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# *Annual Report 2020* mediation for peace

**Trusted. Neutral. Independent.  
Connected. Effective.**

**The Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD) mediates between governments, non-state armed groups and opposition parties to reduce conflict, limit the human suffering caused by war and develop opportunities for peaceful settlements.**

**As a non-profit based in Switzerland, HD helps to build the path to stability and development for people, communities and countries through more than 50 peacemaking projects around the world. →**



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The Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD) is a private diplomacy organisation founded on the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence. Its mission is to help prevent, mitigate and resolve armed conflict through dialogue and mediation.

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Design and layout: Hafenkron

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# About HD

**The Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD) is a Geneva-based private diplomacy organisation founded on the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence.**

HD's mission is to help prevent, mitigate and resolve armed conflict through dialogue and mediation.

Since 1999, HD has been working beyond the frontiers of traditional diplomacy, engaging hard-to-reach conflict parties and addressing issues that may be insoluble via other channels.

With more than 50 mediation and dialogue initiatives around the world and 300+ staff based mostly in the field, HD is a leader in private diplomacy and significant “unofficial” actor in peacemaking.

In 2020, HD achieved strong results despite the many challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic. These included on-the-ground activities in the Middle East, Africa, Eurasia, Asia and Latin America complemented by HD's expertise in digital conflict and fostering inclusion for women, youth and other groups in peace processes.

## What we do

- **Facilitation and mediation:** HD offers a range of services to connect conflict parties in their search for a settlement. Where discretion is key, HD supports them to establish channels of communication (sometimes as a first step to a formal peace process), to prevent flare-ups in ongoing conflicts or to achieve a humanitarian objective
- **Dialogue:** HD supports and manages confidential or public multi-stakeholder dialogue processes that often complement a formal peace process. Elite bargains are often not possible or legitimate, at least not by themselves, and often not effective. Instead, a movement from conflict to peace requires broader consensus
- **Advice:** HD can take on an advisory role, working with one or more parties to help them move away from armed violence. Advising is often unilateral but open to all sides, relies heavily on trust and depends on the same principles of impartiality as multi-party engagements
- **Mediation support:** Where HD is not the lead third party, it can provide technical, expert and logistical support to conflict parties or another third party such as a mediator. Where a lead mediator is operating, HD will never compete – as the HD Charter requires the organisation to put the interests of the peace process above all other considerations

HD also plays a leadership role across the mediation sector by promoting discussions on emerging challenges and sharing insights from its operational experiences.

HD's Mediation Support team (MESU) provides vital operational support with its technical and process design expertise, strategic planning, critical reviews of HD projects and the sharing of insights from projects with HD teams and the wider peacemaking community.



Community mediators in the Sahel region – © HD

## Measurable results

HD is a results-driven organisation committed to demonstrating its concrete contribution to peace.

HD's work may lead to formal peace or conflict management settlements – the most valued and tangible results – but also produce many valuable interim steps, including:

- Establishing first contact with hard-to-reach conflict actors or raising difficult issues
- Building trust and channels of communication between parties
- Brokering unilateral or joint declarations
- Mediating interim agreements for violence reduction or humanitarian access

HD's proven ability to engage nimbly and discreetly as a neutral, independent and trusted partner is the hallmark of the organisation and a significant advantage in sensitive conflict environments.

## Our approach

### Flexible and responsive

As a private entity, HD can react quickly and flexibly to emerging crises and adapt to unpredictable events. HD's dynamic and enterprising approach encourages its people to develop and launch creative initiatives for peace while operating within a firm accountability framework.

### Decentralised and connected

To ensure its operations stay nimble and responsive to events on the ground, HD has regional hubs in Asia, Eurasia, Anglophone and Lusophone Africa, Francophone Africa, Latin America and the Middle East and North Africa. Reinforced by support teams and executive oversight at HD's headquarters in Geneva, these regional hubs react rapidly to emerging conflicts with deep knowledge of local contexts and strong networks of contacts.

### Discreet and effective

HD's low-profile and confidential approach allows it to engage in situations that may be inaccessible to official actors and conventional diplomacy. HD's ability to take measured risks, obtain access, build trust and work as an effective mediator means that discretion is always paramount.

### Principled and trusted

HD's principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence are vital to the ethos and success of the entire organisation. HD operates effectively by applying – and being known to apply – these principles rigorously. HD's reputation allows it to maintain access to all sides in a conflict and to cultivate trusted relationships in situations of extreme tension.

### Accountable and focused on quality

HD's flexible, decentralised activities require strong accountability mechanisms. Led by HD's central monitoring and evaluation team, all projects undergo peer reviews at key decision points. To ensure quality and accountability, HD's innovative monitoring and evaluation system also includes expert mediation advisors, peer-to-peer learning exchanges and independent verification of peacemaking results. HD also undergoes various financial audits throughout the year.

### Inclusive in peacemaking

To foster greater inclusiveness in peace processes, HD supports and encourages the meaningful participation of women, young people and civil society groups. An inclusive and diverse range of representatives can bring significant benefits, including innovative ideas and new perspectives that ultimately contribute to resolving conflict and building sustainable peace and development.

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*With more than 50 projects in major conflict zones around the world, HD achieved strong results in 2020 despite the many challenges to peacemaking from the COVID-19 pandemic.*

*HD's core mediation work resulted in breakthrough accords in Libya and delivered progress in numerous local conflicts and in sensitive, high-level dialogue on geopolitical threats.*



# HD in 2020: Peacemaking in perspective

**With more than 50 projects in major conflict zones around the world, HD achieved strong results in 2020 despite the many challenges to peacemaking from the COVID-19 pandemic. HD's core mediation work resulted in breakthrough accords in Libya and delivered progress in numerous local conflicts and in sensitive, high-level dialogue on geopolitical threats.**

Alongside on-the-ground activities in the Middle East, Africa, Eurasia, Asia and Latin America, HD has built its expertise and offerings in the digital space to address the importance of cyber security and social media in the modern context of conflict. HD is also fostering inclusion in peace processes and communities while expanding, training and advising networks of local mediators who have been effective in resolving and preventing conflict.

HD addressed the specific threat of the pandemic in war zones by:

- Brokering a series of humanitarian ceasefires in support of the UN Secretary-General's global call in March 2020
- Delivering vital sanitation supplies to hundreds of thousands of people isolated in conflict areas
- Countering online falsehoods and reaching millions of people with reliable health information through creative social media messaging

Despite obstacles to travel and in-person meetings due to the pandemic, HD sustained its record of results that create the conditions for peace, stability and development for communities, economies and countries. HD projects in 2020 also included:

- Creating channels of discreet contact between major powers to avert unintended consequences from escalating military tensions and diminishing diplomacy
- Engaging with some of the states most active in cyber security
- Building and nurturing networks of contacts with local conflict parties
- Working with communities affected by sectarian and ethnic tensions or under assault by armed groups

After almost a decade of violence and turmoil, **Libya** gained its best prospects for peace with a series of agreements in 2020 building on intensive preparation by HD. Ceasefire declarations in August led to meetings in Switzerland where parties agreed to relaunch a political process with the aim of holding elections towards the end of 2021.

Libya may be the most visible of more than 15 major agreements brokered by HD in 2020 but the others are also significant.

