as there is a high need for this expertise. The directory provides contact information so that organizations and individuals can identify and liaise directly with persons with relevant expertise. The aim is to match needs and capabilities as reconstruction and rehabilitation initiatives progress. According to Homira Nassery, this database has successfully matched numerous Afghans with firms that have hired them. Thirdly, there is a programme run by the *International Organization for Migration* (IOM), called Return of Qualified Afghans (RQA). The major difference between the World Bank DOB database and the IOM’s programme is that the latter only provides personal information on candidates and IOM staff do the ‘matching’ themselves. Currently, there is an IOM-RQA European programme targeting qualified and skilled Afghans residing in the European Union who wish to return to their home country. Comprehensive assistance packages are offered for doing work in the public and private sectors in Afghanistan. Fourthly, a discussion forum by the Swiss Peace Foundation should be mentioned, which has been co-organizing a process of Afghan civil society and diaspora involvement since the Petersberg Talks, also using

Internet fora for fostering dialogue amongst civil society members, government agencies and the international community.

Since 2003, a government agency, the *Afghan Investment Support Agency*, has tried to foster investments in Afghanistan from the better-off diaspora members in Western countries. During a conference on migration and development in May 2004, organized by the GTZ (see <http://www.gtz.de/migration-and-development/english/>), it became clear that in-depth discussion about remittances and the role of the Hawala money transfer system had been going on amongst development experts since the end of 2001. In Arabic, *hawala* simply means “transfer”. The term refers broadly to money transfer mechanisms that exist in the absence of, or parallel to, conventional banking channels (see Maimbo 2003, p. 3). One starting point of the debate was the fact that the privately run, trust-based agents of the Hawala system in California had only recently been closed down through US legal action on the grounds that the service could be used for criminal and terrorist-related activities. A somewhat ironic background to this is that only recently, banks operating internationally have been re-opened in Kabul and services for private equity transfers between host and home countries, such as *Western Union* or *Money Gram*, were opened only recently.

Currently, no transaction from Kabul to Herat is possible without using the Hawala system; even the international development agencies have to use its services or alternatively carry cash in bags. The experts at the Afghanistan working group considered three types of remittance-based funds in the case of Afghanistan: matching funds bringing social and development projects in Afghanistan together with diaspora groups willing to fund a particular project; large-scale investment funds attracting more massive sums from wealthy diaspora entrepreneurs by organizing stable framework conditions and credit guarantees; and finally, funds for fostering micro-enterprise development and income-generating activities in particular regions. Beyond the technical aspects of the remittance flows, which are difficult to grasp statistically, and the opportunities to regulate them without stifling the flexibility and low-cost aspects of the system, the questions of its impact in political and conflict-related terms remained very much under-explored during this expert conference.



How crucial it is to go into the social structures and, finally, the contextual political conditions in much more detail can be exemplified by the following considerations (see Glatzer 2003). As in many other conflict cases but possibly a bit more extreme than in the average protracted-conflict setting, ethnicity in Afghanistan has been deliberately applied as an instrument, depending on the situation. Therefore one should not view the ethnic units as distinct social and political groups with guide social and political actions. They can be significant but they are not necessarily so, as in reality actors and their clienteles are often guided by questions of political power, influence and material profit rather than traditional or ethnic values. If, for example, humanitarian aid were delivered on the basis of ethnic relations (“ethnic balance”), new injustices and new causes of conflict could be created, not least because ethnic boundaries are very fuzzy and highly flexible in Afghanistan, according to the needs of factional political interests. Whether some kind of ethnic political representation would work in Afghanistan remains an open question. Certainly, a future government, administration and army would need to have a high level of legitimacy throughout the population. Therefore a complex and balanced system of power-sharing with respect to the distribution of security, access to socio-economic resources and public recognition for all influential political and ethnic groups in Afghanistan needs to be developed. Strengthening local governance might be one important approach. But in the overall medium- to long-term process, considerations how ethnic and all other major groups, including the diaspora communities, relate to each other cannot be excluded.

