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# Norwegian Assistance to Countries in Conflict

The Lesson of Experience from Guatemala, Mali,  
Mozambique, Sudan, Rwanda and Burundi

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A report submitted to the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
by Christian Michelsen Institute (CMI) in cooperation with the  
International Peace Research Institute, Oslo (PRIO)

The Ministry does not accept any responsibility for the information  
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## Preface

This study has been carried out by a team of consultants from the Chr. Michelsen Institute (CMI) and the International Peace Research Institute (PRIO). Team members were: Gunnar M. Sørbo (CMI-team leader), Wenche Hauge (PRIO), Bente Hybertsen (CMI) and Dan Smith (PRIO). It is primarily a desk study based on previous evaluations and on material gathered and analysed by the study team itself.

A Norwegian version of the report was submitted to the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) in April 1998. It was decided to make an English version available within a short time and we are grateful to Gail Adams Kvam and Virginia Slim for undertaking the task of translation. We also wish to thank staff of the MFA and other persons who made their precious time available for interviews and questions related to the study. We have benefitted much from written comments on the Norwegian version of the report, both from MFA and NORAD. At CMI, we are grateful to Inger A. Nygaard and Marianne Serck-Hanssen for technical support in preparing the manuscript for publication.

Bergen  
October 1998

## Executive Summary

Throughout the post-war period Norway has taken an active role in relation to conflict situations in other countries, some of them involving more than one country and some within the boundaries of a single country. During the past decade this commitment has increased, partly due to a more active Norwegian government policy and partly due to important international developments since the end of the cold war.

During the period 1990-96 Norwegian support for various types of peace building measures has been directed towards some 30 countries. The trend is clear: whereas Norway provided support to 4 countries at a cost of NOK 3.7 million in 1990, the corresponding figures were 22 countries and NOK 167 million in 1996. This amounts, however, to only a small proportion of Norway's total humanitarian assistance where most of the funds for peace building measures derive from.

Direct support for peace negotiations or mediation efforts were provided in connection with 14 conflicts during the same period, either through Norwegian institutions and organisations or through local, foreign or international/multilateral actors. In addition, funds have been provided for various other efforts to support processes of peace, such as demobilisation, support for police forces, judicial processes, UN operations and funds of various types, research, seminars and conferences.

The study explores lessons learned from Norwegian assistance to six countries within the broad field that encompasses conflict prevention, conflict resolution and other peace building efforts. The countries selected are: Guatemala, Mali, the Sudan, Mozambique, Rwanda and Burundi.

In *Guatemala*, Norway played a high-profile role in the process leading up to the peace agreement in December 1996. Norwegian efforts were characterised by a deep understanding of the conflict, a long-term perspective and willingness to persist, good networks with various parties to the conflict, active coordination with a number of other key actors, and involvement on several levels and in different fora. Norway was accepted by the parties to the conflict, who themselves wanted to achieve a political solution. In many ways Guatemala represents the ideal type of "the Norwegian model", a closely coordinated effort between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other Norwegian actors, in this case with Petter Skauen from Norwegian Church Aid as a key person throughout the entire process. Norway played a constructive facilitatory role in the Guatemalan peace process.

*Mali* also provides an example of an NGO (Norwegian Church Aid) with a former resident representative (Kåre Lode) as a key person playing a constructive role in local peace processes. Lode had long experience in Mali and thus a thorough knowledge of the country and the region and good political and social networks. Norwegian Church Aid's sustained presence in Mali contributed to the trust the organisation enjoyed among the people, also because NCA remained in the northern region long after the other western organisations had left the country. Its efforts, in which the Malian NCA staff also played a key role, were supported by Norway, Germany, Switzerland and Canada. On the part of Norway, the process was driven by



the NCA, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not play a significant role in the peace efforts themselves. However, Norway provided support for the UNDP's important Mali activities (led by the Norwegian Tore Rose) and has also subsequently chosen to use the UNDP as an important channel for consolidating the peace process in the country. The Norwegian efforts in Mali cannot be compared directly to the work in Guatemala. The conflict in Mali never reached the same heights or level of violence as in Guatemala. It was also more localised, while at the same time the conditions for a successful peace process existed. In Mali, unlike in Guatemala, the main challenge was to create a basis for the implementation of an agreement that had already been signed.

In relation to the Sudan Norway has also played a high-profile role, primarily as a substantial provider of humanitarian aid, but also as an occasional participant in the peace process. An evaluation report by COWI claims that Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) and Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) have helped people in need, but that the impact of their work has been marginal in terms of getting the warring parties to seek peace and reconciliation. Norway is also criticised for not having a consistent, coherent Sudan policy, and the report recommends that the Norwegian government's diplomatic initiatives (which should be strengthened) and the objectives of the aid programmes of the NCA and NPA should be more closely linked.

Many attempts have been made by outsiders to resolve the conflict in the Sudan. All of them have failed thus far. This is due to several reasons, but the most important is arguably that the civil war has not yet reached a point where the two main belligerents (SPLA and the government in Khartoum) simultaneously have felt that they stand to gain the most from a negotiated solution. Likewise, the regionalisation of the conflict has further complicated the situation. Nevertheless it can be claimed that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, given Norway's unique position in relation to the Sudan (various actors with long-term involvements, good contacts with most of the groups in the conflict, experience from peace-building initiatives, etc.), has had an uneven engagement. Given current developments in the Sudan and in the countries surrounding it, there is an urgent need to revitalise the peace process. It is suggested that the IGAD Partner Forum of which Norway is a member, increase their involvement in the process.

In *Mozambique*, like in the Sudan, Norway has been criticised for insufficient coordination, in this case also between aid and foreign policy. The CMI report claims that Norwegian authorities paid little systematic attention to the relationship between short-term aid and the peace process and the maintenance of peace in the long run. The peace process in Mozambique, although Norway was a substantial aid donor, did not emerge as an important foreign policy issue in Oslo, partly because there was a detailed peace agreement which laid the framework for peace and partly because Norway considered the process in Mozambique mainly a question of providing development assistance. However, Norway supported the peace process through many different efforts, although not sufficiently coordinated, and also played a role jointly with other donors, particularly in the difficult process leading up to the election in 1994. Yet it took quite a long time (1997) before Norway formulated a country strategy which acknowledged that the end of the war created new conditions for the aid programme.

In the *Great Lakes* region Norway has chosen to have the greatest involvement in Burundi. In Rwanda Norway has not become involved in conflict resolution efforts, neither before nor after the genocide, but has provided substantial humanitarian aid since the spring of 1994. Norway's political involvement has been much greater in Burundi, comprising both mediation and reconciliation efforts. However, Norwegian efforts have primarily been linked to funding, without the participation of Norwegian actors as in Guatemala and Mali. Although the situation in Burundi remains uncertain, there is reason to commend the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for a reasonably consistent, yet flexible policy.

Whether any peace process succeeds or fails clearly lies beyond the capabilities of external mediators; instead, success is ultimately contingent upon the willingness of the parties to live together non-violently. For many reasons, some armed factions don't want to negotiate an end to civil war; they want to keep fighting either because they think they can eventually win, will do better in negotiations by fighting longer, or have too much to lose in a negotiated settlement. Thus, it is critically important for those who engage in conflict resolution to understand the dynamics that keep internal conflicts going and those through which they end.

As far as mediation efforts are concerned, there is little doubt that the sustained Norwegian presence through ongoing and long-term NGO programmes has been an important factor behind the successful endeavours in Guatemala and Mali. Such presence would also seem to be crucial for future peace efforts in a country like the Sudan.

In Guatemala and Mali we also see the significance of other factors that are important for success: a thorough understanding of the conflict and its different dimensions, a long-term perspective, good networks, contacts with actors (in Guatemala) who were not invited to the negotiating table, but nonetheless played an important role for the outcome, and extensive flexibility in relation to the need for funding or initiatives that emerge during the peace process. This is particularly evident in relation to Norway's efforts in Guatemala: the links between political initiatives and humanitarian aid and the possibility of allocating funds quickly as opportunities or problems arose were of fundamental significance in order to understand the role Norway acquired and the results achieved.

Evaluation reports on Norwegian assistance in Mozambique and the Sudan claim that there has been insufficient integration between aid policy and programmes on the one hand and broader foreign policy issues, including conflict resolution efforts, on the other hand.

It is often believed that there is tension and a possible conflict between the long-term perspective which has traditionally been at the base of Norwegian development cooperation and what is perceived as more short-term efforts and the needs for flexibility and adaptability which follow from a closer link between aid and foreign policy. In Mozambique and many other countries where Norway is involved in supporting a process of peace and reconstruction, it is however, important to avoid being constrained by such traditional divisions. Efforts towards lasting solutions to destructive conflicts and attempts to prevent conflicts from having serious adverse

effects on development and welfare are tasks which require the use of most instruments and forms of aid.

The salient point for aid is what problems it can alleviate, in the short and long term. This requires cooperation between different forms of aid. Mutual for all of them is the need for problem analysis. In general, new methods and approaches are required with increased emphasis on *conflict impact assessment*. The problem does not lie in getting one form of aid to merge with another (the “continuum from relief to development” debate), but to design aid programmes that are as appropriate as possible in relation to the problems that are identified, and on this basis assign responsibility according to competence. Key words here are long-term thinking *combined with*, not in contrast to, flexibility and the ability to adapt to changing circumstances.

It follows from the discussion above that there is a need for sufficient capacity and competence related to the broad area of conflict resolution both in MFA, in NORAD and among NGOs. This would include (a) ensuring that coherent conflict prevention strategies are incorporated into development cooperation arrangements; (b) designing aid programmes by translating NGO and donor *best practices* in conflict situations into recommendations for the providers of aid; and (c) exploring the interface between humanitarian aid and possible conflict escalation with a view of alleviating such occurrences.

The experience from Mozambique and the Sudan indicates that there is a need to strengthen the institutional basis for a more coherent Norwegian policy towards countries that suffer, or have recently suffered from violent internal conflict. While the study’s mandate does not include a proper assessment of existing arrangements, it is argued that the links between political initiatives and humanitarian aid have been at the centre of Norwegian foreign policy and should remain so. It is therefore important to design political and administrative mechanisms that can help focus political and bureaucratic attention to meet the special needs for coordination and flexibility that arise, e.g. during a transitional phase between war and peace.

In the final part of the report, important requirements for “the Norwegian model” to work in the way that it did in Guatemala and Mali are discussed. The importance of mutual trust (partnership), flexibility, endurance, coordination and follow-up is emphasised.



# 1. Introduction

## Subject

This study explores lessons learned from Norwegian assistance to six countries within the broad field that encompasses conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and other peace building efforts. It is primarily a desk study based both on previous evaluations (Mali, Mozambique, Rwanda and Sudan) and on material gathered and analysed by the study team itself.

## Background

Throughout the post-war period Norway has taken an active role in relation to conflict situations in other countries, some of them involving more than one country and some within the boundaries of a single country. During the past decade this commitment has increased, partly due to a more active Norwegian government policy and partly due to important changes in international developments since the end of the cold war. To an increasing extent the world is experiencing serious regional and local conflicts, some of them “unleashed” because the major powers no longer intervene on the basis of a cold war ideology. Many conflicts have their roots in the social structure that prevails in several countries, particularly in the South: boundary disputes that have been smouldering for many years in the wake of the policies of former colonial powers, conflicts about access to key natural resources, and ethnic conflicts of various types. These ethnic conflicts may originate in areas where large ethnic groups do not have a state of their own, but live within the boundaries of several different countries (e.g. the Kurds), or they may arise from bitter strife in multicultural states (e.g. in Sri Lanka). Today we see both an internationalisation of ethnic conflicts and an ethnification of national discord, which adds an ethnic and cultural dimension to already existing geographic, economic and resource conflicts in Africa, Asia and the Middle East, as well as in the Balkans and in Central and Eastern Europe. These conflicts therefore concern not only the problem of how to allocate scarce material resources; they also involve questions of cultural identity.

As a result of such processes, conflict and development have become intertwined in new ways, and the number of complex emergency relief operations has increased significantly. Of a total of 36 peacekeeping operations, 23 have been established since 1987 – six of them in 1993 alone. In the spring of 1995 the UN and NATO were involved in 27 peace-keeping operations, employing 70,000 personnel, ranging from the small observer corps on the border between India and Pakistan to the nearly 26,000 soldiers in the NATO force deployed in the former Yugoslavia.

Norway is one of the countries that from the outset have regularly contributed to UN peacekeeping operations. Recently, many internal conflicts, such as those in Bosnia, Somalia and Rwanda, have gradually changed the character of such operations. Peacekeeping efforts are increasingly coordinated with humanitarian emergency relief, and have in several instances been politically very demanding. The distinction between the UN’s military and social involvement has become less marked, and emergency relief operations are sometimes conducted with the consent of the existing government, and sometimes without (e.g., among the Kurds in Iraq).

In addition to supporting UN operations, Norway has given support to peacekeeping and peace-building measures of various types in many conflict areas. It seems valid to state that global developments have created conditions for a new Norwegian foreign policy activism, based on new links between peace efforts, support for democracy, development aid, and emergency relief, and with the active participation of actors outside the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (“the Norwegian model”). We recognise this new activism best as part of a trend in which the Oslo agreement of 1993 is a key case in point; but Norway has also been an active participant in relation to conflicts in other countries and regions. This activism has also influenced Norwegian development assistance policy. From its origin as a “non-political” project based on altruism and solidarity, humanitarian aid in particular has faced enormous challenges in conflict-affected countries. A steadily increasing share of long-term assistance has been implemented in politically challenging contexts (South Africa, Angola, the West Bank/Gaza, Mozambique, etc.), particularly in connection with the difficult work of rebuilding societies that are in the midst of, or have just experienced deep and lasting conflicts. There is reason to believe that the closer links between Norwegian foreign policy initiatives and Norwegian development assistance arising from this trend will continue.

Internationally, developments are more ambiguous. On the one hand, most OECD countries have been increasing their allocations for conflict-reducing and peace-building measures of various types, and much is being done to pool experience and establish guidelines for more meaningful and stronger involvement (see *DAC Guidelines on Conflict, Peace and Development Cooperation*, OECD, Paris, 1997). On the other hand, there are signs of reduced and poorly coordinated international involvement in situations where the conflicts are advanced and war has broken out. Especially in the US, the “Mogadishu syndrome”, or the lack of political will to become involved – particularly in Africa – after US soldiers were killed and dragged through the streets of Somalia’s capital, seems to limit the ability to make commitments in relation to possible new crises. In Rwanda, Bosnia and former Zaire we have seen that the international community is not truly capable of responding quickly, constructively and with perseverance to violent conflict and its dreadful consequences.

## **Survey of Norwegian support for peace building measures**

During the period 1990-96 Norwegian support for various types of peace building measures has been directed towards some 30 countries. The trend is clear: whereas Norway provided support to 4 countries at a cost of NOK 3.7 million in 1990, the corresponding figures were 22 countries and NOK 167 million in 1996. At the same time, this amounts to only a small proportion of Norway’s total humanitarian aid, where most of the money for peace building measures derives from. Norway has clearly stated that humanitarian aid should be used as far as possible to reduce conflicts and promote peace.

As Annex 2 shows, 32% of the funding has been used to support peace building measures and peace negotiations, while the remainder has been used for various other measures intended to support peace processes, such as demobilisation, support for building up police forces, judicial processes, UN operations and funds of various types, research, seminars and conferences. Direct support for peace negotiations was

provided in connection with 14 conflicts during the period 1990-96. They were: Israel/Palestine, Armenia/Azerbaijan, Burundi, South Africa, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Sri Lanka, Mali, Mexico, Sudan, El Salvador, Somalia and the former Yugoslavia. This does not mean that the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs or other Norwegian participants have themselves been actively involved in all these areas: in several instances funds have been provided for local, foreign or international/multilateral actors for this purpose. The degree and duration of the involvement has also varied considerably. Norway has worked for an extended period on the conflicts in the Middle East, Guatemala, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Sudan and the former Yugoslavia, and gradually also in Burundi, while in the other conflict areas mentioned Norway's inputs have been more short-term or limited in scope.

## **Scope and limitations of the study**

This study tries to summarise important experience that has been gained from Norwegian involvement in six conflicts: *Guatemala, Burundi, Mali, Mozambique, Rwanda and Sudan*.

According to terms of reference, important objectives are to identify whether Norway's involvement has influenced the course of events in the different conflicts and contributed to peaceful solutions, and to evaluate what "tools" and "channels" have been available and effective in influencing the various situations, which ones Norway has used, and what has influenced Norway's choices. The study also attempts to evaluate whether Norway has had the option of using other channels and instruments, and how Norway's efforts and the effect of these efforts compare with those of other countries (see Annex 1).

By agreement with the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs the study has been carried out in Norway. Thus it has not been possible to interview key actors in the six countries concerned. The conclusions that are presented are based on existing evaluation reports and other written sources in addition to interviews.

It is not easy to compare Norway's involvement in these six countries, both because the conflicts are different and because Norwegian involvement has varied considerably, sometimes involving different measures and interventions at various stages in the different conflicts.

In Guatemala, Norway has held a high profile, playing a key role in the efforts that led to a peace agreement in December 1996. In Mali, too, Norwegian participants played an important role in the peace and reconciliation process between the government in Bamako and the rebel forces and other segments of the population in the northern part of the country. Norway has been involved in Sudan ever since the early 1970s, with considerable involvement in emergency relief efforts since 1983, with various roles in peace-promoting efforts – for a brief period as facilitator for talks between the warring factions, but for the most part in a supporting role where others have taken the lead. In Burundi, too, Norway has played an active role, primarily by funding various activities (including peace and reconciliation talks) without direct Norwegian participation, whereas Norway's role has been relatively marginal in Rwanda. In Mozambique, Norway has made substantial contributions since the country's independence (and supported FRELIMO during the struggle for liberation). Norway

was therefore a significant, though secondary, participant in Mozambique's peace process (1990-94).

It is generally difficult to evaluate conflict prevention, management and resolution activities, particularly because the aggregate effects (on social and political processes) of individual interventions (support for conferences, peace groups, etc.) can seldom be unambiguously assessed in relation to other factors, measures and processes that also play a part and have consequences.<sup>1</sup> This means that it will not always be possible to assess Norway's contribution in relation to the contributions and efforts of other actors. It also means more generally that we cannot always be certain what factors have been decisive in relation to a specific political development. For instance, if widespread genocide should not erupt in Burundi, we may not be able to state with any certainty whether it was the efforts of the international community that primarily deterred such a development, or whether other factors were decisive.

With these reservations, we have chosen an approach that first sums up some important lessons the international community has learned in relation to various interventions in internal conflicts and which have gradually been described and analysed in a growing body of literature. We then review the Norwegian efforts in relation to their various objectives, while endeavouring to place it in a context of more general knowledge.

### **Internal conflicts are difficult to resolve**

An important point of departure for evaluating Norwegian contributions in peace-making work is that, on the whole, internal conflicts are difficult to resolve, both because of the intensity of violence that they entail, and because, when the fighting is over, the combatants cannot withdraw into their own self-contained states, but, barring partition, must go on living together. Many such conflicts, such as in Sudan or Angola, persist for decades without any victory or reconciliation. It seems particularly difficult to manage or resolve conflicts where deep-rooted and sensitive identity issues are at stake. The tendency is for those in power to deny the essence of the problem, which often results in their opponents exploiting ethnicity even more actively in order to attain their goals.<sup>2</sup>

Protracted conflicts tend to proliferate. The 1989 *coup d'état* in Sudan (six years after the start of the civil war) resulted in increased splintering of parties and political groups in northern Sudan, whereas internal dissension in southern Sudan became a problem in earnest when the fall of Mengistu in Ethiopia created problems for the SPLA. Such schisms were actively exploited by the regime in Khartoum. Today we can distinguish between at least four dimensions of conflict in Sudan, which are related to each other in various ways:

- a) the conflict between the Khartoum regime and everyone else;
- b) the conflict between North and South;

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<sup>1</sup> For a more thorough discussion, see G. M. Sørbo et al.: *NGOs in Conflict – an Evaluation of International Alert*. Bergen: CMI, 1997 (Report R 1997: 6)

<sup>2</sup> See Francis Deng: *Preventive Diplomacy: The Case of the Sudan*. ACCORD, Preventive Diplomacy Series No 1, 1997.



- c) resource and other conflicts between various ethnic groups in the agro-pastoral savannah belt; and
- d) the conflict between the SPLA and other political groups in southern Sudan.

Another worrisome aspect of many internal conflicts is that autonomous or semi-autonomous militia groups often emerge, led by local warlords who may not have other objectives than their own power and profit. This makes the conflict landscape complex and increases the danger of total collapse of governments that are already weak. Internal conflicts also have a tendency to spread to or influence neighbouring countries, because one of the warring factions may seek support and receive supplies from one or more neighbouring countries, because ethnic groups involved in the conflict may straddle international borders, or because refugees from war zones may end up in neighbouring countries that already have their own problems to deal with.

The fact that conflicts have a tendency to become more complex and regional with time means that *it is important for the international community to get involved as early as possible*. It is normally far more difficult to resolve conflicts that have become militarised. Or, in other words: the price of passivity at earlier stages increases dramatically when the political-military threshold is crossed and groups with strong interests in warfare, weapons procurement and military resource mobilisation gain a foothold. Namibia's transition to independence illustrates the advantages linked to early involvement; likewise the intervention of the SADC countries in Lesotho in 1994.

The complexity of many internal conflicts confirms the prudence of moderate expectations in terms of what external actors can contribute. In fact, most internal conflicts in this century have been "resolved" when one of the sides has won and the other(s) have been defeated or capitulated. However, there are also many instances of serious conflicts which have found peaceful solutions through talks and negotiations, such as Sudan (1972), Angola (1975), Zimbabwe (1980) and Namibia (1989). In other conflicts which have ended in military victory for one of the sides, such as in Ethiopia/Eritrea, external actors have managed, through negotiations, to avoid further carnage in the final hours of the war (the invasion of Addis Ababa).

During the past 10-15 years the international community has been involved in various ways in a great number of conflict areas. In Africa alone this applies to South Africa, Mozambique, Namibia, Zaire/Congo, Angola, Rwanda, Burundi, Somalia, Sudan, Ethiopia, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Mali, Morocco/West-Sahara and Algeria. Some lessons can be learned from these conflicts and involvement which may also serve as a basis for evaluating the Norwegian contributions. Key words here are: *in-depth knowledge and analysis, good networks, long-term perspectives and coordination*.

## **The importance of analysis**

Many actors who intervene in internal conflicts are motivated by good intentions but lack reliable and robust *analysis*. Thus they have problems setting priorities for their own involvement, difficulties evaluating risks, resource requirements and the effect of various measures, and, not least, problems assessing issues of justice as a basis for lasting solutions. Without a thorough understanding of the dynamics of the conflicts and the causal relationships that create, reinforce or reduce conflict, the chances are

great that interventions can actually serve to complicate the crises, perhaps primarily because there is a tendency to look for aspects of a problem postponing the difficult problems underlying the conflict.

Any conflict almost always consists of complex causes that may be difficult to distinguish clearly from each other. One respected typology distinguishes between (a) the lines of division in a society ("channels"), (b) the warring factions' objectives ("targets"), (c) factors that spark a conflict ("triggers"), and (d) factors which influence the scope, intensity and duration of a conflict once it has erupted ("catalysts").<sup>3</sup> For instance, when conflict re-erupts following a cease-fire and the signing of peace accords, that is often because the channels in society remain unchanged; or it may be that none of the disputants has really altered his objectives. If that is the case, new triggers can easily result in renewed warfare.

It is decisive for any intervention, measure or negotiation attempt that the "right" things are done at the "right" time. Many external actors who try to negotiate fail because they have not sufficiently understood that conflicts must be "ripe" for negotiations; it is a vital prerequisite that the warring parties have begun to realise that they will all suffer if the war continues. On the whole, negotiation attempts can only succeed if the parties to a conflict are willing to live together non-violently. This means that the measures chosen must be linked to a thorough analysis of a given conflict and its various processes, dimensions and actors. This analysis must also include external actors who have vested interests in or may influence the conflict.

### **The need for a long-term perspective**

External actors should have a *long-term perspective* on their own involvement. Successful intervention usually depends on comprehensive, multi-faceted, time-consuming processes. Solutions are likely to be temporary unless they are based on all-inclusive policies that accommodate the aspirations and fears harboured by all or most of the citizens of a country. Solutions that restore the rights of minorities or majorities (as in South Africa) previously excluded should not result in new groups being formed that in turn feel excluded. This will merely sow the seeds of future conflict and instability.

Political solutions that involve the active participation of civil society are likely to be more durable than agreements made solely between political élites. Such participation not only ensures that agreements enjoy broad support; it may also introduce options that could not be launched by political leaders for political reasons. However, working with many different groups in a society is time-consuming (as we have seen in Northern Ireland).

There are other reasons why it is important to have a long-term perspective when taking part in peace-building efforts. A negotiated settlement to a civil war, as in Mozambique, South Africa or Angola, is only one of many steps in a protracted process of bringing war to an end. One of the most important lessons from Africa has been that an agreement does not necessarily signal a lasting peace. Despite a

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<sup>3</sup> David Dessler, 1994: "How to sort causes in the study of environmental change and violent conflict" in N. Graeger & D. Smith (eds.): *Environment, Poverty, Conflict*. PRIO Report No. 2. Oslo: International Peace Research Institute (PRIO).

negotiated settlement in Angola in 1991, fighting was resumed when UNITA's presidential candidate lost the election. So too, in Rwanda, a reasonably sound peace settlement was reached in 1993, before the April 1994 cataclysm. In other words, clinching an agreement to end violence is just one step in a broader process of conflict de-escalation. The implementation of a peace treaty is often riddled with uncertainty, and may include demobilisation, demining, repatriation of refugees, economic reconstruction and elections – each of them critical phases in de-escalation. While elections may serve to legitimise the terms of an accord through regular participation, they are not sufficient in themselves, as we see from Angola. There, elections were held before the security situation was satisfactory (including the demobilisation of UNITA). Sisk writes: “Clearly one of the most important failings of mediation in Africa's civil wars has been the short attention span that the international community has given to effecting long-term reconciliation and reconstruction”.<sup>4</sup>

### **The need for coordination**

Another vital lesson from various types of assistance in conflict situations is that they must be *better coordinated*. A single mediator, whether a person, organisation or state, can seldom succeed alone. Today it is more productive to think in terms of coalitions of mediators working together to bring a civil war to an end. Better coordination of mediation strategies through all phases of the escalation and de-escalation of civil wars is an urgent task for improving the likelihood of bringing such wars to an end. Similarly, there must be improved coordination between those who mediate agreements and those charged with implementing them. One of the criticisms of peace implementation in Rwanda was the lack of continuity between the mediators (the OAU and Tanzania) and the implementation force (UNAMIR). Efficient coordination, such as that of the Sant'Egidio-led process for Mozambique, can prove decisive in bringing a war to an end when the underlying will of the parties is to settle. When coordination fails, the parties can play one mediator off against another, or use a parallel mediation process to divert attention away from another (Sudan). Similarly, mediation efforts are bolstered when members of the coalition harmonise their use of carrots and sticks to get parties to settle and to implement agreements. In Angola, UNITA's decision to finally agree and abide by a negotiated settlement, was the result of carefully coordinated diplomacy on the part of regional leaders such as Mandela and Mugabe as well as the threat of sanctions imposed by UNITA's previous patron, the United States.

### **Different actors - different roles**

There are many instances of individuals or non-governmental organisations playing an important role as negotiators or facilitators for talks, such as the World Council of Churches in Sudan (1971-72), the Sant'Egidio Community and the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Beira in Mozambique (1989) and Jimmy Carter in Ethiopia/Eritrea. In many cases it is precisely the lack of government affiliation that affords strength and proves advantageous, because such mediators can have close contacts with both insurgents and governments and can be used or dismissed without anyone losing face and without diplomatic complications. However, such actors do not generally have the political and economic resources that are often necessary to pressure the parties to

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<sup>4</sup> Timothy D. Sisk 1997: “Mediating Africa's Civil Conflicts – A User's Guide”, in G. M. Sørbo & P. Vale: *Out of Conflict: From War to Peace in Africa*. Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet.

accept a peaceful solution, or the resources that are required to implement a peace agreement. The agreements reached in Mozambique, Ethiopia and Eritrea were reached as a result of close contact between private and official actors. An important lesson, therefore, is the critical task of blending private and official mediation.

## **Humanitarian assistance and conflict**

The Chr. Michelsen Institute has studied the relationship between humanitarian assistance and violent conflict (“Humanitarian Assistance and Conflict”, report to the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1997). One important conclusion is that humanitarian assistance cannot serve as a substitute for political action. For the most part, humanitarian assistance has only a limited moderating effect on political forces and violence in an area of conflict. There is also increasing awareness that it may have negative consequences: either by contributing to the prolongation of war, by increasing the vulnerability of the population through geographic concentration (food relief) or by destroying the basis for local, long-term coping and survival strategies. This means that it is often unrealistic and unproductive to expect humanitarian assistance to reduce existing violence or to prevent the eruption of open violence in a tense area. Not only does this create false expectations; it may also encourage political passivity towards the conflict and its underlying causes. It may also, as described above, cause the situation to deteriorate. There is, e.g., little doubt that the military intervention in Somalia and many NGOs helped refuel and underwrite an extortionist, militarised political economy in many Somalian towns. Much of the benefit was captured by General Aidid and his allied militias Mogadishu South.

For such reasons the principle “first do no harm” has become a common approach among NGOs. Within this perspective, it is often conceived that humanitarian assistance can best serve to mitigate conflict (rather than having negative consequences) by centring efforts on supporting local capacities for peace and development.

## **Division of labour and capacity building**

The crises in countries such as Somalia and Rwanda have shown that the international community has serious problems responding swiftly, constructively and sustainably to violent internal conflicts that arise throughout the world. Thus it is important to establish a prudent, realistic division of labour between various actors, from the UN and the regional organisations (such as the OAU) to government institutions and NGOs that are involved in conflict management. In addition to the work that is being done to strengthen cooperation between international actors (e.g., the concept of “layered response”<sup>5</sup> it is essential to build local capacities and to identify and support “anchors of reconstruction” – organisations and individuals with close links to civil society. This approach aims to rebuild the state from the bottom up instead of relying solely on armed groups as the point of contact. After all, conflict management must be seen as the essential, on-going business of governance. It is the responsibility of government, parliament, state institutions, the judiciary, local authorities and local communities. Somalia, however, is an example of the problems that arise when the international community tries to revive a central state even though the centrifugal

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<sup>5</sup> Tom Vraalsen, 1997: “Thinking about Peace and Peace Making in Africa”, in G. M. Sørbo & P. Vale (eds.): *Out of Conflict – From War to Peace in Africa*. Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet.

forces are far stronger. This exacerbated the conflicts, as the competing warlords positioned themselves to take control of an aid-dependent country.

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In the following chapters (2-7) we will apply some of the considerations described in this introductory chapter to the assessment of Norwegian assistance in conflict situations in Guatemala, Mali, Sudan, Mozambique, Rwanda and Burundi. At the end of each chapter we assess the Norwegian contribution. In chapter 8 we present a more overall assessment, concluding with lessons learned that seem relevant and crucial for a continued strong Norwegian involvement in peace-making and peace-keeping efforts.

## **2. Norway's role in the peace process in Guatemala**

On 29 December 1996 an Agreement on a Firm and Lasting Peace was signed in Guatemala City between the Guatemalan guerrilla movement, URNG, and the Guatemalan government peace commission, COPAZ. At that time, the civil war had lasted for 36 years. Six years earlier, in 1990, the foundation for the conflict resolution process was laid with the signing of "The Oslo Agreement". Between these two agreements was a protracted and sometimes dramatic negotiating process that resulted in a series of subsidiary agreements and culminated in the final peace treaty. Norway played an important role in this process. A more thorough analysis of the peace process and Norway's role in it is presented in Annex 3.

### **The conflict and its roots**

The prolonged civil war in Guatemala began after a group of officers failed in a revolt against the government in 1960. During the years 1960-96 nearly 180,000 people died, while 40,000 "disappeared", 400 villages were completely destroyed, at least 100,000 people fled to Mexico and some 1 million became refugees in their own country. The population of Guatemala is approx. 10 million.

The conflict in Guatemala has its roots in a traditional social order characterised by poverty, injustice and repression. Guatemalan society is deeply split along socio-economic and ethnic lines. 3 per cent of the population owns nearly 70 per cent of arable land. According to World Bank statistics, 75 per cent of Guatemalans live in poverty, of them 58 per cent in absolute poverty. The Mayan majority (60 per cent) have not only been exploited economically; they have also been subject to a political culture of discrimination and exclusion, underpinned by a state which has promoted the ladino minority's culture, values and interests. About 75-80 per cent of the Mayan population is illiterate. Decade after decade, all demands for reform have been quelled at the outset, often with great brutality and severe violations of basic human rights.