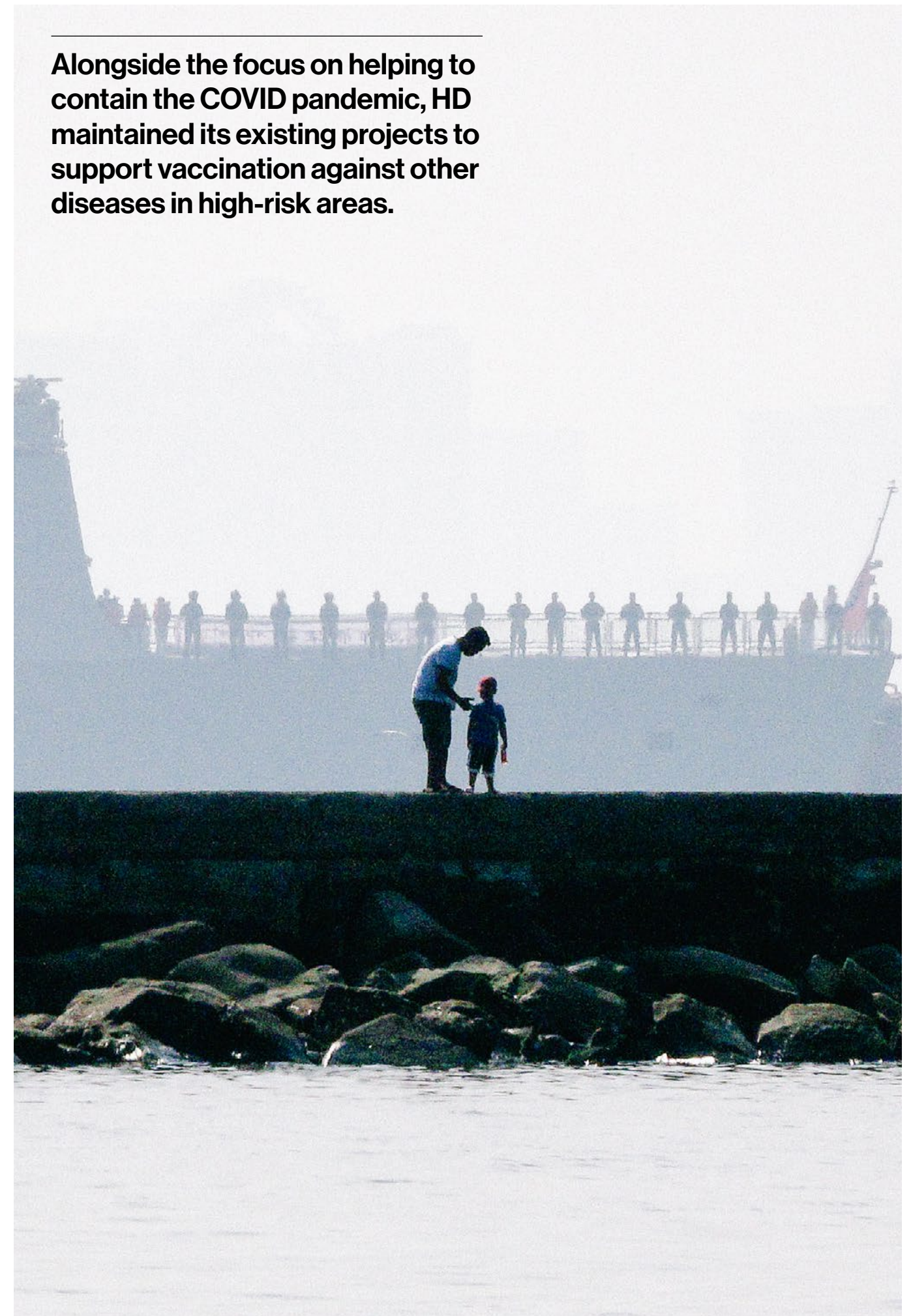
These include a de facto ceasefire between **Iraqi** militias and the **United States** and the first signed agreement that opens the door for peace talks between parties in Africa's oldest insurgency in **Senegal**. HD's work enabled critical humanitarian cooperation across the contact line in Ukraine and consolidated peace accords on the volatile southern island of **Mindanao** in the **Philippines**.

HD also supported a range of local agreements to reduce intercommunal violence in the **Sahel** and, with a partner, mediated the resolution of 17 clan conflicts in the **Sulu archipelago** in the **Philippines**.

The outcomes attest to the expertise and commitment of HD's mediators and to the advantages of a decentralised and nimble operating model. Staff numbers remained at around 300 – with support units and a small team of senior managers at HD's headquarters in Geneva and most people in the field under the guidance of regional directors, including a core group of national “insider” mediators.

As a non-profit organisation focused on private diplomacy, mediation and peacebuilding initiatives, HD wishes to thank its public and private donors for their strategic support and targeted project funding. This reliable funding – plus backing from new donors – is fundamental to supporting HD's projects, safeguarding its independence, driving innovation and preserving its reputation built on trust, confidentiality and impartiality.

**Alongside the focus on helping to contain the COVID pandemic, HD maintained its existing projects to support vaccination against other diseases in high-risk areas.**



Filipino villagers view a Chinese Navy vessel entering the Port of Manila, Philippines - © EPA-EFE Francis Malasig



# COVID in conflict zones

HD’s hallmark is its ability to connect with armed groups and communities in conflict zones that are often beyond the reach of the central government or conventional diplomacy. When the pandemic struck, curtailing the travel and work of diplomats and mediators, HD stayed present in many conflict areas through its global network of country teams and local partners.

From March 2020, HD teams quickly mobilised contact networks to support initiatives to fight COVID with four priorities:

- Deliver lifesaving information to hard-to-reach communities
- Monitor the spread of COVID in war zones and strengthen the response
- Support humanitarian access to people isolated by conflict
- Promote a humanitarian pause in hostilities to help effective responses to the pandemic

After the call for a global ceasefire by UN Secretary-General António Guterres on March 23, HD engaged with armed actors and community leaders in various parts of the world to promote a pause in conflicts that quietly opened space for responses to the pandemic.

In Cameroon, HD facilitated a unilateral ceasefire announced by southern separatists. HD also facilitated a unilateral ceasefire agreement with five members of the **South Sudan** Opposition Alliance (SSOMA), a body of armed groups and opposition political parties.

Even where hostilities continued, HD’s detailed knowledge of conflict dynamics enabled it to use relationships of trust to connect authorities and armed actors to ensure support reached vulnerable people. This included backchannel communications to provide COVID-related information and, in some cases, to support contact tracing across lines of conflict.

HD does not normally deliver aid but, in the exceptional circumstances of the pandemic, it supported two women’s collectives in the southern **Philippines** and others in **Somalia** and **Ukraine** that produce facemasks for frontline workers. HD distributed personal protective equipment (PPE) to villages in **Senegal**, **Mali**, **Afghanistan** and **Syria** and worked with local health partners in **Pakistan** to distribute face-masks, sanitisers and some PPE kits for more than 400,000 people.

## Social media and cyberspace

In 2020, HD honed its digital expertise, tools and analysis to reflect the central roles of social media and cyber security in today’s mediation and peacemaking realities. Social media’s use as a weapon to fuel violence in countries like Myanmar and Syria is well known. Less conspicuously, conflict parties and powerbrokers have exploited social media to undermine fragile peace processes.

HD had already worked with the UN on developing a toolkit on digital technologies but, with the demands of the pandemic, it scaled up work with social media in numerous hotspots to deliver lifesaving health information and counter misinformation spread by some conflict parties.

A Facebook page co-created by HD in Nigeria reached more than 2 million people with COVID information. More than half a million people accessed COVID information produced in five languages in Malaysia. Globally, more than 5 million people accessed HD’s COVID messaging on Facebook, with several hundred thousand liking or sharing what they found.