Relations between returnees and the Afghans who stayed in the country during the years of violent conflict are not necessarily easy and in the worst case may form yet another fault line in Afghanistan’s fractious society. Barakat and Wardell (2002) point out that it should be recognized that the existence of Afghan diaspora communities, particularly its most educated and articulate members who settled largely in Western countries, is a reflection of the political, philosophical and religious debates / tensions in Afghanistan that led to their migration. There is a risk of significant tensions if those who have not lived in Afghanistan for decades are perceived as dominating the debates and decisions about reconstruction. Returning members of the diaspora could make one important conflict line of modern Afghan history even more severe, namely the question how the ruling urban elite can remain

culturally connected to the rural masses, so that the benefits of reconstruction enhance both rural and urban society.

The diaspora played a significant political role in organizing a peaceful transition after the Nato military intervention in 2001/2002. Diaspora members played an important role during the Petersberg Talks, in the ongoing Bonn process of political transition, and as connectors between the international community, the national administrations, international civil society and the private sector. Nassery (2003) describes the potential role of the Afghan-American diaspora as follows: “(...) behaving professionally and collectively, the Afghan-American diaspora can best influence policy planning and implementation of reconstruction in Afghanistan.”

In terms of transforming major conflict lines in Afghanistan, the most significant potential of the Afghans living abroad is the possible increase in engagement - for example on a time-limited basis - by those who have been educated in Western countries and who feel committed to the principles of multipartiality and democratic dialogue to solve the country's political, social and economic problems.

Furthermore, the diaspora plays a important economic role through remittances transferred through the Hawala system. The economic importance of the diaspora communities were recognized by the international community and the Afghanistan transitional government from an early stage on. What remains under-researched is not only the quantitative aspects of these payments, but their impact with respect to sustainable pro-poor development and major conflict lines in the regional and national context. Without this knowledge, it is literally impossible to prevent increasing socio-economic inequalities which may result in greater regional conflict.

What is positive is the high interest in remittances amongst the political elites. At the same time, action research on the topic is weak. The question whether the transfer of funds from the diaspora has a conflict-increasing impact or de-escalating effect remains unexplored and is rarely discussed in public. Generally, there is too little discussion about risks and few attempts to develop practical solutions to them. In particular, there is a danger that monetary and human resource contributions from the diaspora communities may only be felt in Kabul, reinforcing the long-entrenched division of Afghanistan into “Kabul” and “the rest of the country”.

Similarly, direct investments and a targeted channelling of funds from the dispersed diaspora communities in Western countries would need to be thoroughly assessed in terms of their conflict impact at local, regional and national political level.

## **Conclusion**

What these conflicts - with the exception of Afghanistan, but including the conflict in Sri Lanka - have in common that they are politically below the external (UN) intervention level, have diaspora groups living in various host countries including European countries, and some kind of civil conflict transformation initiative - be it only on the diplomatic and humanitarian level - is in place. Beyond these factors, there seems to be a somewhat generic pattern in the relationship between violent struggles for independence, the emergence of diaspora communities and initiatives for civil conflict transformation.

Political groups striving for self-determination are in an asymmetrical power situation. The war with the government or governments regularly produces refugees and other migrants. The violent conflict itself and subsequent effects such as human rights abuses, increasing crime rates and poverty are central factors driving migrants or refugees from their home (*International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies* 2003, p. 114). Given a relatively swift improvement in living conditions for some of them abroad, there is potential for strengthening civil, cultural and military aspects of the civil war party itself and its fellow citizens in the home country. Taken together, this improves their strategic situation vis-à-vis the respective state and may result in the political and military escalation of the violent conflict. Given the overlap of interests in processes of globalization, renewed security concerns since 9/11, and institutions in the international system based on democratic values, this more often than not triggers diplomatic and civilian efforts to find a negotiated settlement. At the same time, diaspora communities are perceived as a cultural and economic challenge to host countries that needs to be regulated by increasingly strict immigration policies. Given globalization and the restructuring of nations which were largely artificially formed by colonial powers, Western countries can only regulate this process to a limited extent. A more constructive approach would be to perceive and work with the socio-economic, cultural and political potentials of

diaspora communities to build functional bridges and thus create win-win situations both for host and home societies. If and to what extent a diaspora community can be empowered to play the role of a pro-active peacebuilder depends at least on these factors:

- geographical distribution and self-organization structures of diaspora communities in the host country,
- legal status and living conditions in the host country,
- political attitudes towards the conflict at home and shared identity: common ground vs. unbridgeable differences,
- motivation and capabilities for constructive engagement in the home country,
- access to key political actors and resources at home and abroad.

In some cases, diaspora communities such as the Cypriots in London have become both a bridge-builder between host and home and a pro-active peace promoter. In other cases, such as the Tamil and Sinhalese diaspora communities in Canada and Europe, they have become a kind of socio-economic and cultural bridge-builder between host and home. But with respect to political initiatives for conflict transformation at home and abroad, Sri Lankan diaspora communities at large have generally supported pro-peace engagement by their main representatives at home, while single individuals from the diaspora have contributed massively as experts. The same seems to be true of Eritrea and Somalia in Africa. However, in the latter cases, the socio-economic importance of remittances seems to be even higher than in the case of Sri Lanka, and the state's policies for institutionalizing economic contributions and political participation through voting rights abroad seem to be even more advanced than in the case of Sri Lanka.

What has not been adequately explored so far is the question how a more active bridge-building role of diaspora groups and key individuals in the peace processes and reconstruction efforts in their home countries could be encouraged by national and international organizations in Europe and North America. This is certainly not a functionalistic or short-term endeavour as complex intra- and intercommunity cleavages and the question of acceptability in home and host countries need to be taken into account. The more politically prominent the tasks taken over in the political arena in the home country, the more risks are associated

with the identification and time-limited support for the employment of experts from the diaspora in their home countries, for example. Yet only reasonable political progress in states with protracted conflicts can create governance structures which are able to ensure that national and international development efforts are not immediately reversed by recurrent cycles of civil war.

The question which thus remains is this: who could promote such an endeavour in a comprehensive way and what impact can reasonably be expected both in the host and the home country? Beyond improved support structures, it is certain that “the growth and maintenance of such entities, and making them significant political actors, depend on cumulative individual and collective decisions taken [by diaspora groups] in the host countries” (Sheffer 2003, p. 36).

## **6 Concluding remarks: political challenges for German / EU policy-making**

### *The further development of domestic migration regimes in response to global challenges*

Highlighting the positive potential of diaspora communities in processes of globalization would demonstrate the economic, social and cultural benefits to German society if diasporas were empowered to play a vital bridge-building role. At the same time, it would make the institutional and political challenges apparent to a larger section of the public before such a pragmatic, win-win oriented role for diaspora communities in Germany could be put into practice. Within such a framework, integration would not simply mean adopting or fully adapting to German language and culture. It would also mean empowering migrants to fulfil a bridging function between home and host country. The underlying metaphor is for migrants to feel at home in German culture and in the culture of their country of origin at the same time.

Given this background, the support for cultural and political integration has to be further developed and conceptually enhanced, taking account of the need to support diasporas in their bridge-building functions. With respect to modernizing German federal immigration policies, many aspects of the new immigration law can be perceived as rather small but significant steps forward. Nonetheless, in legal practice, the transformation of so-called “Altfälle” (old cases) of former civil war refugees into new categories of residence permits is a pending issue. Given the German federalist set-up, there will certainly be different solutions in different German states. This includes the possibility of an increase in forced expatriations of people having lived for more than 10 years in Germany, such as many Afghans. As in a number of other cases, that would not be good for the home or the host country, and would certainly be counterproductive to the idea of strengthening the bridge-building role of diaspora communities. Improving the latter's bridge-building function does not mean promoting the permanent return of specialists to their home countries in the first instance but improving the mobility between and the qualitative impact of these groups. To achieve this, it is less important to offer dual citizenship to everyone and more important to grant long-term residence permits. The current legislation in Germany, which stipulates that even migrants with residence permits have to return to Germany every six months, is not helpful in this respect (see Melchers, Roger, Wurster 2003).

