New publication: BICC brief 42

Diasporas and Peace: A Comparative Assessment of Somali and Ethiopian communities in Europe

DIASPEACE Working Paper; A. Wamecke (ed.)

In recent years, following the political upheavals in Ethiopia, Somalia and what later became Eritrea, large-scale migration from the Horn of Africa has to a significant extent been conflict-induced. Conflict-generated migration is usually large, rapid and includes entire extended families or communities. It is assumed that these migrant communities tend to be predominantly characterised by the source of their migration or flight which subsequently continues to shape the communities' identities in their new residence country and serves as a focal point for community mobilization.

Nonetheless, while diaspora groups or networks originating from the same homeland are frequently referred to as “the diaspora”, it is evident that diasporas are neither homogeneous nor static entities but composed of rather diverse and dynamic groups, factions and ethnic, religious, political etc. identities. In addition, the social, political and economic framework conditions that influence and shape the perceptions and activities of diaspora groups on different levels are subject to permanent change. Accordingly, the engagement of diasporas in conflict processes has to be analysed by simultaneously assessing both diasporas’ aims and activities and the ensuing framework conditions in the countries of origin, residence and on the transnational level.

Taking up this conceptual approach, the study investigates the context in which diasporas in Europe act and adopt or dispose of certain strategies and objectives. Based on extensive fieldwork, including both qualitative and quantitative data, on Ethiopian and Somali diaspora communities in Europe (Finland, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, UK) the study describes and analyzes diaspora activities and modes of engagement towards peace and stability in the origin country and develops a first typology of factors influencing diaspora engagement.

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Please find the full pdf version of BICC brief 42 under:
DIASPEACE stands for Diasporas and Peace. Patterns, Trends and Potential of Long-distance Diaspora Involvement in Conflict Settings. Case studies from the Horn of Africa. It is a nonpartisan, academic research project looking at the chances and challenges of diaspora involvement in countries of origin, in this case Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia. The DIASPEACE researchers come from eight different universities, independent research institutes and NGOs. The University of Jyväskylä (Finland), Bonn International Center for Conversion and the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology (Germany), the Peace Research Institute of Oslo (Norway), the African Diaspora Policy Centre (Netherlands), Centro Studi Politica Internazionale (Italy), the Forum for Social Studies (Ethiopia) and the Academy for Peace and Development (Somalia).

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