Pro-Russian militants of self-proclaimed Donetsk People’s Republic (DPR) operate during a military exercise - © EPA-EFE Dave Mustaine

Digital work on the pandemic demonstrated the potential of new technologies to be applied to HD’s peace process work. HD’s social media and conflict mediation team has developed practical guidelines and strategies for using social media to tackle conflict. These include:

- Analysing social media to identify entry points for engagement with conflict parties
- Delivering strategic communications to boost the legitimacy of dialogue processes
- Using social media tools as a platform for dialogue
- Limiting the harm of social media via dialogue with conflict parties about their actions online

As part of these digital initiatives, HD launched the trial of its first social media code of conduct around local elections in Indonesia, providing a model that can be adapted for contexts beyond election campaigns.

HD has also partnered with thought leaders in the digital space by forming a high-level experts group on social media and peace agreements. Experts from organisations such as Stanford Internet Observatory, Build Up and Chatham House are supporting HD to develop ideas and pilot projects in this space.

Cyber attacks against health facilities during the pandemic underscored a broader threat to international security from weak adherence to the norms governing digital hostilities.

Two UN multilateral processes continue but the implementation of agreed norms has been hampered by geopolitical tensions. Against this backdrop of mistrust in cyberspace, HD has pursued an approach focused on developing confidence-building measures to mitigate the risks around the misinterpretation of actions in cyberspace that can exacerbate existing conflicts.

This discreet work has led to identifying potential areas of cooperation, even between states with an adversarial relationship in cyberspace. HD has also convened dialogue between a regional group of states identifying major threats to critical communications infrastructure and drawing up plans for follow-up actions, and facilitates a number of discreet bilateral tracks.

**In 2020, HD honed its digital expertise, tools and analysis to reflect the central roles of social media and cyber security in today’s mediation and peacemaking realities.**



## Supporting peace and inclusion

The engine of HD's innovation and excellence is the Mediation Support team (MESU) in Geneva. MESU incubates new mediation approaches to support projects, deploys technical experts to reinforce country teams, delivers training, manages HD's monitoring and evaluation system, leads strategic discussions and shares insights with the wider mediation and peacemaking community.

In 2020, MESU coordinated the pivot of HD's operations to the pandemic. It ensured HD's effectiveness by hosting rapid reflections for project teams and senior management and developing a virtual version of its trademark peer reviews and training for country teams to promote digital literacy and enhance skills in engaging online with conflict parties.

In response to rapid changes in the conflict landscape and mediation, MESU enriched its portfolio of learning, monitoring, evaluation and strategy tools while continuing to lead the discussion among peace-making organisations and the donor community on monitoring and evaluation practices.

In 2020, MESU's activities also included:

- Adapting its monitoring and evaluation tools to the pandemic
- Developing partnerships with the International Committee of the Red Cross, researchers and academics to pilot new approaches to better demonstrate HD's contribution to peace
- Expanding the breadth of its learning activities by designing and delivering new online courses such as "How to Facilitate Online Meetings with Conflict Parties"
- Conducting regular HD-wide briefings on critical topics related to peacemaking practices

In support of operational innovation, MESU developed greater capacity to provide thematic support to HD teams in three main areas: gender-responsive and inclusive peacemaking, environmental peacemaking and the impact of organised crime and illicit economies on peacemaking.

MESU ramped up its work on **gender and inclusion** as a strategic priority. For many years, HD has worked with women's and youth groups to strengthen the response to violent conflict. This has included involving women in networks of peace monitors in **Nigeria's** Middle Belt and engaging with women and youth in **the Sahel**.

HD's support for women participants in the **Libyan Political Dialogue Forum** contributed to the recommendation – adopted in the elections roadmap – that women should make up at least 30% of the cabinet in the future government.

In 2020, HD reinforced its internal capacity through a dedicated mediation support project on gender and inclusion. The project aims to enhance the skills of staff to design and implement inclusive peace processes by delivering capacity-building opportunities and tools on gender-sensitive conflict analysis and programming. The project also provides operational teams with strategic advice and technical support on gender and inclusion issues and facilitates cross-regional learning and exchanges of good practice among HD teams and with the wider mediation community through collaborative exchanges.

MESU has developed similar thematic capacity and expertise in environmental peacemaking and organised crime and illicit economies. It has helped HD teams to design operational engagements in these areas, has linked HD with the expert community working on these issues and plans to collaborate with more HD teams in the near future.



Agro-pastoral mediation in the Sahel. Beneficiaries of the project in Niger - © HD

On environmental peacemaking, some of the approaches piloted by HD teams include facilitating dialogue on the ecological threats posed by armed conflict and addressing farmer-herder conflicts as a main source of instability in Nigeria and the Sahel. In 2020, MESU laid the foundation to build HD capacity and expertise in environmental peacemaking and address the climate, environmental and natural resources issues inside and outside peace processes in the future. HD is also developing tools to help project teams understand the impact of organised crime and illicit economies on their peace-making contexts and to design appropriate programmatic responses.

The annual **Oslo Forum**, co-hosted by Norway's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and HD, provides a headline event for the mediation community by convening high-level participants to assess conflict trends and share experiences.

With the Forum postponed due to the pandemic, the co-hosts launched **The Mediator's Studio** podcast to support the sharing of perspectives, best practices and behind-the-scenes insights from some of the most prominent voices in peacemaking.

Guests featured on the podcast in 2020 include:

- Ghassan Salamé, former UN Special Representative for Libya, who spoke candidly about modern multilateralism and international cooperation
- Sanam Naraghi Anderlini, founder and CEO of the International Civil Society Action Network, who discussed her role in the design of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security
- Martin Griffiths, UN Special Envoy for Yemen and HD's founding director, who spoke about the origins of private diplomacy and his early efforts to bring peace to the Indonesian province of Aceh, as well as his current role in one of the most complex conflicts of our time

While the Oslo Forum will restart as an in-person event as soon as safely possible, The Mediator's Studio podcast will continue to play a key role in the team's policy outreach to the mediation community.

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**For many years, HD has worked with women's and youth groups to strengthen the response to violent conflict.**

Publications in 2020 included an Oslo Forum paper on mediating mass movements and an interview with Miriam Coronel-Ferrer, former chief negotiator in the Philippine peace process.

To access Oslo Forum podcasts and publications, go to [www.osloforum.org](http://www.osloforum.org)



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*Gender and inclusion are strategic priorities for HD, including work with women's and youth groups to strengthen peacemaking in Nigeria and the Sahel.*

*In 2020, HD's support in the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum led to a commitment that women should make up at least 30% of the cabinet in the future government.*



# Middle East and North Africa

After nearly a decade of conflict, lawlessness and social fragmentation, Libya ranked among the world’s most volatile conflicts. By the end of 2020, despite outside interference and mercenaries still posing a major threat, Libyan leaders had taken big strides towards a political deal brokered by the UN. As the office of the UN Secretary-General acknowledged in September, HD played a pivotal role in getting them there.

In the first half of the year, Khalifa Haftar’s forces – supported by Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Russian mercenaries and other actors – continued air and ground assaults on forces backing the UN-recognised Government of National Accord (GNA), which was being aided by Turkey and foreign mercenaries.

Amid the fighting, HD was able to bring relief to civilians by using its contacts with rival militias to negotiate a resumption of water supplies to 2 million residents of Tripoli. In June, the pro-GNA camp pushed back Haftar’s offensive. The rebalancing of the military equation led to a pause in the fighting but the build-up of forces threatened to erupt into another major battle along a Sirte-Jufra line.

Working closely with the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), HD seized this window opportunity to consolidate the calm and relaunch the political process.