On the European level there is the urgent need to develop a substantive political discourse on immigration policies beyond national state borders. The inability of the national systems to deal constructively with refugees and migrants, many of whom come from crisis and war zones such as currently from the Darfur region in Sudan, or to share the burden equally between the member countries needs to be tackled. If a practical solution which takes the challenges of transnationalism, long-term diaspora communities and global mobility systematically into account cannot be found, European foreign policies run the risk of being further de-legitimized. This is due, not least, to the fact that short-time engagement for humanitarian catastrophes in national foreign policy initiatives and the non-existence of good asylum regulations in Europe are increasingly perceived as paradoxical.

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### ***Foreign and development policies engage constructively with diaspora communities***

In view of the tightened security environment in Europe since 9/11 and the more specific challenges faced by German institutions, there have been a number of proposals to integrate foreign and development policies much more. This includes making non-military conflict management a clear priority. Increasingly curtailing the freedom of our own citizens, resorting to military action to combat terrorist groups, closing our borders further and putting Muslims and other groups under general suspicion are not adequate responses to international terrorism. Instead, we must work on the causes of conflict, and must therefore create much more synergy between foreign policy and development institutions as well as making use of all the expertise available (see Fischer 2004). For too long, the expertise of diaspora communities has been neglected or has only been used in a casual and non-professional way. The issue of migration has been left out of the development policy equation and delegated entirely to domestic politics. And at national level, the issue is so highly politicized that a pragmatic approach to dealing with diaspora groups seems unlikely. Foreign and development policies should therefore foster a more constructive way of dealing with diaspora groups, which means making use of their potentials, notwithstanding the fact that many immigrants live in limbo, both socially and in terms of their legal status.

The aim should be to identify “high potentials”, especially in the second generation, in a very broad sense and to support selected self-help, political and socially committed commercial associations active in their home countries. This could also entail the more systematic integration of qualified diaspora members into German development cooperation and German foreign services dealing with peacebuilding and conflict prevention. Beyond the recommendations given by the first meeting of the Committee on Economic Cooperation and Development of the German Bundestag on migration and development in May 2004, the role and transformative potential of diaspora communities in violent conflicts and their potential for the rehabilitation and rebuilding of post-war societies must be accounted for much more.

An important precondition for achieving this would be to close the research gap as regards the socio-political situation of diaspora communities here and their

specific bridge-building and facilitation potential for development, trade and foreign policy initiatives. Much more empirical research is needed, especially on remittances, skills, political attitudes, political group structures, interest in returning, duration and activities of circulation with the country of origin, and influence in the politics of the home country. Key research questions would be as follows: firstly, which groups and individuals are conducting outstanding activities in relation to their home countries, thereby fostering development, good governance and conflict transformation? Secondly, which governmental, civil society or diaspora initiatives already strengthen the bridge-building potential in the host countries and which of the state's policies are conducive to achieving these outcomes? *Good practices* could thus be identified and used for formulating policies aimed at further strengthening the existing potentials of diaspora communities.

For fostering civil conflict transformation approaches which integrate diaspora potentials pro-actively, the best approach is to launch a series of pilot projects based on selected countries. These pilot projects could provide space for trust-building, dialogue promotion and problem-solving between key actors in the diaspora communities and between them and strategic political groups in the home country. In the early stage, this could be organized as internal capacity-building or dialogue groups, and when relationships between influential figures from the conflicting parties have matured, problem-solving workshops could be conducted, making use of "neutral" ground abroad as well. The results of accompanying empirical research into the political practice of key actors in the specific diaspora communities should be fed back to the diaspora public, thereby enhancing their capacity for contributing to a sustainable and just peace in the specific violence-prone country of origin. Implicitly, the often experimental character of many of these interventions will provide political organizations, such as donor agencies willing to intervene constructively in violent conflicts, with the necessary hands-on knowledge for designing more sophisticated ways of using the conflict-transformative capacities of diasporas in conflict.



