CPI
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CORDOBA PEACE INSTITUTE
GENEVA
معهد قرطبة للسلام

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CORDOBA PEACE INSTITUTE - GENEVA (CPI)

CPI-Geneva is an independent non-profit organisation, working on violence prevention and peace promotion. CPI aims to enhance theoretical and practical conflict transformation resources and has extensive experience in West Asian and African contexts. CPI promotes a methodology adapted to and accepted by local communities, conflict parties and peace actors. Since 2002, it has developed unique access and networks in the countries where it works. CPI's outlook is inspired by the Andalusian city of Cordoba: a renowned medieval centre of inter-faith dialogue, and by Geneva: a modern centre of international dialogue and exchange between peoples. CPI has Special Consultative Status with the United Nations.



FOREWORD

The year 2024 was characterised by intensifying conflicts and minimal progress towards peace. In defiance of international law, human folly continued to sow death and destruction, particularly in Africa, Europe and West Asia. This resulted in widespread human rights violations and exacerbated the already dire humanitarian situation in many regions, particularly for vulnerable populations. Too many people around the world are desperately seeking just and lasting peace.

The rapid fall of the Assad regime in Syria in late 2024, after years of brutal oppression, offers hope that positive change can be brought about by local actors. These actors now require the support and understanding of the international community to help them establish good governance for all sectors of society.

Armed with optimism and patience, and confident in the perseverance of its local partners, CPI continued its peacebuilding work in Africa and West Asia in 2024. This work has contributed to CPI's deep and nuanced understanding of local contexts and stakeholders, informing its interventions and projects.

CPI Direction

CPI'S STRATEGIC PROGRAMME

In 2024, CPI remained focused on addressing tensions and polarization within Muslim-majority societies, working to bridge the significant gap between the prevalence of conflict in these regions and the limited availability of both theoretical and practical conflict transformation resources.

CPI's approach centers on five key areas:
Research and Analysis – identifying and revitalizing indigenous approaches to conflict transformation;
Capacity Building – strengthening local expertise and empowering peace actors to lead their own initiatives;
Peace Initiative Support – launching and accompanying peace efforts, including the creation of safe spaces for mediation and other transformative processes;
Knowledge Exchange – fostering experience sharing among practitioners in the field;
Interworldview Engagement – promoting peaceful interaction among actors of differing worldviews to reduce prejudice and foster collaboration.

CPI operates in full adherence to the humanitarian principles of independence and impartiality. Its work is guided by a commitment to non-violence, inclusivity, and empathy. Over the years, CPI has established robust networks and platforms bringing together researchers, practitioners, and activists across the Arab region, the Sahel, Sub-Saharan Africa, and East Africa. These forums are instrumental in contributing to the transformation of violent or potentially violent political conflicts, particularly those with a religious dimension.



ACTIVITIES BY STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Strategic Objective 1: Harnessing and amplifying internal peace resources within Muslim-majority societies by researching, documenting, and disseminating local conflict transformation approaches, alongside the development and accessibility of training materials to empower peace actors in these communities

Engaging Across Religious Differences
(15.02.2023 – 14.02.2025)
Funded by the Templeton Religion Trust (TRT) and the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA)

In February 2023, CPI launched, in partnership with the Center for Security Studies at ETH Zurich (CSS), a two-year research project titled "Engaging Across Religious Differences: Evidence-based Research on Islamic Jurists who Influence Armed Groups' Actions and their Capacity to Develop Practical Solutions to Conflicts." This project aims to study, in five different contexts, how various Islamic jurists interpret Scripture to influence armed groups' behavior, and what types of dialogue engagement enable these jurists to develop, support, or legitimize practical solutions to conflicts at the level of governance, conduct of hostilities, or negotiation processes. This evidence-based project thus focuses on the role of Islamic jurists within and close to armed groups in five countries: Iraq, Mali, Mozambique, Somalia, and Yemen. Using a comparative approach, the project seeks to examine in what way Islamic jurists interpret the political action of militant groups. On this basis, the research outcomes contribute to academic debates, provide a deeper understanding of the relationships between Islamist jurists and armed groups, and support organizations or governments if they one day seek to engage in dialogue or conflict resolution interventions.

Within this context, CPI and the CSS/ETH Zurich invited field researchers and academic mentors from Iraq, Yemen, the Sahel, Somalia and Mozambique to a meeting in Zanzibar, Tanzania, from 15 to 17 April 2024. The 20 participants met to deepen the preliminary results of the specific case studies, reflect on the research experiences of the five teams and benefit from training focused on the narratives of different worldviews and mediation.