HD’s mediation bore results in August when the heads of Libya’s two rival camps called for a ceasefire. In close cooperation with the head of UNSMIL, HD facilitated talks in Switzerland between key actors in the Libya conflict and brokered an agreement in Montreux on a political roadmap, which was further developed and endorsed by the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum in Tunis in November under the UN auspices.

The Libyan Political Dialogue Forum participants agreed on the mechanism to form and select a new unity government and on holding elections in December 2021.

Throughout the year, HD supported the UN process by engaging with regional actors to try to contain the risks of proxy war and holding regular briefings and consultations in regional and international capitals with important international actors.

HD similarly shuttled intensively between political parties and actors in **Tunisia** to help navigate the divisions that dominated national politics after 2019. HD’s support helped to enable the creation of a new government in February. Amid rising protests over social and economic conditions, exacerbated by the pandemic, HD continued to advise political parties and government leaders on managing threats to security, with a particular focus on developments in neighbouring Libya.

After a decade of death and destruction on a massive scale, **Syria’s** civil war moved into a twilight zone of limited fighting but no prospects for peace and an ever-present threat of violent eruptions. With the country divided into three distinct zones controlled by diverse local forces, each backed by major powers, the political complexities defied UN efforts to broker national arrangements for ending the war.

HD’s unique network of contacts enabled its productive engagement with all parties in 2020, helping to defuse tensions locally and regionally. In northwest Syria, HD supported the consolidation of the Idlib ceasefire agreed by Russia and Turkey in March, helping avert a catastrophic assault on a small area crammed with millions of people displaced by fighting.

Cross-border aid flows from Turkey remain contentious and Russia, a veto-holding member of the UN Security Council, forced a reduction in the number of crossing points. HD held consultations with all stakeholders on a humanitarian charter which, if agreed, will ease delivery of aid.

Through contact with Damascus and Russia, HD maintained access to government-controlled areas and, in the absence of a broader political settlement, facilitated efforts on transitional governance arrangements to help bring more normality to people’s lives.

In northeast Syria, HD shuttled between Turkish authorities and Kurdish leaders to avert fresh military confrontation. Meanwhile, HD’s mediation also eased tensions between Kurdish authorities and Arab communities. Dialogue via an HD-established mediation platform in Deir Ez-Zor led to the release of thousands of people, mainly women and children, from the detention facility in al-Hol and encouraged HD to look at setting up similar dialogue channels in other locations.

In response to the pandemic, HD also worked closely with local authorities to distribute PPE and hygienic materials to vulnerable populations in Manbij and Deir Ez-Zor.

In **Iraq**, ethnic and sectarian tensions inflamed by Islamic State atrocities were prominent among multiple threats to stability that HD addressed in 2020, including engagement with Shiite militias.

The difficult situation was reflected in Iraq’s uneasy position as a front line in the US confrontation with Iran, underscored by the US strike that killed a top Iranian general in early 2020 and in mass protests that exposed government failures to deliver effective public services. There was an urgent need for dialogue to address community grievances and avert further violence.

As part of its response to the pandemic, HD was able to elicit commitments to a humanitarian pause in military action from Saraya al-Salam and Kataeb Hezbollah, two of Iraq’s biggest Popular Mobilisation Forces. In the process, HD shuttled messages with the US side, which allowed the humanitarian commitments to function as a de facto suspension of attacks against US facilities in Iraq that would hold for several months.

The truce also created valuable space for a new government to be formed and led by Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi in May after months of delay and protest. Following up on contacts from the previous year, HD convened a two-day conference in Basra that addressed grievances behind the protests and fostered more contact between the community and national authorities.

Despite COVID-related constraints, HD arranged meetings between Sunni tribes in restive Anbar province on the border with Syria that facilitated communication with local military commanders and the central government and persuaded the tribes to allow the return of displaced people. HD also facilitated contacts between Iraq’s excluded Yazidi minority and regional and federal authorities to defuse tensions over returnees, land rights and fraught relations with Arab communities.

In **Lebanon**, HD worked to prevent popular frustration from turning into violence over the government’s failure to tackle rising social and economic hardship. The explosion in Beirut in August only deepened public anger and elevated social tensions.

While pandemic lockdowns curtailed in-person contact with a rising generation of political actors, rounds of dialogue in four governorates and scores of bilateral discussions enabled HD to draw up a plan of action that is due to be presented to a national anti-corruption conference. As part of its COVID response, HD used its access and relationships to set up and coordinate a task force, made up of international and Lebanese humanitarian organisations, to ease medical access in one of the worst affected refugee camps.

Cross-border aid flows from Turkey remain contentious and Russia, a veto-holding member of the UN Security Council, forced a reduction in the number of crossing points. HD held consultations with all stakeholders on a humanitarian charter which, if agreed, will ease delivery of aid.





## Francophone Africa

For much of the past decade, Middle East conflicts held global headlines. But 2020 saw attention shift increasingly to the Sahel region and to threats posed by collapsing governments, migration and climate change.

**The Sahel** suffered the sharpest growth in displacement of people in 2020. French-led counter-insurgency operations, supported by G5 Sahel governments and almost a dozen European countries, have yet to stem the rise in attacks on civilians by jihadist groups competing for territory and influence. Instead, competition for resources is stoking increasingly militarised conflicts between communities and between nomads and farmers.

By supporting networks of mediators and facilitating contacts with state authorities, HD continued to make progress in Francophone Africa with a bottom-up strategy in areas where the presence of national government and public services is weak or non-existent.

In 2020, HD pursued 40 mediation projects in Francophone Africa alone and recruited more than 900 new local mediators to its agro-pastoral network stretching from Mauritania to the Lake Chad region. The HD-backed networks concluded scores of community-level agreements that ended conflicts, averted violence and demonstrated how inclusive engagement can create pockets of stability.

In **Mali**, **Niger** and **Burkina Faso**, HD is working to tackle violence in the porous and highly volatile area along their common border that is contested by jihadist and non-jihadist armed groups and is largely outside the reach of central governments and public services.

In Burkina Faso, HD organised four consultations of communities and authorities in the country's Sahel region about the roots of the instability and on recommendations for finding a way forward. This was the first time that authorities had prepared for non-military solutions to the conflict.

In Mali, several mediations started by HD in the Mopti area succeeded in lowering tensions and averting conflict between armed groups.

A military coup in Mali in 2020 underscored the fragility and turmoil surrounding the transition to a new government while also stalling HD's planned consultations on how to revive the 2015 Algiers Agreement. Still, HD was able to work with security management frameworks in the northern Timbuktu and Gao regions and mediate with armed groups in the Diré area.



Agro-pastoral mediation in the Sahel - © HD

HD worked with religious leaders in Mali's central and northern regions on strategies to regulate preaching and prepare peace messages for broadcast in 2021. It brokered agreements between Fulani communities, local authorities and hunters that have reduced tensions in the central region.

HD also organised a regional forum on conflicts between farmers and herders that included representatives of communities and local authorities on both sides of Niger/Nigeria border. This led to progress on steps to prevent conflict and the creation of a bilateral committee to monitor implementation.

As competition for access to pasture land and other resources intensifies, agro-pastoral conflicts across the Sahel have become increasingly militarised, escalating the risks of violence in an already volatile environment.

HD, working at a local level, continued to create networks of mediators from nomadic and settled communities in **Mali**, **Niger**, **Burkina Faso**, **Mauritania** and **Chad** that have proven effective in resolving and preventing clashes. In 2020, HD set up 27 new networks – bringing the total to 63 with close to 2,000 mediators across 130 municipalities.

The networks settled nearly 400 micro-conflicts in the five participating countries in 2020, resulting in the return of several thousand cattle. HD worked with communities on agreements to manage use of key water resources and identified various corridors for the movement of nomadic people and herds in **Mali** and **Burkina Faso** in preparation for the demarcation of these routes in 2021.