However, it was middle-class ladinos who established the first guerrilla groups in the 1960s, influenced by Marxist ideology and inspired by Fidel Castro's Cuba. Gradually the Maya became increasingly politicised as well, as a response to decades of oppression and inspired by liberation theology and development projects supported by the churches. In the late 1970s, during the government of Kjell Laugerud García, there was a limited opening for democratic opposition, followed by a brutal backlash of massacres and systematic oppression. By 1983 the scale of terror had made the Guatemalan government an international pariah. With the rebel movement, which had joined forces under a single umbrella (URNG) in 1982, severely weakened, a significant sector of the army saw a strategic advantage in returning the country to civilian rule. The civilian regime established under the leadership of President Cerezo gradually allowed popular organisations in Guatemala, and the human rights situation improved somewhat.

After the peace process had been initiated, the guerrilla leaders, URNG, and the government peace commission, COPAZ, were the formal negotiating partners. URNG, which stands for "Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity", comprises a

joint command for the guerrilla movement consisting of different organisations. The goal of the URNG is democracy, with opportunities for political participation and the right to organise for all groups without discrimination. The URNG emphasises the need for socio-economic “restructuring”, with land reform as a key element.

In a historical perspective the military must be considered the guerrillas’ prime adversary. The military’s objectives have been expressed through the policies they have pursued and through their treatment of the civil and armed opposition in Guatemala. They have traditionally not wanted changes that could weaken the position and role of the power élite in society. During the negotiations, they pressed for a separation of the operational (demobilisation) and the substantial negotiations, wishing to negotiate an agreement on demobilisation as quickly as possible. The URNG, on the other hand, claimed that the parties would make no progress if they did not address such substantial themes as the socio-economic situation, the overall situation for the Maya, human rights and the role of the army in a democratic society, before an agreement on demobilisation could be reached.

### **The peace process from 1989-93**

In August 1987 a Central American peace plan, Esquipilas II, was signed by the presidents of Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Costa Rica, on behalf of the governments of those five countries. In addition to the sections that dealt with relations between these countries, the plan also contained declarations on domestic affairs, such as the need for national reconciliation, ceasefire, democratisation and free elections. No representatives of the guerrillas or the opposition participated in the signing of these agreements, but in Guatemala a national reconciliation commission was established (CRN). The peace process in Central America was actively supported by the CONTADORA group, consisting of Mexico, Venezuela, Columbia and Panama, of which the first three later joined the Group of Friends of the Guatemalan Peace Process.

In 1989 the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) sent an ecumenical delegation to Guatemala. Their purpose was to explore whether there was any will to negotiate between the parties to the conflict, the guerrilla and the government/the military. The answer was affirmative, which must be seen in the context of other developments in Central America at the end of the Cold War (the changed role of the U.S., the collapse of communism around the globe, the peace treaty in El Salvador, the Sandinistas’ defeat in the elections in Nicaragua, etc.) as well as the fact that the war in Guatemala had developed into a war of attrition with neither winners or losers.

The Lutheran World Federation has had a long-standing involvement in Latin America, particularly in Central America. From its programme office in El Salvador the LWF had followed developments in Guatemala closely and had good contact with the various groups in the conflict from its head office in Geneva.

The LWF decided to take the initiative for a meeting, and the LWF Norwegian Secretary General, Gunnar Stålsett, contacted the then Minister of Foreign Affairs Kjell Magne Bondevik and State Secretary Knut Vollebæk, who agreed that the meeting could be held in Oslo. Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) and its Guatemala

representative Petter Skauen were drawn into the preparations, in part by recruiting participants from the government and the armed forces for the Oslo meeting.

Norwegian Church Aid has been operating in Guatemala since 1976, and thus had not only a particularly good understanding of the political, social and economic situation in the country, but had itself experienced the problems and the considerations that must be taken into account in a difficult human rights situation. During the particularly violent years from 1980-82, NCA had also begun to recognise that peace was necessary in order to accomplish anything else in Guatemala.

A combination of the LWF initiative, Norwegian Church Aid's sustained presence and contacts in Guatemala, and the willingness of Norwegian political leaders and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to contribute to peace efforts by making the necessary arrangements made the Oslo meeting possible. This meeting resulted in the Oslo Agreement of 30 March 1990, in which the main point was a distinction between the substantial and the operational (military, ceasefire, demobilisation) negotiating themes and an agreement that the substantial issues had to be dealt with first.

Negotiations continued during the period 1991-93. The peace process took place on several levels, both in formal negotiations between CRN and URNG (the front channel) and in a series of consultations with various groups from the civil sector, including four major ecumenical hearings (the back channel). Norway actively supported efforts in both channels, by providing development assistance and political follow-up.

The formal negotiations were moved to Mexico in 1991, where the Norwegian embassy under Ambassador Rolf Berg played an important role in monitoring and coordinating developments. Much of the Norwegian support for the peace process in Guatemala was channelled through the embassy in Mexico. There were also separate contacts between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the parties to the conflict, for instance when the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Rigoberta Menchu in 1992. In the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, State Secretary Jan Egeland played a key role until the final agreement was signed in 1996. The many talks with the most important participants in the conflict were an instrument in the effort to keep negotiations going and in attempts to prevail upon the parties when the fronts became intransigent. Thus Norway was active in the peace process on several levels.

During the negotiations in Mexico, Norway did not have a formal role at first, but in 1992 joined the Group of Friends of the Guatemalan Peace Process, which consisted of Columbia, Spain, the US, Mexico, Norway and Venezuela.

After a subsidiary agreement on democratisation was signed in July 1991, the peace process was threatened by a crisis. This crisis culminated in May 1993 when President Serrano of Guatemala attempted a *coup d'état*, suspended the constitution and gave orders that the parliament, the Supreme Court and the constitutional court should be dissolved. The "autocoup", however, was not successful, and Serrano was replaced by the former Human Rights Ombudsman (de León Carpio). A peace commission, COPAZ, replaced CRN, which was dissolved.



The problems during this phase were primarily due to disagreements about a subsidiary agreement on human rights and plans to establish a truth commission. However, work continued in the civil sector and efforts were made, not least by Norway, to involve the UN in the negotiations. At a time when negotiations were largely at a standstill, Norway continued to play an active role by supporting the process economically and politically, affording the parties both time and resources. The URNG increased their mobility and legitimacy when they were issued visas to the US, to visit both the UN in New York and Washington, D.C. These trips were financed by Norway.

## **Negotiations are completed – 1994-1996**

During this period substantial progress was made in the formal negotiations. Norway continued to play an active role on several levels throughout the period. The Norwegian contributions to the negotiations, which took place in Mexico, were made through the embassy in Mexico and through the Group of Friends of the Guatemalan Peace Process, which assumed an increasingly important role in the process. Norway also hosted the negotiations in 1994 and the signing ceremony for the ceasefire agreement in 1996. One particularly important Norwegian contribution was to invite representatives of the Guatemalan armed forces to Norway (a decision made by Jan Egeland) and later the members of the big landowners' association CACIF. Awareness of the peace process increased in civil society, and Norway provided financial support for a series of ecumenical hearings, as well as hosting one of them. Development assistance to Guatemala increased, and a memorandum was issued on the focus of Norwegian development assistance to Guatemala. Contact between Norway and Guatemala was further increased in 1996 when Norway established an embassy in Guatemala headed by a chargé d'affaires. This was expanded to a full-scale embassy in 1997. Guatemala also established an embassy in Norway at about the same time.

A new feature of the situation from 1994 was that the UN Secretary-General's representative Jean Arnault was formally assigned the role of negotiator in the conflict. Not until the UN acquired a formal, operative role did the process gain momentum. Three subsidiary agreements were signed the first year, dealing with human rights, the return of refugees and the establishment of a truth commission. Two of them were signed in Norway. It was decided that the UN would establish a verification team for human rights (MINUGUA), which was not accomplished until November 1994, despite pressure applied by Norway, among others. Norway supplied USD 1 million in funding for MINUGUA in 1995.

During this period Norway intensified its contacts with the military in Guatemala, in part through reciprocal visits, not least to break the isolation surrounding the military. For the military, who felt that everyone was against them, Norway served as a safety valve, which helped reduce tension, particularly in relation to the mandate of the truth commission. Mexico's ambassador to Norway emphasises the contact with the Guatemalan military as being one of the most important Norwegian contributions to the peace process in Guatemala. Norway also had close contact with other important groups, including CACIF and various political parties.

In 1994 and 1995 other subsidiary agreements were signed, dealing with human rights, the resettlement of population groups uprooted by the armed conflict and the identity and rights of indigenous peoples. The 1996 election results increased the political influence of reformist groups within business and industry. The New Guatemalan Democratic Front (FDNG), a broad-based, left-of-centre party dominated by activists from the unions and popular organisation was, at least tacitly, supported by URNG.

A major breakthrough in the peace process came in the same year, when the final subsidiary agreements were signed. The first of them dealt with socio-economic aspects and the agrarian situation, including the establishment of a land trust fund to promote the access of tenant farmers and landless peasants to land ownership. The second subsidiary agreement dealt with the strengthening of civil society and the role of the armed forces in a democratic society. Then came the ceasefire agreement (signed in Oslo on 4 December 1996), the agreements on constitutional reform and the electoral regime, and the agreement on the basis for the legal integration of URNG in Guatemalan society. The final peace accord was signed in Guatemala City on 29 December 1996.

### **Norwegian development assistance to Guatemala**

Norwegian NGOs have been active in Guatemala since the 1976 earthquake. Three of them, Norwegian Church Aid, Norwegian People's Aid, and Redd Barna, have their own representatives in Guatemala, whereas the Norwegian Refugee Council (which had its own representative until April 1996) is represented by Project Counselling Service.

Guatemala has never been a main partner country for Norwegian development cooperation, nor did Norway support national, official programmes in Guatemala until the peace process had been initiated. A Norwegian delegation from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and NORAD (the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation) travelled to Guatemala in 1994. A memorandum on new guidelines for assistance to Guatemala was approved in May 1994 ("Principles of Norwegian development assistance in Guatemala"). According to this memorandum, the primary objective of Norwegian development assistance to Guatemala is to underpin the on-going peace and democratisation process. On this basis two main priority areas were established: (a) support for democratisation and political development; and (b) support for especially vulnerable groups, in particular the indigenous population. The memorandum recommends drawing on the Norwegian NGOs, a recommendation that led to the submission of a joint application for funding and the swift approval of a "peace package" for Guatemala.

In addition to providing funds for the Norwegian NGOs, which have conducted a broad range of activities in Guatemala, particularly to benefit vulnerable groups (child labourers, street children, refugees, small farmers, etc.), Norway has established cooperation with local NGOs and UN organisations. Especially high priority has been given to supporting the process of repatriation through the UNHCR and the UN verification team for human rights, MINUGUA. The UNDP has also received considerable funding from Norway for its work in Guatemala, including NOK 23 million for a demobilisation fund in 1996.

As a result of Norway's participation in the peace process, development assistance to Guatemala increased sharply during the period 1990-96, from NOK 16 million in 1990 to more than NOK 97 million in 1996. The greatest increase, naturally enough, was within the areas (a) peace building measures, democracy and human rights, and (b) humanitarian aid, including aid to refugees.

## **Norway's role in the peace process**

Norway played a substantial role in the peace process in Guatemala. This was due to several factors:

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) under the leadership of Gunnar Stålsett brought the first negotiations to Norway in 1990. This occurred at a point in time when the conflict was ripe for negotiations and the various parties were eager to find political solutions. The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs responded quickly and affirmatively to the request, and in Guatemala the presence of Norwegian Church Aid made the process possible. Confidence in Petter Skauen among different segments of the population and various political groupings in Guatemala, his personal contacts and his thorough knowledge of the situation were fundamental both for the implementation of the Oslo meeting and for the ensuing process.

b) Keeping the process alive was very difficult during several phases. Political resolution was exhibited by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, particularly its State Secretary Jan Egeland, by maintaining Norwegian economic and political support for the peace process even during periods of prolonged stagnation and crisis. While NORAD played a constructive role by translating political guidelines into concrete programmes, strong involvement, patience and perseverance also characterised the efforts of Norwegian Church Aid, the embassy in Mexico and LWF. Through this network, Norway acquired close contact with the key actors in the Guatemalan peace process, including the military. This is what distinguishes Norway from the other countries that played a role in the peace process.

c) Norway's role must also be viewed in light of the participation of other countries and institutions in the peace process. In the Group of Friends of the Guatemalan Peace Process, Mexico in particular played a key role, by hosting meetings and as headquarters for the URNG leadership. Mexico, however, was not a prime mover in the peace process in other ways, not wanting to be regarded as a country that intervened in the internal affairs of neighbouring countries. Norway applied active pressure to get the parties to accept a more active role for the UN in the negotiating process, and also supported, through economic means, the establishment of MINUGUA at a critical point in the process. As a small country, without strategic interests and pursuing a foreign policy that promotes peace and development, Norway obtained the required credibility in Guatemala.

d) Norway also applied pressure to get the government to accept the necessity of negotiating on substantial issues – i.e., on the root causes of the war – before they could expect the guerrilla to sign an agreement on demobilisation. This was a crucial step. At the same time, the Norwegian participants had relatively clear ideas of how far the government/the military could be pressured if an agreement was to be reached.

On the whole Norway pursued a policy in the peace process which emphasised efforts to put the problems that had caused the war on the negotiating agenda, balanced against a desire for results and the conviction that continued war is worse than an imperfect peace agreement.

e) The Norwegian participants also directed their efforts towards including the most important parties to the conflict in the peace process by bringing them together and keeping the lines of communication open. Development assistance and political follow-up went hand in hand throughout the peace process. Negotiations, visits, informal meetings, talks and advisory measures were financed from Norwegian aid funds and followed up by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, NORAD, Norwegian Church Aid and the Lutheran World Federation. During the years 1990-96, total development assistance to Guatemala increased, in particular assistance channelled directly to the mediation and peace process. Norway has also demonstrated the ability and willingness to follow up the peace agreement, in particular measures related to democratisation and human rights, as well as continued support for vulnerable groups.

## **Overall assessment**

An international evaluation of the peace process in Guatemala states: "Outside of the Americas, it was the government of Norway which played the most constructive facilitating role in the Guatemalan peace process." (Negotiating Rights: "The Guatemalan Peace Process", Conciliation Resources, London 1997, p. 94).

It is important to note that Norway was active in the peace process on *several levels*. The many talks with the parties to the conflict were an important tool in keeping negotiations going and in efforts to temper the participants when the fronts were intransigent. The process was also *well coordinated* both internally among Norwegian participants, within the Group of Friends which Norway joined, and in relation to the UN, which was drawn into the process and which played a key role in attaining a positive result. During a period in which negotiations broke down, Norway sustained its support and high level of activity. The Norwegian contribution was characterised by the involvement of individuals, a long-term perspective, thorough knowledge and good networks. In many ways the peace process in Guatemala can be seen as an ideal type or example of "the Norwegian model".

At the same time, it is important to recognise that the signing of the peace treaty for Guatemala was not the end, but rather the beginning of the peace process in that country. The murder of Bishop Gerardi on 26 April 1998, two days after he presented the report "Guatemala – never again", was a serious blow to the process. There are strong indications that it will be difficult to implement many of the measures promised by the peace accord, with its ten subsidiary agreements. The accord in itself has not changed the country's power structure or the living conditions of the ordinary Guatemalan. Thus it is vital that Norway and other countries persist in their efforts to ensure the future of the peace process.

### **3. Development assistance and peace-building in Mali**

Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) contributed to the peace process in Mali during a period extending from 1992 to 1996. This organisation's peace-making efforts were evaluated in *Norwegian Church Aid's Humanitarian and Peacemaking Work in Mali* by the International Peace Research Institute in Oslo, PRIO, in 1997. Their report seeks to describe the contributions of Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) and explain how they were possible. This chapter is based on that report. We have also been able to make use of Kåre Lode's account in *Civil Society Takes Responsibility. Popular Involvement in the Peace Process in Mali* (Lode 1997), as well as memoranda from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

#### **The Conflict and its causes**

Armed conflict in Mali began in the North in 1990. It involved a total of five armed ethnic movements and the regime (later the interim government) and lasted until 1995. Six to eight thousand people were killed as a result of the conflict, while some 150,000 were forced to flee, in addition to the internally displaced (Lode 1997:47). Internally displaced persons were estimated by UNHCR at approx. 3,000 in 1995 (UNHCR 1995). A number of underlying structural causes, combined with various triggers, led to the conflict.

The underlying causes originate in an unequal distribution of resources and unequal access to political channels. The people of North Mali, who are mostly nomads from various ethnic groups,<sup>1</sup> have been dominated by the people of the South since colonisation.<sup>2</sup> Since independence in 1960 only two North Malians have held cabinet posts, and the political influence of the population in the North has been marginal. Moreover, North Malians have held very few positions in central and local government and in diplomacy. The Tuaregs have also been denied access to the national military academy (Lode 1997:12). Political decisions at all levels were made by representatives of the government and were highly centralised.

The widespread dominance by the South in government and administrative posts was one of the factors that kindled dissatisfaction in the North and the feeling of being "colonised" for the second time (PRIO 1997:9). The government consistently neglected the North when distributing development assistance and economic resources, and the leaders in the North were convinced that this discrimination was due to their status as "ethnic minorities".

The economic and political marginalisation of North Mali, which led to the war, was primarily triggered by three factors. The drought in 1984-85 was one such trigger. North Mali was particularly hard hit; much of the livestock that belonged to the Tuaregs died, and there was mass migration to Algeria, Libya, Nigeria and the Ivory

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<sup>1</sup> Tuaregs and Moors are the dominant ethnic groups in the North. The Tuareg population numbers between 300,000 and 400,000, while there are some 75,000 Moors (Lode 1997:11).

<sup>2</sup> In 1958, before Mali attained independence, the local leaders asked de Gaulle to grant North Mali status as a separate republic. This request was denied.

Coast. The government's weakness and lack of preparedness for this situation led to increased demands for political change.

International economic pressure in the early 1980s was the second trigger. Increased pressure from the IMF and other international creditors for structural adjustment resulted in social unrest, demonstrations and strikes.<sup>3</sup> Growing poverty, public sector debt and structural adjustment programmes, combined with difficult environmental conditions, had profound effects on the north of Mali. As in other parts of the Sahel region, the consequences were far too great for local survival strategies to cope with (PRIO 1997:12).

A third trigger was the growing political opposition in the South against Traoré's authoritarian government, combined with violent provocations by the government. Early in 1990, 18,000 illegal immigrants (Tuaregs) were expelled from Algeria and returned to Niger and Mali. These refugees were convinced that the Niger authorities had promised them the necessary means to survive after their return, which the Niger government denied. There were also rumours among the refugees that international aid intended for them had not reached them once again. Several violent incidents took place between Niger soldiers and nomads, and some of them fled to Mali, where they were imprisoned by Malian authorities. This led to the first attack by the Popular Movement of Azawad (MPA) on 28-29 June 1990, when armed Tuaregs liberated prisoners, leaving behind a number of dead bodies. Early in 1991, 31 nomad leaders were executed by the government. This, combined with indications that the government wanted to enter into negotiations due to pressure from civil society, induced the four major rebel movements to forge a common front, Movements and United Fronts of Azawad (MFUA) (PRIO 1997:11-12).

## **Peace negotiations and agreements**

The first peace agreement between the rebel forces and the government was signed in Algeria in 1991. Traoré's regime collapsed that same year, and non-implementation of the treaty, combined with pressure from civil society, led to a new agreement, *the National Pact*, signed by MFUA and the transitional government on 11 April 1992 in Mali.

The 1992 peace agreement might have led to peace if the UN and the international community had provided funds for infrastructure and other development projects, but this did not happen (Lode 1997:35). The general state of insecurity in the North, and the fact that the National Pact did not guarantee the safety and interests of the involved groups, resulted in the formation of a new rebel movement (MPMGM) and renewed fighting in the following years. Whereas the years 1992-93 were relatively peaceful, violence and armed clashes increased in intensity again in 1994.

In 1995, local leaders from the Songhay and Tuareg populations took the initiative to end violence and create peace by organising intercommunity meetings. The first meetings were sporadic and ad hoc in nature, but from November 1994 they were

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<sup>3</sup> Mali has one of the world's most aid-dependent economies, with 37% of government expenditure covered by foreign aid. The most important donors are France, the US, and Germany. The Netherlands, Italy and Japan also provide considerable support. In addition, Mali has received military training and equipment from the former Soviet Union, France and the US.

better organised. In 1995 there was a “wave” of intercommunity meetings in northern Mali. It was these meetings Kåre Lode and his group facilitated, which later led to peace in Mali (PRIO 1997:31). After the fall of Traoré, military discipline was weak, but early in 1995 the government gained control of the army and expressed a desire for peace. Thereafter the rebel leaders also supported the process (Lode 1997:25,49). War-weariness seems to have been the most important factor leading to peace in the North (PRIO 1997:20).

## **Norwegian Church Aid's work in Mali**

Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) started its work in the Gourma region in Northern Mali by providing humanitarian aid during the 1984 drought and famine. In 1987 this humanitarian aid was replaced by long-term development assistance. NCA's peace-making work can be divided into two phases. The target groups for development assistance were primarily Tuaregs, Moors and Songhays.

From 1992 to 1995, when the conflict spread to the Gourma region, NCA started to move in the direction of conflict resolution, while continuing its development work in the region.<sup>4</sup> During the second phase, from 1995 to 1996, NCA and Kåre Lode initiated explicit efforts to resolve the conflict by supporting and facilitating the organisation of intercommunity meetings (PRIO 1997:14).

### **The period 1992 to 1995**

The first phase began after the conflict reached the Gourma region in 1992 and lasted until 1995. A group at the head office in Mali became involved in peace-making activities, including local employees and two or three persons from the Norwegian NCA staff, the Norwegian responsible for West Africa at NCA headquarters in Oslo and the Resident Representative in Mali, Terje Eltervåg. Their activities included building up contacts and networks for information and personal communication with the main actors in the conflict and with influential local leaders. These activities were kept secret from the rest of the staff out of concern for the security of the local employees (PRIO 1997:23).

NCA employees facilitated conciliatory talks between various parties to the conflict who until then had not communicated with each other. They made the arrangements for the meetings and conveyed information to the government of all signs of change towards peace on the part of the rebel leaders. Three Malians who had previously held key positions at the NCA office were particularly important in this process: Zeidan Ag Sidalamine (secretary-general of the FPLA), Zahaby Ould Sidi Mohamed (secretary-general of the FIAA) and Mohamed Ag Erlaf (minister in the Malian government since the Tamanrasset agreement of 1991).

NCA not only facilitated the flow of information within Mali, but also participated in international fora, thus helping put the Mali conflict on the international agenda. The international efforts were organised by the Office of the Coordinator for West Africa at NCA headquarters in Oslo (PRIO 1997:23).

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<sup>4</sup> NCA's long-term development assistance programme in Mali has largely remained the same since 1987, consisting of 25 different projects in 55 villages. In 1996 NCA expanded its activities to include rehabilitation projects – primarily focused on the reintegration of refugees (PRIO 1997:20).

NCA's decision to stay in Mali during this period was problematic. Throughout the entire period, the safety of the employees at the NCA Mali headquarters was in danger. At times during the war, NCA was viewed as partial, primarily because two of NCA's staff members resigned to take leading positions in the rebel movement (Lode 1997:38). Moreover, many of NCA's four-wheel-drive vehicles were stolen by the rebels. This was used by the Malian press as evidence that NCA was collaborating with the rebels (PRIO 1997:21). In May 1992, five NCA employees were killed, and two more were killed in 1995. The rebel movement was responsible for one of the deaths in 1992, when they attacked an NCA base to steal motor vehicles. The Malian army responded to this incident by killing five Tuaregs who were employed by NCA, claiming that they were rebel sympathisers.

NCA has a policy of not employing anyone who belongs to a rebel movement (PRIO 1997:21). The government was also aware that the accusations were false, and that Terje Eltervåg and Njell Lofthus (head of NCA's Africa desk in Oslo) had acted as "go-betweens" between the warring factions on many occasions, making valuable contributions for peace. Because the government had confidence in NCA, and because of NCA's position in northern Mali, the government wanted NCA to play a more active role in the peace process. In October 1994 NCA decided to assume such a role, and Kåre Lode and NCA began preparations for this work.

The decision to pursue peace-making efforts as well as development assistance work was not unproblematic for NCA. It bred conflict and discussion between NCA-Oslo and NCA-Bamako on key issues related to the situation. For instance, what relationship should NCA have to the Malian government? Could NCA continue to provide aid for Tuaregs in the Gourma region without being considered partial and accused of supporting armed rebels who were fighting against the government?

NCA has a reference group that is consulted on situations in which the organisation is involved in peace and reconciliation processes. With input from Mali, this group prepared a strategy and convinced the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to provide funding for the project. The plan was later modified, and a new strategy was designed in Mali, primarily by Malians.

#### The "Kåre Lode Initiative" (August 1995 to March 1996)

The second phase of NCA's peace-making efforts began in 1995 and has been called the "Kåre Lode Initiative". NCA engaged Kåre Lode as a consultant during the period from 20 August 1995 to 29 March 1996 to take part in reconciliation work in the Gourma region. His task was to help organise intercommunity meetings. NCA's resident representative in Bamako supported the peace project, but did not want NCA to exercise formal responsibility. Thus Kåre Lode's contribution was designed as an independent project.

The project was funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with NOK 450,000 as initial funding. Later, an additional NOK 5 million was granted, of which NOK 400,000 was used for the Kåre Lode project while the remainder was for rehabilitation projects (PRIO 1997:24,27).



Kåre Lode had intimate knowledge of Mali and the North through his work as a missionary and later as Resident Representative of NCA Mali, but he had not been involved in NCA's Mali programmes during the war. This was advantageous, as no one would associate him with a particular group or incident (Lode 1997:39). The NCA resident representative in Mali also organised an information campaign in 1995 to create a more nuanced picture of NCA's development assistance work, and to show that the accusations that NCA was partial in the conflict were not based in reality.

Lode organised a committee to help him plan and arrange the intercommunity meetings. This committee designed a strategy for the meetings, in which the local community or groups within a single geographic area, who were dependent on the same resources and who shared a marketplace, would meet in order to try to solve the problems that had arisen during, or been exacerbated by, the war. The focus was on such things as finding joint ways of dealing with armed robbery, the reintegration of demobilised soldiers and refugees, storing weapons, conflicts about land and water resources, etc. (Lode 1997:42). Civil servants, members of the army, politicians and leaders from the rebel movements could only take part in the meetings as observers. The objective was to return to the communities' traditional fora for dialogue, without intermediaries, in order to resume relations between them. The government supported this strategy for two reasons: it could promote reconciliation and consolidate the peace, and it was in line with the official policy of decentralisation (Lode 1997:42).

NCA and Kåre Lode never took part in the peace negotiations per se, but played a part in reducing the level of conflict and initiating a positive process in the local communities (Lode 1997:9).

Kåre Lode's work coincided with an increasing desire for peace in Mali. As previously mentioned, local leaders and representatives of the rebel groups had already organised a few community meetings, independently of NCA's initiative. This movement was further strengthened through the work of Lode and his committee.

After having arranged six intercommunity meetings, NCA was advised to draw other partners into cooperation on the peace and reconciliation programme in order to attain broader international support for the process (Lode 1997:41). This was partially motivated by the need for funding, and partly because of previous accusations that NCA favoured the Tuaregs (PRIO 1997). This led to the creation of Fonds d'Aide pour la Réconciliation et la consolidation de la Paix dans le Nord Mali (FAR-Nord) based on an initiative by Lode and the head of the German aid programme in North Mali. Canada and Switzerland joined this group in January 1996. The group jointly financed 22 new intercommunity meetings.

The intercommunity meetings soon had consequences that gave the population faith in the peace process. A number of marketplaces opened and began to function normally; disagreements about the distribution and use of resources were discussed and some of these problems were solved; crime (theft of motor vehicles and cattle) was reduced and people from different sides of the conflict began communicating with each other (PRIO 1997:25).

## **Explanations for NCA's contributions**

All of the 37 intercommunity meetings Lode organised were successful, with perhaps one exception (Lode 1997:45). A number of factors contributed to this favourable outcome.

NCA's lasting presence in Mali was an important factor in creating trust among the population, despite accusations of partiality. The Malians perceived NCA as a responsible organisation that remained in Gourma long after other Western organisations had left the country (Lode 1997:37; PRIO 49).

Experience from other conflict situations underscores the significance of a lasting involvement. Lode mentions the role of International Alert (IA) in the peace process in Sierra Leone, about which IA says: "It is important for NGOs to maintain their presence in many areas of Sierra Leone including the North to offer reassurance to the local people and give them some confidence in the peace process" (A Joint Action Peace Forum 1995:5). The Sant'Egidio Community played a key role in the peace process in Mozambique. One leader of the community explained their involvement in the conflict by their lasting presence in Mozambique. A lasting presence, combined with respect and solidarity, can constitute a sound basis for the trust that is required in order to play a role in conflict situations (Lode 1997:38).

Likewise, it was important that NCA had its base in the North, where many of the intercommunity meetings were held, and where the organisation had built up a sufficiently large group of supporters, networks and clients that were essential for the intercommunity meetings. Several of the Malians who had previously been employees of NCA were key actors in the peace process.

The Malian staff of NCA also played a central role. The difficulties during the years 1991-94 interfered with the implementation of various NCA projects, in part because they were mainly located in the combat zone. Nevertheless, the organisation carried out 90 per cent of its projects during this period. The work of the Malian staff, who ensured continuity, was vital. The fact that the Malian staff remained in the North, while the Norwegian staff had to evacuate, had a favourable and stabilising effect on the process (PRIO 1997:37). The Norwegian leadership built up a network, establishing contacts and securing support in much of northern Mali through their own staff members, even before this period. The Malian leaders in NCA constituted the "pillars" on which much of NCA's development and humanitarian work depended, and on which the peace process was built.

The Malians in NCA had to deal with a number of dilemmas in relation to considerations of their own safety and loyalty to the organisation, support for the peace process versus sympathy with the reasons for the rebellion, etc.

NCA's values promoting compassion, justice, participation, responsibility and peace (Føyn 1997:3), combined with Lode's personal involvement gave NCA and the Kåre Lode Initiative a unique position in relation to all the groups in the conflict.

Moreover, NCA did not need permission from the Norwegian authorities to commence their role as “peace-makers”, nor did they have to request funding to begin this work, which made it easier to initiate the process.

The evaluation report concludes that “the right combination of individual leadership attributes with an appropriate organisational milieu or support base was required to be able to produce the NCA’s successful intervention in the Malian peace process” (PRIO 1997:36).

The evaluation report raises the question of whether peace could have been established in northern Mali without the contributions of NCA and Kåre Lode. It concludes that the NCA efforts were of great importance. It also points out that the conditions for a successful peace process already existed. The Kåre Lode Initiative helped realise existing possibilities.

Poulton and Youssouf describe the peace process as follows in a report for UNIDIR: “The peace negotiations truly emerged through Civil Society: a symbiosis between community leaders of what we have called ‘traditional’ Civil Society, and younger leaders in the ‘modern’ Civil Society, including local and international NGOs well-established in the North.” (1997:6).

## **Other actors**

The UN played an insignificant role at the beginning of the peace process. The international community was not willing to provide the necessary assistance after the peace agreement had been signed, and the UN showed no interest or initiative in organising such efforts in relation to the external donors. In 1994, Tore Rose became UNDP resident representative in Mali and served as an unofficial coordinator for external aid. He made an important contribution to the peace process and to an atmosphere of hope in which civil society could act. The UNDP worked through official channels and never tried to mobilise civil society (Lode 1997:35, 51).

France, Germany and the US have traditionally been the most important external actors in Mali, both historically and as the largest aid donors (see note 4). Of the traditional actors only Germany became involved in the Kåre Lode project (see above).

Peace-building, demobilisation and the repatriation of soldiers are financed through a fund (Fonds d’Affection Special) for North Mali channelled through the UNDP. The US and Norway were among the largest donors to the fund. France, Belgium, Japan and the Malian government made contributions, as did Canada and Switzerland (PRIO 1997:29).

NCA has enjoyed close cooperation with a number of international organisations in Mali. This includes both UN organisations and NGOs.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> See PRIO 1997:29 for further details.

## **Mali's role in the peace process**

The evaluation report emphasises the role of Malians in the peace process. Malians took the initiative for the intercommunity meetings and made peace possible.

Further it draws attention to the Malian women's movement and its contributions to the peace process.<sup>6</sup> The National Movement of Women for the Safeguard of Peace and National Unity (MNFPUN) was founded in 1991. This organisation, which was started in the North and whose leaders came from the North, worked for peace and took part in the signing of the National Pact. It helped create mechanisms for dialogue between parties to the conflict (PRIO 1997:33).