Furthermore, CPI and the Centre for Security Studies (CSS/ETH Zurich) organised a peer review workshop as part of the research project. The workshop, held in Zanzibar, Tanzania, on 15 and 16 September 2024, brought together the researchers, mentors, advisers and peer reviewers involved in the various case studies.

Madrassa Project
Funded by the ICRC and the Swiss FDFA

As part of its collaboration with the ICRC, CPI contributed to the preparation of the sixth edition of the Madrasa meeting of Sahel ulema (religious scholars) on the same theme as the previous edition, i.e. the Protection of civilians in armed conflict under International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and Islamic law. The sixth edition of the Madrassa meetings was held on 18-19 September 2024 in Nouakchott, Mauritania.

Strategic Objective 2: Building and sustaining an active, effective community of conflict transformation practitioners through networking, platforms, and forums, focusing on fostering collaboration and knowledge sharing among peace actors in Muslim-majority societies.

Reconciliation and Political Dialogue in Iraq
(01.01.2023 – 28.02.2024)
Funded by the German Federal Foreign Office

In February 2024, CPI completed the 'Promoting social cohesion in Iraq' project, funded by the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The project had two components. The first was to support the voluntary return of Iraqi Turkmen refugees to Talafar and their reintegration into their communities, and the second was to strengthen the role of governmental, religious and civil society institutions in promoting the 'right to know' the fate of missing persons in Iraq. The conclusion of the project highlights its positive impacts and persistent challenges. In particular, 73.64% of respondents felt that CPI's reintegration efforts had had a positive impact on the local socio-economic environment. However, some still perceive that families or refugees could be linked to the 'Islamic State', indicating the need for constant monitoring and dialogue. The mixed results highlight the complexity of reintegration, particularly in Talafar. In addition, 71.43% of respondents felt that CPI had been effective in raising awareness among stakeholders about the "right to know" the fate of missing persons.

Strategic Objective 3: Promoting inclusivity, social cohesion, and peaceful interaction across diverse communities, particularly in Muslim-majority societies, by engaging all constituents in efforts to prevent extremism and reduce polarization.

Building resilience against violent extremism through alternative narratives in Nigeria (BRAVE-TAN)
(01.01.2021 - 30.06.2024)
Funded by the European Union

The project was extended by 6 months (January-June 2024) to strengthen efforts to prevent violent extremism in six Nigerian states: Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Kaduna, Niger and Plateau. This initiative, based on a Training of Trainers (ToT) model, has enabled more than 140 religious and community leaders to acquire essential skills for disseminating alternative narratives to extremist ideologies and promoting peaceful coexistence.

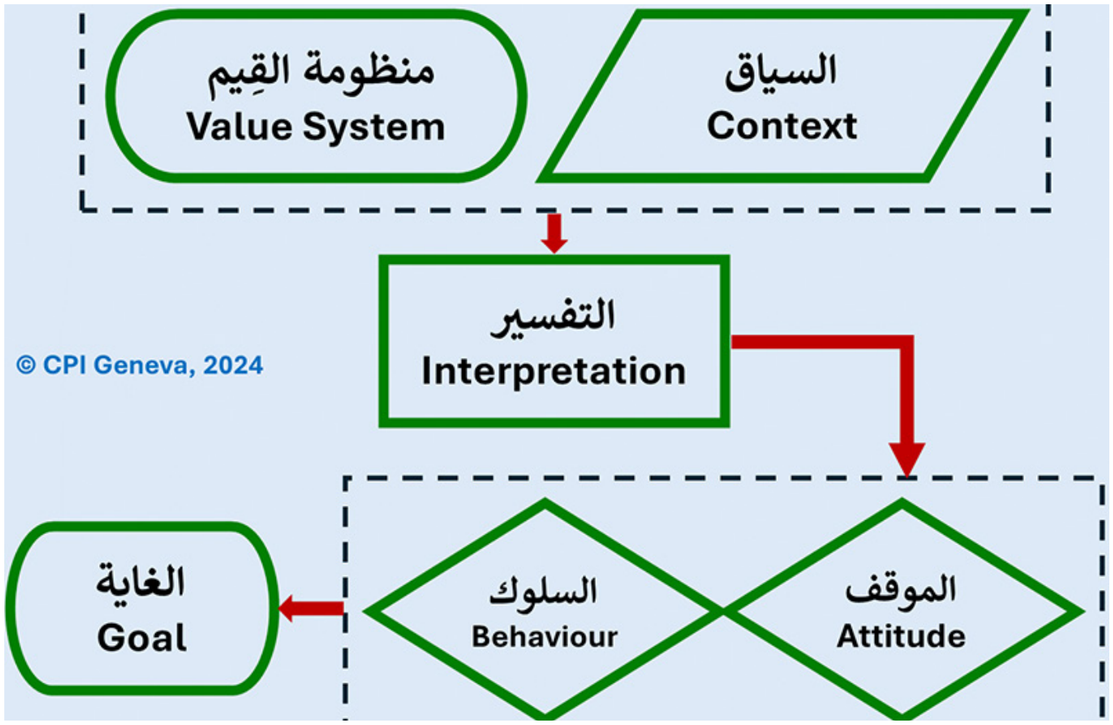
The main activities include:

- Training of Trainers (ToT): Religious and community leaders attended capacity-building sessions on Islamic teachings, inter-religious dialogue and the prevention of violent extremism. Participants recorded an average 75% increase in their knowledge, and a high level of preparedness to organise outreach training within their communities.

- Community awareness-raising and decentralised training: Participants conducted workshops and awareness campaigns at local level to promote alternative narratives.

- Media engagement: The project worked with 12 radio stations to broadcast over 130 programmes in Hausa, English, Fulfulde and Kanuri, reaching an estimated audience of 10 million listeners. These programmes have helped to deconstruct certain misconceptions about Islamic teachings and promote messages of peace and coexistence.

Despite the challenges of insecurity and language barriers, the project has strengthened



community resilience to extremist rhetoric. The project demonstrated an effective and replicable approach to the prevention of violent extremism, highlighting the key role of local religious actors in promoting peace and stability.

Fiqhi Pathways in the Sahel, Lake Chad Basin, East African Swahili Coast, and Afghanistan
(15.02.2023 – 14.05.2024)
Funded by the Swiss FDFA

The 'Fiqhi Pathways' project, funded by the Swiss FDFA, aims to engage credible ulema with armed groups on issues relating to the conduct of hostilities in accordance with IHL and Islamic law, good governance and the preference for dialogue. The programme covers the Sahel, the Lake Chad Basin, the Swahili Coast of East Africa and Afghanistan.
- On 25 May 2024, CPI and its local partner Friends of Peace (FoP) in Tanzania brought together 30 representatives from the diverse landscape of Islamic education and learning institutions in Tanga, Tanzania. The participants, from traditional, Salafist and Ibadite backgrounds, exchanged views on the ethics of difference and disagreement and the merits of dialogue with a view to working together for the common good in the areas of religious education and social work that they all undertake.
- From 14 to 18 July 2024, CPI contributed to a follow-up workshop in Mogadishu on the process design of the UNDP-supported project "Islaamku wa Nabad: a peacebuilding approach to counter violent extremism in Somalia". The aim of the workshop was to bring together key members of the network of Islamic scholars from across Somalia to clarify their roles, share lessons learned from their work and extend the reach of the network. CPI contributed to the network on the

theme of “Hisba: monitoring and oversight of governance processes”.

Promoting Social Cohesion and the Dissemination of Constructive Alternative Narratives in Northern Nigeria (01.03.2023 – 31.03.2024)
Funded by the Swiss FDFA
In collaboration with Dar al Andalus Centre (DAAC)

As part of the project entitled ‘Promoting Social Cohesion and Disseminating Constructive Alternative Narratives in Northern Nigeria’, launched in March 2023 with the support of the FDFA, CPI and its partner in Nigeria, Dar al Andalus Centre (DAAC), organised several events during 2024.

- Reconciliation process in north-east Nigeria: From 14 to 16 January and from 26 to 28 February 2024, two training programmes were conducted in the Maiduguri Metropolitan Council, bringing together 50 members of the community and 30 former members of non-state armed groups. The main objective was to create a link between the two sides, promoting mutual understanding, empathy and reconciliation. The training consisted of a two-day preparatory session followed by a dialogue on the third day. The dialogue led to a greater humanisation and empathy between the parties. Former members of non-state armed groups acknowledged the suffering caused by their actions and expressed sincere remorse, while members of the community began to see former group members as individuals with complex histories rather than as faceless enemies. Although full reconciliation is a long process, the training has sown the seeds of understanding and forgiveness.



- Training in Geneva, April/May 2024: In April 2024, CPI was delighted to welcome the DAAC project team, our valued implementing partners from Nigeria, to Geneva for a week-long capacity building programme. The event provided an invaluable opportunity to enhance their conflict transformation skills, with a particular focus on negotiation and mediation techniques and mediation safe space methodology. In addition, the programme included comprehensive sessions on the project management cycle, specifically targeting proposal development, project monitoring and evaluation, as well as the application of artificial intelligence in peacebuilding. The positive results of this capacity-building initiative should greatly enhance the effectiveness of DAAC’s peace-building efforts in Nigeria, reinforcing our shared commitment to sustainable peace and development.