In the Sahel, where more than 60% of the people are younger than 30 and the population is growing by 3% a year, prospects for the future of peacemaking rest heavily on including young people. With this in mind, HD continued to organise dialogue between national authorities and youth groups in the G5 Sahel countries to make policy-making more responsive to the concerns of younger generations in urban and rural areas.

HD helped to convene a series of national-level meetings to address issues of religious radicalisation, migration and access to education and employment. It continued training programmes for youth representatives on election management, communications and community awareness. The Ministry of Youth in **Burkina Faso**, following up on an HD initiative, is developing a policy to promote youth entrepreneurship.

Despite pandemic-related setbacks to planned activities in **Senegal**, HD was still able to achieve the first signed agreement between the government and three of the four armed factions making up the Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques pour la Casamance (MFDC), Africa's oldest insurgency.

HD has worked with the factions to align their diverse interests into a unified negotiating position and engaged with civil society, women's and youth groups to build support for a peaceful settlement of the 30-year-old conflict. The memorandum of understanding on confidence-building measures, signed by the three factions in December, opens the way to talks on a peace process.

HD sought to develop a common negotiating platform for English-speaking separatists in **Cameroon** as part of support

## HD helped to convene a series of national-level meetings to address issues of religious radicalisation, migration and access to education and employment.

requested by Switzerland to defuse an increasingly violent confrontation between the francophone government and the separatists. HD engaged with women's groups in Cameroon to broaden support and, in the course of the year, saw resistance to the initiative among independence groups shrink significantly, opening possibilities for direct talks between the two sides in 2021.

Amid escalating inter-communal tensions in **Togo**, HD helped to develop and train a network of local peace committees that have achieved some success in managing conflicts. Pressures are most acute in northern areas bordering Burkina Faso where farmers and herders are competing for scarce resources.

Measures to deal with the pandemic and delays in funding affected activities in Togo in 2020 but HD still helped to mediate two local agreements, prepare the way for a third and expand the number of peace committees – all of which helped to improve local understanding of conflict dynamics and build government confidence in the process.

Surging violence ahead of elections in the **Central African Republic** in late 2020 exposed the fragility of efforts to consolidate the government's authority and build a platform for stabilising the country.

HD worked with the 14 armed groups to build support for the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation that they reached with the government in 2019. HD provided expert advice on transitional justice legislation which, importantly, passed the national assembly in 2020. HD also conducted training on plans for disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration.

Violence by armed groups around the election period created uncertainty over the future of various programmes but reaffirmed HD's key role as a neutral intermediary among parties and within the international community.

HD's contacts with armed groups in Central African Republic facilitated a declaration of support to fight COVID and enabled access for polio vaccination campaigns that benefitted more than half a million people. In addition, HD was able to set up three more networks of agro-pastoral mediators who resolved about 60 local disputes between farmers and herders.



# Anglophone and Lusophone Africa

Violence escalated in **Nigeria’s** north-eastern states where Boko Haram’s Islamist insurgency over more than a decade has aggravated deep-rooted social and political conflicts within communities and killed more than 30,000 people.

Increasing vigilante-style operations by the Civilian Joint Task Forces against Boko Haram in Borno and neighbouring northern states is adding to the threats to peace. HD, working with religious and community leaders, has nurtured an “alternative narrative” laying out a mainstream and pro-peace interpretation of Islamic principles as a bulwark for communities against extremist propaganda.

HD built awareness of that narrative in 2020 by convening dialogue with federal officials, militias and community groups and establishing two groups – Women in Dialogue and Peace Champions – to mediate community disputes. HD amplified the message significantly by creating the “Borno Peace Forum” page on Facebook and using social media to bring credible voices to even remote communities.

Insecurity rose sharply across Nigeria’s Middle Belt states. In past years, Peace Management Networks set up by HD with strong participation by women have managed to lower levels of violence between farmers and herders and ethnic and religious groups. But COVID lockdown measures and escalating protests against the police Special Anti-Robbery Squad added to tensions in 2020.

A number of local peace agreements were signed in the Middle Belt of Nigeria to end conflict and signalled a commitment by communities to seek peaceful means to resolve their differences. Several communiques were also signed at the community level to align with the UN Secretary-General’s call for a global ceasefire.

In previous years, HD had fostered peace agreements in Jos and southern Kaduna states. In 2020, it built up networks in Benue state and engaged widely with traditional rulers and community groups to help manage tensions. It also reached a broad audience with the Facebook page “Initiatives for Peace” that delivered peace messaging and guidance on COVID to counter disinformation about the pandemic that threatened to inflame community grievances.

HD took up multiple tracks of activity in **Sudan**, responding to requests from the prime minister and other decision-makers to support stabilisation efforts after the ousting of Omer Al Bashir in 2019. HD provided technical advice to some of the signatories to the Juba peace agreement signed by the transitional government and several rebel groups in August.

A key challenge for the government is managing expectations and fostering an inclusive vision of the future that Sudan’s regions can buy into after decades of authoritarian rule and conflicts in Darfur and other regions that have killed hundreds of thousands of people.

HD, working in cooperation with the European Union, convened the first of a series of town hall meetings in four regions – engaging local authorities, civil society, women, youth and other groups in dialogue on common interests around achieving a peaceful transition.

HD also participated in discussions with government ministries on transitional justice and security sector reform in Sudan and established a partnership with the UN human rights office on joint support for a Transitional Justice Commission expected in 2021.

Peace proved more elusive in **South Sudan** where the formation of a unity government in February saw a decline in conflict between parties in the political process but an escalation in ferocious attacks on communities in the states.



A girl sells locally made face masks on a pedestrian bridge in Ikeja district in Lagos, Nigeria - © EPA-EFE Akintunde Akinleye

Informal dialogue sessions convened by HD in the past two years among aid organisations, senior commanders in Central Equatoria and political groups succeeded in improving humanitarian access to the Yei River area. COVID restrictions impeded some activities planned in South Sudan in 2020 but HD managed to convene online meetings that identified humanitarian priorities in Equatoria and to resolve obstacles to aid deliveries. HD also facilitated dialogue among aid workers, armed groups and government officials to provide access to humanitarian assistance for communities in the region.

In **Ethiopia**, inter-communal violence surged in the Oromia and Amhara regions and simmering political tensions in Tigray exploded into a full-fledged war between the government and the Tigray People’s Liberation Front.

In the Oromia region, HD drew on a study it commissioned of conflict parties and dynamics to build relationships at federal, regional and local levels. HD also developed relationships with local partners, including the Inter-Religious Council of Ethiopia, which it supported with training in mediation.

As the conflict in Tigray escalated, HD provided support to former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo’s initiative to try to de-escalate tensions and establish a channel of dialogue between the Tigray People’s Liberation Front and the government.





An exchanged Ukrainian prisoner walks during a prisoners swap between Ukrainian and pro-Russian militants' sides, near the pro-Russian militant-occupied town of Horlivka - © EPA-EFE Yevgen Honcharenko

## Eurasia

Shifting political, economic and social dynamics across Eurasia added new areas of turmoil in a region still grappling with entrenched conflicts.

More than five years after the Minsk accords set out a roadmap to settle armed hostilities in eastern **Ukraine**, the conflict remains unresolved and fighting continues to endanger civilians.

Even common concerns over COVID failed to inject any impetus into tackling broader sources of tension. The delicate situation underscored the value of HD's activities at a national level in sustaining engagement between Kiev and the Donbas region on critical political, economic and ecological issues that helps to manage the situation and prevent a larger-scale crisis on the ground.