The evaluation report also raised the question of the role of religion in the conflict and how the Malian people could accept Kåre Lode, with his Christian background, in the peace process.

All parties to the conflict were Muslim (90 per cent of Mali's population are Muslim), but Islam was never used as a factor in the war – either against the central government or among the various factions. Experience, for instance from Afghanistan and Pakistan, indicates that an intra-Muslim conflict can be just as serious as a conflict between people of various religions. This is particularly the case if the religious differences correspond to ethnic composition. In Mali the conflict did not develop along these lines.

The evaluation report offers the explanation that in Mali religion has never been a divisive factor in society. This is linked to the traditional organisation of Malian society, which consists of many ethnic groups but in which no group is dominant. The unique set of factors in the composition of Malian society generally creates a moderation in the population and helps prevent the rise of religious fundamentalism. It has also meant that all the most important leaders in the conflict, from local to national level, have been able to agree on religious issues. Moreover, it has meant that they could accept Kåre Lode, a Christian peacemaker, at their intercommunity meetings.

## **Recommendations in the evaluation report regarding Norwegian policy**

The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) have supported NCA activities in Mali since 1984, providing about NOK 216 million in funding from 1984 to 1997. In 1996 alone NOK 63.9 million was channelled into Mali.

The evaluation report points out that the situation in Mali requires massive investments through the help of the international community. The international community, in particular the World Bank and the IMF, should therefore re-evaluate their macroeconomic strategies in post-war societies. The report recommends that Norway and other donors should work to counter undue pressures for economic

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<sup>6</sup> Compared with other conflicts, such as Ethiopia/Eritrea, Mozambique and South Africa, there were very few women soldiers in the conflict in Mali.

reform during this period. It also points out that Norwegian authorities can champion debt relief for Mali.

The evaluation report points to the need for training in techniques for resolving intercommunity conflicts if peace-building is to become an important component of development strategies in Mali. It also points out that it would be natural for Norwegian authorities to support such peace-building activities in light of Norway's involvement in the transition from war to peace.

Norway's policy has primarily been to use the UNDP as the channel for consolidating the peace process in Mali, rather than NGOs such as NCA. In keeping with the recommendations from the evaluation report, Norway will promote debt relief for Mali, particularly in relation to the African Development Bank, where Mali has a substantial government debt. Moreover, Norway will send signals to the multilateral financial institutions that consideration must be shown for the difficult situation Mali is experiencing when planning economic reform. Furthermore courses will be held to improve competence in peace-building measures. Research in this area will also be increased.

Pursuant to a recent letter of intent between Norway and Mali, three main areas of development assistance in Mali will be given priority: 1) primary sectors, natural resource management, and rural development; 2) democratisation, institution building and follow-up of the peace process; and 3) basic education and literacy. Norwegian development assistance in Mali will give special priority to the northern regions.

NCA's desire to gradually work through partner organisations will mean transforming NCA activities in Mali. This does not mean that NCA will withdraw from Mali. On the contrary, NCA plans to establish a regional office for West Africa in Mali. The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs does not want the reorganisation to take place at the expense of the sustainability of existing projects, and has also expressed concern about a too rapid withdrawal from the Gourma district.

## **Overall assessment**

Norway's position on the conflict in North Mali has been to support a comprehensive approach to the peace process in the country, inter alia through the UNDP. When Norway has played an active role in the peace-making work, this is first and foremost due to the initiative of Norwegian Church Aid. NCA and Kåre Lode have played a key role on local levels by facilitating intercommunity meetings. The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has funded these projects jointly with Germany, Switzerland and Canada.

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## **4. Norwegian involvement in the Sudan**

Norwegian humanitarian assistance to the Sudan was assessed by COWI in the report "Evaluation of Norwegian Humanitarian Assistance to the Sudan" (Evaluation Report 11.97, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs). An important part of the COWI team's task was to evaluate the effect of Norwegian assistance on the civil war in the Sudan and on-going efforts to achieve peace and reconciliation. During the past 15 years most of the Norwegian funding (which on average has amounted to some NOK 50 million annually) has been channelled through Norwegian Church Aid (NCA), which began its work in the Sudan in 1972, and Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), which has had a strong involvement in southern Sudan since 1985/86. Since the present civil war broke out in 1983, most of the Norwegian assistance has been in the form of humanitarian aid. However, there have also been other close, sustained contacts between Norway and the Sudan. Thus since 1965, there has been cooperation between the University of Bergen and the University of Khartoum, involving a number of disciplines and staff in both countries. Such links have also given rise to various initiatives related to political developments in the Sudan.

### **The conflict and its causes**

The Sudan has been afflicted by war since independence in 1956, with only an eleven-year reprieve (1972-83) when the country experienced peace and it was possible to think constructively about long-term development. The Sudan is Africa's largest country in terms of land area and a large number of diverse ethnic groups live within its national boundaries. Although there will always be disagreement about the roots of the conflicts and the war, most observers agree that a key factor is the relationship between North and South, not only in terms of ethnic and cultural composition, but also differences in development level. The Addis Ababa agreement that was signed in 1972 confirmed the existence of such differences between North and South, that the South had not been included in the development that had taken place in the North (centred around the Nile valley), that people in the South felt dominated by the North, and that something had to be done to establish a more just order and development. The agreement granted regional autonomy to the South, with a separate popular assembly and government elected by and accountable to the assembly.

It was developments in Khartoum more than a clash of interests in the South that gradually eroded the basis of the Addis Ababa agreement. For instance, in 1976 exiled opposition groups invaded the capital Khartoum (with the support of Libya), and in order to retain power President Nimeri chose to make advances to the conservative opposition in the North, which culminated in the introduction of Sharia legislation in 1983. In 1983 he also decided to divide Southern Sudan into three regions, which not only deprived the South of its regional self-government, but also soon contributed to a fresh outbreak of conflicts between different ethnic groups in the South. South Sudan was divided into three regions on 5 June 1983. The Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) was established on 31 July that same year under the leadership of John Garang.

The civil war has persisted until now with varying degrees of intensity and success for the parties to the conflict, but with great sufferings among much of the population, particularly in the South. In 1989, after a period of instability (with a civilian

government) in Khartoum (Nimieri was removed from power through a coup in 1985), the National Islamic Front (NIF) seized power in a military coup. Since then the positions in the conflict have been further polarised, both because of the Khartoum regime's loyalty to the Sharia laws which have played an important symbolic role during the entire period since 1983, and because of repeated violations of human rights and the lack of a democratic course of development, also in North Sudan. At the same time, the regime has become ever more isolated and stigmatised internationally, and has been accused of backing destabilisation attempts and supporting oppositional groups in Eritrea, Ethiopia and Uganda. Thus the war in the Sudan has developed into a conflict with significant regional dimensions.

The regionalisation of the Sudan conflict has complicated external efforts to resolve it, particularly because the Sudan's neighbouring countries have assumed a mediation role through the regional organisation IGAD (Inter-Governmental Authority on Development), while at the same time relations between the Khartoum regime and these countries (specially Eritrea, Ethiopia and Uganda) have deteriorated. Egypt has consistently played a key but ambivalent role – not pleased about the presence of a fundamentalist, aggressive regime in Khartoum, nor particularly keen on supporting the establishment of a possible new state in Southern Sudan (because of Egypt's own dependence on waters from the Nile).

At the same time, new internal conflict dimensions have been intensified in the Sudan. Whereas the opposition (including the SPLM/A) have managed to unite in the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) under the military leadership of Garang (with Asmara as a vital operational base), their political programme remains unclear. In Southern Sudan there have continually been breakaway factions from the SPLA who have carried on their own warfare, directed more against former allies than against government troops. The regime in Khartoum has consistently played up such antagonisms, as they did when they made a separate agreement with Riak Machar and the Nuer dominated SSIM, whereas the SPLA is dominated by the Dinka, the largest ethnic category of the South.

## **Norwegian assistance to the Sudan**

Norwegian assistance to the Sudan has been carried on for nearly 30 years, and has been considerable ever since 1972, when NCA was asked to establish a long-term, broadly based development programme in the East Equatoria province in South Sudan. That programme, which at one time was the most comprehensive single effort ever within Norwegian development assistance, had as its objective to build peace and create development following a sustained civil war with large-scale refugee problems. Since war broke out again in 1983, most of the Norwegian assistance to the Sudan has been humanitarian aid/emergency relief. The main channels have been NCA and NPA. Gradually NPA has become the larger of these two, in part due to the seriousness of the war, which made several other organisations withdraw from Southern Sudan. In addition to Norway, USAID, among others, has channelled extensive funding through NPA to Southern Sudan.

According to the COWI report, the two Norwegian organisations have made significant contributions towards peace and reconciliation in the Sudan. By way of illustration, it can be mentioned that NCA/Nairobi has supported the Sudan Working



Group, whose work is closely linked to IGAD's peace initiatives; NCA/Khartoum has worked to reconcile points of view among oppositional groups in government-dominated parts of the country; NCA/Nairobi has provided support for peace meetings among representatives for various ethnic groups in South Sudan; NPA has provided training in international humanitarian law to the SPLM; and NCA's support to the New Sudan Council of Churches has made this organisation more capable of playing an increasingly active role in its work for peace.

Yet the report claims that there have been discontinuities between the programmes and projects of the NCA and NPA and the peace process. This can best be understood against a background of several factors: both NCA and NPA have a well-developed understanding of the political and other effects of their work, but they have been more concerned with providing emergency relief to vulnerable populations in the South than with trying to reduce the level of violence. Their origins of involvement in the Sudan as well as their objectives differ. NCA's involvement can be traced to a commitment to developing the most underprivileged areas of the Sudan after the Addis Ababa agreement. They have brought some of their approaches into humanitarian assistance programmes, placing great emphasis on working through local institutions and strengthening local capacity (help for self-help). This has particularly characterised NCA's work in North Sudan, where NCA has made substantial contributions, particularly for refugees from South Sudan who have settled in the areas around Khartoum and Omdurman. NPA began their work in the Sudan in 1985/86 based on a specific request that they carry out emergency relief in South Sudan. They have continued this work. They have also had a more action-oriented and political approach to their work than NCA, particularly by explicitly supporting one of the sides (SPLM/A) in the civil war, while NCA has placed foremost emphasis on its loyalty to the churches and the people (rather than political parties). Throughout its many years in the Sudan, NCA has worked both in government-controlled areas (including Juba in South Sudan) and so-called "liberated" areas.

According to the evaluation report, the differing approach and character of the two organisations give them different strengths and weaknesses. NPA has had a presence in areas that have been inaccessible for other organisations. According to the report, NPA has been "an exceptional agency in terms of its capacity to provide food and other relief supplies to different areas of Southern Sudan". NPA's main problem has been on the administrative level, including poor control over resources, poor follow-up and an excessive sense of project focus.

NCA's strength has been the organisation's flexibility and ability to adapt to change. By working through local structures, NCA has helped create a cadre of exceptional professionals, highly sought after by other organisations. NCA's limitations are largely linked to the difficult political balancing act they must perform. According to the COWI report constraints imposed by the Government of Sudan reduced the effectiveness and efficiency of NCA's humanitarian operations.

The report even claims that the activities of NCA and NPA may even have contributed to *increasing* the level of tension between the parties to the conflict. NCA's focus on East Equatoria (where the organisation started its work in 1972) has been interpreted as support for ethnic and political groups in this part of the country, as a counterweight to the Dinka dominance that characterises SPLA. The report

indicates that this may have contributed to the general inter-ethnic animosity both in rebel and government controlled areas. According to the report, NPA's role as a solidarity organisation for the SPLA, and the SPLA's dependence on NPA, may have contributed to weakening the need for, close interaction between the movement and "traditional" administrative structures, including tribal chiefs and the churches.

Whereas the evaluation team on the one hand seems to feel that neither of the two organisations, whether individually or jointly, has sufficient resources to maintain a level of support to the Sudan that could really make a difference in advancing the peace process, both organisations are criticised for not exploiting the advantages they do in fact possess. The report states: "There is a large impact which could be achieved by making the reduction of violence another general objective of the aid agencies." (p. 50). Their argument is as follows: NCA has been in the Sudan since 1972, has a very good reputation and a thorough knowledge of the country. This allows the organisation to play a role in the promotion of peace and reconciliation, but the agency needs a broader approach and a larger set of tools to play the role effectively.

NPA aims at strengthening the position of one of the warring parties, of course based on a desire to promote a just peace in the Sudan. NPA could use its leverage with the SPLA effectively to promote peace, but seems to have insufficient capacity, particularly for analysing the options available to SPLA in greater depth.

In other words, both organisations need to create a strategic focus in their promotion of peace and reconciliation in the Sudan.

### **The Norwegian back channel**

The report also comments on the "back channel" that was established by Norway in 1994 in an attempt to bring the two main adversaries (the government and the SPLA) together in order to resolve the conflict. This peace initiative was carried out parallel to more open negotiations within the framework of IGAD, where the Sudan's neighbours to the east and south are members (Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and Uganda).

The report does not draw any definite conclusions about the Norwegian initiative. On the one hand it is perceived as a sincere, serious, yet unsuccessful attempt by a country that has used substantial resources in the Sudan. On the other hand, the report maintains that arguably the Norwegian peace initiative at best created confusion in relation to IGAD's parallel peace efforts, at worst undermined or derailed the IGAD process.

### **The lack of a coherent Sudan policy**

The report criticises the Norwegian government for not having an institutional basis for developing a comprehensive and coherent Sudan policy capable of combining short-term interventions (emergency relief, facilitation of processes of peace, protection of human rights) with longer-term perspectives in terms of sustainable development. An important consequence is that it is difficult to make well-informed decisions about the relative share of funding that should be used for short-term and long-term measures. Moreover, measures that fit into neither category, such as efforts

to strengthen civil society in various parts of the Sudan, have a tendency to fall in the grey zone and not be given priority. A key implication is that NCA and NPA have to deal with two very different parts of the Norwegian government (the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and NORAD) in order to obtain funding for their programmes in countries such as the Sudan. It appears, according to the report, that the Government has left it to the NGOs themselves to create the institutional basis for linking relief with development (p. 14).

## **COWI's recommendations**

The report concludes that the impact of Norwegian assistance on the willingness of the parties to seek peace and reconciliation appears to be marginal (p. 6). The civil war in the Sudan illustrates the need to establish a two-tier international response system: (a) an impartial humanitarian response which is provided automatically to meet people's basic needs, irrespective of the political context; and (b) a political response which links further support to areas in conflict to the willingness of the parties to reduce violence and promote peace and stability (p. 25). Norway should provide resources for both "tiers" of this emerging international system. As part of this strategy, the Norwegian Government's diplomatic objectives and the NGOs' aid objectives should be linked more closely. In order to replace the "disjointed incrementalism" that characterises the present policy with a clearly defined Sudan policy, the two organisations must also reassess their objectives and strategies. In so doing, they must weigh more carefully their impact upon Sudanese society and reconcile their different institutional roles and bases in terms of that society's needs.

At present the criteria for selection of priority projects are not always clear. Rather the organisations are responding to needs and opportunities as they see them. The report suggests that both organisations should reassess their role in the Sudan; that NCA perhaps ought to focus most efforts on advocacy and the creation and maintenance of structures, rather than the provision of services and resources; and that NPA should play a stronger, catalytic role in efforts to establish a civil society and a civil administration in SPLA-controlled areas.

According to the COWI team, an important point of departure for a discussion about future Norwegian involvement in the Sudan must be the unique position Norway holds in relation to the Sudan. This provides us with both opportunities and responsibilities. A continued Norwegian involvement in the Sudan is required, possible and wanted in the Sudan (p. 53).

Humanitarian aid should not become a poor substitute for adequate political interventions. A Norwegian Sudan policy, therefore, should allow the Government to pursue a three-pronged strategy. In brief, the Government should:

- Intensify political and diplomatic efforts both in the context of wider initiatives and in bilateral contacts to obtain a just and lasting peace in the Sudan;
- Give higher priority to the provision of preventive assistance to reduce the use of violence and contain its spread; and
- Continue to provide humanitarian assistance, but with clear objectives, criteria for setting priorities among various types of interventions, and better documentation of results (p. 53).

According to the report, Norway also has a unique potential for playing a catalytic role in coordination of the international response to the situation in the Sudan. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs should consider holding a meeting of key NGOs, donor governments and UN-representatives to discuss ways to promote collaboration in all aspects of humanitarian operations in the Sudan. In Norway the Ministry should consider increasing Norwegian capacity for political intervention and the provision of preventive assistance, in part by establishing an advisory group of experts from different Norwegian constituencies who can monitor and support the development of Norwegian policies and the implementation of specific programmes to ensure a coordinated and coherent Norwegian response to the complex emergency of the Sudan (p. 54).

## **Assessment**

An assessment of Norway's involvement in the Sudan must be rooted in a thorough understanding of the conflict, its various key actors and dimensions. The COWI report correctly perceives the war as resulting from a combination of several conflicts in the country. This is a situation that it is highly likely will persist. In recent years, all attempts to intervene constructively in relation to the many conflict dimensions have failed. Nor has there been an obviously appropriate time to enter into the conflict to mediate between the two main warring factions, the government and the SPLA. The tides have turned on both sides at different times and in conjunction with various factors, including processes outside the Sudan (e.g., Mengistu's fall in Ethiopia created supply problems for the SPLA.) At any given time, then, the situation has made at least one of the sides think they had more to win by continuing the war than by negotiating a settlement. As long as one party is too strong or too weak, neither can be genuinely motivated to negotiate in good faith and with the mutual interest as the guiding principle.

At present, in the short term, there is little reason for optimism. The IGAD process has not produced results. It has been characterised by public meetings, but little activity between the meetings. Some observers now even claim that the process is not meant to result in a peaceful resolution of the conflict, but rather to stall such a prospect. Their argument is as follows: the mediators do not want a deal involving the South alone, because their own interests could only be served by a comprehensive deal which would "tame" the Khartoum government. They also have a number of bilateral issues with the Sudan that they want to resolve first. But as things stand, the process is concerned only with the Southern problem, and the bilateral issues are not on the table. Therefore, the mediators, too, are waiting for the military option and diplomatic pressures to bear fruit first. Khartoum is also best served by stalling. As long as the mediation effort is continuing, the pressure from abroad eases giving the Khartoum regime time to go on with its own plans. The SPLA is also happy with this deadlock, since it hopes it will increase pressure on Khartoum and win time to oust the regime. Nor does the United States pressure the two sides for the same reasons. Most eyes, then, are on the battlefield, not the negotiating table, while those who wanted to contribute seriously to a negotiated peace (Carter, Norway, the Netherlands) had their fingers burned and received more criticism than encouragement.

What all this means is that the peace process in the Sudan is likely to be protracted and longer than is desirable. If we assume that the war is not winnable and that ultimately it will only be ended by a negotiated settlement, it would seem that the options have now crystallised into three: federation, confederation and separatism. In this range, self-determination has emerged as the most contentious principle of choice which is challenging both sides to make the available options competitive. To move the process forward, a programme of action is required that would comprise sustainable cease fire, a humanitarian agenda, and a comprehensive peace process in which all the significant political forces in the country would participate.

The last point is particularly important. At the moment, there are a number of conflicts between different parties and groups in the country, both based on ethnic or local affiliations and on various religious and political agendas. While the issues have tended to be oversimplified in the media, the configuration of the conflict has been complicated by increasing factionalism on both sides. As a consequence, some wonder whether it is possible any longer to talk of a North-South conflict, pointing out that more Southerners may have died in internal conflicts between the factions than have died in the war with the North. Others argue that even if a settlement with the North were possible, conflicts within the South would continue to destabilise the region. Yet others find lumping North together unfair, since significant Northern factions do not identify with the regime or its policies, not to mention the ethnic conflicts in the peripheral regions.

While it may be possible to argue that the principal diversities are, still between the North and the South, any genuine effort to end the conflicts in the country must disentangle them, place them in their proper scale of gravity and address them separately but comprehensively for the nation as a whole to achieve peace, stability and progress. At the moment this is not being properly addressed, neither by the Sudan Government and the main opposition parties forming the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), nor by external mediators and others concerned with peace building measures for the country. This will involve stronger efforts in trying to get different political groupings together, using different fora and constellations, for detailed discussions on the serious points of contention (religion and the state, self-determination, constitutional structures, a.o. This would seem to be an important condition for any settlement to be lasting rather than undermined in the future political process.

There is also an urgent need for geographically more distant actors such as Norway to help fill the current vacuum of moral responsibility that haunts the Sudan conflict. The talks have been going nowhere, and there is a need for rescuing the peace process from its current IGAD impasse, without at the same time ignoring the IGAD countries. Nor can Egypt be ignored which occupies a similar role towards the Sudan as India towards Sri Lanka. There would seem to be a number of challenges here which need to be confronted, and IGAD's Partner Forum, where Norway is a member, may be a convenient forum for new and creative initiatives.

Given the glaring inadequacy of the current process, and the worsening of the humanitarian situation and the escalating cost of the war in terms of civilian suffering, it is no longer credible for the international community to persist in its inaction on the pretext that the IGAD process is working, since clearly it is not. On the other hand,

the current state of inaction on the peace front is likely to be self-sustaining, unless outside actors provide some vigorous input to weigh the scales in favour of action. Since the current stagnation serves the purposes of all those involved, no progress is likely to come from within the region without outside input.

In this regard, the role of the IGAD Partners is pertinent, given that they already have legitimacy through their formal association with the IGAD process. It is thus imperative that the IGAD partners move in and engage themselves in the process on a sustained basis.

It is true, as the COWI report claims, that Norway has a unique relationship with the Sudan, characterised by the long-term involvement of a number of individuals and institutions and thus the existence of comprehensive, good networks with virtually all the groups involved in the conflict, whether in the South or North, East or West. There is probably no other country outside the region itself that has a similar point of departure.

It is also true that Norwegian policy towards the Sudan has not shown the same degree of consistency over time as in the case of Guatemala. Particularly during the past three years, other countries, individuals and organisations have assumed much of the initiative, although all efforts have been unsuccessful.

However, there are several indications that the Norwegian Government will take a more active stance in the Sudan conflict. The Norwegian ambassador in Washington (Tom Vraalsen) has recently been appointed Special Envoy for UN's Secretary General on the humanitarian crisis in the Sudan; a Norwegian resource group very much like the one recommended by COWI, has been formed by MFA, including representatives from NCA and NPA; Norway keeps more regularly contact with the warring parties as well as the Kenyan government which provides the IGAD secretariat for the Sudan talks; and the present Minister of Development Cooperation and Human Rights (Hilde Frafjord Johnson) has herself paid a visit to both Khartoum and the South, thereby signaling a renewed commitment to a more consistent and, hopefully, constructive engagement in a conflict which has gone on far too long.

## 5. Experience gained from the conflict in Mozambique

Norwegian assistance to Mozambique and possible impacts on the peace process were assessed in the *Evaluation of Norwegian Assistance to Peace, Reconciliation and Rehabilitation in Mozambique* carried out by the Chr. Michelsen Institute in 1997. This report analyses the impact of Norwegian assistance on peace building, reconciliation and rehabilitation in Mozambique during the period 1990-95. Mozambique is also used as an example of successful internationally supported peace building in developing countries in order to draw general conclusions about the role of donors in transitional processes (*ibid.* 1).

Qualitative criteria have been used to evaluate the Norwegian contribution, rather than more conventional criteria such as cost effectiveness. Cost-related criteria can measure how efficiently a project has been carried out, but they are not a good instrument for assessing the effect of projects in a broader perspective. The criteria applied are related to timing, utility, and autonomy. The key questions posed in the evaluation report are: Was Norwegian aid timely, in the sense that it was given at the right time in the process, and was it appropriate in relation to the internationally defined programme for the transition from war to peace? Did Norway make any particular contributions to the peace process? Did the assistance increase the autonomy of the recipients? (*ibid.* 4).

### The transition from war to peace

Both the conflict and the peace process in Mozambique were strongly internationalised and particularly influenced by the cold war and its demise. External actors helped negotiate a peace agreement, and its implementation was monitored and largely financed by the UN system and its members. Experience gained from Norwegian assistance for the peace process in Mozambique will primarily be relevant for this type of internationally driven process <sup>1</sup>

### Conflict and crisis

The conflict in Mozambique was to a great extent the result of an external destabilisation campaign spearheaded by the former Rhodesia and later South Africa.<sup>2</sup> In 1977 FRELIMO outlined a socialist strategy with a foreign policy emphasising its relations with allies in the struggle for liberation (Eastern Europe and the Nordic countries) and supporting the liberation movements in South Africa and Rhodesia. In

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<sup>1</sup> However, the conflict in Mozambique was unique. The country had strategic significance in the regional conflict in southern Africa, and the peace solution was related to the negotiations that ended apartheid in South Africa. Moreover, prolonged warfare, great poverty and protracted aid dependency resulted in unusually strong dominance by foreign states, NGOs and international organisations in the peace and rehabilitation process. Close cooperation among the donors in Maputo further increased this dominance.

<sup>2</sup> This conventional wisdom has recently been challenged by theories that focus on the internal causes of the war, particularly the government's Marxist-inspired reforms that favoured peasants, local chiefs and some ethnic groups at the expense of others. However, as both the evaluation report and others conclude: independent Mozambique was no different from many other African countries in terms of misrule, local discontent and ethnic divisions (Finnegan 1992; *ibid.* 35).

March 1976, in accordance with UN sanctions, Mozambique's borders with Rhodesia were closed. By assuming a nationalistic, aggressive stance against apartheid, the Mozambique government provoked hostility from Rhodesia and South Africa. Yet FRELIMO had few alternatives in relation to their own liberation history and the international context. In response, Rhodesia created the Mozambique National Resistance (MNR) – later RENAMO.

MNR's objective was to thwart support for the Zimbabwe liberation movement, ZANU. South Africa retaliated against Mozambique's support for the ANC by diverting its traffic from Mozambican ports, reducing the number of Mozambican miners (migrants), and launching air attacks and commando raids against Maputo. Following the establishment of an independent Zimbabwe in 1979, South Africa assumed the role Rhodesia had held in relation to the MNR.

From the early 1980s until the early 1990s, South Africa attempted to destabilise Mozambique's economy, intimidate the population and turn them against their government, while achieving a much higher international profile for RENAMO. With substantial resources to draw on, South African backing made it possible for RENAMO to inflict widespread destruction on the country and its civilians.

In this decentralised, chaotic war, it was sometimes unclear which side was responsible for the violence. Even so, the objective of much of RENAMO's violence was clear: to undermine the legitimacy of the government and its social policies by destroying economic infrastructures, health services and schools. By the early 1990s, 58 per cent of primary schools and nearly 1200 health clinics had been destroyed or forced to close. The rural trading network suffered serious problems, and exports of coal, cement, tea and cotton ceased. Because of the destruction of power lines, Mozambique had to import electricity instead of exporting it to South Africa. In 1989 the UN Economic Commission (UNECA) estimated the destruction and related losses at USD 15 billion. UNECA further reported that approximately 900,000 people (including 500,000 children) died as a result of the war during the period 1980-88.

The drought aggravated the crisis. All of southern Africa suffered from drought, but it had particularly serious effects in Mozambique. Because of the war, the traditional safety nets for dealing with environmental disasters were impaired.

The combination of war and drought from 1981-84, and again in 1991-92, reduced 70 per cent of the rural population to absolute poverty, giving rise to a relief effort which lasted for about 10 years, from 1982-83 to 1992. In 1988 Mozambique had 1.7 million internally displaced persons and 1 million refugees. When the peace agreement was signed in 1992 some 3.7 million Mozambicans were internally displaced, while 1.6 million had fled the country. All told, this amounts to one third of the population (*ibid.* 35-38).

## **The peace process**

The most important reasons for the turn-away from war were international events, which resulted in both sides losing their external backing in the late 1980s and early 90s. The economic and military support from the Soviet block ceased, while



international pressure on the apartheid regime resulted in the termination of South Africa's support for RENAMO (*ibid.* 39).

The formal process from war to peace took place during the period 1990-94. The key event was the General Peace Agreement (GPA), signed in Rome in 1992. This agreement led to the cessation of warfare, if not to lasting peace. The first phase of the transition (1990-92) covered the negotiations in Rome leading up to the GPA. The second phase centred on the implementation of the GPA and culminated in national elections in 1994 (*ibid.* 2).

The main points in the peace agreement and its implementation centred on the demobilisation and reintegration of soldiers, demining, rapid reconstruction, the return and reintegration of internally and externally displaced persons, political pluralism and elections (including human rights).

The Catholic organisation the Sant'Egidio Community and Italy played a key role in the peace process. RENAMO and Sant'Egidio had their first informal talks in May 1988. The first formal meeting between FRELIMO and RENAMO took place in July 1990. From 1990 the US, France and the UK were also strongly involved – as observers to the negotiations and in the implementation – as well as Italy, Portugal and the UN (*ibid.* chap. 4).

## Norwegian assistance for Mozambique

Norway has long been one of the major donors and political backers of FRELIMO. Norwegian development assistance to Mozambique began in the late 1960s, with financial support for FRELIMO during the struggle for independence. Norwegian policy was to support the struggle against apartheid in South Africa, and Mozambique – which was an important “frontline state” – was perceived as part of a regional conflict. The poverty aspect was also important: Mozambique was one of the poorest countries in Africa.

In the early 1990s Norway was the sixth largest bilateral donor to Mozambique, channelling more than NOK 400 million annually, or one-tenth of Mozambique's bilateral aid, primarily in the form of long-term assistance.

**Table 1: Norwegian assistance for Mozambique, 1990-1995**

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
Short-term assistance	23.169	26.005	47.793	43.479	35.534	11.513
Long-term assistance	303.866	420.308	406.542	375.830	473.757	319.495
Total	327.035	446.313	454.335	419.309	509.291 <sup>3</sup>	331.008

Source: NORAD 1990-95.

All figures in NOK thousands.

<sup>3</sup> The increase in assistance in 1994 is mainly due to a NOK 92.8 million payment to Linjebygg for a project in the energy sector.

The aid portfolio was extremely fragmented during the period 1990-95, with more than 900 disbursements. Many of the projects were small (projects costing less than NOK 100,000 represented one-fifth of the number of payments, but less than 1 per cent of total expenditure). Many of them were related to peace, emergency relief or other humanitarian projects. The fragmentation of the aid portfolio, combined with the recipients' lack of managerial capacity, placed a heavy administrative burden on both the embassy in Maputo and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Oslo, affecting coordination and project evaluation (*ibid.* 16).

**Table 2: Number of disbursements**

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
NOK 5 mill. and above	19	20	24	24	25	18
NOK 1 mill - 4.999.999	28	33	35	33	36	35
NOK 100.000-999.999	47	65	62	71	85	48
Less than NOK 100.00	25	35	21	39	49	24
All disbursements	119	153	142	167	195	125
Average disbursements (NOK million)	2,8	2,9	3,2	2,5	2,6	2,7

On average, 14 per cent of the aid for Mozambique was channelled through NGOs during the period 1990-95. Most of these transfers (some 80 per cent) were through the "big five" Norwegian NGOs: the Norwegian Refugee Council, Norwegian Church Aid, Norwegian People's Aid, the Norwegian Red Cross and Redd Barna (Norwegian Save the Children) (*ibid.* 23-24).

Norway provided aid for all the main areas in the GPA: demobilisation, demining, repatriation and reintegration of refugees, rapid reconstruction, and promotion of political pluralism. Projects directly targeting the formal peace process (the GPA) accounted for about 20 per cent of the aid from 1992 to 95 (*ibid.* 25).

## **Lessons learned from Norwegian assistance**

Norway's primary policy objective was to support the formal peace process and the implementation of the GPA. Norway did not participate in the negotiations that defined the strategic terms for peace and the aid programmes to be implemented during the transitional period. From 1990-95 Norway was a conventional donor, a humanitarian actor, and a reliable, but in a broad sense secondary partner in the peace process.

### **Norway's role in the peace process**

Norway maintained its traditional development assistance programmes to the Mozambican state during the transitional period and cooperated with the group of "like-minded" nations (the Nordic countries, Canada, the Netherlands and Switzerland) to cushion the government against harsh demands from other donors, or against the international management of the peace process when it was overwhelming or intrusive. Norway's sustained assistance through the years of war and into a situation of peace was in itself an expression of political support – an indirect, but not

insignificant declaration of solidarity that was appreciated by the government in Maputo.

Assistance during this period was rooted in the general principles of Norwegian development cooperation and was not articulated with particular reference to the exceptional imbalances between the donor community and the Mozambican authorities during the peace process.