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## Berghof Reports: An Overview\*

Berghof Report	Title	Author	published
1	Friedliche Einmischung. Strukturen, Prozesse und Strategien zur konstruktiven Bearbeitung ethnopolitischer Konflikte.	NORBERT ROPERS	October 1995
1	<i>Peaceful Intervention. Structures, Processes, and Strategies for the Constructive Regulation of Ethnopolitical Conflicts</i>	NORBERT ROPERS	October 1995
2	Interkulturelle Mediation – eine schwierige Vermittlung. Eine empirisch-analytische Annäherung zur Bedeutung von kulturellen Unterschieden.	FRANK LIEBE (WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF NADJA GILBERT)	May 1996
2	<i>Intercultural Mediation: A Difficult Brokerage. An Empirical-Analytical Attempt to Assess the Impact of Cultural Differences.</i>	FRANK LIEBE (WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF NADJA GILBERT)	May 1996
3	Konstruktive Haltungen und Verhaltensweisen in institutionellen Konflikten. Erfahrungen, Begriffe, Fähigkeiten.	EVA MARINGER / REINER STEINWEG	June 1997
4	Krisenprävention und zivile Konfliktbearbeitung durch die EU. Konzepte, Kapazitäten und Kohärenzprobleme.	TOBIAS DEBIEL / MARTINA FISCHER	August 2000
4	<i>Crisis Prevention and Conflict Management by the European Union. Concepts, Capacities and Problems of Coherence.</i>	TOBIAS DEBIEL / MARTINA FISCHER	September 2000
5	Friedensförderung in Bosnien-Herzegovina. Ansätze der Jugend-, Bildungs- und Kulturarbeit.	MARTINA FISCHER / JULIE TUMLER	September 2000
6	Die soziale Eingliederung von Kindersoldaten. Konzepte und Erfahrungen aus Mosambik.	PETER STEUDTNER	March 2001
7	Macht und Differenz. Ein erweitertes Modell der Konfliktpotentiale in interkulturellen Auseinandersetzungen.	ANJA WEIß	March 2001
8	<i>Local Peace Constituencies in Cyprus. Citizens' Rapproachment by the bi-communal Conflict Resolution Trainer Group.</i>	OLIVER WOLLEH	March 2001

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Berghof Report	Title	Author	published
9	Kollektive Traumata. Annahmen, Argumente, Konzepte. Eine Bestandsaufnahme nach dem 11. September.	ANGELA KÜHNER	February 2003

## Occasional Papers: An Overview\*

Occasional Paper	Title	Author	published
1	Ergebnisbericht: Interkulturelle Konfliktbearbeitung. Einführungsseminar in neue Konzepte der innergesellschaftlichen und internationalen Mediation und präventiven Diplomatie. 30.November – 2. Dezember 1994	NORBERT ROPERS	July 1996 out of print
2	<i>Golitsino Workshop for Peace Builders. 25. – 29. September 1995</i>	ANJA WEIß / ALEKSEJ NAZARENKO	August 1996
3	<i>Warsaw Workshop for Peace Builders. 28. Januar – 2.Februar 1996</i>	ANJA WEIß / ALEKSEJ NAZARENKO	September 1996
4	<i>The Hungarian Concept of Autonomy for Romania. The 1993 DAHR Draft-law on National Minorities and Autonomous Communities and Reactions from Other Political Parties in Romania.</i>	KINGA PÁLL	September 1996
5	<i>The International Relations of the DAHR 1989 – 96. The Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania. An Introduction.</i>	ANNA-MÁRIA BÍRÓ	August 1996
6	<i>The Protection of National Minorities and Regional Stability.</i>	KINGA GÁL	September 1996
7	<i>Strategies and Needs of NGOs Dealing with Ethnopolitical Conflicts in the New Eastern Democracies.</i>	ANJA WEIß/ ALEKSEJ NAZARENKO	March 1997
8	Eigeninitiativen einheimischer FriedensstifterInnen. Wirkungsmöglichkeiten in den neuen östlichen Demokratien.	SONJA BORSKI/ HOLGER HESS	September 1998