HD interventions delivered tangible benefits in Ukraine. When fighting threatened to shut down water supplies through a key filtration system, HD maintained a channel of contact between the facility and peace process participants who delivered security guarantees that enabled it to keep working.

The contacts HD kept going between the government and the areas outside Kiev's control covered everything from trade to sensitive questions of transitional justice. In Istanbul, HD organised a meeting of women from both sides, opening a gender track that participants have signalled their wish to continue.

At the request of negotiating teams from both sides, HD provided technical advice on areas of convergence that could help to move talks forward and it commissioned a study by Russian economists on the benefits peace would bring to Russia. Pandemic restrictions blocked HD's plan for a bilateral Ukraine-Russia dialogue on the Azov Sea but preparations went ahead for a trilateral meeting – including Turkey – to review Black Sea security.

While the official OSCE-led peace process struggles to implement confidence-building measures, HD's Track 1.5 international process has been moving steadily along in its discreet effort to find a feasible way to resolve the conflict.

Restrictions on movement halted in-person meetings in HD's high-level track but dialogue continued online, signalling high-level support in developing ideas for ending the conflict.

The pandemic and political instability left little possibility of progress in normalising relations between **Kosovo** and **Serbia**.

Two governments rose and fell in Kosovo in 2020 while Serbia went through elections in June that led to a new government three months later. As Kosovo grappled with surging COVID infections, HD mobilised experts to advise health authorities on mitigation measures. It also deployed experts for workshops with ethnic Albanian and ethnic Serbian officials on delayed and controversial plans for an association/community of Serb majority municipalities.

To support its work on the health and political tracks, HD partnered with local NGOs on social media communications strategies that could reach minorities with health messages and build public support for normalising ties.

Azerbaijan's 44-day war with Armenia over the territory of **Nagorno-Karabakh** added a new milestone to another conflict with deep roots and underscored the region's shifting power dynamics. A ceasefire brokered by Russia provided a formula for halting hostilities but not longer-term stability. HD put together an experts group with participants from both conflict parties, Russia, the United States and key regional actors Turkey and Iran. By the end of 2020, the experts group had convened to take stock of events and start proposing actions to de-escalate tensions.





Philippine government troops in military vehicles conduct a patrol during the plebiscite on the Bangsamoro Organic Law in Jolo town, southern Philippines - © EPA-EFE Ben Hajan

## Asia

COVID presented challenges for HD's multiple levels of activity in Asia. The inability to conduct face-to-face diplomacy worsened regional tensions in the **South China Sea** and made it harder to address conflicts between state and non-state actors across Southeast Asia.

While lockdowns and travel bans put an immediate brake on numerous in-person meetings, country teams adapted quickly to enable HD to preserve and build relationships with conflict parties and also deliver substantive progress across its peace-building portfolio.

The deepening chill between China and the Trump administration in 2020 set bilateral relations on a trajectory that is unlikely to change significantly in the near term. The situation also added value to the dialogue and simulations facilitated by HD aimed at easing military tensions in the Western Pacific and developing a draft code of conduct for the use of artificial intelligence in weaponry.

Against a backdrop of increasingly abrasive rhetoric by both sides, a working group of retired senior military officers from China and the United States convened by HD identified key risks and drew up a code of conduct on AI-enabled weaponry. The draft code has been circulated among defence and foreign policy officials in Beijing and Washington, informing discussions on crisis management.

Increasing military brinkmanship in the South China Sea underscored the timeliness of this engagement. HD organised two table top exercises in 2020 simulating naval crises that brought sobering reality to discussions and the urgent need for both sides to develop practical measures for risk management. The outcomes helped alert top officials to the urgent need to improve crisis communications between the two countries.

The risks of dangerous escalation are not only from movements of military naval vessels. Most incidents in recent years have involved fishing vessels and coastguards.

## To keep up its engagement with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) despite pandemic restrictions on travel, HD achieved tangible results by expanding its partnership with local non-government organisations.

Negotiations between China and the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) on a code of conduct were postponed until 2021 as a result of the pandemic but HD proceeded with workshops covering common operating principles for maritime law enforcement and humanitarian treatment of fishermen. HD also convened a workshop on management of fisheries resources that addressed the need to preserve specific species that support an estimated 4 million people in the region.

Progress towards a ceasefire between **Myanmar's** Tatmadaw (armed forces) and an array of ethnic armed organisations continued to prove elusive. In Rakhine State, heavy fighting between the Tatmadaw and Arakan Army displaced some 200,000 people before giving way to a temporary ceasefire towards the end of the year.

Violent clashes flared in other areas, notably in Shan State, even though a peace conference in August saw some Ethnic Armed Organisations (EAOs) endorse principles of federal government.

In this environment, HD provided a unique channel of communication between influential ethnic Rakhine actors and the government. HD was able to facilitate meetings by an Arakan humanitarian coordination team made up of Rakhine civil society groups with the state chief minister and his cabinet, which reviewed urgent humanitarian needs.

In Shan State, HD facilitated dialogue between EAOs that helped to sustain the ceasefire they agreed in 2019. HD also brought women into security sector discussions by cooperating with the Women and Peace Action Network on organising workshops with women combatants and addressing issues such as ceasefire monitoring.

HD kept alive a channel of communication between Myanmar and Bangladesh as bilateral relations continued to deteriorate and threaten conflict. The combination of COVID and conflict in Rakhine State largely halted face-to-face meetings that are essential to their discussions on sensitive national security issues but HD convened two meetings between representatives – one in person, the other virtual – who agreed on a joint road map for moving towards repatriation of Rohingya refugees.

Even when meetings were not possible, the importance of keeping up contacts with military representatives on both sides was apparent in the cooling of tensions from a build-up of troops on their common border. HD also continued to facilitate contact between the parties and neighbouring ASEAN states while liaising with other international stakeholders, including the UN special envoy to Myanmar and government-affiliated think tanks in China.

In the **Philippines**, implementation of the 2014 peace plan for the southern island of Mindanao edged forward despite tensions stoked by the pandemic in an area with fragile security, persistent rivalries between major clans and a history of chronic violence.

To keep up its engagement with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) despite pandemic restrictions on travel, HD achieved tangible results by expanding its partnership with local non-government organisations. Working with Pakigdait, an NGO, HD was able to significantly lower tensions by reconciling differences between two influential MILF commanders that had threatened to derail the peace process. HD worked with another partner, Tumikang Sama-Sama, to bring about convergence between the MILF and MNLF.

HD's efforts around a joint economic strategy bore fruit in July when the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao's parliament approved its first development plan. HD also supported the Bangsamoro government's decommissioning of former fighters and converting what were highly fortified military camps into productive civilian communities. As these initiatives progressed, Tumikang Sama-Sama continued mediating clan conflicts in Sulu, resolving 17 disputes in 2020.

The pandemic overshadowed much of the first half of 2020 in **Thailand** where social media, the main source of news for more than half of the population, was a particular focus of HD's attention.

In 2019, HD had set up Cofact.org, a forum for fact-checking news and views circulating on social media in Thailand and for pushing back at disinformation and political hate speech. In 2020, it proved an effective instrument by giving space to doctors, international experts and policymakers to combat misinformation on the pandemic that threatened to inflame social and political tensions.

Cofact.org proved equally valuable as student protests took off in the second half of the year, moving beyond criticism of the military-dominated government to press unprecedented and potentially explosive demands for reform of the monarchy. Formal discussions with parties to the conflict in southern Thailand stalled in 2020 but informal contacts facilitated by HD continued exploring steps to reduce violence and maintained effective contact between the principal parties.