Although opportunities for influence on strategic issues did arise during the peace process, the Norwegian government generally did not respond, at least not in a proactive manner. High-level officials in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs showed little interest in a wide range of political and economic issues that were raised both by other donors and by the Mozambican parties themselves, a striking fact in light of Norway's role as one of the most important donors. Naturally, the Minister of Development Cooperation and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) were concerned, but their primary focus was on conventional aid issues.

There were two main channels for strategic influence on the peace process. One of them was the Rome negotiations, which included the peace agreement, a programme for implementing the agreement, and the framework for the organisational structure for implementation. The other channel was the Bretton Woods institutions and their consultative forum, which determined the macro-economic parameters for the peace agreement.

Norway was not a strategic participant, partly for reasons beyond its control. Other states and NGOs had pre-empted the possibilities during the early stages of the peace process. The initiative for the Rome process was outside the sphere of the traditional donors, including Norway and other like-minded states. Active diplomatic participation by Norway in Maputo could not influence the structural limitations imposed on the traditional donors by the Rome process. The division between the political and the economic spheres was highly visible in 1992, when the peace agreement was signed by one group of states, while the donor community was called in a month and a half later to finance its implementation.

There were great fears that RENAMO would return to military action and destroy the peace process during the implementation phase (1992-94). This was precisely what had happened in Angola. Thus a primary objective during the period 1992-94 was to transform RENAMO from a loosely organised rebel group into a political party that could remain in the political arena. In this context, a critical situation arose when the deployment of the UN peacekeeping forces was delayed. RENAMO refused to begin demobilisation until at least 65 per cent of the UN force was deployed, as specified by the GPA. When the peace process took longer than expected during its critical first phase, the UN Secretary General called for a quick response from the countries contributing to ONUMOZ.

Norway, along with Sweden, had received an informal request already in October 1992 to send troops and/or military observers to ONUMOZ. The Ministry of Defence turned down the request on the grounds of insufficient peacekeeping capacity and because Norway was already participating in seven UN operations. There were no experienced military observers available. In addition there were severe budgetary

limitations. At the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the section that dealt most closely with Mozambique was institutionally located on the development side of the Ministry and did not conceive of the peace process in military terms. On the political side of the Ministry, the question was not raised. Norway did not contribute at what was clearly a strategic and critical juncture, evidently because Mozambique was viewed as a "development issue".

Likewise, official Norway was strikingly passive in relation to one of the most important political issues in the peace process, which was raised just before the elections. RENAMO put forward a demand, supported by the US, that they be guaranteed government posts. The donors that were actively involved in Mozambique, but not in the Rome process, had the opportunity to influence these strategic issues. Norway did not produce a high-level response until early 1995, when the US upheld this demand.

The UN Trust Fund for RENAMO was a key instrument for integrating the military rebel forces in the political process. Norwegian policy on this issue was dominated by traditional principles and sympathy for the government. It was decided that the Norwegian contribution would be minimal. But in Maputo the NORAD representation tried in small, but symbolically significant ways to create greater symmetry in Norway's relations with the two sides.

The division of labour between the political players who shaped and monitored the Rome process, and the traditional donors who financed the implementation of the GPA, was not necessarily dysfunctional. In Maputo there was good communication and extensive contact between the two groups.

During the 1994 elections this division of labour became a diplomatic resource. RENAMO's leader announced that he would boycott the elections because of irregularities in the preparations. The political heavyweights (the US, the UK, France and Germany) contacted the RENAMO leader, while the group of like-minded nations, including Norway, which had close ties with the government, negotiated with the president, thus contributing to a peaceful solution.

This hectic diplomacy in Mozambique evoked little response in Oslo. The Mozambican peace process was not considered a major foreign policy issue, partly because there was a detailed peace agreement that laid the framework for the peace, and partly because Norway perceived the process in Mozambique as an aid issue. Overall Norwegian policy was to support the framework of the peace agreement, primarily by providing financial support.

The implementation programme defined by the GPA was supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and NORAD, whose main focus was on budgetary issues. Funds from NORAD's somewhat inflexible aid programme (the country programme) were augmented with short-term activities directed towards the peace process funded from flexible budget items administered by the Political Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. From 1992-94, much of the decision-making in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs dealt with such budget items.

The end of the civil war led to a rethinking of the Norwegian aid programme. The uncertainties of the transitional phase were recognised, and from the outset Norway was willing to provide substantial, flexible funding for the GPA implementation programme.

The aid programme for 1994-96 included support for elections and “democratisation”, emphasising the need to resume rural development projects as a contribution towards lasting peace. Apart from these priorities, the main sectors were traditional (energy, women, the environment, import support). A review of the most important aid strategies for the period shows that little effort was made to relate aid to the particular challenges facing the donors in post-war Mozambique.

There was little integration of Norwegian principles in multilateral financial institutions (the World Bank and the IMF) in terms of aid policy. The macro-economic context for peace and reconstruction, largely defined by the Bretton Woods institutions, was, on the whole, taken as given in the formulation of Norwegian aid strategies for Mozambique. Norway did not actively participate in the growing debate about the relationship between the macro-economic parameters and the peace process.

The post-war period posed many challenges. For instance, the issue of political and administrative integration was urgent. Given the problems, but also the importance of administrative integration in the wake of a civil war where “parallel administration” still occurred, what would be an appropriate balance between support for national structures and for local authorities? If RENAMO were excluded from political power, should they be accommodated in other ways? Was the structural adjustment programme designed by the Bretton Woods institutions a suitable macro-economic framework for rehabilitation and the reintegration of millions of displaced persons? What about the linkages between massive short-term rehabilitation efforts and long-term development? What were the implications of changes in the regional political and security situation? Did Norway have anything unique to contribute towards the development of civil society and a judicial system? These questions were not raised systematically at the Ministry.

### Aid policy

The formulation of aid strategies is a continuous process. Every year, the bilateral consultations between Norway and Mozambique and the annual meetings of the Consultative Group in Paris require some articulation of policy, although the focus on strategic issues may vary from year to year. Obviously, Norway has greater influence over the bilateral meetings than in the Consultative Group, which includes several large donors with strong political agendas. In addition to these regular meetings, there are a number of ad hoc opportunities for articulating policy and strategy, such as high-level visits and the formulation of policy papers (*ibid.* 27).

Country-specific policy documents are the most important Norwegian institutional instrument for raising strategic issues. For Mozambique they were produced intermittently by NORAD. The last such document was presented in 1991, but it was laid aside when the GPA was signed in 1992. Instead of assuming a proactive approach to issues that were clearly on the agenda, thereby positioning Norway in relation to other donors, the Ministry chose to wait until the situation stabilised before

articulating a new strategy. A new country strategy for Mozambique was not presented until February 1997.

The primary objectives of Norwegian aid to Mozambique, presented in the 1991 country analysis, were support for social and economic development (*inter alia* through rural rehabilitation and improvement of the situation for women), reduction of the social and economic consequences of the crisis, reduction of Mozambique's economic dependency on South Africa, strengthening of regional cooperation, and ecologically responsible management of natural resources and the environment (*ibid.* 28). The Norwegian government recognised that the end of the war created a new context for aid, but found it difficult to formalise a new strategy during an uncertain transitional period.

An interim policy paper from 1993 is the best-articulated strategy document from the entire period 1992-97. This paper ("Prinsippnotat 1994-96") addressed various aid issues in light of the post-war phase in anticipation of a new policy document. The question was raised of the level of assistance, as NORAD was concerned that international assistance to Mozambique would decrease drastically with the end of the war. There was concern that the reduction in short-term aid would not be compensated by long-term assistance. In NORAD's view, the need for assistance was at least as great as during the war in order to secure the peace. NORAD recommended that Norwegian aid be channelled via flexible budget items through NGOs and international organisations, and recommended greater involvement in long-term assistance, with emphasis on rural rehabilitation, energy and the oil sector. Moreover, Norway should support the electoral process as well as reintegration of demobilised soldiers. Priority should be given to projects that would enable local leaders to actively participate in the planning and management of local activities, and resources should be allocated to projects that focused on integration between Norwegian and local NGOs, and between local and national authorities. A country programme for the period 1995-97 incorporated the peace agreement, but in a secondary and segmented manner.

During the post-war period Norway consistently emphasised the need to put the gender issue on the assistance agenda. Whereas this issue was not raised specifically in the GPA, the post-war situation made it possible to provide assistance particularly for women who had been the victims of violence, and national reconstruction also created new opportunities for the "empowerment" of women. This was recognised in the action plan (Women and Development) produced by NORAD/Maputo in 1993, which incorporated various women-in-development projects.

The Norwegian authorities paid little systematic attention to the relationship between short-term assistance for the peace process and maintaining peace in the long term. The decision to postpone the preparation of a formal country strategy until after the elections followed by a subsequent postponement until 1997 limited the institutional possibilities of articulating a coherent strategy and pursuing a proactive policy.

Norway's role in Mozambique was primarily as a reliable source of funding for programmes determined by others. It is clearly necessary to rank the priorities of the various commitments, but a coherent policy requires a greater degree of integration between aid policy and foreign policy. Reforms have been introduced at the Ministry

of Foreign Affairs in order to increase integration between NORAD and the Ministry, including the development of a desk system. Such integration may possibly increase the overall effect of Norway's role in situations in which the government wishes to become politically involved in a peace process, or in countries where Norway is one of the main donors.

Various administrative mechanisms may contribute to focusing political and bureaucratic attention to meet the particular needs for flexibility and coordination during a transitional phase from war to peace (Canada has recently established a "Peace-building fund", Denmark and the Netherlands have similar budget items and the US has an Office of Transition Initiative in USAID). In Norway, flexible budget items are already available. In addition to the desk system, a "task force" approach (which has been used for Norwegian policy towards Palestine) seems best in situations where the government wishes to make a significant contribution.

A task force would have the authority to coordinate and evaluate various considerations in complex situations and could increase the integration of aid policy with broader foreign policy issues (*ibid.* 12).

## **Project evaluation**

The Norwegian aid projects targeting the transition process were generally initiated at a satisfactory moment and were appropriate in relation to the GPA programme. On the project level, it was often Norwegian NGOs and NORAD/Maputo that took the initiative. Close donor cooperation in Maputo helped ensure that Norwegian aid was integrated with other aid components in the peace process. A diversified, active Norwegian NGO community, and properly timed support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, contributed to this effect.

The autonomy and diversity of NGO operations made a proactive, flexible response to the implementation programme possible. At the same time, this made it difficult for the Embassy to assess the cumulative effect of the Norwegian contribution and to deduce the political consequences (*ibid.* xiii). These are classic trade-offs between autonomy and coordination in the relationship between the NGO sector and the state. The needs in Mozambique did not clearly favour one side or the other in this trade-off.

The Norwegian NGOs and NORAD generally cooperated closely with the Mozambican recipients, even though very few of them were local NGOs – partly owing to the generally weak NGO sector in Mozambique. The problem of using Mozambican channels (recipient responsibility) during a period when large capital transfers exceeded local capacity was frankly acknowledged. By setting a tight timeframe for the peace process, and an agenda with large budgets for implementation, the international community tended to skew aid activities towards local institutions that lacked the necessary capacity – thereby helping create problems – or to induce foreign actors to take on the job themselves. Nor did Norwegian aid organisations manage to avoid this situation altogether.

The need for a rapid, flexible response during the transition from war to peace increases the risk and possibility of failure. At the same time, the situation justifies a

higher risk. Some of the Norwegian-supported projects can arguably fall into the category of being high-risk with limited expectations of success (e.g., the RENAMO Trust Fund). Other projects (emergency relief, such as the distribution of seeds and tools) seem to have involved an unnecessarily high degree of risk. While a rapid response was necessary, the sustained emergency relief situation in Mozambique should have allowed ample time for developing procedures to reduce risk.

There was relatively little reporting and assessment of individual projects in the “peace component” of the Norwegian aid to Mozambique. Since many of the projects have become standard elements of a “peace package”, and in combination represented substantial allocations, more reporting and monitoring are desirable.

## **The UN operation**

The UN operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ) was planned with reference to the failed peace process in Angola. In order to avoid a new fiasco, ONUMOZ was designed on a large scale, much larger than the government had wanted and expected. The questions of sovereignty and autonomy became sources of irritation and tension between the government and the UN. The UN presence also created imbalance in the labour market, accentuating the inequalities between local poverty and the white foreign presence.

Nevertheless, ONUMOZ was a success. 92,000 troops were demobilised, between 4 and 5 million displaced people were resettled, and post-war elections were held. The impact of a multifaceted demining programme, distribution of food and seeds, and the construction of several hundred schools, health clinics, water resources, and countless “community development” initiatives was substantial. The principal shortcoming was the failure to collect small arms from the soldiers who were demobilised. This resulted in an increasing concentration of illegal arms in southern Africa.

The UN presence as an impartial mediator, demobiliser and election supervisor, together with massive international funding, also enabled donors to maintain political pressure on the two sides in Mozambique to implement the peace agreement.

One important consideration is the fact that the vast majority of the civilian refugees returned home spontaneously, without assistance and without knowing what they returned to, other than the existence of the peace agreement. The mines and the absence of infrastructures and social services do not appear to have influenced their return. This indicates that the massive international aid directed towards the process of repatriation was superfluous to a certain degree: the same results may have been achieved with a lower degree of funding, or some of the resources could have had a more lasting effect if they had been used in a long-term development perspective instead of as emergency relief.

A number of “aid packages” promoted by UNHCR, other donors and many NGOs were not suited to the needs of the recipients, or they lacked long-term funding. While one package to satisfy basic needs (water, food, seeds and tools) helped the returnees during the initial phase, they also had a number of needs that were not satisfied to the same extent. This shows that the priorities for rehabilitation other than satisfying basic needs must be determined in close consultation with the recipients.



Foreign NGOs kept a lower profile than the UN, but made a more sustained contribution through their lasting presence during the entire transition from war to peace. They provided both short-term and long-term aid, they were key actors for reconstruction and reconciliation during the peace process, and after 1994 they reoriented their activities towards lasting peace and development. However, the work of the NGOs also had a negative impact, related to their great numbers (170 at the height of the peace process), extensive resources and often independent modes of operation.

During the two-year implementation phase, aid to Mozambique was characterised by the resource-intensive, high profile ONUMOZ operation. However, after this phase many of the donors left the country just as quickly as they had come. The result was a marked disjuncture between the peace process – defined as ending in 1994 – and the establishment of a sustainable, lasting peace.

## **Overall assessment**

The overall objective of Norwegian policy towards the conflict in Mozambique has been to support the implementation of the 1992 peace accord. Norway did not play a role in the process around the peace agreement that defined the strategic framework for the peace, but was a traditional, reliable actor during the period 1990-95. However, more involvement at the political level might have been expected in light of Norway's role as one of the largest donors to Mozambique over several decades.

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## 6. Dealing with the crisis in Rwanda

In the autumn of 1994, Denmark initiated a joint evaluation of the international community's response to the complex crisis in Rwanda.<sup>1</sup> The primary objective of the *Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda* (1996) was to extract lessons from the crisis and the assistance that was given, both in relation to future crises and in relation to the on-going operation in Rwanda and the Great Lakes region. The evaluation report focuses on historical perspectives, early warning and conflict management, preparations for and implementation of humanitarian aid, and the transition from emergency aid to rehabilitation and development, in four separate studies. This chapter is based on the political response to the crisis, as evaluated in a second study: *Early Warning and Conflict Management*, prepared by York University and the Chr. Michelsen Institute.

*Early Warning and Conflict Management* studies the impact of international observation, early warning and conflict management in the Rwanda crisis. The report is based on a critical policy analysis and focuses on two related questions: (i) the existence and effect of mechanisms for early warning of violent conflict and genocide, and (ii) the response of international actors in the development of a conflict (*ibid.* 13).

### The refugee problem

The conflict in Rwanda was the result of previous strife of a type that is often seen in Africa: the losers or victims in a conflict flee to a neighbouring country, which then becomes a base for invading their homeland. In this instance, Tutsis, who were the primary target of political violence in Rwanda during decolonisation (1959-63), fled to the neighbouring countries. A large number of these refugees settled in Uganda.

The Ugandan authorities were unwilling to grant the refugees full settlement rights, while the Rwandan government denied them the right of return.<sup>2</sup> This difficult situation became highly visible in 1982-83. Some 35,000 Rwandan refugees (and Rwandan refugees who had been granted Ugandan citizenship) were expelled from southwestern Uganda and stopped at the border by Rwandan government forces. Caught between two countries denying them access, the refugee community formed a militia.

In the refugee community, the militia from the early 1960s was replaced by a new generation. A new political movement was formed in 1979, the Rwandan Alliance for National Unity, later evolving into the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF). The RPF invaded Rwanda on 1 October 1990.<sup>3</sup> This invasion was not only about the return of refugees, but must be perceived in a broader context. The RPF demanded changes in

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<sup>1</sup> The evaluation report was funded by Australia, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the UK, the US, the EU, OECD/DAC, IOM, UN/DHA, UNHCR, UNDP, UNICEF, WFP, WHO, IBRD, ICRC, IFRC, ICVA, Doctors of the World, INTERACTION, the Steering Committee for Human Response, and VOICE. Several other countries supported the evaluation but did not play an active role. France withdrew from the evaluation in December 1995.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. International instruments governing host country treatment of refugees (*ibid.* 18).

<sup>3</sup> Many of the military leaders in the RPF were, or had been, in senior positions in the Ugandan army.

the political regime in their homeland. The issue of return was one of eight points on their political programme.

Rwanda's President Habyarimana took the initiative to discuss the return of refugees on an individual, conditional basis in 1989/90. In the autumn of 1990 the UNHCR and the OAU were involved in the work of assessing the refugees' situation. States and international organisations are aware that refugee problems of this type can lead to further conflict (*ibid.* 19).<sup>4</sup> In retrospect, a possible window of opportunity for dealing with these problems can be discerned around 1989 and early 1990. If the Habyarimana regime had formally recognised the refugees' right of return, this might have been a sufficient symbolic act for many of the refugees, despite the lack of political reform, and it could have undermined the position of the most radical elements in the RPF.

There are international norms for solving refugee problems of this kind that provide suitable guidance for action. In this instance, the lack of pressure on Rwanda and Uganda to fulfil their obligations reflected conditions that were to recur in later phases of the conflict – limited regional capacity and limited international interest. The OAU had established norms for this type of problem, but no mechanisms or power to enforce them. The same was true of UNHCR. Western countries were preoccupied with events in Europe and the Soviet Union and seemed largely indifferent. Uganda permitted, and partially supported, the RPF's invasion.

Habyarimana probably had advance information of the coming invasion. There was visible movement towards the border of Tutsi soldiers and officers in the Ugandan army; there had been an aborted invasion attempt in 1989; the sudden slaughter of 1200 cattle for provisions of smoked meat was registered in July 1990; the training of Rwandan military refugees in the Mbarrara border region was raised in the Ugandan parliament; and fund-raising took place in the Tutsi community. There were also a number of reports of military mobilisation by Tutsis in Uganda. These observations were available to Habyarimana and to diplomats and observers in the region (*ibid.* 20).

At this early stage of the conflict there were opportunities for preventive efforts. However, they were not exploited, nor did the various actors deal with the refugee problem in an adequate manner.

## **Conflict resolution and peace settlement**

Shortly after the RPF invasion on 1 October 1990, the conflict was strongly internationalised. Two weeks after the invasion, Tanzania initiated a conflict resolution process, and several cease-fire agreements were signed during the period 1990-92. However, they were all breached, and the OAU did not manage to provide a military force that could adequately supervise the cease-fire agreements – clearly illustrating the limited regional capacity for dealing with such situations.<sup>5</sup> On 12 July

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<sup>4</sup> See also Watson 1991, Erny 1994, Guichaoua 1995.

<sup>5</sup> The first cease-fire was signed on 29 March 1991 and lasted until mid-April the same year. The Military Observer Team (MOT) was the first OAU-sponsored military force that was mobilised to monitor activities. Only Zaire, Burundi and Uganda contributed observers to this force, which did not

1992 the parties agreed to enter into formal peace talks, which resulted in the Arusha accords of August 1993.

Tanzania and the OAU were the most important actors in the peace process, but other states and organisations were also involved. The loosely organised Great Lakes Region Heads of State, as well as the EU, and more peripherally the UN, Belgium, France and the US helped to move the process forward.

The conflict was also internationalised in other ways. France and Zaire sent troops to support the Rwandan government, while Uganda in reality served as a base for the RPF. Belgian troops were also sent in, but only to protect Belgians in Rwanda. They left the country after a short time.

### **Ugandan and French policies**

Both Uganda and France pursued a dual policy of supporting their respective Rwandan partners, yet encouraging negotiations. Uganda supported the RPF and allowed them to have a base in the refugee community. At the same time, through the OAU, Uganda helped initiate negotiations.<sup>6</sup>

By formally declaring that the RPF invasion constituted a violation of international norms, Uganda tried to avoid responsibility for the situation. The official Ugandan stance was that the conflict was purely an internal Rwandan problem that did not merit international response. However, it is clear that Uganda's president had much to gain from a successful invasion. He would get rid of a troubling refugee problem, and at best have close friends in power in a neighbouring country.

France provided military assistance to Rwanda throughout the civil war. As the military weakness of the government was revealed, the Africa Unit at the Elysée Palace and the Military Assistance Office at the Ministry of Cooperation embarked on a policy to rapidly build up the *Forces Armées Rwandaise* (FAR). With French technical and military assistance, including credits for arms purchases, Rwanda's army was tripled from 1990 to 1991, and by mid-1993, when the peace settlement was reached, numbered at least 30,000 men.

The French military unit in Kigali (DAMIN) was responsible for training and operational guidance under the 1975 military assistance agreement. This agreement was renewed in August 1992. Numerically, the French presence was small. Some 40 *coopérants militaires* were gradually increased to 100, and the size of the French *Force Noroit*, which first arrived in October 1990, varied according to the rhythm of the war. After the 1991 cease-fire, this force was halved (168 men), increasing again after the RPF offensive in 1992 and reaching its peak in 1993 at about 700 men.

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become operative because none of the contributing states was considered neutral by the warring parties. The second cease-fire was signed on 26 October 1991. A revised monitoring force, the African Neutral Military Observers Group (MNOG) did not become operational until mid-1992. Early in 1992 the OAU Secretary-General proposed reinforcements for MNOG. They were needed, but the OAU did not manage to raise the necessary funds. The OAU requested funding from the UN but was turned down because the UN wished to fund only their own forces.

<sup>6</sup> Uganda held the chair of the OAU

French authorities have consistently denied reports that their paratroopers participated in the war. Although the French military presence was small in scope and had a restricted mandate, it had a strategic and political significance. By training the rapidly growing Rwandan army, and by sending paratroopers every time there was an RPF offensive, the French government clearly signalled that it stood by Habyarimana. Thus France pursued customary alliance politics by providing military assistance in time of war, rather than observing the neutral international practice of not supplying arms to belligerents.<sup>7</sup>

French policy was characterised by competition among domestic institutional actors, who had differing interests and perspectives, particularly when the situation deteriorated in 1994. The result was a dual policy that supported negotiations but simultaneously built up the Rwandan armed forces and supported the regime politically. French policy helped to move the negotiations forward at the inter-governmental level, while at the same time providing political space and resources for the Habyarimana regime to consolidate. Indirectly, this allowed a group of Hutu extremists to strengthen their position near the centre of power.

## **The process of democratisation**

The RPF invasion had a manifest influence on the process of democratisation. In 1989-90, Habyarimana had begun to liberalise the political system in response to various demands for democratisation. The RPF brought the process forward by making radical demands for power sharing. Foreign donors added to the pressures by emphasising that democratisation was necessary to bring the war to a close, and that it was desirable in itself.

Habyarimana first responded by forming a token coalition government, but as pressures mounted during the spring of 1992, he agreed to a second coalition with significant representation from the newly formed opposition parties.

Three political trends were evident in 1991 and early 1992. The conservatives defended Hutu supremacy and wanted to preserve the regime. A moderate group wanted a non-violent introduction of political pluralism that could replace the Second Republic. The third alternative was more radical and represented by the RPF. Their objective was to establish a new order, ideologically defined as political pluralism, in which ethnicity could not serve as a legitimate basis for political mobilisation.

The formation of the second coalition government in 1992, which included the "moderate" tendency, had substantial, contradictory consequences. The timing of democratisation was not perfect. The country was at war and the economy was weak. The multi-party system became an excuse for special interests that also encouraged ethnic mobilisation and had a significant effect on Hutu extremism. At the same time, it had a positive effect on the peace negotiations. The new, moderate foreign minister called for political talks with the RPF. After intercession by the US, France and the Vatican, the Arusha negotiations began in the summer of 1992.

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<sup>7</sup> No international arms embargo against Rwanda was in force until June 1994

## The Arusha process

The Arusha process was formally launched on 12 July 1992. The negotiations had participant-observer delegations from five African states (Burundi, Zaire, Senegal, Uganda and Tanzania), four Western countries (France, Belgium, Germany and the US) and the OAU. The UN was brought in at the invitation of the OAU, and the UNHCR sent an observer. The UK, Canada, the Netherlands and the EU, who were important donors to the region, monitored the process from their local embassies.<sup>8</sup>

Tanzania was the formal host of the peace process and played a vital role. The OAU was involved at a high level and was often represented by the Secretary General, Salim Ahmed Salim. For Salim, the Arusha process represented an opportunity to demonstrate that the OAU could make a contribution to conflict resolution in Africa.

The negotiations dealt with issues of legal rights, the establishment of transitional institutions, the resettlement of internally displaced persons, and the integration of the two armed forces into one integrated national army. The accords moved Rwanda from a presidential to a parliamentary system of politics, and the Arusha agreement was characterised by many as “perfect” (*ibid.* 24).

Even so, there were some key problems. The point of departure for change was the existence of an authoritarian regime, and any progress in the talks would require significant concessions from the government, which had already lost power when the coalition was formed. However, this was nothing compared to the radical changes the RPF achieved in Arusha. In reality, the accords represented a *coup d'état* for the RPF and the internal opposition.

A critical weakness in the agreement was that it did not take the losers into account in the process of change. The conservative supporters of Habyarimana and the extremist movement *Coalition pour la défense de la république* (CDR) were not included in the political process, nor were they neutralised in other ways. The CDR was formed in March 1992 and consisted of military and political hard-liners from circles with close ties to the presidential palace. The party's militias (*interahamwe* and *impuzamugambi*) were also created at this time and received direct support from the CDR, the government and the presidential guard.

Some observers of the Arusha process have concluded that it was unwise to exclude a major political force in Rwandan politics, which thereby had no stake in the successful implementation of the accords. Other diplomats in Kigali shared the RPF assessment that the Hutu extremists were not interested in power sharing, but that they wanted to destroy the new political order that had been drawn up (*ibid.* 26).

## Violations of human rights

From late 1992 and early 1993 onwards there was significant, increasing evidence of Hutu extremism. Killings of Tutsis were more frequent. There was mounting information about death squads, as well as reports that an organised group near the president planned to exterminate opponents of the regime and was circulating death

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<sup>8</sup> In addition, Nigeria was represented at the Arusha-linked Joint Political Military Committee.

lists. A report by the International Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights described systematic killings of Tutsis, estimating that approx. 2,000 had been murdered during the period 1990-92 (FIDH 1993). Belgium reacted strongly to the report and withdrew its ambassador for a time. The International Commission initially used the word "genocide" to describe the killings. In the official report, this term was retracted because of fear that such a designation would be considered hysterical. However, the term was used at a press conference, referring to a report submitted by the UN Commission on Human Rights (E/CN.4.1994/7, Add.1, 11 August 1993) just a few months later.

The spread of hate propaganda in Rwanda was also an indicator of increased tension and mounting "Hutu power". The hate propaganda during this period was so explicit and extreme that a number of diplomats, both Western and African, tended to dismiss it. There were similar reactions within the RPF. As one representative of the RPF said, "what they said was so stupid, we did not take it seriously enough" (*ibid.* 29).

There was also other evidence that the situation was serious. At least two government documents were leaked to the diplomatic community in Kigali. One of them was an internal report dated 21 September 1992 entitled "Definition and Identification of the Enemy", in which the "enemy" was defined as Tutsis, Hutus in mixed marriages with Tutsis, and moderate Hutus who were critical of the government. The other document was a letter dated 25 March 1993 from the Prime Minister in the second coalition government (an opposition member) to the Defence Minister. In it the Prime Minister gave details of the illegal distribution of weapons to civilians and called for immediate action to stop it. At this time links between civil violence and developments in the peace process became more explicit. At every decisive juncture or setback for the government, Tutsis were murdered.

## **Conditionality**

Most Western donors made economic aid conditional upon the observance of human rights. In practice, however, this requirement was seldom followed up; the donors did not reduce aid with reference to human rights violations. The most important reason was that democratisation was seen as the solution to the growing problem of violence. Support for democratisation and the related peace process required both economic and diplomatic involvement in Rwanda. Given this perspective, it would have been counter-productive to withdraw aid, because it would have affected developments in the country. In 1993 the number of internally displaced persons increased, and a number of donors shifted from development assistance to humanitarian aid, which made it even more difficult to impose conditionality requirements.

When the donor community did not reduce aid in protest against human rights violations, it sent a message that human rights conditionality was preached but not practised. At the same time there was too great a conviction that democratisation would solve the problems of violence.

## **Implementation of the accords**

The Arusha accords provided for the establishment of a neutral peacekeeping force to assist in the implementation of the peace agreement. The UN Secretariat and the

Security Council considered Rwanda a low-priority area in the autumn of 1993, and planned a conventional, minimal peacekeeping force. The UN's lack of interest in Rwanda was evident in both the size and mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda I (UNAMIR I).

UNAMIR I lacked the necessary equipment and personnel to be able to investigate human rights violations. According to the accords, a "peacekeeping force" was to ensure security, protect civilians and confiscate illegal arms, while the UN force's mandate was to contribute to security, monitor the cease-fire, help local authorities demobilise the two Rwandan armies, and investigate violations of the accords, but not specifically to confiscate illegal arms.

Many saw the implementation of the Arusha accords as an opportunity to control the extremists, but the extremists became more determined to destroy the accords by violent means the closer the accords came to being realised: After the peace agreement had been reached and the UN peacekeeping force was deployed, the militias started planning the extermination of Tutsis (*ibid.* 31). *Radio mille collines* (RTLM) broadcast the hate message that the country had to be freed from Tutsis, and the violence increased. Foreign diplomats and UN officers were aware of the deterioration of the situation. The relationship between President Habyarimana and the extremists was unclear during the entire period, and it is still not known what their relationship was.

On 11 January 1994 the UN Department of Peace-Keeping Operations (DPKO) in New York received an important file from the head of the UN force in Kigali containing detailed information about the *interahamwe* plans to kill Tutsis in Kigali. The DPKO was passive and took no further action. Similar mistakes were made by France and Belgium, who had good information about the situation in Rwanda.<sup>9</sup>

## The crisis

On 6 April 1994 the plane carrying Habyarimana was shot down. The next 24 hours saw a military coup, renewed civil war, systematic assassinations, and the commencement of genocide. Over a three-month period, between five and eight hundred thousand people were killed. Many others were maimed for life – both physically and mentally. More than two million fled to neighbouring countries, and about one million were internally displaced within Rwanda.

As early as 8 April the UN received information from the UNAMIR commanders in Kigali regarding organised murders that were expected to increase. On 13 April the Security Council received information that thousands had been killed, and during the next two weeks the amount of information increased. When Secretary General Boutros-Ghali presented various possible reactions to the Security Council on 20 April, he misinterpreted the organised, systematic nature of the violence. Instead it was perceived as anarchistic and spontaneous. Most of the Western media presented the same picture. Rather than emphasising the need to end the massacre of civilians, Boutros-Ghali stated that "the most urgent task is the securing of an agreement on

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<sup>9</sup> See *ibid* pp. 37-39, and *ibid* endnote 64



cease-fire in the hopes that this would lead to the resumption of the peace process and reviving the Arusha Accords” (*ibid.* 43). On 21 April the Security Council decided to withdraw its UN force from Rwanda (*ibid.* 44).

But when the UN could no longer ignore the direction and the magnitude of the genocide, the organisation reversed and acknowledged its obligation to protect civilians.<sup>10</sup> On 8 June the Security Council voted to deploy UNAMIR II. However, implementation of UNAMIR II was characterised by reluctance from the most important members of the Security Council, in relation both to funding and supplying troops and to effectively equipping available African troops. UNAMIR II did not become operational until after the genocide and the civil war were over.

## Lack of response

The international community was not prepared for the planning and implementation of genocide, and most international observers, organisations and states were shocked when it occurred. At the same time, it is clear that there was sufficient information to conclude that genocide was planned and could be carried out. The UN system, nation-states and the NGO community failed to connect human rights violations to analyses of social conflict (*ibid.* 69). Human rights violations are an important indicator of potential conflict, but this was not understood in Rwanda’s case.