- Roundtable in Abuja, May 2024: In collaboration with the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA), CPI and DAAC organised a roundtable on 31 May 2024 at the Hilton Transcorp Hotel, Abuja, Nigeria, entitled ‘Towards Reconciliation: Perspectives on Positive Reconciliation in Northeastern Nigeria’. This gathering of 20 participants from various international institutions, embassies and international NGOs is an essential part of CPI and DAAC’s ongoing efforts to promote peace and understanding through dialogue and cooperation in north-eastern Nigeria. The roundtable served as a platform to share knowledge, exchange innovative strategies and develop concrete recommendations to support the sustainable reintegration of former members of armed groups.
- The project ‘Promoting Social Cohesion and Disseminating Constructive Alternative Narratives in Northern Nigeria’, funded by the



Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) and implemented in collaboration with our partner DAAC in Nigeria, was successfully concluded in May 2024. Building on this achievement, DAAC, with the support of CPI, secured further funding from the FDFA for an 18-month project entitled 'Pathway to Peace', which began on 1 June 2024. This initiative reinforces the long-standing collaboration between CPI and DAAC to promote peace, reconciliation and reintegration in north-eastern Nigeria. The Pathway to Peace project focuses on two key objectives: (1) To build the capacity of Islamic scholars and community leaders, including women, by deepening their understanding of Islamic principles and their application in peacebuilding and conflict resolution, through the dissemination of a Constructive Alternative Narratives, (2) To support the reintegration of former members of armed groups through Islam-based education, mentoring and safe dialogues and mediation promoting forgiveness, emotional well-being and mutual understanding with communities. CPI will maintain an advisory role, providing technical and methodological expertise throughout the project.
and develop concrete recommendations to support the sustainable reintegration of former members of armed groups.

- The project 'Promoting Social Cohesion and Disseminating Constructive Alternative Narratives in Northern Nigeria', funded by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) and implemented in collaboration with our partner DAAC in Nigeria, was successfully concluded in May 2024. Building on this achievement, DAAC, with the support of CPI, secured further funding from the FDFA for an 18-month project entitled 'Pathway to Peace', which began on 1 June 2024. This initiative reinforces the long-standing collaboration between CPI and DAAC to promote peace, reconciliation and reintegration in north-eastern Nigeria. The Pathway to Peace project focuses on two key objectives: (1) To build the capacity of Islamic scholars and community leaders, including women, by deepening their understanding of Islamic principles and their application in peacebuilding and conflict resolution, through the dissemination of a Constructive Alternative Narratives, (2) To support the reintegration of former members of armed groups through Islam-based education, mentoring and safe dialogues and mediation promoting forgiveness, emotional well-being and mutual understanding with communities. CPI will maintain an advisory role, providing technical and methodological expertise throughout the project.

PUBLICATIONS

1– Ozair Khan. Afghanistan News Roundup. Ozair Khan. Cordoba Peace Institute – Geneva. Monthly.

2– Abbas Aroua (an edited interview). Peacemaking in Islam. Published in: Still time to talk: Adaptation and innovation in peace mediation. Accord Issue 30, Issue Editor: Teresa Whitfield. Conciliation Resources. February 2024.

3– Reine Radwan. The right to know the fate of missing persons in Islamic law and international humanitarian law: Summary of two academic publications. Cordoba Research Papers. Cordoba Peace Institute - Geneva. February 2024.

4– Alice Carchereux. Meg-Ann Lenoble (editor). The Reintegration of Former Boko Haram Associates in Maiduguri, Nigeria. Conflict Transformation in Practice. Cordoba Peace Institute – Geneva. March 2024.

5– Mae Anna Chokr, Ali Al-Ahmad and Abbas Aroua. Social Cohesion in Iraq: Leveraging Religious, Political, and Tribal Authorities for Conflict Transformation. CSS Mediation Resources 22. Center for Security Studies (CSS) / ETH Zurich 2024.

6– Meg-Ann Lenoble. Towards Reconciliation: Perspectives on Positive Reconciliation in North Eastern Nigeria: Report of a Roundtable. Cordoba Workshops Reports. Cordoba Peace Institute - Geneva. July 2024.

7– Reine Radwan. Navigating complexity: Approaches to the repatriation and reintegration of foreign fighters from Islamic State-controlled territory. Meg-Ann Lenoble (ed.) Cordoba Research Papers. Cordoba Peace Institute - Geneva. September 2024.

8– Abbas Aroua. The role of religion in peacebuilding and conflict transformation (in Arabic). Religions Journal. Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue. October 2024.