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Occasional Paper	Title	Author	published
9	<i>Ethnopolitical Legitimacy and Ethnic Conflict Management. The Case of the Russian Federation in the Early 1990s.</i>	AIRAT AKLAEV	June 1996
10	<i>Peace Work by Civil Actors in Post-Communist Societies.</i>	DIANA FRANCIS/ N. ROPERS	September 1997
11	<i>Advanced Networking: A Conceptual Approach to NGO-based Early Response Strategies in Conflict Prevention.</i>	ANTON IVANOV	October 1997
12	Peacebuilding Aktivitäten der bikommunalen <i>Conflict Resolution Trainer Group</i> in Zypern.	OLIVER WOLLEH	November 1997
13	<i>Natural Law, Agents and Patients, and Minority Rights.</i>	GABRIEL ANDREESCU	November 1999
14	<i>Roles and Functions of Third Parties in the Constructive Management of Ethnopolitical Conflicts.</i>	NORBERT ROPERS	November 1997
15	<i>The Intercultural Mediation Project: The Bléré Experience: A Study of Conflict Management in an Intercultural Context.</i>	JON SEBASTIAN	November 1997
16	Zivile Konfliktbearbeitung deutscher NROs und Einrichtungen – Ein Wegweiser, 1998/99.	CORDULA REIMANN	September 1998
17	<i>Southeast European NGOs for the Stability Pact.</i>	M. FISCHER / G. SCOTTO	September 2000
18	<i>Conflict Transformation by Training in Nonviolent Action. Activities of the Centre for Nonviolent Action (Sarajevo) in the Balkan Region.</i>	MARTINA FISCHER	June 2001
19	<i>Prevention of Ethnic Conflict. Lessons from Romania.</i>	WOJCIECH KOSTECKI	August 2002
20	Handlungsspielräume und Hindernisse für die Beteiligung von Frauen am demokratischen Aufbau in Afghanistan.	ANTJE BAUER	August 2002
21	Zypern: Gesellschaftliches Rapprochement im Spannungsfeld von impliziter Anerkennung und Repression. (Greek/Turkish version)	OLIVER WOLLEH	June 2002
22	<i>Constructive Discourse Transformation. Media Work in asymmetrical, inter-cultural Conflicts: The Case of the Middle East.</i>	HANNAH REICH	February 2003

Occasional Paper	Title	Author	published
23	<i>Contract or War? An Essay on Institutional Logic in Violent Conflict.</i>	BENEDIKT KORF	April 2003
24	<i>War Veterans and Peacebuilding in Former Yugoslavia. A Pilot Project of the Centre for Nonviolent Action (CNA).</i>	OLIVER WILS	February 2004
25	Kooperative Friedensförderung? Die OSZE und lokale NGOs in Mostar.	ANNE JENICHEN	July 2004

### Berghof Series: Konflikttransformation (in German only)

Nr.	Title	Author	published
1	Konfliktbearbeitung in der Zivilgesellschaft. Die Workshop-Methode im rumänisch-ungarischen Konflikt.	P. HAUMERSEN/ H. RADEMACHER/ N. ROPERS	2002
2	Die Teilung überwinden. Eine Fallstudie zur Friedensbildung in Zypern.	OLIVER WOLLEH	2002
3	Hilfe die nicht vom Himmel fällt. Gewaltprävention in der Entwicklungsarbeit von NGOs.	E. FORBERG/ U. TERLINDEN	2002
4	Friedensbildung in Mostar. Die Rolle der internationalen NRO.	GIOVANNI SCOTTO	2004