In the 1948 Geneva Convention, “genocide” is defined as the intention to destroy all or part of a nation, ethnic group, race or religious group, and not the mass murder of hundreds of thousands as the term is often applied in everyday use. In the case of Rwanda, too, there was great confusion as to the nature of what was actually happening.

Indications of the seriousness of the situation should have resulted in greater commitment and preventive measures. The UN has a normative obligation to prevent genocide under the Geneva Convention, and an additional obligation through its actual peacekeeping role in Rwanda. Moreover, by virtue of its presence during the implementation phase, the UN gave the Tutsis in Rwanda a false feeling of security.

Important actors seemed to reject the possibility that the situation could be defined as genocide because this would have required changes in their reaction. For France, acknowledging genocide would have meant serious self-criticism, given their support for the Habyarimana regime and its extremists. The US would have been confronted with a moral obligation to intervene. For the UN Secretariat it would have meant that they would have had to prepare a major operation at a time when they did not want to cross “the Mogadishu line” (*ibid.* 69).

Although the Security Council was well informed of the genocide shortly after the crisis erupted, it did not take any initiative to deal with it. The US slowed down the

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<sup>10</sup> The UN Secretary-General did not call for strong reactions from the UN until 29 April. On 25 May Boutros-Ghali publicly confessed that “we are all responsible for this disaster, not only the super-powers, but also the African countries, the non-government organisations, the entire international community. There has been genocide, and the world is talking about what it should do. It is a scandal” (*ibid.* 43).

Secretariat's efforts to react swiftly by insisting that established procedures had to be followed.

The UN's inability to act to try to stop the genocide can be seen as the tendency of states to act in their own interests in preference to a moral obligation to uphold international standards of justice. Rwanda was a small Central African country that was peripheral in relation to the economic and political interests of the members of the Security Council except for France. Through their power of veto and financial control the five permanent members, particularly the US, controlled the UN peacekeeping operations. The US, the only country that has managed to mobilise the Security Council in a crisis, did not want to get involved in another African conflict after the fiasco in Somalia. Washington was also preoccupied with crises elsewhere, especially in Bosnia and Haiti. A fundamental lesson from the conflict in Rwanda is that in a world filled with crises even disasters with major humanitarian consequences can be neglected.

The mass media, with a few exceptions, were irresponsible in their reporting from Rwanda. It took nearly a month before they described the violence correctly. This influenced the reaction and contributed to the lack of action.

Humanitarian aid for the refugees in the border regions soon resumed, but it represented a reaction to the consequences of the conflict rather than to the violence itself (*ibid.* 71). A principal conclusion from the Rwanda evaluation report is that humanitarian aid cannot serve as a substitute for political action, and that emergency relief has only a limited effect on the political situation and the nature of the violence.

## Norwegian aid to Rwanda

Norway was not engaged in conflict resolution efforts in Rwanda, but gave high priority to humanitarian aid for the crisis after it erupted in April 1994.

**Table 1: Norwegian aid to Rwanda 1990-1996**

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
Short-term aid	-			6.325	50.056	99.146
Long-term aid	-	2.493	2.111	2.642	11.881	4.330
Total	150	2.493	2.111	8.967	61.937	103.476

Source: NORAD List of Activities 1990 - 1995

All figures in NOK thousands.

Norway had no previous history or relations with Rwanda, and involvement in the conflict resolution efforts was never discussed in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. To the extent the Ministry focused on problems in the region, it focused on Burundi. When it became clear that a humanitarian disaster had taken place, and that the international community had not reacted in an adequate manner, efforts were made to alleviate the suffering and give priority to the crisis based on criteria of need. During the period prior to 1994 only the Norwegian Red Cross and the Strømme Foundation had projects in Rwanda. These projects were very limited in scope. When the crisis erupted several Norwegian NGOs became involved. Norwegian Church Aid,

Norwegian People's Aid and the Norwegian Refugee Council have been the most active, alongside the Norwegian Red Cross. These organisations have primarily channelled funds to their international partner organisations.<sup>11</sup>

A review of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs archives shows that the Ministry was informed about the Arusha process and the human rights violations throughout the entire period. The embassy in Dar Es Salaam monitored the situation closely and informed the Ministry continuously. The Ministry received a request for funds for the Arusha negotiations on 3 June 1993 through the embassy in Dar Es Salaam, but turned it down. When Norway was asked by France in June 1994 to contribute to the peacekeeping force, the response was again negative on the grounds of insufficient capacity. In the same way as other countries, Norway failed to perceive the dangerous situation in Rwanda. However, a possible Norwegian contribution to conflict resolution in Rwanda, either before or after the crisis erupted, seems unlikely because of Norway's limited relationship with and knowledge of the situation and the region.

## Overall assessment

Norway has not been politically involved in conflict resolution in Rwanda – neither before nor after the genocide. Nor could such involvement have been expected because of the limited contact between Norway and Rwanda before the genocide took place. Priority has been given to humanitarian aid for the victims of the crisis from spring 1994 onwards.

The lessons from Rwanda apply particularly to the failure of international efforts to prevent the terrible genocide that took place there. The main points are well known: The UN failed to read early signs that plans were being made to eliminate the Tutsi minority and enemies of the regime of President Habyarimana. When the plans became a reality in April 1994, the United Nations Security Council responded by withdrawing most of the peacekeeping force that in late 1993 had been deployed to help implement the Arusha peace accords. About a month later, the Security Council reversed itself, recognised an obligation to protect civilians – who by that time were being slaughtered at the rate of thousands a day – and authorised sending 5,500 peacekeepers into the mayhem. When the peacekeeping force arrived in late July, the killings were all but over (Suhrke 1997: 97). A more decisive and robust demonstration of international force at an earlier stage might have restrained the extremist forces directly, and at any rate sent signals to the effect that the international community was fully behind the peace accords (*ibid.* 113).

As Suhrke has argued there was also in Rwanda a critical gap between a peace agreement that moved key players out of power, and a peace-keeping operation that had neither mandate nor capacity to tackle the potential spoilers. The Rwanda case raises important questions regarding the appropriate working relationship between the UN and the OAU, the latter being inexperienced in peacekeeping and wholly dependent on the UN to provide logistics and finances. Yet it was effectively discouraged by the UN and key Security Council members from taking a larger role.

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<sup>11</sup> Norwegian People's Aid has had its own projects in Rwanda.

This is, as Suhrke writes, particularly ironic given the demonstrated inefficiency of the UN during the Rwanda emergency (*ibid.*).

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## 7. Burundi: Norwegian support for peace and reconciliation efforts

Burundi is one of the first instances where the international community's explicit desire to prevent the outbreak of full-scale war and potential genocide has been put into practice. This is mainly due to the painful lessons learned in Rwanda, where the international community was incapable of preventing genocide and massacres in 1994 (see chapter 6). Norway has provided valuable support for various initiatives for peace and reconciliation in Burundi. This brief chapter is primarily based on archival material and interviews in the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.<sup>1</sup>

### The conflict in Burundi

The crisis in Burundi is primarily a conflict between groups commanding unequal power and unequal resources. Ethnicity has been exploited and manipulated by certain groups in order to realise political ambitions. Burundi became an independent monarchy in 1962 and a republic in 1966. The first years were characterised by power struggles between aristocratic families of mixed ethnic origins, but Burundi was also influenced by the social revolution in Rwanda (1959-62) when the Hutus seized power and drove out the Tutsis. In 1965 a group of Hutus in the army tried to overthrow the Tutsi-dominated government in Burundi, which led to a widespread massacre of Hutus. The bloodiest massacre took place in 1972 when the Hutus again unsuccessfully staged a coup. More than 80,000 people, most of them Hutus in leading positions, were murdered and some 150,000 people had to flee. This laid the foundation for a widespread feeling of martyrdom among the Hutus.

In 1976 a new Tutsi militia seized power. A more conciliatory policy was pursued in relation to the Hutus, but the regime again assumed a steadily more authoritarian character and was replaced in 1987 by a military council under the leadership of Major Pierre Buyoya. New uprisings in 1988 were quelled brutally, but Buyoya tried to accommodate some of the Hutu demands, such as appointing a Hutu prime minister. He also introduced a gradual process of democratization. A charter for national unity was adopted in 1991, and in a 1992 referendum a new constitution was approved that instituted a multiparty system and free elections.

The first free elections were held in 1993. The Hutu-dominated FRODEBU achieved a sweeping victory, while the Tutsi-dominated party (UPRONA) won only 16 of 81 seats in parliament. However, the newly-elected president and several ministers were assassinated in an attempted coup that same year, which led to a new massacre in which 50,000 people were killed and 600,000 (of a population of 5.6 million) had to flee, most of them to neighbouring countries. The crisis was intensified in April 1994 when the plane in which Rwanda's President Habyarimana and Burundi's President Ntaryamira were travelling was shot down. This incident triggered the genocide of Tutsis and the massacre of moderate Hutus in Rwanda (see chapter 6).

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<sup>1</sup> We are particularly grateful to Kjell Harald Dalen, MFA for much of the information contained in this chapter.

In September 1994 agreement was reached on a division of power among all the parties in Burundi. A transitional government was formed, and UPRONA acquired greater influence than the election results decreed (45% of the ministerial posts). The situation remained unstable, with growing mistrust of the military among the Hutu population, a paralysed economy, increasing impunity for serious crimes and human rights violations and a large group of refugees who could not return. Attempts to launch a national dialogue of reconciliation were completely blocked by the constant ethnic clashes.

In September 1996, former President Buyoya again seized power in a military coup, which brought the peace and reconciliation process to a halt. At the same time, violence continued and a comprehensive massacre of sympathisers of the Hutu guerrilla was launched by the army. The coup also led to economic sanctions against Burundi by the neighbouring countries in the region in order to isolate and put pressure on the new military regime. The situation was further complicated by warfare and a transfer of power in the former Zaire (now Republic of Congo) which, at least in the short-term, strengthened Buyoya's military regime because the Hutu guerrillas which were operating in former East Zaire with the Rwandan Hutu extremists were greatly weakened.

The most urgent problem in Burundi is to bring about a dialogue between credible representatives of the country's Tutsi minority and the Hutu majority about a future form of government that can both ensure the safety of the minorities and give the majority a reasonable representation in the governing bodies of the country. Until an understanding is reached on the framework for such a form of government, it is difficult to implement a more comprehensive programme of support for Burundi, or to press for further repatriation of those Burundian refugees who are still in Tanzania.

### **The role of the outside world**

The UN system has been active in Burundi, and preventive efforts have arguably helped prevent open civil war. The UN Secretary General, the Security Council and the General Assembly condemned the attempted coup in 1993. The Secretary General proposed the establishment of a preventive military force, but did not obtain support from key potential contributors nor from Burundi's armed forces. The Secretary General appointed a UN special envoy, Ould Abdallah, who played an important role in Burundi, i.a. by supporting many different projects to promote reconciliation in Burundi. Since Abdallah's resignation in 1995, UN efforts have been weakened and appear to have lacked an overall plan. The OAU has also had a presence in Burundi, including a group of military observers in the country. The EU, a number of European countries and NGOs have also been active in Burundi, all of them participating in an operation to promote reconciliation and stability.

A number of attempts have been made to initiate negotiations for a solution involving peace and reconciliation in Burundi, and Tanzania's former President Julius Nyerere has acted as mediator between all the parties to the conflict on behalf of the countries in the region. Under the auspices of the Catholic organisation the Sant'Egidio Community, attempts have also been made to initiate negotiations in Rome between the Buyoya regime and Nyangoma's Hutu-guerrilla group (CNDD), the most important armed resistance group.

During 1998 some progress has been made. In June, Buyoya introduced a transitional constitution and brought Hutus from FRODEBU into government. A power-sharing transitional government was established, with 11 opposition ministers in a 22-strong government, the replacement of the prime minister by two vice-presidents, one Hutu and one Tutsi, and an enlargement of the National Assembly from 81 members to 121.

While extremists on both sides denounced the agreement which was passed in the assembly, some of them, perhaps fearful that it might actually work, turned up in Arusha where two all-party peace talks have been held under the mediation of Julius Nyerere. A third meeting is scheduled for October 13, 1998. In the meantime, Burundi's main pro-Tutsi party UPRONA recently ousted its leader (Charles Mukasi) and replaced him with the Minister of Information (Luc Rukingama) who is a staunch supporter of President Buyoya. Mukasi's wing of UPRONA, however, is likely to continue to represent a powerful strand of militant Tutsi opinion that opposes any form of accommodation with FRODEBU. The recent agreement is also opposed by President Museveni of Uganda.

Another significant development has been the reported suspension of Nyangoma as a leader of CNDD by the commander of its military wing FDD. Initial assessments are that the new leader may be more ready to reach agreements with the other predominantly Hutu groups.

After 1993, Burundi settled into a low-level conflict of terror and counter-terror, but, despite the fears, has not followed its neighbour Rwanda down the path to genocide. The past months have seen substantial strengthening of encouraging trends. Whether or not the country will find a path to peace, however, remains to be seen.

### **Norwegian support for negotiation and reconciliation efforts**

Norway has not traditionally had much contact with Burundi. Whereas much of the primary attention in the Great Lakes region was first concentrated on humanitarian problems, particularly in relation to the large Rwandan refugee concentrations in the neighbouring countries, the focus has gradually become increasingly directed at the internal political situation in these countries, and at efforts to find broad cooperative solutions that will help stabilise conditions in this region. Norwegian aid to Burundi amounted to NOK 37 million in 1996 and remained at about the same level in 1997.

The now deceased Norwegian UN ambassador Martin Huslid played a key role in getting Norway involved in Burundi. The UN Secretary General sent Huslid to Burundi with the former foreign minister of Cote d'Ivoire in 1994. When the Secretary General, in part based on the report of these two envoys, appointed a Special Envoy to Burundi (Ould Abdallah), Norway soon became an important supporting actor, particularly providing funds for grassroots-oriented reconciliation efforts. Since 1994-95 Norway has supported several other such efforts, among them a programme for parliamentary exchange between Burundi and the Nordic countries which has been administered by Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, and a reconciliation programme launched by International Alert.

Norway also provided funding for the summits between the heads of state of the Great Lakes region mediated by former US President Carter in Cairo (in November 1995) and in Tunis (in March 1996). It was in part as a result of former President Carter's involvement that former President Nyerere was drawn in as a mediator specifically for the conflict in Burundi. During spring 1996 Nyerere had a number of meetings with the different political leaders in Burundi, and in his attempts to achieve a broad-based dialogue between the various political groups in the country he also organised two conferences in the city of Mwanza in Tanzania, which were chiefly paid for with Norwegian funding. By April 1998, Norway had so far provided a total of USD 250,000 in funding for Nyerere's negotiation efforts in Burundi. The Arusha meetings have subsequently also received financial support from Norway.

Earlier, Nyerere's negotiation efforts largely broke down with the military coup in Burundi on 25 July 1996, when Major Buyoya seized power. It was evident that Buyoya and the military Tutsi elites who took over the country did not have much confidence in Nyerere, whom they considered far too Hutu-friendly, and whom they suspected of being behind the sanctions imposed on Burundi by the neighbouring countries after the military coup. It was this deadlocked situation the Sant'Egidio Community entered as a new actor, having contacts through its church network with Buyoya and his regime, as well as with Leonard Nyangoma and his Hutu-dominated rebel movement CNDD. These emerged as the two main belligerents in the conflict following the coup.

The Sant'Egidio Community held three rounds of confidential talks in Rome between representatives of the Buyoya regime and CNDD, most recently during the first week of May 1997 (i.e., just after a visit by Leonard Nyangoma and two of his co-workers to Oslo during the last week of April). Although nothing very concrete emerged from the talks - at least a dialogue was initiated and a 7-point framework for further deliberations was adopted. Norway was the main source of funding for these negotiation efforts under the auspices of Sant'Egidio, and contributed USD 422,000 to Sant'Egidio for this purpose. Later both sides confirmed publicly that the talks took place, as has Sant'Egidio. Norway has also confirmed its support for the talks.

## **Assessment**

Norway was quick to support several initiatives in relation to political developments in Burundi. Particularly in relation to mediation efforts Norway emerges as a significant source of funds, but has also supported other efforts, both in relation to civil society groups and activities specifically designed for parliamentarians. It is difficult to assess to what degree the different measures have contributed to reducing conflict in Burundi, as the situation is still serious. So far, however, Norwegian policy has been reasonably consistent and flexible, building on the important awareness that it is political solutions that are needed and not just humanitarian aid. Unlike in countries like Sudan, Guatemala and Mali, the participation of Norwegian actors outside the Ministry of Foreign Affairs appears to have been insignificant.



## **8. Aid and conflict – an overall assessment**

### **A new Norwegian foreign policy?**

Global developments since the end of the cold war, characterised by strong local and regional conflicts and a dramatic increase in complex and politically challenging emergency relief operations, have created conditions for a new Norwegian foreign policy activism. The link between peace efforts, humanitarian and long-term aid and the promotion of democracy and human rights are important aspects of this policy, together with the active participation of actors outside the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (“the Norwegian model”).

That aid is becoming a form of political engagement is part of an international trend, by no means exclusive to Norway. There has been an increase in the number of actors and agencies working in the broad area of conflict resolution with steadily growing donor funds supporting their work. A more interventionist approach is justified on various grounds – from enlightened self-interest (security concerns, costs of wars and peace keeping operations etc.) to the ethical and moral need to protect values such as peace, democracy, human dignity and tolerance. Generally speaking, internal conflicts undermine efforts to protect human rights and they hamper economic and social development.

As we indicated in the introductory chapter, interventions in internal conflict are often controversial. Inherent in civil wars is the fact that the government itself is a party to the conflict. That being the case, its exercise of sovereignty becomes intrinsically an exclusion of rebel movements and the civilian population identified with such movements from the benefits normally associated with sovereignty. One can say that the excluded or marginalised groups become victims of the sovereignty that is supposed to protect them. In fact, national sovereignty becomes a contested commodity. And while the contest rages, a vacuum of moral responsibility is created into which innocent civilian populations fall victim. It is increasingly being accepted that in such cases, like in Iraq, Kosovo or Bosnia-Herzegovina, someone else must step in to fill that vacuum.

In Norway, not everyone has been equally pleased about the growing foreign policy activism in the broad area of conflict resolution. A few have been concerned that emergency relief has become a prominent part of our foreign policy and that problems which are far away from us are given more priority than what is happening closer to home. However, there is reason to emphasise that aid in recent years has been used as an active instrument in our foreign policy also in areas that are central for Norwegian and European security such as the Balkans and the Middle East. Others, particularly among those engaged in traditional development assistance, have been concerned that the long-term perspective which has characterised Norwegian development assistance since its beginning in 1952 is losing ground in relation to the needs for flexibility, adaptability and shorter term efforts on various fronts and in various countries where Norway is involved and maintains a state of readiness. These concerns have also been linked to another special organisational feature of Norwegian foreign policy: the administrative division between the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation

(NORAD), which has been responsible for implementing long-term development assistance, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), which has been responsible for emergency relief, refugee aid and human rights. This division of responsibilities has been based on theoretical and practical considerations related to the nature of development assistance and emergency relief, as well as on foreign policy assessments of the more political nature of emergency relief/refugee aid. The differences between these two areas of responsibility, and the grey area between them, have remained unclear throughout the entire era of development assistance, with consequences for both political and administrative coordination.

The Norwegian use of NGOs as peace mediators and agencies involved in conflict resolution, as we have seen in Guatemala and Mali, has also been discussed. As a result of their focus on the middle and grassroots levels of societies in crisis, NGOs tend to be particularly effective at working with both a country's mid-level officials and local populations. Because of their familiarity with the country and its decision makers, NGO representatives often have a keen understanding of the realities on the ground, allowing them to reach across their counterparts from other agencies into a web of indigenous officials and resources in order to build and maintain a sustainable infrastructure that has a better chance of ameliorating not just the manifestations, but also the causes of conflict. On the other hand, it has been argued that the use of NGOs as actors in political processes abroad may create new problems with regard to the parliamentary and political control of Norwegian foreign policy<sup>1</sup>

This study was not an exhaustive assessment of "the new Norwegian foreign policy". The authors undertook a limited study of Norwegian efforts in six different countries where MFA, NORAD and other Norwegian actors have played different roles depending on a number of circumstances, including widely varying historical points of departure. Individually and in different combinations, however, the examples may serve to highlight some key issues related to the following question: How can Norwegian aid and foreign policy best contribute towards reducing conflict and promoting peace and reconciliation?

There are no simple answers to this question, but there are some important issues that deserve more attention than they seem to have been given until now. Let us first recapitulate briefly how we assess the Norwegian contributions in the six countries under consideration before we try to extract more general lessons.

## **Comparative assessment**

In *Guatemala*, Norway played a high-profile role in the process leading up to the peace agreement in December 1996. Norwegian efforts were characterised by a deep understanding of the conflict, a long-term perspective and willingness to persist, good networks with various parties to the conflict, active coordination with a number of other key actors, and involvement on several levels and in different fora. Norway was accepted by the parties to the conflict, who themselves wanted to achieve a political solution. In many ways Guatemala represents the ideal type of "the Norwegian model", a closely coordinated effort between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other Norwegian actors, in this case with Petter Skauen from Norwegian Church Aid

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<sup>1</sup> Terje Tvedt 1998: *Angels of Mercy or Development Diplomats? NGOs and Foreign Aid*. Trenton and London: Africa World Press and James Currey.

as a key person throughout the entire process. Norway played a constructive facilitatory role in the Guatemalan peace process.

*Mali* also provides an example of an NGO (Norwegian Church Aid) with a former resident representative (Kåre Lode) as a key person playing a constructive role in local peace processes. Lode had long experience in Mali and thus a thorough knowledge of the country and the region and good political and social networks. Norwegian Church Aid's sustained presence in Mali contributed to the trust the organisation enjoyed among the people, also because NCA remained in the northern region long after the other western organisations had left the country. Its efforts, in which the Malian NCA staff also played a key role, were supported by Norway, Germany, Switzerland and Canada. On the part of Norway, the process was driven by the NCA, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not play a significant role in the peace efforts themselves. However, Norway provided support for the UNDP's important Mali activities (led by the Norwegian Tore Rose) and has also subsequently chosen to use the UNDP as an important channel for consolidating the peace process in the country. The Norwegian efforts in Mali cannot be compared directly to the work in Guatemala. The more localised conflict in Mali never reached the same heights or level of violence as in Guatemala. In Mali, unlike in Guatemala, the main challenge was to create a basis for the implementation of an agreement that had already been signed.

In relation to *the Sudan* Norway has also played a high-profile role, primarily as a substantial provider of humanitarian aid, but also as an occasional participant in the peace process. The COWI report argues that Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) and Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) have helped people in need, but that the impact of their work has been marginal in terms of getting the warring parties to seek peace and reconciliation. Norway is also criticised for not having a consistent, coherent Sudan policy, and the report recommends that the Norwegian government's diplomatic initiatives (which should be strengthened) and the objectives of the aid programmes of the NCA and NPA should be more closely linked.

Many attempts have been made by outsiders to resolve the conflict in the Sudan. All of them have failed thus far. This is due to several reasons, but the most important is arguably that at no point have the two main belligerents (SPLA and the government in Khartoum) simultaneously felt that they stand to gain the most from a negotiated solution. Likewise, the regionalisation of the conflict has further complicated the situation. Nevertheless it can be argued that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, given Norway's unique position in relation to the Sudan (various actors with long-term involvements, good contacts with most of the groups in the conflict, experience from peace-building initiatives, etc.), has had an uneven engagement. Given current developments in the Sudan and in the neighbouring countries, the peace process needs to be revitalised and it is imperative that the IGAD Partners move in and engage themselves in the process on a sustained basis.

In *Mozambique*, too, Norway has been criticised for insufficient coordination, in this case also between aid and foreign policy. The CMI report claims that Norwegian authorities paid little systematic attention to the relationship between short-term aid and the peace process and the maintenance of peace in the long run. The peace process in Mozambique, although Norway was a substantial aid donor, did not emerge

as an important foreign policy issue in Oslo, partly because there was a detailed peace agreement which laid the framework for peace and partly because Norway considered the process in Mozambique mainly a question of providing development assistance. However, Norway supported the peace process through many different efforts, although not sufficiently coordinated, and also played a role jointly with other donors, particularly in the difficult process leading up to the election in 1994. Yet it took quite a long time (1997) before Norway formulated a country strategy which acknowledged that the end of the war created new conditions for the aid programme.

In the *Great Lakes* region Norway has chosen to have the greatest involvement in Burundi. In Rwanda Norway has not become involved in conflict resolution efforts, neither before nor after the genocide, but has provided substantial humanitarian aid since the spring of 1994. Norway's political involvement has been much greater in Burundi, comprising both mediation and reconciliation efforts. However, Norwegian efforts have primarily been linked to funding, without the participation of Norwegian actors as in Guatemala and Mali. Although the situation in Burundi remains uncertain, there is reason to commend the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for a reasonably consistent, yet flexible policy.

### **Norway's role in mediation efforts**

An important point of departure for any assessment of Norwegian efforts in the broad area of conflict resolution is to recognise both differences and difficulties. First the violence which has haunted countries as diverse as Sudan, Guatemala and Mozambique, has multiple origins inside and outside the countries, reflecting a complex configuration of social, economic and political factors. Alongside the majority who seek political solutions to end violence, is often a significant minority who seek to sustain the conflict dynamics in different ways.

Second, it seems to be particularly difficult to manage or resolve conflicts where deep-rooted and sensitive identity-issues are at stake. The tendency on the part of those who dominate the status quo is to deny the essence of the problem and give it more palatable labels, which represent partial truth at best and distortions at worst. When culture, religion and other factors are merged into a composite identity which is then projected to define the nation, the crisis becomes a zero-sum contest for the soul of nationhood. Under these circumstances, even diplomatic initiatives aimed at resolving the conflict tend to shy away from the truth because it points the path to failure. And yet, it cannot be wished away and solutions based on half-truths are not likely to endure.

Diplomatic or other intercession that seeks quick fixes in addressing such complex issues can only complicate the crisis. There is a tendency to look for aspects of a problem that lend themselves to relatively easy solutions and to postpone more difficult ones. While this is understandable and perhaps even practical, it is probably the more difficult ones that eventually provoke people to violent confrontation making them determined to kill and risk being killed.

While a complex array of instruments has been developed internationally to manage inter-state conflicts, these have proved themselves extremely limited in the context of internal war. For those working in internal conflicts the obstacles are, therefore,

formidable. They are at once analytic (both in terms of seeking an explanation of a particular conflict, and recognising that these explanations situate their actors politically), as well as being ethical, juridical and highly practical.

As far as mediation efforts are concerned, there is little doubt that the sustained Norwegian presence through ongoing and long-term aid programmes has been an important factor in the successful endeavours as we have seen them in countries like Guatemala and Mali. Such presence would also seem to be crucial for future Norwegian peace efforts in a country like the Sudan.

In Guatemala and Mali we also see the significance of the various factors that were discussed in the introductory chapter: a thorough understanding of the conflict and its different dimensions, a long-term perspective, good networks, contacts with actors who were not invited to the negotiating table, but nonetheless played an important role for the outcome, and extensive flexibility in relation to the need for funding or initiatives that emerge during the peace process. This is particularly evident in relation to Norway's efforts in Guatemala: the links between political initiatives and humanitarian aid and the possibility of allocating funds quickly as opportunities or problems arose were of fundamental significance in order to understand the role Norway acquired and the results achieved.

The case of Burundi is different. Whereas the belligerents in Mali and Guatemala were motivated to reach a negotiated solution, and the conflicts were thus "ripe" for mediation and reconciliation, the primary point of departure for international efforts in Burundi has been an endeavour to prevent genocide and the outbreak of full-scale civil war. Norway has, through different channels and over an extended period of time, supported various mediation and reconciliation efforts intended to resolve the political crisis in Burundi. Norway has provided substantial funding and closely monitored the conflict, but the channels have primarily been foreign (Carter, Nyerere, Sant'Egidio, the UN). There is little Norwegian competence and insufficient grounds for Norwegian actors to be able to play an important role in the country. It may now finally be possible to get the process in Burundi on a positive course with prospects of reconciliation and lasting peace.

The cases of Sudan, Guatemala, Mali and Burundi can also be used to illustrate the following points:

- Whether any peace process succeeds or fails clearly lies beyond the capabilities of the mediator; instead, success is ultimately contingent on the willingness of the parties to live together non-violently. Once there is sufficient motivation and a measure of political will on the part of national antagonists to move towards peace, there is clearly a facilitatory role for the international community in bringing civil wars to an end, and nurturing the conditions for increase political tolerance and diversity. Thus, it is critically important for mediators to better understand the dynamics that keep civil wars going and those through which they end.
- In both Guatemala and Burundi, as in the Sudan, the neighbouring countries play a crucial role, for better or for worse. In Guatemala, Mexico played a key role, and the Central American peace plan was important as a foundation for the peace

process. Even so, we see that it was a difficult role for Mexico to play. On the one hand the Mexican government did not want to be considered partial and interventionist (as the US has been in the region), yet they granted residence permits to the guerrilla leaders and thus could easily be considered not neutral. The lesson from Central America is that, even in the face of superpower opposition, it is possible for co-ordinated action by concerned state actors to achieve a minimal agenda for conflict transformation.

In the US and Europe, much of the public debate on regional and sub-regional actors in Africa has been couched in rather negative terms. While the IGAD initiative for the Sudan has been considered promising, it could be argued that several IGAD governments (Eritrea, Ethiopia and Uganda) have seen their relation deteriorate enough with the Khartoum regime and would all like to see a change of government in Khartoum. On the other hand, the economic gains from peace and reconstruction for neighbouring countries are likely to be significant.

The examples of IGAD and the West African ECOWAS countries' intervention in Liberia under the leadership of Nigeria are often used to show the limited options regional players have in terms of promoting peace in their vicinity, particularly in Africa. Even so, it is important, also for Norway, to work harder to Africanise the conflict management area on various levels. Far too often humanitarian interventions and peace efforts have as their premise that African populations are recipients and victims rather than actors involved in their own development and future.

- While Norway played a high profile, leading role in Guatemala, it is important to emphasise that there are other crucial roles in a peace process. For instance, there is still a tendency to underestimate the enormous demands and challenges posed by the implementation process in the wake of a peace agreement (see more below). When Norway, other countries and international institutions increasingly use money to influence political developments in various parts of the world, we assume responsibility, economically and politically, for the ultimate success of the process. There are both major roles and supporting roles that must be filled. The point is that they must be coordinated as far as possible and not emerge as fragmented efforts. This also applies to different instruments that any individual country has at its disposal; in Norway's case, these instruments include NGOs, the Norwegian Resource Bank for Democracy and Human Rights, the Norwegian Emergency Preparedness System, and others). In principle, all roles are equally demanding in terms of the need for analytic competence, robust networks, the ability to reassess the situation as well as flexibility and a long-term perspective in designing policy.

Guatemala again provides an example of the challenges that remain, even after a peace settlement has been made. There is a range of deep concerns that must still be addressed if peace building in Guatemala is to be sustained and extended in the medium-term. Among them, perhaps none is as crucial as extending the rule of law and establishing just and peaceful means for adjudicating remaining conflicts. If the ultimate step is to be taken from negotiating to realising rights, the national, regional and international actors who have achieved so much will need to renew

their commitment to the country and, in the process devise appropriate roles for continued engagement.

## **Foreign policy and aid**

This leads us to a more general discussion of the relationship between political initiatives and forms of development assistance. In both Mozambique and the Sudan, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been criticised for a lack of overall strategy. The CMI report on Mozambique argues that the peace process never emerged as a significant foreign policy issue in Oslo and that there was insufficient integration between aid policy and broader foreign policy issues (Mozambique was a typical NORAD country). The COWI report on the Sudan states that the lack of an overall strategy has diminished the effectiveness of Norwegian aid to the Sudan and that the humanitarian aid should be better coordinated with diplomatic initiatives.

Although there are not grounds for taking the criticism of Norway's role in Mozambique and the Sudan very far, the discussion points to some important questions about the *links between political processes and initiatives on the one hand and the use of different forms of aid on the other hand*.

In the introductory part of this chapter, it was mentioned that it is often believed that there is tension and a possible conflict between the long-term perspective that has traditionally been at the base of Norwegian development cooperation and what are perceived as more short-term efforts and the needs for flexibility and adaptability which follow from a closer link between aid and foreign policy. In Mozambique and many other countries where Norway is involved in supporting a process of peace and reconstruction, it is however, important to avoid being constrained by such traditional divisions. Efforts towards lasting solutions to destructive conflicts and attempts to prevent conflicts from having serious adverse effects on development and welfare are tasks which require the use of most instruments and forms of aid.