9- Ozair Khan and Ahmed-Waleed Kakar. The Afghan Taliban Constitution Drafting between Theory and Practice, New Beginnings and Calculated Continuity. Cordoba Research Papers. Cordoba Peace Institute – Geneva. November 2024.

10– Lakhdar Ghettas. Fiqhi Pathways: The Role of Islamic Jurists in Shaping Armed Group Behavior. Cordoba Research Papers. Cordoba Peace Institute - Geneva. December 2024.

NEWSLETTERS

Two editions of the Cordoba Update, which provides an overview of CPI's work, were published in January and June 2024 and distributed by email.

EXTERNAL EVENTS

CPI participated in the launch of 'Accord 30: There's Still Time to Talk: Adaptation and Innovation in Peace Mediation', published by Conciliation Resources, in London on 15 February 2024 and in Geneva on 16 April 2024. CPI was a member of the volume's advisory board.

On 2 March 2024, CPI took part in an international symposium on 'The Crisis of Human Values: Between Perceptible Disruption and Hope for Strengthening Common Humanity', organised by the Global Coalition for Ethics and Human Values, at the International House of Associations in Geneva. CPI contributed with a presentation on the 'Articulation of values and interests in international relations'.

On 15 March 2024, CPI took part in a conference on "Sacred Sites Promoting Pluralism", organised by Pepperdine University and held on the Château d'Hauteville campus in Saint-Légier. The conference brought together over forty experts and practitioners in the fields of human rights, interfaith engagement and cultural heritage protection.

On 27 April 2024, CPI took part in a workshop on the theme of 'Debate or Dialogue', organised by the youth parties at the Espace Dickens in Lausanne. CPI contributed with a presentation on 'Democracy as a mechanism for resolving conflicts through dialogue'.

On 7 and 8 May 2024, CPI took part in the 15th Doha Conference on Interreligious Dialogue, organised in Doha by the Doha International Centre for Interreligious Dialogue (DICID), on the theme 'Family Structure in the Light of a Changing World: A Religious Perspective'.

CPI participated in a series of three Brown Bag Lunches held at the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs in Bern on the theme of 'Engaging Islamic Jurists to Overcome Obstacles in Mediation Processes'. The events took place on 5 March, 30 April and 28 May 2024.

CPI co-facilitated a round table on 'The role of religious actors, women and youth in peacebuilding in the Sahel', organised in Dakar from 21 to 23 May 2024 by the Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers and the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The round table brought together 25 participants from Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger.

CPI attended a meeting of the Covenantal Pluralism Initiative Council in Washington DC on 22 May 2024, organised by the Templeton Religion Trust and hosted by the El-Hibri Foundation at its headquarters.

During the week of 9 to 13 September 2024, CPI contributed to the 'Religion and Mediation Course 2024: Horn and East Coast of Africa', organised in Zanzibar by the Center for Security Studies ETH-Zurich and the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, in collaboration with the Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers and the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

On 7 November 2024, CPI attended the presentation of the ICRC's 'Global Mapping of Armed Groups 2024' organised by the International Committee of the Red Cross. For several years, the ICRC has conducted an annual survey of armed groups of humanitarian interest in order to identify behavioural trends and improve its engagement.

CPI was invited by the Network of Traditional and Religious Peacemakers (NRTP) to host the Sahel online meeting on 14 November 2024. The purpose of the meeting was to provide a platform for informal discussions and updates on a number of key topics, including the outcomes of the Dakar consultative workshop held in May 2024 and the current situation in the region.

ADMINISTRATION & FINANCE

Governance

The Board of Trustees is the governing body of CPI. It has the responsibility to ensure compliance with the mission of CPI and that the assets of CPI are fully engaged in achieving its goal in line with international professional standards. The Advisory Committee provides technical expertise and guidance and ensures that the programs and projects of CPI comply with its strategic objectives, core values, methodology and approach, and guiding principles. The Executive Management (the Director and the General Manager) has the mandate to direct and manage CPI according to the directives of the Board of Trustees and the recommendations of the Advisory Committee. The External Auditor is appointed by the Board of Trustees to review and approve the accounts of CPI. The audited accounts are reported every year with CPI's annual report to the Swiss Federal Supervisory Authority.

Internships

In 2024, CPI hosted two students for internships from the Graduate Institute of Geneva and from the University of Lausanne.

Finances

Income:	
Public & Private Funds	CHF 1'339'272
Expenses:	
Activities	CHF 756'871
Human Resources	CHF 465'079
Running Costs	CHF 41'486

Registered Offices

Geneva/Switzerland – Head Office
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