HD kept up support for dialogue between members of the **Papuan** community and Indonesia as Jakarta ponders its next moves in response to Papuan demands for independence. Jakarta plans to extend Papua's special autonomy arrangements, a measure that falls far short of Papuan aspirations.

The pandemic and government failure to take effective health measures have further deepened Papuans' mistrust of Jakarta and resistance to such an initiative. HD, partnering with local NGOs, conferred with Papuan leaders to help build a common position on autonomy. HD also engaged with Indonesian authorities, including the offices of the president and vice-president and several ministries, to share insights on Papuan perspectives that Jakarta has largely overlooked.



# Latin America

In **Nicaragua**, two attempts at dialogue between the government and civil society opposition movements have taken place since the conflict erupted in mid-2018 but neither has produced a comprehensive negotiated solution to address issues of national importance discussed between the parties. In 2020, the context did not offer new opportunities for progress on that front.

The pandemic significantly limited HD's engagement with key national actors, for confidentiality reasons.

**Venezuela** remained immersed in a deep political, social, economic and humanitarian crisis. The political scene was dominated by the parliamentary elections held in early December.

In the context of the health crisis, a project with a humanitarian focus was launched in the framework of HD's COVID-19 Global Response Initiative. This effort involving engagement with key national actors, combined with HD's previous exploratory work, led to the definition of two other streams of work to be developed in 2021.



Luz Reyes, 19, stranded in Panama due to COVID-19 protests in front of the Venezuelan embassy demanding humanitarian flights in Panama city - © EPA-EFE Bienvenido Velasco



# HD governance: The Board

## HD is supervised by a board that is the supreme authority of the foundation.

The board meets twice a year and has three committees:

- Audit and Finance
- Operations
- Human Resources

The 13 current members sit on the board on a voluntary and private basis.

In 2020, the board terms of Ambassador Raymond Loretan and Ambassador Herman Schaper came to an end. HD would like to thank both for their valuable contributions to the organisation and dedication to supporting HD's peacemaking work over the past years.

HD welcomed Ambassador Karl Eikenberry and Margot Wallström in 2020 as new members of the board.



**Espen Barth Eide**  
Chair of the Board

Espen Barth Eide is a member of the Norwegian parliament, where he represents the Labour Party. Before his election in September 2017, Eide was the United Nations special advisor on Cyprus from 2014 to 2017, as well as managing director and a member of the managing board of the World Economic Forum in Geneva from 2014 to 2016. Between 2000 and 2013, he served as Norway's minister of foreign affairs, minister of defence, deputy minister of foreign affairs and deputy minister of defence. After joining HD's board in 2013, he became vice-chair in 2015 and chair in 2019.



**Ambassador Pierre Vimont**  
Vice-Chair of the Board

Pierre Vimont is a senior associate at Carnegie Europe, where his research focuses on the European Neighbourhood Policy, trans-Atlantic relations and French foreign policy. From 2010 to 2015, he served as executive secretary-general of the EU's European External Action Service. Before that, he worked for 38 years in the French diplomatic service. Vimont holds the title of Ambassador of France, bestowed for life on only a few French diplomats, and is also a Knight of the French National Order of Merit. He joined HD's board in 2015, was chair from 2016-2019 and was named vice-chair in 2019.



**Sarah F. Cliffe**  
Chair of the Operations Committee

Sarah F. Cliffe is the director of the Center on International Cooperation at the University of New York. Before that, she was special representative for the World Bank's World Development Report on Conflict, Security and Development and special advisor and assistant secretary-general of civilian capacities to the United Nations. For 25 years, she has worked in countries emerging from conflict and political transition, including Afghanistan, Burundi, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea Bissau, Ethiopia, Haiti, Indonesia, Liberia, Mali, Rwanda, South Sudan, South Africa, Somalia and Timor-Leste. At the World Bank, her work covered post-conflict reconstruction, community-driven development and civil service reform. She joined HD's board in 2015.



**Neil Janin**  
Chair of the Human Resources Committee

Neil Janin is a director emeritus of McKinsey & Company and now advises senior executives on strategy and leadership. He is chairman of the board of the Bank of Georgia and a member of the board of Ipsos SA and a number of non-profit organisations. He spent 27 years with McKinsey, conducting engagements in every area of organisational practice – design, leadership, governance, performance enhancement, culture change and transformation. He has been a member of HD's board since 2013.



**Armin Slotta**  
Chair of the Audit and Finance Committee

Armin Slotta has more than 30 years of experience with PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) where he built strong expertise working with multinational organisations and companies, advising leaders and managers worldwide. From 2015 to 2017, he managed PwC Germany's innovation programme and foreign business network that supported German clients in developing and delivering strategies abroad, particularly in developing markets. Until 2015, Slotta was a member of PwC Germany's assurance leadership team, managing business units including the network's capital markets and accounting advisory services. He joined HD's board in 2018.



**Dr Dewi Fortuna Anwar**  
Board Member

Dewi Fortuna Anwar is a research professor at the Indonesian Institute of Sciences where she also held the position of deputy chairman for Social Sciences and Humanities from 2001 to 2010. A member of the Indonesian Academy of Sciences, she is also the vice-chair of The Habibie Center in Jakarta after serving as chair of its Institute of Democracy and Human Rights. Between 2010 and 2017, she was deputy secretary for political affairs to Indonesian Vice President Boediono and then deputy for government policy support to Vice President Jusuf Kalla. She joined HD's board in 2019.



**Ambassador Karl Eikenberry**  
Board Member

Karl Eikenberry is a faculty member of Schwarzman College at Tsinghua University in Beijing and non-resident fellow at the Liechtenstein Institute on Self Determination at Princeton University. He previously served as director of the U.S.-Asia Security Initiative at the Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center at Stanford University and as an affiliate at the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Relations, the Center on Democracy, Development and Rule of Law, the Center for International Security Cooperation and the Europe Center. He was U.S. ambassador to Afghanistan from 2009-2011, where he led the civilian surge directed by President Barack Obama to set the conditions for transition to full Afghan sovereignty. Eikenberry's 35-year military career included senior command and political-military postings in Afghanistan, Europe, China, South Korea, Hawaii and the continental United States. He joined HD's board in 2020.





**Grace Forrest**  
**Board Member**

Grace Forrest is a founder of Walk Free, an international human rights group focused on the eradication of modern slavery. Since its formation in 2011, it is now one of the leading anti-slavery organisations in the world. Forrest has worked extensively in Southeast Asia and the Middle East, using photography and storytelling to share the experiences of survivors of slavery, with a current focus on refugee communities. She represents Walk Free at international forums, including events at the United Nations and the Vatican. Forrest, who is also a director of the Minderoo Foundation, joined HD's board in 2017.



**Ameerah Haq**  
**Board Member**

Ameerah Haq was vice-chair of the high-level independent panel on peace operations for the United Nations and UN undersecretary-general for field support from 2012 to 2014. She has nearly 40 years of UN experience, including 19 years in the field. She was special representative of the secretary-general (SRSG) in the UN mission in Timor Leste, deputy SRSG and UN resident coordinator in Sudan and in Afghanistan, as well as UN resident coordinator in Malaysia and Laos. She has also held senior positions in the UN Development Programme. Haq has been a guest lecturer at universities in the United States and Europe and a speaker to many think tanks and research institutions. She joined HD's board in 2015.