At a time when steadily increasing shares of aid budgets, including long-term aid, are used for the reconstruction of societies that have experienced deep, lasting conflicts, this is an extremely important point. The Sudan and Guatemala are both countries where Norwegian NGOs have worked for years, combining emergency relief and more long-term development efforts. As humanitarian aid develops its methods, enabling it to support self-help programmes of various types, and as long-term aid becomes more focused on supporting civil society, there will be only a difference of degree distinguishing the two forms of aid. This is even more evident in serious conflict situations and in countries where it is important to support a peace process. The main question will always be as follows: *Where, when and how* can aid be most beneficial?

The salient point for aid is what problems it can alleviate, in the short and long term. This requires cooperation between different forms of aid. They should all be based on solid analysis of the overall problem. In general, new methods and approaches are required with an increased emphasis on *conflict impact assessment*. It is critically important, also for aid organisations like NORAD to better understand the dynamics that produce internal conflicts, those that keep them going and those through which they end. This applies to all forms of aid, as experience from Rwanda indicates.

Almost right up to the genocide, Rwanda was perceived as a relatively successful aid recipient. A retrospective look at the genocide shows how also aid programmes contributed to strengthening social divisions which later had dramatic consequences.

Such a perspective shows that the problem does not lie in getting one form of aid to merge with another (the “continuum from relief to development” debate), but to design aid programmes that are as appropriate as possible in relation to the problems that are identified, and on this basis assign responsibility according to competence. Key words here are long-term thinking *combined with*, not in contrast to, flexibility and the ability to adapt to changing circumstances.

Reconstruction of a society after conflict is a time-consuming process which requires a long-term, lasting involvement. Building up infrastructures can be done relatively quickly and is very important, particularly as a symbol pointing to a better future. The social and socio-political dimension of reconstruction, however, is even more significant for consolidating peace, but is also more complex and time-consuming.

Increasing emphasis should be given to analysing the lessons learned from aid for reconstruction as a basis for developing methods and policies within the more long-term peace-promoting development assistance. Lessons from the growing role of capacity building within humanitarian aid should also be analysed and incorporated in this context.

### **Aid and peace – the institutional basis**

It follows from the discussion above that there is a need for sufficient capacity and competence related to the broad area of conflict resolution both in MFA, in NORAD and among NGOs. This would include (a) ensuring that coherent conflict prevention strategies are incorporated into development cooperation arrangements; (b) designing aid programmes by translating NGO and donor *best practices* in conflict situations into recommendations for the providers of aid; and (c) exploring the interface between humanitarian aid and possible conflict escalation with a view to reducing the possibility of such occurrences.

The experience from Mozambique and the Sudan indicates that there is a need to strengthen the institutional basis for a more coherent Norwegian policy towards countries that suffer, or have recently suffered from violent internal conflict. After all, an increasing share of Norway’s development cooperation budget is being allocated to such countries. Besides the six countries included in this study, they include South Africa, Gaza/West Bank, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Angola and Sri Lanka.

The study’s mandate does not include a proper assessment of existing arrangements. In principle, there is reason to believe that the organisational reforms in the MFA, including the development of a desk system and so-called “integrated” embassies (foreign policy, development cooperation) will increase chances that Norwegian policy will be more coherent and governed by overall considerations. This should apply both to countries where the government wants to start a political engagement in a peace process and in countries where Norway is among the main donors. The links between political initiatives and humanitarian aid have been at the centre of Norwegian foreign policy and should remain so. It is therefore important to design



political and administrative mechanisms that can help focus political and bureaucratic attention to meet the special needs for coordination and flexibility that arise, e.g. during a transitional phase between war and peace.

## **The Norwegian model**

It is often argued, and probably correctly so, that Norway's good international reputation at present is largely due to the country's strong and persistent engagement in peace building efforts in different parts of the world. While successive Norwegian governments have all prioritised such efforts it is probably also correct to claim that this reputation rests primarily on the efforts of individuals. Part of the pattern which emerges, particularly if we extend the scope beyond the six countries under study, includes dynamic, concerned individuals who become involved in conflict situations and have both the weight and the energy to ensure that Norway becomes engaged in peace processes.

While such individuals are likely to remain important, and while opportunities for playing peace facilitating roles often arise by chance rather than as a result of deliberate, planned action, there are still a number of lessons that can be drawn from past experience. There would seem to be the following requirements for the Norwegian model to work in the way that it did in the high-profile case of Guatemala and the much lower profile case of Mali:

- A relationship between the government, in the form of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and a Norwegian non-governmental organisation – presumably either a humanitarian organisation or a research institute. As we have seen, the NGO needs not to be regarded as *parti pris* and presumably has some particular expertise on the issues and/or region in conflict. Where this expertise is based on an extended engagement in the region, so much the better.
- The MFA/NGO relationship begins with agendas that coincide. As it develops, the relationship should be regarded as a partnership. Each side of the relationship must trust the other. While the NGO is accountable to the MFA for its use of project funds, the MFA should not make the effort to control or micro-manage the workings of the NGO. In Guatemala and Mali, the foundations of success were not only the independent capacity and expertise of NCA personnel, but also the MFA's willingness to rely on the independence as much as on the expertise.
- A crucial element on both sides is operational flexibility. From this comes the need in both MFA and NGO for speed in decision-making and responsiveness to changing circumstances and the needs of the moment. A central feature of flexibility in responding to events as they unfold is efficiency in handling matters at both political and working levels in the MFA.
- The need for organisational flexibility has a parallel in a need for substantive flexibility - a pragmatism in the approach, and a willingness to get a result that works and is sustainable, rather than one that corresponds in detail to pre-set blueprints. These two kinds of flexibility come together in the recognition by MFA and NGO that it is often necessary to work both with government and civil society in order to achieve sustainable settlements.
- The model has also prospered by the willingness of MFA and NGO to operate through a wide range of channels, and to bring other external actors in as necessary and appropriate.

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- As well as speed, the model calls for endurance. Both MFA and NGO have to recognise that success may not come quickly if at all. In this sense, “the Norwegian model” also makes it possible to acknowledge that many efforts fail. Fear of failure implies inaction, and therefore rules out the possibility of success. For this endurance to be possible, operations have to be conducted at low cost, though without false economies of the kind that create more work than they save.
  - To manage these things, co-ordination and follow-up are essential, As a means of managing the effort, the best approach appears to be to put together a small team that is committed, competent and backed by the political leadership in the MFA.

# Annex 1: Terms of Reference

*Study commissioned by the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs*

*Title:*

Experience gained from Norwegian assistance in conflict situations:  
A study of assistance for Rwanda, Burundi, Mali, Mozambique, Sudan and Guatemala.

*Carried out by:*

the Christian Michelsen Institute (CMI)  
in cooperation with the International Peace Research Institute, Oslo (PRIO)

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## **Purpose**

Throughout the post-war era, Norway has been involved on the international arena in conflict situations in other countries. Some have been conflicts between nation states, others internal conflicts in individual countries. In the last decade, with a growing number of situations bordering on civil war in developing countries, this involvement has assumed a new dimension. Norway has sought to play a role in several conflicts of this nature through its foreign and development cooperation policy. There are clear political signals that Norway will continue to pursue an active policy in this area. There is therefore a growing need to summarise the experience that has been gained from cases that can now, to a certain extent, be viewed from a historical perspective.

## **Objectives**

The study will review the experience gained from Norwegian assistance in the broad area that comprises conflict prevention, conflict resolution, support for peace processes and post-conflict reconstruction.

The report will review Norwegian efforts in conflict situations in Rwanda, Burundi, Sudan, Mali, Mozambique and Guatemala. On the basis of these case studies, the objective of the report is to discover whether Norway's efforts have affected the actual course of the conflicts and contributed towards a peaceful solution, evaluate the "instruments" and "channels" that have been available and effective in influencing the various situations, discover which of them Norway has used, and find out what governed Norway's choices. The report also seeks to evaluate whether Norway had the possibility of using other channels or instruments, and how Norway's contributions and their effects compare with the contributions of other countries.

By comparing the six cases, an attempt will be made to provide a more general picture of Norway's role and the experience gained from providing assistance for peace-promoting measures. It may then be possible to apply the lessons that have been learned when setting future priorities.

In four of the cases (Rwanda, Mali, Mozambique and the Sudan), recent evaluations commissioned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have already been completed. This study will largely be based on those evaluations. Norwegian assistance in connection

with the conflicts in Burundi and Guatemala, and parts of Norwegian assistance for the Sudan (Norway's role in the peace process) have not been evaluated previously. Consequently, in these cases it will be necessary to collect primary data.

## **Organisation of the study**

The study will be divided into four phases, each covering a different aspect of the final report.

Phases 1 and 2 will be carried out first, in parallel. A seminar is planned at the end of November 1997 to present and discuss preliminary findings.

Phases 3 and 4 will follow, ending with the submission of a draft final report by 22 April 1998.

### **Phase 1: Review of Norwegian contributions**

This part of the report will provide a general review of Norway's contributions and priorities and will seek to place Norway's contributions in conflict situations within a broader context. It will attempt to give an overall picture of Norway's financial contributions in this area, broken down geographically and by type of input. The study will also discuss the borderline between this type of assistance and other types of Norwegian development aid. The study will be based on information available from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and NORAD (the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation).

### **Phase 2: Methodological framework**

This part of the study will endeavour to identify the general lessons learned from conflict-reducing measures on the basis of Norway's experience. The conflicts covered by the study differ greatly. Norway's contributions in connection with these conflicts have also differed in terms of the type of assistance that has been provided and the phases of the conflicts in which assistance has been provided. The amount of international attention focused on the conflicts has also varied. It is therefore necessary to develop a methodological framework for evaluating and comparing the assistance that has been provided to reduce conflicts, and to discuss the criteria for comparing conflicts.

### **Phase 3: Experience gained from the evaluations that have already been completed**

The evaluations that have already been completed, concerning Norwegian involvement in Rwanda, Mozambique, Mali and Sudan, are essentially different in terms of the phases of the conflict that are evaluated, the actors, type of assistance provided (humanitarian aid, conflict resolution etc.) and the criteria for evaluation. It may therefore be difficult to compare the characteristics of and experience gained from Norway's role. This part of the study will therefore primarily identify the analytical approach and the conclusions of each evaluation and relate them to the methodological framework from Phase 2. In this way, the evaluations and the information that has been collected can be viewed in the context of the more general picture. In one of the reports (Rwanda), Norway's role in the conflict has not been evaluated. In this case, the necessary data will be collected in order to consider Norway's possible role in the peace-making effort and draw on the general conclusions of the report. For example, one of the report's conclusions is that successful early warning/inputs of aid are closely linked to the systematic collection

and analysis of data and the international community's political willingness to take action. These conclusions have lasting value and are transferable to other, similar situations.

#### **Phase 4: The conflicts in the Sudan, Burundi and Guatemala**

Since the current evaluation of the Sudan does not specifically consider Norway's role in the peace process, it will have to be supplemented by new data. The same applies to Norway's contributions in connection with the conflicts in Burundi and Guatemala. This part of the study will be based on interviews carried out in Norway (and, if necessary, in other European countries) with representatives of the various key actors, and on newspaper articles and available documents.

### **Reporting**

The main report will be written in Norwegian. It will contain a summary that may be used as a basis for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' reports to the Storting.

### **Deadlines**

The first draft of the report will be submitted by 22 April 1998, provided that work can begin by 1 October at the latest.

A seminar has been planned for 18 November 1997 to present the working memoranda from Phases 1 and 2.

## **Annex 2: Norwegian priorities when providing assistance in conflict situations**

### **Introduction**

This annex endeavours to provide a general review of Norwegian assistance in conflict situations, i.e. for conflict prevention, conflict resolution, support for peace processes and the reconstruction of societies after conflicts have taken place, in the period 1990-96. In order to place this type of assistance in a broader context, it is briefly compared with Norwegian development aid as a whole. Moreover, the report endeavours to show which conflict situations Norway has prioritised in terms of funding and in terms of the type of involvement concerned. The English version is abridged and contains only a summary of findings.

From a broad perspective, assistance in conflict situations may include many different types of assistance, both short-term and long-term. For example, it has been shown that traditional humanitarian aid supplied to an area of conflict has long-term effects that influence the actual course of the conflict over and above its short-term objectives and effects, such as saving lives (Anderson 1994; Hybertsen, Suhrke, Tjore 1998).

It is therefore difficult to differentiate clearly between various types of assistance that affect the course of a conflict. However, in this report an effort has been made to define measures that specifically target the course of a conflict and its resolution, whether they are implemented before a conflict breaks out, during a conflict, i.e. in the form of arbitration between the parties, or after a conflict has ended. Measures that target the political situation, the demobilisation of armed forces and support for the police force are one type of post-conflict activity that is included in the review. Norway's multilateral contributions are not included here.

### **Main findings**

In the period 1990-96, Norway provided assistance for peace measures in some thirty countries. This type of involvement has increased during the period in terms of both the numbers of countries for which Norway has provided assistance and the amounts that have been allocated for this type of assistance. In 1990, Norway provided assistance for four countries (NOK 3.7 million), while the number increased to 17 countries in 1994 (NOK 114 million) and 22 countries in 1996 (NOK 167 million) (see Table 6)

Most projects relating to peace building measures are funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and comprise part of Norway's humanitarian aid. Table 1 shows that aid for peace measures accounts for only a small proportion of humanitarian aid, but that the relative increase in the funds allocated for such measures has risen sharply, particularly from 1993 to 1994.

**Table 1. Norwegian development aid 1990-96**

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
Total aid	7.551	7.635	7.910	7.193	8.021	7.902	8.472
Humanitarian aid <sup>1</sup>	853	985	1.077	1.125	1.192	1.512	1.546
Peace building measures	3.7	10	59	23.3	114.4	212.6	167

Source: Proposition No. 1 to the Storting and NORAD List of Activities 1990-96.

All figures in NOK million..

In this case, "Peace building measures" is a category that covers several types of involvement aimed at influencing the course of a conflict, one of them being peace negotiations. The highest priority recipients of humanitarian aid in 1994, 1995 and 1996 correspond to the highest priority conflicts in terms of general peace measures, and particularly in terms of direct involvement in peace negotiations (Table 2).

**Table 2. The largest recipients of humanitarian aid 1994-96**

	1994	1995	1996	Peace building measures	Peace negotiations
Former Yugoslavia	247.549	421.257	395.635	x	x
Rwanda	49.386	98.643	149.805	x	x
Pal adm areas	44.619	30.586	78.421	x	x
Angola	51.069	79.138	54.857	x	
Sudan	44.011	56.501	55.203	x	x
Afghanistan	55.439	47.991	42.779		
Ethiopia	82.526	49.549	37.738	x	x
Eritrea	21.891	28.695	4.527	x	
Guatemala	13.536	18.066	33.936	x	x
Burundi	9.032	28.669	33.396	x	x
Somalia	26.202	24.343	18.648	x	

Source: NORAD List of Activities 1994-96

All figures in NOK thousands, x marks priority conflicts in terms of peace building measures and peace negotiations

Norway has been involved in peace negotiations in connection with fourteen conflicts from 1990 to 1996. They are: Palestine/Israel, Armenia/Azerbaijan, Burundi, South Africa, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Sri Lanka, Mali, Mexico, Rwanda, the Sudan, El Salvador, Somalia and the former Yugoslavia.<sup>2</sup> From 1994 to 1996, Norway was involved in peace mediation in all these conflicts except El Salvador. Of the thirteen conflicts where Norway was involved in peace arbitration, seven also had priority in terms of humanitarian aid. Norway also provided assistance for peace building measures in all the countries that were priority recipients of humanitarian aid except Afghanistan in the period 1994-96.

<sup>1</sup> Humanitarian aid is calculated on the basis of Ch. 0190: "Humanitarian aid in the case of natural disasters", Ch. 0191: "Aid for refugees and human rights measures", and Ch. 0192: "Measures to support peace and democracy".

<sup>2</sup> Norway's involvement concerned the following periods: Palestine/Israel (92-96), Armenia/Azerbaijan (94), Burundi (96), South Africa (92-95), Ethiopia (90/94), Guatemala (90-96), Sri Lanka (90-94), Mali (95), Mexico (94), Rwanda (96), Sudan (91/94-96), El Salvador (91-93), Somalia (96), the former Yugoslavia (93-96).

These priorities are in accordance with the government guidelines for development cooperation. Report No. 19 to the Storting (1995-96) states: "In recent years, much attention has been paid to short-term humanitarian aid and emergency relief.... As far as possible, efforts must target the causes of conflicts. Support for conflict resolution is therefore regarded as an integral part of Norwegian humanitarian aid and emergency relief" (*ibid.* p. 17 of the English version).

However, the degree of involvement in peace negotiations varies significantly as regards the number of projects concerned, the amounts involved and the duration of this type of input. Contributions vary from one or two projects (Armenia/Azerbaijan, Ethiopia, Mexico, Mali, Rwanda and Somalia) to a more continuous effort over a longer period of time as in the Middle East, Guatemala, South Africa, the Sudan and the former Yugoslavia. The latter conflicts have had the highest priority for this type of contribution. Sri Lanka was a priority country until 1994, while Burundi had high priority in 1996.

Assistance for direct peace negotiations is channelled through NGOs, the UN system or official Norwegian representatives. Representatives of the Norwegian Government have been involved in conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, Guatemala and South Africa, either following a Norwegian initiative or under the auspices of the UN. Funds channelled through non-government organisations have mainly provided through Norwegian NGOs (primarily Norwegian Church Aid and Norwegian People's Aid), local NGOs, or more specialised organisations such as International Alert and the Carter Center.

Peace building measures, i.e. measures specifically targeting the course of a conflict, therefore, include various types of involvement, one of which is peace negotiations. Furthermore, peace building measures can be divided into funds provided for tribunals, the demobilisation and reintegration of soldiers, police forces, research and conferences, UN operations and funds and miscellaneous peace building efforts. Miscellaneous peace building measures mainly comprise grass roots projects in connection with peace-making and trust-building efforts. UN operations and funds comprise earmarked funds channelled by Norway through multilateral agencies.

However, it is important to be aware that there are no clear dividing lines between the various types of contribution. UN operations and funds partly overlap in terms of the type of activity concerned. Moreover, the various UN agencies are used as channels for other types of Norwegian assistance for peace building measures. Norwegian assistance for demobilisation in Angola is a case in point. Miscellaneous peace measures targeting the grass roots level may be in the grey area between peace building measures and humanitarian aid. The figures under "Peace building measures (misc.\*)" may therefore be somewhat under-estimated. The projects carried out under the categories "Peace building measures (misc.\*)" and "Peace negotiations" may also be interconnected. For this reason, the two categories "Peace measures (misc.\*)" and "Peace negotiations" have been combined in Figure 1 and Table 3. In other words, since relatively little information is provided about each project in the Lists of Measures, it is difficult to place the various projects in their appropriate categories (see below). Figure 1 therefore gives only a rough idea of the types of contribution and how they relate to each other.



**Figure 1. Peace building measures by type of contribution<sup>3</sup>**

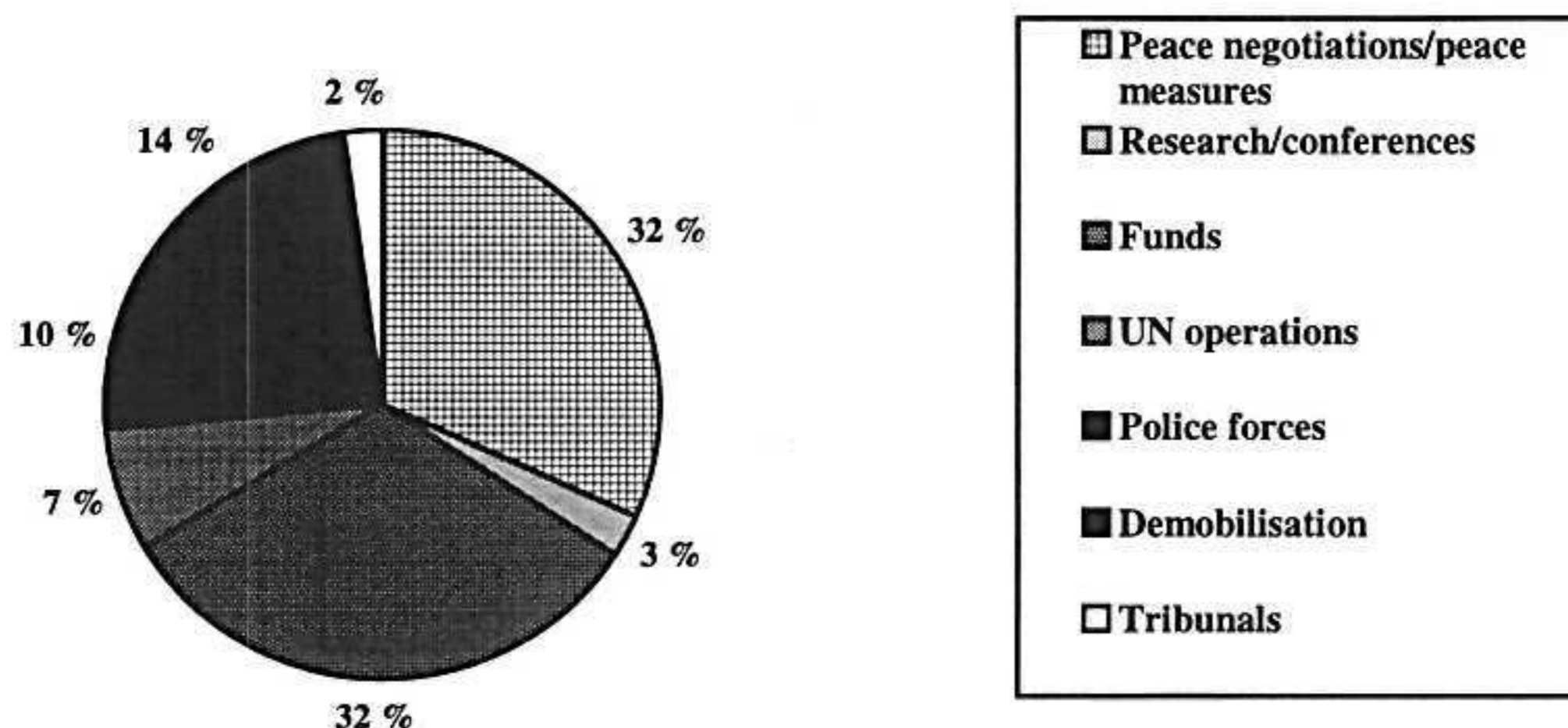


Figure 1 shows that Norway's involvement in peace negotiations and miscellaneous peace measures accounts for almost one third of Norwegian contributions for peace measures. Contributions to UN operations and funds account for approximately 40 per cent, while police forces account for some 10 per cent and demobilisation 14 per cent.

Aid for police forces has been concentrated on three countries/areas, of which the Palestinian Administered Areas have clearly had the highest priority (see Table 3). Norway provided aid for the police in El Salvador (NOK 2.8 million) and South Africa (NOK 0.2 million). Aid for demobilisation is largely channelled through UN agencies, the Angolan conflict having the highest priority.

Table 3 shows the ten highest priority conflicts in terms of peace building measures and the significant variations in Norway's contributions from one conflict to the next.

<sup>3</sup> The figure is based on Table 8: "Disbursements for peace measures by type of project 1990-1996".

**Table 3: The ten highest priority conflicts, 1990-1996**

	Peace measures	Peace negotiations/ peace measures	Tribunals	Demobilisation	Police forces	UN operations/Funds
Pal. adm. areas	131.894	25.782 <sup>4</sup>	4.612		53.611 <sup>5</sup>	59.928
Angola	77.635	----	----	57.000		20.500
Guatemala	57.555	28.148	322	51		23.000
Former YUG	37.558	12.666	1.888			22.288
El Salvador	30.801	1865	754	9.732	2.813	15.500
Sri Lanka	24.945	24.807	----			
Mali	17.051	450	----			16.400
Mocambique	15.392	757	----	6.300		5.420
South Africa	11.930	53.834 <sup>6</sup>	232		228	450
Ethiopia	10.056	6.404	306	3.302		

Source: The table is based on tables 7 and 8.

All figures in NOK thousands.

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Report No. 19 to the Storting 19 (1995-1996). A changing world. Main elements of Norwegian policy towards developing countries.

<sup>4</sup> Tallet inkluderer også prosjekter ført under Midtøsten og Asia rettet mot konflikten mellom Israel og den palestinske befolkningen

<sup>5</sup> Dette inkluderer NOK 443 000 ført under Midtøsten.

<sup>6</sup> Tallet inkluderer midler overført fra posten Afrika Uspesifisert, og viser derfor et høyere beløp enn den totale summen for fredstiltak.

## **Annex 3**

### **An Evaluation of Norway's Role in the Guatemalan Peace Process**

Wenche Hauge  
PRIO, April 1998

## ACRONYMS

ADEJUC - Association for the Development of Children  
ASC - Civil Society Assembly  
CACIF - Co-ordinating Committee of Farming, Commercial, Industrial and Financial Associations  
CCPP - Permanent Commissions of Guatemalan Refugees  
CEAR - Special Commission for the Care of Repatriated, Refugees and Displaced  
CIA - Central Intelligence Agency  
CIEDEG - The Evangelical Church Conference  
CLAI - The Latin American Council of Churches  
CLIDE - The Lutheran Development Organisation  
CNOC - National Co-ordination of Campesino Organizations  
CNR - National Reconciliation Commission  
CONAVIGUA - National Co-ordination of Guatemalan Widows  
CONDEG - Council of the Displaced of Guatemala  
CONIC - National Indigenous and Campesino Co-ordination  
CONTADORA - The group of supporting countries to the Esquipulas process  
COPAZ - Peace Commission  
COPREDEH - The Presidential Human Rights Commission  
CUC - Committee for Campesino Unity  
DCG - Christian Democratic Party  
DAC - Development Assistance Committee  
EGP - Guerrilla Army of the Poor  
FAR - Rebel Armed Forces  
FDNG - New Guatemala Democratic Front  
FMLN - Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front  
FODIGUA - Fund for the Development of the Maya Population  
FONAPAZ - National Fund for Peace  
FONATIERRA - Fund for the Promotion of Landless Peasants' Access to Land  
FRG - Guatemalan Popular Front  
GAM - Mutual Support Group  
HDI - Human Development Index  
KN - Norwegian Church Aid  
LVF - The Lutheran World Federation  
ODHA - Catholic Archbishop's Human Right's Office  
OECD - Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development  
ORPA - Revolutionary Organisation of the People in Arms  
PAC - Civil Defence Patrol  
PAN - National Advancement Party  
PCS - Project Counselling Service  
PGT - Guatemalan Workers' Party  
PHD - The Human Rights Ombudsman  
REMHI - Recovery of Historical Memory  
UFC - United Fruit Company  
UNDP - United Nations Development Programme  
UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

URNG - Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity  
MINUGUA - United Nations Mission for the Verification of Human Rights and of  
Compliance with the Commitments of the Comprehensive Agreement on Human  
Rights in Guatemala

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## 1. Introduction

The cease-fire agreement between the Guatemalan guerrilla movement, URNG, and the government peace commission, COPAZ, was signed in Oslo on 4 December 1996. By then, the civil war in Guatemala had lasted for thirty-six years. Six years earlier, in 1990, the foundation for the negotiating process had been laid with the signing of the Oslo Agreement. Between these two agreements lay a long and sometimes dramatic negotiating process which resulted in a series of subsidiary agreements and a final peace agreement that was signed in Guatemala City on 29 December 1996.

Many actors, both inside and outside Guatemala, were involved in the peace process and many networks were activated to achieve the final peace agreement. The formal negotiations between the warring parties, the guerrillas and the government - including the army as an important element in its own right - mainly took place in the period 1990-96. However, a peace process can never be precisely dated because it takes place on so many levels. Between the formal negotiations, a series of more informal meetings was arranged between representatives of the most important groups in the conflict. Civil society also gradually became more strongly involved through the Civil Society Assembly (ASC), which produced consensus documents as proposals for the formal negotiations. A great deal of effort was invested in building trust between groups and individuals in a society that had been through thirty-six years of war.

Through a network of organisations, individuals, institutions and development aid, Norway came to play an important role in the Guatemalan peace process. This evaluation investigates why Norway came to play this role and how Norway filled it. Norway was not the only external actor to contribute to the peace process. Particular mention should be made of the other members of the Group of Friends of the Guatemalan Peace Process: Mexico, Spain, Venezuela, USA and Colombia. They closely followed the peace process and contributed constantly. Mexico hosted most of the negotiations and the UN's role was decisive, particularly in the final period of the process. Sweden, too, played a role. The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) was also an important international actor. Although the LWF had a Norwegian-Secretary General for a long period, the organisation as such is not Norwegian.

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The possibility of influencing a peace process leads to other questions which this evaluation will attempt to elucidate: given Norway's role and possibilities for influencing the process, was the Norwegian contribution the best possible in terms of promoting a peace agreement that responds to the real causes and consequences of the war in Guatemala? Was there too much haste at the end? Was too much pressure exerted on the parties, or was this perhaps necessary in order to achieve something before international support evaporated? Aid and financial resources represent power, and it is also necessary to examine how this power was used.

The peace treaty in Guatemala was finalised after a long and difficult process, through great effort, primarily on the part of the Guatemalans themselves but also on the part of individuals, organisations and the countries involved. It is important to analyse the Norwegian contribution in order to find out if this is a method that can be repeated in other conflict situations in the future. This evaluation will therefore consider which factors in this case appear to have been inherent in the structures and which were more specific to that particular situation. Individuals made a substantial contribution, but these individuals were also elements of a structure and a network that were in place in, and in relation to, Guatemala, largely due to development cooperation. If these structures and this network prove to be in place in other conflict-torn countries where Norway is involved, new personal involvement within this network may perhaps help to initiate a Norwegian peace effort elsewhere.

## **2. Purpose and Method**

Report No. 19 to the Storting (1995-96) *A Changing World: main elements of Norwegian policy towards developing countries* emphasises that Norwegian policy towards developing countries must at all times attempt to adapt to the challenges and opportunities facing developing countries and the international community. In this connection, it points out that active efforts in the field of peace and conflict resolution have been an important element of Norway's international commitment in recent years. More than before, development aid is now used to support peace and democratisation processes. The Report takes an integrated view of issues relating to conflicts and development. This is particularly clearly expressed in one of the main conclusions:



“Peace, reconciliation and democratic development are preconditions for economic and social development. The Government views Norwegian humanitarian aid in close conjunction with efforts to promote peace and prevent conflicts. Long term development aid also has an important role to play in preventing conflicts and keeping the peace. The poverty problems of the developing countries are themselves a threat to peace, national reconciliation and global security.” (Page 5 of the English translation)

According to the Report, the main goal of Norwegian North-South policy is to contribute to improving economic, social and political conditions in developing countries within the parameters of sustainable development. It specifies that this goal comprises the following main points:

- \* To contribute to promoting peace, human rights and democracy
- \* To contribute to economic and social development for poor countries and population groups
- \* To contribute to sound management of the global environment and biological diversity
- \* To contribute to promoting equal rights and opportunities for women and men in all areas of society
- \* To contribute to preventing and alleviating distress arising from conflicts and natural disasters

In April 1994 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a memorandum on “The Focus of Norwegian Development Cooperation with Guatemala”<sup>1</sup> which was approved by the aid policy leadership in May 1994. According to this memorandum, the main objective of Norwegian aid for Guatemala is “to support the ongoing peace and democratisation process in the country”.

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<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs memorandum *Innretning på norsk bistandssamarbeid med Guatemala*, 29 April 1994.

This evaluation is an independent part of a larger project commissioned by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The project comprises a review of the experience gained from Norwegian efforts in conflict situations in Guatemala, Mali, Mozambique, Sudan, Rwanda and Burundi. The mandate for the evaluation also states: "On the basis of these cases, the objective is to identify whether Norway's efforts have had an effect on the actual course of the conflict and contributed towards peace in these situations, to evaluate which "instruments and channels" have been available and effective in influencing the various situations, which of them Norway has used, and what governed Norway's choices. Moreover, the report attempts to evaluate whether Norway had the possibility of using other channels and instruments and how Norway's efforts and the effect of these efforts compare with the efforts of other countries."

In accordance with the overall mandate, the main purpose of this evaluation is to analyse the role Norway played through various channels in the Guatemalan peace process and why Norway came to play this role. In highly simplified terms, the question is therefore what Norway did, could have done better or did not do, given the parameters within which the main actors operated and the opportunities that were available to them.

### **Method**

Neither the Report to the Storting nor the memorandum on Norwegian development cooperation with Guatemala provide a recipe for how peace and democracy are to be established in countries that are recipients of Norwegian development aid. In other words, they do not specify the criteria against which Norwegian assistance for the peace process in Guatemala is to be evaluated. In order to be able to evaluate Norway's role in the Guatemalan peace process, it is necessary to analyse the conflict itself. The result of the peace process and how Norway contributed to this result must be evaluated in relation to an analysis of the causes of the conflict, the dynamic of the peace process, the content of the final peace agreement and its implementation. How much progress was made in solving the real problems, the causes of the war and the factors that kept it going? The war in Guatemala was characterised by a totally asymmetric balance of power. The guerrillas were never a match for the government's superior military force. Even if the parties' views on the content of the peace

agreement may vary, not least in civil society, it is also necessary to view the results of the negotiations in the light of the costs of a possibly unsuccessful negotiating process.

Every conflict consists of a network of complicated causes which it may often be difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish clearly from each other. The conflict in Guatemala is not different in this respect. Research that focuses on the causes of civil war and armed conflicts therefore makes use of many different types of theory, ranging from the significance of economic factors, environment and resources, distribution, ethnic dividing lines and identity to types of regime, policies and human rights.<sup>2</sup> Some theories focus on the psychological and psycho-social dimensions of conflicts while others discuss the underlying structural and material factors. A conflict will always contain all these perspectives, although the importance of the individual factors will vary considerably from one conflict to the next.

With such a large number of theories trying to explain why armed conflicts arise, there is a pressing need for a method that can systematise common characteristics in the course of events. One method, the professional soundness and usefulness of which has been confirmed through its use by an increasing number of people, is David Dessler's<sup>3</sup> categorisation of the causes of conflicts in relation to *the roles they play in these conflicts*. Dessler operates with four causal roles: the dividing lines in society ("channels"), the objectives of the parties to the conflict ("targets"), what ignites the conflict ("triggers") and the "catalysts". 1) The channels, or dividing lines in society, may be social, economic, environmental, ethnic, national, etc. They are the framework that divides the participants into conflicting groups. 2) The targets of the warring parties are what the conflict is about. 3) The triggers explain why a conflict begins at that particular time and place. 4) A catalyst is any factor that affects/controls the extent, intensity and duration of a conflict once it has broken out. By using Dessler's method of analysing the causal relationships in the conflict, it will be possible to better understand the dynamic of the peace process and thereby also evaluate how Norway has related to it.

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<sup>2</sup> Some analyses of the various causes of civil war may be found in the following works: Howard & Homer-Dixon, 1995; Rummel, 1995; Hauge & Ellingsen, 1998; Gleditsch & Hegre, 1997; Jagers & Gurr, 1995.

<sup>3</sup> Dessler, 1994

The explanations of why Norway came to play an important role in the peace process and how this role was filled partially overlap and partially differ. The reason why Norway came to play a central role in the peace process was not only dependent upon what the Norwegian actors did when the possibilities for making a contribution arose, but upon what had taken place previously. It had to do with the regional and international context of the conflict as well as Norway's foreign policy and status. In addition to an analysis of the conflict itself, it is therefore also necessary to consider Norway's role against the background of a more general understanding of the role of external actors in negotiations and peace processes, and to consider the historical context of the negotiations.

The sources for this evaluation consist primarily of archive documents from the period 1989-97 from the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and a series of interviews with people who were involved in the peace process. The people interviewed worked for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), the Norwegian embassies in Mexico and Guatemala, Norwegian Church Aid, Norwegian People's Aid, the Norwegian Refugee Council, Redd Barna (Norwegian Save the Children), the Lutheran World Federation and the Guatemalan and Mexican embassies in Norway. The source materials also include a series of UN documents relating to the peace process, including all the subsidiary agreements that make up the peace agreement and all the reports from the UN verification team, MINUGUA, and the parties' position papers. They also include technical literature about the conflict in Guatemala, general works of reference and newspaper articles.

One of the limitations of this evaluation is that, pursuant to an understanding with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it had to be carried out in Norway. It has therefore been impossible to interview the parties to the conflict and other actors in Guatemala. The evaluations that have been made are therefore based on written materials and interviews with the Norwegian actors.

The evaluation has been organised as follows: the introduction provides information about the main issues relating to Norway's role in the peace process. Chapter 2 addresses the objective of the evaluation and the methods that are used. Chapter 3 concerns the instruments used by Norway in the peace process, i.e. development aid and politics. Chapter 4 deals with Norwegian development aid for

Guatemala. Chapter 5 analyses the conflict using Dessler's method. Chapter 6 contains a more detailed review of the peace process and Norway's role. This chapter has been divided into sub-chapters dealing with 1) the Norwegian actors, 2) the international actors, and 3) the phases and progression of the peace process and how Norway was involved in the various phases. Chapter 7 summarises and discusses the Norwegian model and the Norwegian contributions, while Chapter 8 provides the conclusions.

### **3. Instruments: Development Aid and Political Follow-up**

The Norwegian contributions to the Guatemalan peace process were mainly in the form of initiatives and inputs to the political process in the period 1990-1996, as well as by development aid that was directly related to the peace process. However, this illustrates only one role, and perhaps the most visible role, played by development aid for Guatemala, since Norway began providing aid long before the beginning of the peace negotiations. The first Norwegian NGOs to work in Guatemala were, Norwegian Church Aid, Redd Barna and the Norwegian Refugee Council. They were in place in Guatemala just after the 1976 earthquake. Norwegian People's Aid became involved somewhat later. It is therefore necessary to consider what long-term aid has meant in terms of facilitating a Norwegian role in the peace process. In addition to the strategic focus of aid for development purposes, it is important to analyse the effects of aid in terms of legitimacy, trust, awareness-raising and the network of contacts. In the "Norwegian model" (discussed in greater detail in Chapter 7), the NGOs play an important role. However, Norwegian NGOs are involved in development cooperation in many countries without having had the same access to peace processes as they did in Guatemala. Consequently, it is also important to consider the specific characteristics of their presence in Guatemala.

Norwegian involvement in the negotiation process itself was also dependent upon several Norwegian actors from a variety of institutions and organisations: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norwegian Church Aid, the Norwegian embassies in Mexico and Guatemala and the Lutheran World Federation, which for much of the period had a Norwegian Secretary-General. These organisations played various roles in the negotiating and peace processes and together comprised and facilitated the

Norwegian contribution. Norway was one of several external actors who made efforts to contribute to the peace. Among the other were Mexico and Spain. Nevertheless, Norway played a crucial role, and one element of analysing this role is therefore to consider the degree to which the network of Norwegian actors contributed towards this situation, in addition to other important issues relating to Norway's foreign and development cooperation policy and Norway's standing in Guatemala. This must in turn be considered in relation to what, on the other hand, made more active involvement on the part of other external actors more difficult, first and foremost the members of the Group of Friends of the Guatemalan Peace Process (referred to below as the Group of Friends). These were Spain, Mexico, the US, Venezuela and Colombia.

Chapter 4 concerns Norwegian aid to Guatemala. First of all it discusses how the objectives of aid for Guatemala, which is not a designated "main partner country", were formulated. Then follows a review of the various channels of aid that have been used in Guatemala. Finally there is a description/discussion of the strategic focus of aid to Guatemala and how this fits into the Guatemalan context. The focus here is on aid as a prerequisite for the initial Norwegian involvement in the peace process on the one hand, and the role of the peace process in changing the content of aid on the other. Development aid and political follow-up of the peace process have been closely linked in Guatemala. A detailed description of the political follow-up of the peace process, which has largely been supported by aid funds, is given in Chapter 6.

#### **4. Norwegian Aid to Guatemala**

##### **4.1 A coherent Aid Strategy for Guatemala**

Norwegian non-governmental organisations have been working in Guatemala since the 1976 earthquake. Three of these organisations, Norwegian Church Aid, Norwegian People's Aid and Redd Barna, have their own representatives in Guatemala. Until April 1996, the Norwegian Refugee Council also had its own representative there, but is now represented by PCS (Project Counselling Service). As mentioned above, Guatemala is not designated a "main partner country" for Norwegian development cooperation and Norway did not provide support for national programmes in Guatemala until the peace process was under way. Thus, in 1994 a

Norwegian delegation from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) went to Guatemala in the course of preparing new guidelines for the focus of Norwegian aid to Guatemala. On the basis of the delegation's report, the main objectives for Norwegian aid to Guatemala were identified and formulated in a memorandum to the Minister of Development Cooperation, dated 29 April 1994.

For countries that are not main partner countries, the objectives of aid for each country are in practice a combination of the main goals of Norwegian development cooperation as formulated in Report No. 19 to the Storting (1995-96), the objectives of the individual schemes and budget chapters that partially fund the NGOs, and the NGOs' own objectives. Official aid is channelled through numerous schemes and budget chapters. The most important schemes used by NORAD include: the Regional Allocation (in this case for Central America), the NGOs Allocation, the Allocation for Women in Development and the Industrial and Commercial Schemes. Humanitarian aid, including aid for refugees, human rights and peace efforts, is administered by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Although the budget chapters and their guidelines are given, the NGOs are highly involved in designing the content of aid to countries that are not main partner countries. This is because the initiatives, ideas, project proposals and contacts are the responsibility of the NGOs, even if in some cases these processes take place in reverse order, as in the case of the Guatemalan "peace package" 1994.

The political aid policy leadership approved the memorandum "The Focus of Norwegian Development Cooperation with Guatemala" in May 1994. According to this memorandum, the main objective of Norwegian aid for Guatemala is to support the ongoing peace and democratisation process. On this basis, two main priority areas for Norwegian aid for Guatemala are specified: 1) Support for democratisation and political development, 2) Support for especially vulnerable groups, with particular emphasis on the indigenous population. Particular fields which should receive support are defined within each of these main priority areas.<sup>4</sup>

1. Support for democratisation and political development. Under this heading are explicitly listed: a) Strengthening respect for human rights. b) Institutional

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<sup>4</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs memorandum: *Innretning på norsk bistandssamarbeid med Guatemala* (The Focus of Norwegian Development Cooperation with Guatemala), 29 April 1994.

strengthening of the civil sector, including the rights of the indigenous population.

c) Strengthening women's rights.

2. Support for particularly vulnerable groups, with particular emphasis on the indigenous population. Under this heading are explicitly mentioned: a) Support for the repatriation process. b) Support for bilingual and multi-cultural development. c) Support for social and economic development.

The memorandum recommends drawing on the resources of Norwegian NGOs which have been establishing contacts in Guatemala over a long period of time. This was particularly relevant because NORAD did not have a Resident Representative in Guatemala. The four Norwegian NGOs who did have resident representatives were therefore requested to produce a project proposal. The NGOs agreed and quickly produced a joint application. The application was completed by 18 August and was approved by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 12 September. Thus, the "peace package" was put together extremely quickly.

The trend in development aid for Guatemala illustrates an almost dialectical process, beginning with emergency relief after the 1976 earthquake. Emergency relief gradually turned into more long-term aid. Long-term aid led to greater knowledge of the Guatemalan conflict and thereby also awareness that peace was necessary if development was to be possible. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs became involved at the initiative of the Lutheran World Federation and Norway thus became involved in the peace process itself. This in turn influenced the content of aid, as is particularly clearly illustrated in the memorandum concerning the focus of Norwegian development cooperation with Guatemala, and the allocations, in 1994.

## **4.2 Channels of Aid**

The memorandum setting out the guidelines for Norwegian aid points out that the channels have been and will continue to be multilateral agencies (the UN system), Norwegian NGOs, local NGOs, and direct cooperation with official and semi-official institutions and organisations. It is clear that entering into comprehensive bilateral government-to-government cooperation is not an option.



Through the aid programme for Guatemala, Norway has built up cooperation with local NGOs which it is regarded as important to maintain. However, this cooperation is viewed from a more long-term perspective, and in the shorter term cooperating with the UN has priority. In 1995 and 1996, therefore, in accordance with the main goal of supporting the peace process, high priority was given to supporting the repatriation process through the UNHCR and the UN human rights verification team, MINUGUA. The work of MINUGUA is regarded as being particularly important for the peace process.<sup>5</sup>

### 4.3 Aid in a Guatemalan Context

The main Norwegian development policy goals of supporting development and peace must be interpreted in a Guatemalan context. The conflict analysis in Chapter 5 shows that the problems aid is meant to solve, such as poverty, malnutrition, illiteracy and the lack of material means of existence, are elements of the same structures that have caused the war itself. Poverty and other social problems are deeply rooted in the inequitable distribution of land and socio-economic resources, suppression of the Indian population and of political rights, and human rights in general. These problems have proved to be important causes of the conflict and each of them was addressed separately through the subsidiary agreements to the peace agreement. Poverty and unfair distribution are important causes of the war, and the war has in turn prevented development.

Norwegian aid for Guatemala must therefore be evaluated in relation to how much it has been focused on the actual causes of the conflict and how it has contributed towards the peace process. These factors are inextricably linked. This evaluation does not address the micro-level and does not, therefore, consider how individual projects have been implemented. A separate evaluation of the aid projects has been carried out, focusing on the micro-level.<sup>6</sup> Instead this report addresses the macro-level and the strategic focus of aid, both in relation to the causes of the conflict

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<sup>5</sup> Memo to the Minister of Development Cooperation from the Department of Bilateral Development Cooperation, 8 October 1996.

<sup>6</sup> *Demokratisering, forsoning og fred i Guatemala*. Democratisation, reconciliation and peace in Guatemala: a review of work done by Norwegian NGOs financed from the Regional Allocation for

and in relation to the peace process itself. In this context, strategic focus does not mean a conscious strategy on the part of the authorities or the NGOs but concerns how aid is *actually* distributed in relation to the causes of the conflict and the peace process itself. Two tables have been provided below for this purpose, one showing Norwegian aid to Guatemala in the period 1990-96 by sector and the other showing allocations specifically channelled towards the negotiating process.

Both tables are based on official NORAD project data (published as *Tiltaksliste*) for the period 1990-96. All aid projects financed by the government are included in the project data. The data therefore contain both long-term projects financed by NORAD and short-term projects administered by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Each project is coded according to the Development Assistance Committee's (DAC's) sector codes and the tables show against which budget item in Proposition No. 1 to the Storting the project has been listed. The first table uses the DAC's sector codes because they give a relatively clear indication of the projects' target groups. In table 2, which concerns only transfers linked to the negotiating process, the projects have been selected on the basis of their title and cross-checked against archive documents at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The DAC's sector code system provides a good basis for commenting upon the strategic focus of aid on target groups and social sectors in relation to the conflict itself. It also provides a basis for saying something about the growth in the relative amount of aid channelled towards the negotiating process, the refugee situation and human rights efforts in comparison with other aid. Separating the projects that are more directly related to the negotiating process (table 2) from the rest provides a basis for saying something about Norway's actual priorities in this connection. While the NORAD project data list individual projects, table 1 combine the figures in order to provide an overview.

The main categories (DAC sector codes) are as follows: 0 = Cannot be related to a particular sector (this sector code includes humanitarian aid and peace measures, democratisation measures and human rights. In Table 1, this sector code has been split into 02 and 09 in order to differentiate between precisely these areas); 1 = Planning and public administration; 2 = Development of public services; 3 = Agriculture and

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Central America in the period September 1994 to December 1997. By Stener Ekern and Nanna Thue, with contributions from Myrna Moncada, GM asociados, Managua, 26 January 1998.

fisheries; 4 = Industry, mining and craft trades; 5 = Banking, finance and tourism; 6 = Education and science; 7 = Health and population projects; 8 = Social infrastructure, social welfare and culture and 9 = Multisectoral and unspecified.

**Table 1. Distribution of Aid by DAC Code**

Category	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
<b>02</b>	2965	5525	10152	9279	13626	8807	6827
<b>09</b>	297	1324	3555	5966	23986	41902	69008
<b>Rest of 0</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>1</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>2</b>	574	912	834	850	-	562	296
<b>3</b>	1129	-	-	183	-	216	752
<b>4</b>	-	35	-	982	1924	1692	813
<b>5</b>	-	-	-	-	-	63	183
<b>6</b>	2804	2619	3475	1517	4655	9841	10065
<b>7</b>	-	730	429	1749	33	406	250
<b>8</b>	946	3652	1071	5319	4784	4567	2548
<b>9</b>	7418	2107	2099	3349	7326	6826	6846
<b>Total</b>	16133	16904	21615	29194	56334	74882	97588

Table 1 shows, firstly, a strong rise in Norwegian aid to Guatemala in the period 1990-96. The largest item, which has increased throughout the period and particularly after 1993, is sector code 09: peace measures, democracy and human rights, followed by sector code 02: humanitarian aid, which includes aid for refugees. The allocations under this code peaked in 1994 and have since gradually declined. The third largest item is sector code 6: education and science, which has risen steadily since 1993. This is followed by code 9: multisector and unspecified, which includes rural development, and code 8: social infrastructure, social welfare and culture, which includes housing projects. There is a significant difference between the size of allocations under all the above sector codes and the rest: code 4 (Industry, mining and craft trades), code 3 (Agriculture and fisheries), code 2 (Development of public services), code 7 (Health and education) and code 5 (Banking, finance and tourism).

Considering that the issue of access to and distribution of land is a crucial factor in the conflict, the allocations in DAC code 3: Agriculture and fisheries appear to be disproportionately small. The same might be said of the allocations for health and population measures under code 7. However, it is difficult to draw conclusions on the basis of a superficial study of the DAC codes because many projects have several

functions and have been coded according to the intention of the project.<sup>7</sup> Some of the projects relating to refugees, coded under 02, concern, among other things, strengthening the negotiating position of refugees as regards access to land. In this case, refugees seek legal aid and insight through their organisations, which are in turn supported by Norwegian aid.<sup>8</sup> Other refugee projects include preventive health care.

In order to gain a more finely-tuned impression of the content of Norwegian aid to Guatemala in the period 1990-96, it is necessary to find out which target groups and which types of aid are covered by the largest Norwegian NGOs operating in Guatemala (Norwegian People's Aid, the Norwegian Refugee Council, Norwegian Church Aid and Redd Barna).

*Redd Barna* runs a multi-faceted programme for children in Guatemala. The organisation's efforts range from projects for child labourers and street children in the cities, projects for slum children, development projects targeting poor children in rural areas, rehabilitation and educational projects for children and adolescents who have been the victims of violence and projects that generally seek to promote children's rights by disseminating knowledge of the UN Children's Convention, to projects that seek to strengthen children's identity and cultural affiliation, including the production of literature in Indian languages and support for the development of a library for Indian children. Redd Barna has many projects in areas where there are large numbers of repatriated refugees.<sup>9</sup>

Redd Barna's main partner in Guatemala is ADEJUC (Alianza para el Desarrollo Juvenil Comunitario), Guatemala's equivalent of Redd Barna. Redd Barna has made efforts to document the consequences of structural readjustment programmes for children. In its annual report for 1993, Redd Barna noted that the neo-liberal economic policy had resulted in a dramatic reduction in investments in the social sector. The report for 1995 also emphasised that the structural readjustment programme, which prescribes cuts in public expenditure, has led to a deterioration in health and educational services.

*The Norwegian Refugee Council* makes wide-ranging efforts on behalf of internally displaced persons in Guatemala, Guatemalan refugees in Mexico and refugees who

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<sup>7</sup> Interview with Nils Haugstveit, 9 March 1998.

<sup>8</sup> Interview with David Bergan, 1 April 1998.

<sup>9</sup> Interview with Kari Thomassen, 15 April 1998.

have returned to Guatemala. The Refugee Council has supported the establishment of new communities for repatriated refugees, an effort that has included infrastructure, health, housing construction and schools, assistance for the productive sector and training in organisation and management.

The Refugee Council's work in Guatemala also includes projects to provide personal documents for refugees and a cooperative project with local human rights organisations to disseminate knowledge about the peace process, Indian rights and civil rights. The Refugee Council has also supported the refugees' own organisation, CCPP (Comisiones Permanentes) as a contribution towards supporting negotiations with the Guatemalan government concerning land and the terms of repatriation.<sup>10</sup> This is one aspect of the work the Refugee Council has done to assist in monitoring the agreement that was entered into between the CCPP and the Guatemalan authorities in 1992.

The Refugee Council also works closely with the UNHCR and has supported the UNHCR's repatriation programme by seconding technical staff since 1992. The Refugee Council and the Institute for Human Rights also sent observers to the Guatemalan elections in 1995-96.

*Norwegian People's Aid* also has many projects among Guatemalan refugees in Mexico and repatriated refugees in Guatemala, and has particularly concentrated on the health situation. Among refugees in Mexico, Norwegian People's Aid has been training "health promoters" who will make an important contribution to basic health services in the areas to which they return in Guatemala.<sup>11</sup> Among repatriated refugees, the focus has been on training local health brigades. Norwegian People's Aid has also been supporting the refugees' own organisation, CCPP (Comisiones Permanentes) for several years.

Norwegian People's Aid also supports the re-integration of local communities that were particularly hard hit by the oppression and violence that took place at the beginning of the 1980s. Many of them were small farmers who fled to the mountains to survive, known as the CRP (Comunidade de Resistencia Popular). Assistance is provided for credit programmes and training through various farmers' organisations in the counties of Chimaltenango and Santa Rosa.

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<sup>10</sup> Interview with David Bergan, 1 April 1998.

<sup>11</sup> Interview with David Bergan, 1 April 1998.

By cooperating with organisations such as Fundación Myrna Mack and the Council for the Mayan People in Guatemala, Norwegian People's Aid also provides assistance for human rights efforts. Moreover, Norwegian People's Aid supports one of the groups that have been hardest hit and most abused through its cooperation with the National Co-ordination of Guatemalan Widows, CONAVIGUA, by providing aid for training in sustainable agriculture.

*Norwegian Church Aid* runs many rural development projects, including projects relating to productive labour, support for the development of local organisations, preventive health care and human rights. Many of these projects focus particularly on the situation of women by providing training in productive activities and preventive health care and through literacy projects. NCA supports projects that attempt to preserve Indian traditions in the field of agriculture and the environment, and some of these projects also include courses in Mayan history, religion and use of natural medicines. Like the other NGOs, several of NCA's projects include repatriated refugees. NCA also runs several slum projects.

Norwegian Church Aid has a wide variety of partners in Guatemala. Some of them are Lutheran organisations, such as CLIDE (Comunidad Luterana Independiente para el Desarrollo) and CIEDEG (Conferencia de Iglesias Evanélicas de Guatemala), while others are agricultural, development or women's organisations.

Many of NCA's projects are also linked to the peace process itself, providing information about the subsidiary agreements, human rights efforts and Indian rights. NCA has played a unique role in the peace process in Guatemala. From 1993 onwards, NCA's regional representative, Petter Skauen, worked full time on the peace and negotiating process.<sup>12</sup> This aspect of NCA's activities will be described in more detail in Chapters 6 and 7.

Since the majority of the Guatemalan population is poor and oppressed, it is obvious that the work of Norwegian NGOs is largely focused on improving their standard of living. This is the case whether projects concern land, health, human rights, the situation of refugees or participation in general, because the majority of the population are marginalised in all these areas. From this point of view, the projects are also focused on the actual *causes of the armed conflict*. Furthermore, many of them are directly linked to *the implementation of several of the subsidiary agreements*

*under the peace agreement.* This particularly applies to work on the resettlement of refugees and projects relating to the human rights agreements and the rights of the indigenous population. In the case of one of the organisations, Norwegian Church Aid, however, the allocations also specifically target *the negotiating process itself.*

The NORAD magazine *Innsyn* of 26 February 1997 contains a review of the connection between all the subsidiary agreements entered into in the peace process, the focus of Norwegian aid and the most important partners for Norwegian development cooperation.<sup>13</sup> In addition to the Norwegian NGOs and their partners in Guatemala, the UN agencies UNHCR, MINUGUA and UNDP are particularly important.

The Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights, signed on 29 March 1994, concerns international verification through the UN by establishing and deploying the MINUGUA verification team and establishing a trust fund for MINUGUA. Norway was the first country to sign an agreement concerning the funding of MINUGUA and contributed NOK 6.3 million in 1995 and NOK 7.2 million in 1996.

In order to support the agreement on the resettlement of refugees and internally displaced persons, signed on 17 June 1994, Norway allocated funds to the UNHCR. After Sweden, Norway is the country that has provided the largest contributions to the UNHCR. In 1994, Norway supported the repatriation process, through the UNHCR, by providing NOK 7 million, and the head of the UNHCR in Guatemala stated that he was extremely grateful for this support, which saved the organisation from financial crisis.<sup>14</sup> Norway also provided NOK 12 million for the UNHCR in 1995 and NOK 14 million in 1996.

Moreover, UNICEF has received substantial Norwegian contributions every year since 1994 to support educational and training projects among the Indians.

In 1996, NOK 23 million was allocated to the UNDP peace fund, in addition to a further NOK 7.2 million for MINUGUA. The funds allocated to the UNDP were spent on the demobilisation and reintegration of former guerrilla soldiers, restructuring measures in the armed forces and assistance for various groups of war victims. The UNDP and MINUGUA cooperated on demobilisation, MINUGUA

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<sup>12</sup> Interview with Petter Skauen, 2 February 1998.

<sup>13</sup> Interview with Marit Brandtzæg, 14 April 1998. *Innsyn* 5 no. 1. 26 February 1997.

<sup>14</sup> Memo to the Special Adviser on Development Cooperation from the Asia/Latin-America Unit, 23 February 1995. "Impressions from a visit to Guatemala 13-17 February".

providing the military observers and the UNDP, in cooperation with URNG and the government, being responsible for the practical implementation.

All in all, contributions to the UN agencies were large and important aspects of the Norwegian follow-up of the individual subsidiary agreements to the peace agreement. Norway also provided direct support for a number of Guatemalan organisations. This type of assistance increased particularly from 1994 onwards after both the comprehensive agreement on human rights and the agreement concerning the Truth Commission had been signed, and was donated particularly to Guatemalan human rights organisations.

**Table 2. Aid for the Negotiating Process**

<b>Guatemala</b>				
<b>Bud.chap</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Description</b>



0191.75	90	70	09	Nat. Rec. Comm. Esquipulas HR.
0191.75	90	100	09	Luth. World Fed.; peace process. HR.
0191.75	90	127	09	Church of Norwegian Council on Foreign Relations, Guatemala negotiations. HR.
0191.74	91	135	09	Norwegian Church Aid (NCA); peace process. Central America. HR
0191.74	91	283	09	Church of Norwegian Council on Foreign Relations; peace process HR
0191.74	91	1.200	09	NCA; support for peace work.HR
0191.74	92	340	09	Norwegian Refugee Council; support for the peace process. HR
0191.74	92	68	09	Nat. Rec.Comm., peace work. HR
0191.75	92	24	09	Negotiations peace process in Oslo; HR
0191.74	93	679	09	Nat. Rec. Comm.; peace programme. HR
0191.74	93	400	09	NCA; peace negotiations. HR
0191.75	93	500	09	NCA; peace process; talks HR
0191.75	93	6	09	Peace negotiations. GTM; talks HR
0191.75	93	53	09	Nobel Peace Prize; travel expenses. HR
0191.74	94	1.369	09	ASC (Civil Society Assembly). Conference
0191.74	94	500	09	NCA; peace process
0191.74	94	1.000	09	NCA; peace work
0191.74	94	350	09	NCA; negotiation meeting in Oslo
0191.74	94	500	09	NCA; peace process
0192.70	94	1.139	09	Various receptions; peace negotiations in Oslo
0192.70	94	1.981	09	URNG; peace negotiations
0191.74	95	16	09	Various visits. Travel expenses. CACIF, Oslo.
0191.74	95	500	09	NCA; peace work
0191.74	95	305	09	NCA; ecumenical hearing
0191.74	95	17	09	Embassy San Jose; 4th ecumenical consultation
0192.70	95	1.844	09	Unidad Revolucionaria National; general support
0191.74	96	140	09	Misc. recipients. Travel expenses. Parliamentarians.
0191.74	96	58	09	URNG. Travel expenses.
0191.74	96	500	09	NCA; the peace process; meetings, talks, etc.
0191.74	96	34	09	Confederation of Norwegian Business and Industry (NHO); the peace process, investigation of project possibilities/travel expenses.
0191.74	96	836	09	NCA; signing of subsidiary agreement peace, misc. expenses.
0191.74	96	147	09	Misc. recipients; delegation from URNG in Norway, misc. expenses.
0191.74	96	654	09	URNG; the peace process & info. activities
0191.74	96	653	09	URNG; the peace process & info.
0191.74	96	224	09	Misc. recipients; subsidiary agreements, travel expenses.

Table 2, which contains aid directly linked to the negotiating process, reveals that the amounts were relatively small in relation to total aid for Guatemala. The largest amounts are included in the previous table (Table 1) and were contributions to the UN agencies, UNDP, UNHCR, MINUGUA and UNICEF, and to the Norwegian NGOs.

Aid for the negotiating process was mainly channelled through Norwegian Church Aid and the Lutheran World Federation, but was also given directly to URNG and to the government negotiating commission. The funds were spent on travel expenses in connection with the formal negotiations, mainly in 1990, 1994 and 1996, but also on many informal meetings, consultations and talks that included military personnel, representatives of business and industry and Guatemalan parliamentarians. Direct support for the ASC, the Civil Society Assembly, and for a series of ecumenical hearings is also included here since these were important events that resulted in documents and inputs to the negotiating process itself. Finally, the URNG also received a certain amount of more general funding, including for representatives in the US and Europe, travel expenses, office expenses and consultancy services.

## 5. The Conflict

*“It is important for the peace process to maintain a dialogue among the five most important actors in the process; the army, the landowners (CACIF), the civil sector, COPAZ and the URNG. NCA has an important task in this connection.” (Norwegian Church Aid Activity Report of 31 January 1995).*

This statement by Petter Skauen, NCA’s resident representative in Guatemala, shows how Norwegian aid organisations, in the same way as the Norwegian authorities and other external actors operating in or in relation to Guatemala, form their own opinions of the conflict in that country. How a conflict situation is interpreted by those working on it has consequences for the solutions they attempt to achieve.

This evaluation will try to show what Norway did, did not do and could have done better in terms of assistance for, and official Norwegian involvement in, the Guatemalan peace process. In order to be able to do this satisfactorily, it is necessary to delve deeper into the substance of the conflict. What are the main problems and how are they reflected in the tangible results of the peace process - the subsidiary agreements themselves - and in the work done on the conflict by the Norwegian authorities and aid agencies?

The following analysis has been undertaken using Dessler's method. First there is a discussion of the conflict channels, followed by the trigger, the targets of the parties and the catalysts.

### 5.1 The Channels

Guatemalan society is deeply split along socio-economic and ethnic lines. According to the 1995 World Development Report, Guatemala had a per capita GDP of USD 1,100 and is therefore designated a lower middle income country. Nor does Guatemala score particularly high on the UNDP's Human Development Index (HDI), ranking number 112 and being placed in the group of countries with "medium human development".<sup>15</sup> In this respect, Guatemala comes well after poorer countries in the same region, such as Grenada, Cuba, Bolivia, Paraguay, Peru and Guyana. This is because of Guatemala's lack of welfare systems and extremely unequal socio-economic distribution.

Agriculture is important for the Guatemalan population, but due to its topography Guatemala does not have large areas of arable land. According to the UNDP's 1996 Human Development Report, only 12.2% of Guatemala's total land area is arable land. The rest is forest and mountains. Moreover, these percentages are extremely unequally distributed. Less than 3% of the population owns 70% of the arable land. More than seven hectares of land is required to feed an average family in Guatemala. Even though farms of up to seven hectares account for 90% of the productive units, those same farms account for no more than 16% of all privately owned land.<sup>16</sup> On the other hand, large farms of more than 45 hectares account for only 2% of the productive units but 65% of privately owned land. This distribution is, in itself, highly unfair but also results in credits, loans and other resources being unequally distributed to the benefit of the agricultural export sector and urban areas.

The overall picture of unequal distribution in Guatemala is further exacerbated when supplemented with some general figures from the World Bank, 1995. They show that

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<sup>15</sup> UNDP, 1996. *Human Development Report*.

<sup>16</sup> Wilkie, 1995. *Statistical Abstract of Latin America*. Vol. 31, part 1. Los Angeles: UCLA Latin American Center Publications.

75% of Guatemalans live in poverty and almost 58% in absolute poverty.<sup>17</sup> In 1989, the minimum wage for a male agricultural worker in the western highlands was USD 1.35 a day while women earned less than USD 0.76 a day. The wage level has not risen perceptibly in the 1990s and a seasonal worker picking coffee earns no more than USD 3 a day. If you look at the situation of the Indian population in isolation, the pattern of distribution is even worse.

Approximately 60% of the population in Guatemala are Mayan Indians. There are twenty-one Mayan linguistic communities in Guatemala in addition to two other Indian groups, the Xinca and the Garifuna. The rest of the population consists of mestizos (a mixture of Indian and white).<sup>18</sup> In many local communities in the highlands, the Indians account for as much as 95% of the population. The Mayan Indians' identity is strongly linked to the land and the rural community. Nevertheless, almost one million live in the capital, Guatemala City. Land is important for several reasons. Firstly, it represents the link to their forefathers and is important for religious fellowship and Indian culture. Secondly, access to land is the key to survival for the vast majority of Mayan Indians.