**Dr Jakob Kellenberger**  
**Board Member**

Jakob Kellenberger was president of the International Committee of the Red Cross from 2000 to 2012. A former state secretary for foreign affairs and head of the Directorate of Political Affairs in the Swiss Foreign Ministry from 1992 to 1999, he also served in Swiss embassies in Madrid, Brussels and London. Between 1984 and 1992, he headed the Office for European Integration, serving first as a minister and later as an ambassador with responsibility for relations with the European Union and the European Free Trade Association. Kellenberger teaches in the Law Faculty at the University of Salamanca in Spain. He was awarded the Grosses Verdienstkreuz mit Stern by Germany in 2012 and appointed Commandeur de la Légion d'Honneur by France in 2013. He joined HD's board in 2013.



**Dr Joanne Liu**  
**Board Member**

Joanne Liu was international president of Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) from 2013 to 2019. At the helm of MSF, she was a leading voice on medical humanitarian crises, namely the Ebola outbreak in West Africa, attacks on hospitals and forced displacement of people. During her career at MSF, she had more than 20 medical-humanitarian field assignments. Trained at McGill University's School of Medicine, she holds a fellowship in paediatric emergency medicine and a master's degree in health leadership. Liu's operational work has ranged from introducing comprehensive care for survivors of sexual violence to developing a telemedicine platform to connect doctors in rural areas with specialists worldwide. She joined HD's board in 2019.



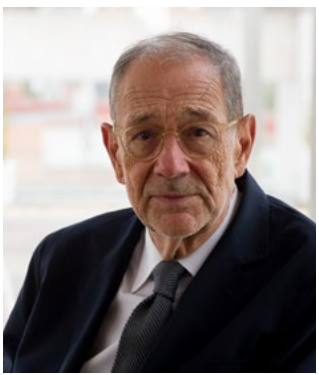
**Dr 'Funmi Olonisakin**  
**Board Member**

'Funmi Olonisakin is vice-president and vice-principal international of King's College London, where she teaches security, leadership and development. She also served as director of the African Leadership Centre, which she founded to build the next generation of African scholars and analysts specialising in security and development. Olonisakin was director of the Conflict, Security and Development Group at King's College from 2003 to 2013 and previously worked in the Office of the United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General (UNSG) on Children and Armed Conflict. She is one of seven members of the advisory group of experts on the review of the UN peacebuilding architecture by the UNSG and sits on the advisory group of experts for the UN progress study on youth, peace and security. She has been a member of HD's board since 2013.



**Margot Wallström**  
**Board Member**

Margot Wallström was elected to the Swedish parliament in 1979 before serving as minister for youth, local authorities and consumer affairs from 1988 to 1991, minister of culture from 1994 to 1996 and minister of social affairs from 1996 to 1998. Before taking up her appointment as EU commissioner in 1999, she worked for Worldview Global Media in Sri Lanka. From 1999 to 2004, Wallström served as the European commissioner for the environment and then as first vice-president of the European Commission from 2004 to 2010. In 2007, she became chair of the ministerial initiative of the Council for Women World Leaders. In 2010, then UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon appointed her as the first special representative on sexual violence in conflict until 2012. She then served as Sweden's minister of foreign affairs from 2014 to 2019. She joined HD's board in 2020.



**Dr Javier Solana**  
**Honorary President**

Javier Solana was secretary-general of the Council of the European Union and high representative for the EU's common foreign and security policy from 1999 to 2009, as well as secretary-general of NATO from 1995 to 1999. Before that, he was Spain's minister for foreign affairs from 1992 to 1995. Solana serves as president of the Esade Center for Global Economy and Geopolitics, distinguished fellow in foreign policy at the Brookings Institution, chairman of the Aspen Institute in Spain, senior fellow at the Hertie School of Governance and visiting professor at the London School of Economics.



**Andrew Forrest**  
**Global Patron**

Andrew Forrest is one of Australia's most active philanthropists and successful business leaders as chair of Fortescue Metals Group and chairman and co-founder of the Minderoo Foundation. Passionate about ocean conservation, he recently completed his PhD in marine ecology. In 2019, he was named as a patron of nature by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and is a member of the UN Environment Programme Scientific Advisory Committee on the assessment of marine litter and microplastics. He has received the Australian Sports Medal and the Australian Centenary Medal and was the inaugural winner of the EY Entrepreneur of the Year Alumni Social Impact Award. Through Minderoo, Forrest co-founded Walk Free to end modern slavery and Generation One to create parity of opportunity among all Australians.



# Investing in peace

**After a decade of steady growth in funding, COVID-19 took its toll on financial support for HD in 2020 as income fell 6% from a year earlier to 39 million Swiss francs. Peace yields obvious human and economic benefits but the innovation and persistence needed to help make peace require substantial and lasting investment.**

Despite the challenges of the pandemic, HD increased its presence in dozens of the world's most difficult conflict areas in 2020 with new staff and projects.

Continued support from existing donors – along with new funding from foundations, charitable trusts and other philanthropic organisations – will be vital to the growth and success of HD's mediation and peacebuilding initiatives in an uncertain world.

HD has adapted to the challenges of the pandemic with a range of innovative steps to keep mediation projects on track and launch new ones. In Libya, for example, social and digital media channels helped support the country's retreat from civil war. As new conflicts broke out elsewhere in 2020, HD has been fast to seek out space for dialogue.

As a non-profit organisation, HD receives a combination of strategic support and targeted project funding that are both fundamental to its operations.

**Strategic support** helps to safeguard HD's independence, improve operational effectiveness and drive growth and innovation. It enables HD to maintain a critical degree of flexibility in planning and ensures continuity in implementation.

The flexible funding also allows HD to respond rapidly to emerging conflicts or new opportunities for mediation, dialogue or technical exchanges. This includes HD's social media and conflict mediation programme with its effective approach to mitigate instability and threats growing in cyberspace as the frontlines of conflict become increasingly digital. Accordingly, HD strives to strengthen innovation by continuously increasing strategic support funding.

**Targeted project funding**, which makes up the majority of donor support, enables HD to maintain a global and diverse portfolio of initiatives. In 2020, HD worked on more than 50 projects in many of the most violent and fragmented conflicts across Africa, Asia, Eurasia, Latin America and the Middle East.

HD was launched in 1999 with unearmarked funding from Switzerland and the Red Cross institutions. Within its second year, and with its Aceh project running in Indonesia, the funding pattern for

HD's first decade was set. A multi-year framework agreement with Norway and core funding from Denmark, Ireland, Sweden and the United Kingdom built on HD's Swiss foundations.

The strong support from a small group of donors ensured HD could develop its Track 1 mediation model and helped to establish modern private diplomacy's early successes. As this model spread and donors saw the increased need for sustainable, multi-track initiatives from non-state actors, HD's second decade was underscored by impactful funding from the European Union, Germany and the Netherlands – the latter in the form of a strategic partnership.

As support has grown over the years, HD now counts on more than 10 major donors, including important programme funding from Australia and Canada.

This reliable funding – along with backing from key private donors – helps HD to:

- Contribute its expertise, insights and experience to peacebuilding efforts based on trust and confidentiality
- Maintain its strong Swiss roots that enable mediation around the world from an impartial, neutral perspective
- Innovate and develop better, more inclusive and sustainable programmes

HD is grateful to all those who have contributed to its work throughout the last two decades. This crucial financial support – and in some cases political and strategic support – has enabled HD to grow and deliver positive change in many conflict zones.

HD is equally grateful to the City of Geneva for providing Villa Plantamour as its headquarters and an exceptional, neutral and discreet setting to lead its peacemaking work.

At the same time, **HD welcomes interest** from government agencies, private organisations and philanthropic foundations in becoming donors and partners to support essential efforts to reduce conflict, build peace and create opportunities for development for millions of people around the world.

## HD's project expenditure in 2020