According to the latest government estimates, 81% of the Indian population live in absolute poverty.<sup>19</sup> In general terms, 50% of the population in Guatemala are illiterate. This figure rises to 75-80% for the Indian population. The situation is worst for Indian women, approximately 90% of whom are illiterate. More than 60% of them are also monolingual. Life expectancy for Mayan women is 17 years less than for the non-Indian population (Ladinos) - 47 and 48 years for men and women, compared with 64 and 65 years for Ladinos.

Decade after decade of authoritarian rule and the lack of political rights in Guatemala have cemented the existing socio-economic dividing lines, since all demands for reform have been quelled at the outset. This has often been achieved through serious human rights violations. Political participation has been hindered not only by institutional limitations, such as the prohibition of various political parties and

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<sup>17</sup> While the richest 10% of the Guatemalan population received 46.6% of the country's total revenues in 1995, the poorest 20% of the population received only 2.1% of total revenues. In 1995, the richest 20% of the population received 63.0% of the country's revenues. (World Bank, 1995. *World Development Report*.)

<sup>18</sup> Armon, Sieder and Wilson, 1997.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

organisations, but just as much by the murder, massacre, kidnapping and torture of the opposition.

The first mobilisation of popular movements in Guatemala in the 1920s ended in suppression and fourteen years of military dictatorship. Dictator Jorge Ubico introduced repressive labour legislation and many workers and opposition leaders were killed during his period in office. Persecution of the opposition was particularly harsh in the period December 1931 to February 1932. The goal was to dissolve the trade unions and eradicate communism.<sup>20</sup> With the exception of the democratic decade 1944-1954, the repression continued and the peasant population, particularly the Mayan Indians who account for a large proportion of it, was seriously affected. In the course of only the first two months under the new regime of Castillo Armas in 1954, approximately 8,000 peasants were murdered. The persecution of the Mayan Indians was particularly harsh under General Efraín Ríos Montt, who used scorched earth tactics at the beginning of the 1980s.

Given this background of socio-economic and ethnic channels in Guatemalan society, it would be reasonable to expect the Indian population in Guatemala to be the main source of recruitment for the guerrillas. They were, gradually, but it is clear that Indians were never members of the guerrilla leadership. This reflects the pattern in the rest of society; the Mayan Indians are not included in the political leadership either. They are recruited to the army and civil patrols, but not to leading positions.

The first guerrilla organisation, FAR (Rebel Armed Forces), which was established in 1962, found its support in areas in the eastern highlands where there was not a large proportion of Mayan Indians. FAR was Marxist-oriented and regarded ethnic issues and cultural repression as belonging within the framework of the class struggle. Their main source of recruitment was among radical students, left-wing political activists and dissidents from the army, mainly middle-class Ladinos. Towards the end of the 1970s, however, the guerrillas became more interested in recruiting the Indian population. When the two new guerrilla organisations, EGP (Guerrilla Army of the Poor) and ORPA (Revolutionary Organisation of the People in Arms), were established in 1972 and 1971 (by breakaway factions from FAR), they based their main activities in the highlands where the Mayans lived. Most recruits to these organisations were Mayan Indians, particularly in the case of EGP which

gradually also became the largest organisation.<sup>21</sup> EGP was strongest along the north-western border of Quiché and Huehuetenango, ORPA on the south coast and in the west, around San Marcos and Lago Atitlán.

At the time of demobilisation in 1997, after the final peace agreement had been signed, the total membership of the guerrilla force was 3,614. Of these, 1,812 had been fighting for EGP. The guerrilla groups reached their peak of recruitment around 1978-79. At that time, membership of guerrilla organisations is estimated to have been between 6,000 and 8,000, while almost half a million people were cooperating with and supporting the guerrillas in various ways.<sup>22</sup> At that time, they were operating in most provinces in the country.

A large proportion of the Indian population were never guerrillas. Although they did not join the armed struggle, very many of them nevertheless expressed their dissatisfaction and often their despair about both the socio-economic situation and the human rights situation. One of the organisations that fought for many of the same causes as the guerrillas was the CUC (Committee for Campesino Unity), a peasants organisation consisting mainly of Mayan Indians. The CUC fought for the right to organise, access to land and democracy and was the subject of harsh persecution, particularly at the beginning of the 1980s. One important expression of the problems arising from the unequal distribution of land were the many occupations of land in Guatemala, which also continued throughout the peace process. As late as 1996, the CUC still claimed that 160 estates were occupied by agricultural workers.<sup>23</sup> The deep cleavages in Guatemala are therefore reflected both in the guerrillas' recruitment base and in the non-violent part of the struggle organised by civil society.

## 5.2 The Trigger

The period prior to the establishment of the first armed guerrilla group at the beginning of the 1960s was a decade of democratic government in Guatemala (1944-54), followed by a period of reversal of democratic reforms. Dictator Jorge Ubico

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<sup>20</sup> Trudeau, 1993.

<sup>21</sup> Armon, Sieder and Wilson, 1997.

<sup>22</sup> Reference to Aguilera Peralta, 1985, in Bjørn Rygh, 1994.

<sup>23</sup> Prensa Libre, 17/2/96, p. 2; 18/4/96, pp. 2 and 3; 19/4/96, pp. 2 and 19; 7/5/96, p. 3; 8/5/96, p. 2; Siglo Veintiuno, 19/4/96, p. 2 and La Hora, 8/5/96, p. 8.

was deposed in 1944 and an interim government organised congressional elections and presidential elections the same year. The following year, Juan José Arévalo was proclaimed president after receiving 85% of the vote. He was succeeded by Jacobo Arbenz, who won the 1950 election. Arévalo and Arbenz implemented comprehensive social reforms and in June 1952 Arbenz gained congressional approval for an agricultural reform bill. The reform affected, among others, the US-based United Fruit Company (UFC), which at the time was the largest landowner in Guatemala. Only 15% of UFC's 550,000 acres were cultivated and the government therefore expropriated 400,000 acres, offering compensation based on the UFC's own figures.<sup>24</sup> The figures the UFC was operating with were low for tax reasons. This event was the background for a successful coup against Arbenz, backed by the CIA, in 1954.<sup>25</sup> The period of democratic reform was over.

Before the first guerrilla organisations were established at the beginning of the 1960s, there was a period when the reforms of the democratic decade were reversed. Castillo Armas' new regime rapidly abolished the democratic rights the Guatemalans had introduced in the previous period. The right to organise was repealed and opposition politicians have been persecuted more or less continuously ever since. The suppression of the opposition was harsh. In only the first two months, some 8,000 peasants were murdered.<sup>26</sup> In the 1956 Constitution, agitation and the organisation of units fighting for communist ideas were prohibited. Per capita defence expenditure on the armed forces increased more in Guatemala in the period 1955-65 than in any other Latin American country.

Against this background, the first guerrilla organisations emerged at the beginning of the 1960s. It is difficult to say exactly what triggers a conflict, but it is reasonable to assume that the contrast with the democratic decade and the setbacks that replaced it were frustrating and had a trigger effect. Moreover, the successful Cuban revolution in 1959 probably inspired the guerillas.

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<sup>24</sup> Paredes 1964, p. 30.

<sup>25</sup> Trudeau 1993, p. 23.

<sup>26</sup> Torres Rivas 1980, p. 24.

### 5.3 The Targets

In order to understand the targets of the parties to the conflict in Guatemala, it is necessary to examine more closely who these parties actually were. In the period 1990-96, after the peace process was well under way, the guerrilla leadership, URNG, and the government peace commission, COPAZ, emerged as the formal negotiating partners. However, the URNG consists of several guerrilla organisations. On the part of the government, both then and throughout the negotiating process, it was the army that held the real power, together with the major landowners and commercial interests. Although each of the parties' targets appeared to be relatively coordinated, particularly during the negotiating process, they were the subject of continuous conflicts among internal groups on both sides.

The Guatemalan civil war lasted for thirty-six years and the negotiations for six years. The parties' targets changed somewhat along the way, in line with their expectations of what was possible, but also as a consequence of greater trust in each other. Thus, the targets must also be understood within the framework of this dynamic process.

The URNG was established by the guerrilla organisations FAR, EGP, ORPA and PGT (the Guatemalan Workers' Party) in 1982.<sup>27</sup> URNG stands for Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity and is a joint command for the guerrillas with a platform for revolutionary government. In a report from 1989, the URNG stated that their objective was democracy, with opportunities for political participation and the right to organise for all groups, "without discrimination" (the latter expression was probably particularly related to the situation of the Indians). The strongest emphasis is on respect for human rights and the need for socio-economic "restructuring", of which land reform was one of the main elements.<sup>28</sup> These were also the objectives pursued by the URNG when the agenda for the negotiations was set in 1990-91.

From a historical perspective, the army must be regarded as the guerrillas' main opponent, since it constituted the group that held the real power. This has also been the case when presidents and governments have assumed power through

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<sup>27</sup> For more information about the guerrilla organisations and their orientation, see Chapter 5.2: The channels of conflict.

<sup>28</sup> URNG, 1989, pp. 51-64 and pp. 189-210.



elections rather than through a military coup, since they have always been dependent upon the goodwill of the army to be able to implement their policies. According to some sources, even President Cerezo, who introduced a phase with certain democratic tendencies from 1986, had to promise to adhere to the conditions formulated by the army before he was instated as president. These conditions prohibited him from implementing any agricultural reforms or reforms of the banking system, investigating human rights violations and punishing those responsible. The army also reserved the right to appoint the Minister of Defence and formulate defence policy.<sup>29</sup>

The army's targets have been illustrated through the policies they have pursued and through their treatment of the civilian and armed opposition in Guatemala. Ever since the democratic decade, 1944-54, activities aimed at changing the socio-economic channels in society or the human rights situation and the lack of democracy have been severely repressed by the army. This is an expression of a desire to maintain the status quo. The army, which has also included some of the landowners and the most important segments of the private sector, have not wanted any change, either in the material situation or in the political power structure. Human rights violations have been an instrument for defending the position of the army, the landowners and the extreme right wing.

The civilian politicians' place in this picture is more complicated since, for example, Cerezo clearly showed initiative in creating a democratic opening in Guatemala and also played an active role in the Central American peace process, but he lacked real power in his home country. Even under Cerezo, important organisations like the CUC (the farmers' organisation) and GAM (the Mutual Support Group for the families of disappeared and arrested persons) refused to participate in the national dialogue prescribed in Esquipulas II, the Central American peace agreement signed in 1987, because the Guatemalan government characterised these organisations as illegal.<sup>30</sup>

The positions of the negotiating parties at the beginning of the 1990-96 period reflect the same targets as prevailed throughout the period of the war. While the URNG wanted to see substantial negotiations in conjunction with the operational ones (demobilisation) and had a clear chronology in this respect, the government wanted to

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<sup>29</sup> Fagen, 1988, p. 87.

<sup>30</sup> *Centroamérica Hoy*, no. 19, March 1989.

split the two and negotiate a demobilisation agreement as soon as possible. The URNG wanted to secure substantive agreements concerning the socio-economic situation, the general situation of the Indians, human rights and the role of the army in a democratic society before they were willing to enter into any agreement on demobilisation. At the beginning of the negotiating period, we therefore saw a URNG that was working to achieve complete acceptance of all its targets and a counterpart that wanted to see the guerrillas disarmed and was otherwise unwilling to make any serious concessions. However, this changed in the course of the negotiating process.

The URNG gradually achieved acceptance of its views concerning the chronology of the negotiations, but also had to make some concessions along the way. They did not achieve acceptance for some of their demands relating to the Truth Commission, and neither did the agreement about the socio-economic situation and the distribution of land live up to their original targets. In spite of serious crises during the negotiating process, a certain minimum level of mutual trust was built up between the parties and an understanding of how far the opposition could be pushed before the whole process was undermined. This probably helped to moderate the parties' targets.

#### **5.4 The Catalysts**

A catalyst is any factor that affects or controls the extent, intensity and duration of a conflict when it has first broken out. Typical characteristics of the Guatemalan civil war were that it lasted for a very long time (36 years) and it was extremely bloody and brutal during certain periods. The war was also characterised by an extremely asymmetric relationship between the parties, with a relatively small guerrilla army fighting against a superior military force that was receiving a large amount of American and Israeli financial support and advice. The question is how the civil war could go on for so long with such an asymmetrical relationship between the parties and why in some periods, as in 1980-83, it was characterised by such extreme brutality. It is also of particular interest to attempt to find out which of the catalysts delayed and complicated the peace process to a significant extent.

Three factors have been particularly important in this respect. Firstly, the war in Guatemala was largely fought within the context of the Cold War. Secondly, developments throughout Central America influenced the conflict in Guatemala and,

thirdly, Guatemala's history, geography and ethnic composition must be fully understood. Several of these factors in combination appear to have been the catalysts.

Two aspects of the Cold War particularly influenced the conflict in Guatemala. One was the tendency to polarise around different political platforms in relation to economic and distribution policy and the other, naturally closely related to the first, was access to weapons and military advice. There has been a tendency to label all activity relating to the improvement of both material and immaterial living conditions for the poor people of Guatemala as communist. Work among the poor was often, by definition, regarded as communist. Members of trade unions, farmers' organisations and human rights organisations, journalists and intellectuals were persecuted and the victims of abuse and murder. The non-violent channels for social and political activity were, in practice, closed or extremely dangerous. This increased recruitment to the guerrillas.

The ripple effects of parallel processes in El Salvador and Nicaragua were also significant. The motivation of and recruitment to the guerrillas in Guatemala peaked around 1978-79, at about the same time as the Nicaraguan revolution in 1979. Membership of the guerrilla forces in Guatemala at that time was estimated to be between 6,000 and 8,000, a figure that subsequently declined significantly. Inspiration also came from El Salvador, where the guerrillas, the FMLN, made considerable progress and controlled substantial areas of the country at that time.

Polarisation in the Cold War context helped the government and the army in Guatemala to pursue their anti-guerrilla activities and slaughter of the Indian population without arousing much international attention. Fear of the ripple effects of what was happening in El Salvador and Nicaragua exacerbated the military activity. This period was a precursor to the bloody anti-guerrilla campaign of Presidents Lucas Garcia and Rios Montt in 1980-83 when large numbers of Mayan Indians in the highlands were slaughtered.

With the Cold War and polarisation followed access to weapons and military advisers. The involvement of the USA in Guatemala's political and military affairs goes back to the CIA-backed military coup of Carlos Castillo Armas in 1954 which marked the end of the democratic breathing space (1944-54) in Guatemala's history. Intervention continued later, only interrupted or strongly reduced during President Carter's presidential period. In October 1966 the Guatemalan police carried out a

major anti-guerrilla campaign in the provinces of Izabal and Zacapa. It is estimated that between 3,000 and 8,000 Guatemalans were killed in the Izabal-Zacapa operations between 1966 and 1968. Amnesty International reports that the US military attaché, John Webber, admitted in 1968 that “the operations had been his idea and thanks to his initiative the Guatemalan army had started using anti-terrorist methods in the Izabal region.”<sup>31</sup>

US policy towards Guatemala changed during President Carter’s period of office (1976-80), when there was more emphasis on human rights. Guatemala had to seek other sources of financial support and access to weapons and these contacts were particularly Taiwan, Argentina (during the Falklands War) and, above all, Israel.<sup>32</sup> Israeli military advisers were pivotal in the anti-guerrilla and pacification strategies that were used during the extremely violent period at the beginning of the 1980s.

During President Reagan’s period in office, however, the US also re-entered the scene. Even during Reagan’s presidential campaign in 1980, members of Reagan’s transition team visited Guatemala and El Salvador several times and developed close ties with extreme right-wing military personnel and civilians associated with the death squads. According to Elías Barahona, who was working as Press Secretary for the Ministry of Home Affairs in Guatemala from 1976 to 1980, the US worked closely with the Lucas Garcia regime on the development of an anti-guerrilla strategy through the “Programme for the Elimination of Communism”.<sup>33</sup> This information was also confirmed by several senior civil servants who worked under Lucas Garcia.

Although most of this took place in the context of the Cold War, recent US reports have been published that provide evidence of the CIA’s activities in Guatemala right up to the beginning of the 1990s. In a report published in June 1996, the Intelligence Oversight Board states that many members of the Guatemalan security forces who worked for the CIA had ordered, planned and taken part in serious human rights violations, such as illegal executions, torture and kidnappings and that this was known to the CIA Operational Command. The reason for the report was that it had become known in the US that the CIA was also involved the murder of US citizens and their relatives in Guatemala in the 1990s.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Amnesty International, 1997. *Guatemala. State of Impunity*, p. 11.

<sup>32</sup> Jonas, Susanne, 1991. *The Battle for Guatemala*.

<sup>33</sup> Barahona i Jonas, McCaughan and Martinez, 1984, Council of Hemispheric Affairs 10/30/80.

<sup>34</sup> Amnesty International, 1997. *Guatemala: State of Impunity*.

By providing military equipment, advice and legitimacy, other countries, primarily the US and Israel, contributed to the intensity of the war in Guatemala, particularly in the first half of the 1980s. It was in the period 1981-85 that many of the institutional mechanisms to control the population in Guatemala were established and the worst human rights violations took place, partly in the Lucas Garcia period, but particularly under Rios Montt. At the Guatemalan elections in 1978, more than two thirds of the registered voters declined to vote because of electoral manipulation and corruption. The “winner” was General Romeo Lucas Garcia, who introduced a new, brutal period of repression of the civilian population. His government is estimated to have been responsible for the murder of 10,000 civilians.

After the 1982 election, a group of junior officers led by General Efraim Rios Montt staged a military coup. Montt used scorched earth tactics in a war that was literally intended to depopulate Mayan areas where the guerrillas were active. During the offensive, whole sectors of the population became military targets. This resulted in the inhabitants of 440 villages being massacred. Approximately 100,000 civilians were killed or “disappeared” in the period 1981-83 alone. In addition to murder and massacre, it was this period that generated the largest refugee flows, both to Mexico and within Guatemala.

Another important phase of the army’s anti-guerrilla campaign was the establishment of the so-called civil patrols, Patrullas de Autodefensa Civil (PACs) in the period 1983-85. The objective of the civil patrols, as of other measures such as the establishment of model villages and administrative centralisation of development projects under military control, was to achieve greater control of the population. The pacification programme was called “Frijoles y Fusiles” - beans and rifles - and was subsequently renamed “Techo, Trabajo y Tortillas” - houses, work and tortillas.<sup>35</sup>

The Cold War, polarisation and military advice and support, particularly from the US and Israel, contributed to the intensity and *institutionalisation of political violence in Guatemala*. Ever since the Spanish conquistadors’ conquest of Latin America in the 1500s, violence, abuse of the civilian population, military dictatorship and coups have been daily fare in Guatemala (with the exception of a few more democratic periods). The mechanisms that were established in the 1980s therefore had

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<sup>35</sup> Jonas, 1991, p. 151.

a particularly unfortunate and reinforcing effect on these structures. The result was a basic lack of trust and fear of abuse.

Although the Guatemalan guerrilla movement never became large or gained control of significant areas, as in El Salvador, it was never completely broken either. This most probably has to do with the Guatemalan landscape; the guerrillas could always retreat to the mountains and run their operations on a smaller scale. However, the military in Guatemala considered the guerilla movement as defeated and at the outset they were therefore not interested in entering into negotiations. The low-intensity character of the war in Guatemala was thus an important reason why it dragged on before the parties finally entered into negotiations.

## **6. The Peace Process and Norway's Role**

### **6.1 The Norwegian Actors**

Norwegian involvement in the Guatemalan peace process was driven by a relatively small number of individuals. At the Ministry of Foreign affairs, it was the Latin America desk and State Secretary Jan Egeland (from 1992) who dealt with the peace process. The prospects of peace in Guatemala were not always equally good and investments in the peace process were therefore a "high risk" effort from Norway's point of view. It took six years from the first meeting between the parties to the conflict in Oslo until the peace agreement was signed. The Ministry had to take into account traditional Norwegian foreign policy interests, which were not particularly directed towards Latin America. Peace diplomacy was at its initial stage, and although the Ministry of Foreign Affairs supported peace efforts in various ways in many countries, working for peace was a difficult game in many ways. It was not always successful. Partly for these reasons, efforts relating to Guatemala remained at a modest level in terms of both the people involved and the funds employed. This was also the reason why the top political leadership was relatively little involved. The meetings at the Ministry that were attended by representatives of various Guatemalan groups took place in Spanish, which also limited participation.<sup>36</sup>

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs' network of Norwegian contacts during the peace process consisted primarily of Norwegian Church Aid in Guatemala, the

Norwegian embassy in Guatemala, the Norwegian embassy in Mexico and the Lutheran World Federation in Geneva.

Norwegian Church Aid's (NCA's) regional representative in Guatemala, Petter Skauen, first came to Guatemala in connection with the 1976 earthquake. Petter Skauen has lived more or less continuously in Guatemala since 1978 and therefore represents twenty years of continuity in terms of NCA's presence in the country. From 1993, Skauen worked full time on the peace process, in close cooperation with the chargé d'affaires from 1993 onwards. (Arne Aasheim in 1993, Fredrik Arthur from 1994 to 1997).

NCA's sustained presence in Guatemala has had several implications. On the one hand, NCA, through regional representative Petter Skauen, has built up a great deal of trust among many groups in Guatemala and a network of personal contacts and acquaintanceships with people who have played a leading role in the peace process. These contacts include the guerrillas, the civil sector, the government and the army. His contacts with the army proved to be particularly important. On the other hand, NCA was subjected to pressure and threats because of the work it was doing. During the violent period in 1980-82, several of NCA's local employees were killed. Out of consideration for the staff's security, NCA therefore had to maintain a low profile at the Oslo meeting in 1990.<sup>37</sup>

It is paradoxical that Norway, which was so strongly involved in the Guatemalan peace process, did not have a resident ambassador in Guatemala until 1997. The Norwegian embassy in Mexico covered the whole of Central America until 1985, when Costa Rica was separated from the rest. Guatemala remained under Mexico while Costa Rica then covered the rest of Central America. In 1993, a post of chargé d'affaires was established in Guatemala under the ambassador in Mexico. Not until 1997 did Norway have a resident ambassador in Guatemala.

The embassy in Mexico also played an important role, for two reasons in particular. Firstly, the Guatemalan guerrilla leadership was in Mexico, making it easy to maintain close contacts between Norway and the URNG. From 1993 onwards, embassy staff, under Ambassador Rolf Berg (1992-95), met with the guerrillas every week and sometimes every day. Secondly, both the meetings of the Group of Friends and a large

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<sup>36</sup> Interview with Jan Egeland, 7 January 1998.

<sup>37</sup> Interview with Petter Skauen, 2 February 1998.

proportion of the negotiations took place in Mexico. The Norwegian embassy in Mexico therefore had the possibility of following up negotiations that did not take place in Norway, both through the Group of Friends and through contacts with the arbitrators, first Bishop Quesada Toruño and later the UN moderator, Jean Arnault.<sup>38</sup> A large proportion of aid for the peace process was also channelled through the embassy in Mexico.

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) filled a particularly important role at the beginning of the peace process. The LWF had been involved in Latin America for many years, long before the beginning of the Guatemalan peace process. From their programme office in El Salvador, they closely followed developments in both Guatemala and Nicaragua towards the end of the 1980s. From 1985 to 1994, the LWF had a Norwegian Secretary General, Gunnar Stålsett. This was the decisive reason why the first negotiations took place in Norway. An ecumenical delegation was sent to Central America under the leadership of the LWF in 1989. The report from the delegation's visit to Guatemala contained the information that there was willingness to negotiate on the part of the URNG and the government/army provided that this took place at the LWF's invitation and under its leadership.<sup>39</sup> Through Gunnar Stålsett, the LWF contacted the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs about this and received confirmation that Norway would finance and provide security for a meeting of this nature. This was the background for the 1990 Oslo meeting. The LWF also continued to stay in touch with the parties to the conflict through its Geneva office after 1990. Moreover, the LWF played an important role by organising a series of ecumenical hearings which were attended by many different organisations and groups from the civil sector, and gradually also the URNG and representatives of the government and the army, in the period 1993-95.

This review shows that the Norwegian actors comprised both institutions and concerned individuals. One important question in the final discussion on "the Norwegian model" will therefore be how much of the Norwegian contribution to the Guatemalan peace process was due to that specific situation and how much was inherent in the structures and is therefore transferable to conflict situations in other countries where Norway is involved.

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<sup>38</sup> Interview with Rolf Berg, 12 January 1998.

<sup>39</sup> Interview with Gunnar Stålsett, 29 January 1988.



## 6.2 The international actors

Many international actors were involved in the Guatemalan peace process. Most prominent was the UN, but also the members of the Group of Friends of the Guatemalan Peace Process, and the religious networks, primarily the LWF were important. Certain other countries (Peru, Canada) were also involved as hosts for some of the many consultations with various parties to the conflict organised by the LWF. Costa Rica hosted the last of the four large ecumenical hearings. One of the subsidiary agreements was signed in Sweden. Israel was also involved in discussions in the final phases of the peace process.

The UN's role in the peace process was gradually extended from a purely observer function at the beginning of the negotiations to a formal role as moderator between the parties from 1994 onwards. Only after the UN assumed the role of moderator in 1994 did the negotiations really speed up. In addition to the negotiations themselves, the UN played an extended role through the presence of MINUGUA, the UN Mission for the Verification of Human Rights and of Compliance with the Commitments of the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights that was signed on 29 March 1994. MINUGUA became operational in November 1994, two years before the final peace agreement was signed. Through the UNHCR, the UN has also played a key role in the repatriation of refugees. Projects relating to social and economic follow-up of the peace process were run by the UNDP. The demobilisation process, which began on 15 January 1997, also took place in close cooperation between the UNDP and MINUGUA.

In the subsidiary agreement that was signed in Mexico City on 10 January 1994<sup>40</sup>, the Group of Friends was formally invited to assume a supporting and monitoring role in the peace process. At that time, the Group of Friends, which comprised Mexico, Venezuela, Colombia, Spain, Norway and the US, had already been more or less functioning since 1992. Jean Arnault had frequent meetings with the Group of Friends, which were used as a kind of consultative group for proposals from both the guerrillas and the government in connection with the negotiations. The Group of

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<sup>40</sup> UN, 1994. "Framework Agreement for the Resumption of Negotiations between the Government of Guatemala and the URNG" - 10th January 1994.

Friends also had their own separate meetings with the parties to the conflict and exerted pressure on both the guerrillas and the government when they considered it necessary.

Mexico hosted all the negotiations that did not take place in Norway, Spain or Sweden. Eight subsidiary agreements were signed in Mexico. The Guatemalan guerrilla commanders were living in Mexico, which put Mexico in a difficult situation with respect to the peace process. There were also a large number of Guatemalan refugees in the Mexican province of Chiapas. The Mexican regime is aware that Mexico is a large northern neighbour of Guatemala and has therefore consistently pursued a policy of non-intervention in its relations with Guatemala. The presence of the URNG leadership also limited Mexico's leeway for initiative in the peace process. However, Mexico willingly hosted all the rounds of negotiations desired by the parties.<sup>41</sup>

### **6.3 The Phases in the Peace Process and Norway's Role**

#### **An overview**

A more detailed review of the various phases of the peace process, focusing on Norway's role in each of the phases, is given below. There is no objectively "correct" division of the phases of the peace process; it is rather a working tool. I have chosen to divide the process into four phases: the events prior to 1989, with emphasis on the Central American peace agreement, Esquipulas II, and the foundation it laid for the subsequent peace process in Guatemala; the period 1989-90, which includes the background for the Oslo Agreement in 1990; the period 1991-93, a period of many discussions and negotiations but without the strong presence of the UN; and, finally, the period 1994-96 when the UN was formally involved as moderator of the conflict and the final peace agreement was signed.

#### **6.4 Esquipulas II and the Period Prior to 1989**

The Central American peace plan, Esquipulas II, was signed by the presidents of Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Costa Rica on behalf of the

governments of their respective countries in August 1987. No representatives of the guerrillas or the civilian opposition in the five countries participated in the signing of the peace agreement, nor had they been involved in the negotiating process.<sup>42</sup> The process primarily took place at regional level between the five Central American governments. Esquipulas II contained eleven sections. Although several of the sections dealt with relations between the countries, e.g. Section 5 concerning the cessation of external support for non-conventional forces and guerrilla movements, several sections also concerned domestic matters. Sections 1-4 concerned national reconciliation, cease-fire, democratisation and free elections in each country.<sup>43</sup> The most concrete result of Esquipulas II was the establishment of a National Reconciliation Commission, CRN, on 9 September 1987. This Commission functioned continuously until it was replaced by COPAZ in 1993.

The peace process was actively supported by the CONTADORA group; Mexico, Venezuela, Colombia and Panama. Three of these countries, Mexico, Venezuela and Colombia, would subsequently become members of the Group of Friends of the Guatemalan Peace Process.

### **6.5 A New Beginning: 1989-90**

In 1989 the Lutheran World Federation sent an ecumenical delegation to Central America. Guatemala was one of the countries that was visited. Although the LWF was responsible for the delegation, they collaborated with the World Council of Churches, the American Council of Churches, CLAI (the Latin-American Council of Churches) and the Vatican. The purpose of the delegation's visit to Guatemala was to find out if the parties to the conflict, the guerrillas and the government/the army indicated any willingness to negotiate. The response was positive. Before analysing the actual events of the period 1989-90 in more detail, it is important to consider certain points that may help to explain why the parties' response was positive, i.e. recent history and developments in the regional and international context of the conflict in Guatemala.

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<sup>41</sup> Interview with Gustavo Iruegas, 16 January 1998.

<sup>42</sup> Gomariz, 1988.

<sup>43</sup> Documentos, 1988.

The Cold War had been an important catalyst for several of the conflicts in Central America. US military advisers and economic assistance for the Guatemalan regime had long been an important part of the war scenario, which, however, changed during President Carter's period of office when there was more emphasis on human rights. When the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, this was also regarded as a setback for Marxist ideology, upon which some of the guerrillas' philosophies were based. At the same time major changes were taking place in Central America. The Sandinistas lost the Nicaraguan elections in February 1990 and the peace agreement between the government and the guerrillas in El Salvador was signed in January 1992.

In addition to these factors, which lessened the motivation for continued war in Guatemala, both the asymmetry between the parties to the conflict and the Guatemalan topography were important. On the one hand, the URNG never managed to gain control of large areas of Guatemala as the FMLN guerrillas had done in El Salvador. The URNG's real power was therefore limited and the Guatemalan army regarded the war as won. The Guatemalan guerrillas were facing a totally superior military force which demonstrated the worst aspects of its strength in the period 1980-82. On the other hand, the regime never quite managed to defeat the guerrillas because they could always retreat to the mountains and continue their sabotage activities on a smaller scale, thereby causing the regime military and economic losses. Consequently, the war gradually became a war of attrition with no winners or losers. The losses were human and economic.

Against this background, it is reasonable to assume that the LWF's delegation and initiative for negotiations between the parties in Guatemala occurred at an auspicious time. To the extent the Norwegian contributions to the peace process have been successful, they must also be understood in the light of having come at the right moment in a long civil war.

If we focus on the institutional aspect of the main international and Norwegian actors involved in the peace process, we find some important common denominators. Both the Lutheran World Federation and Norwegian Church Aid had been involved in Central America and Guatemala for some time. Norwegian aid for Guatemala had been channelled through non-governmental organisations for many years. Norway's foreign policy also stressed the importance of development and contributing towards the peaceful solution of conflicts, although it should be noted that at that time peace

diplomacy was in its initial stages. Furthermore, we should not underestimate the fact that the contributions from these institutional actors were linked to strong personal involvement by individuals; State Secretary Jan Egeland at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Secretary General Gunnar Stålsett at the LWF and Regional Representative Petter Skauen at NCA.

The LWF had long been involved in Latin America, as it had in Africa and Eastern Europe. In the case of Latin America, the organisation concentrated particularly on Central America and the following countries, in order of priority: El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua and, to a lesser extent, Honduras. The LWF's programme office was located in El Salvador. From there they closely followed developments in Guatemala and Nicaragua and gradually began to ask themselves if they could contribute more than humanitarian aid: "Could we also contribute in the struggle for peace and human rights?"<sup>44</sup>

The desire and initiative to send an ecumenical delegation to Central America, including Guatemala to assess the possibilities of peace negotiations, were therefore *a natural consequence of involvement and presence in the region over a fairly long period of time* (in strong contrast with other peace initiatives and arbitration efforts in international politics which appear to be more like bungee-jumping exercises). The LWF also had contacts with the various parties to the conflict from its head office in Geneva. The URNG had an office in Amsterdam and its two representatives often went to Geneva in connection with human rights meetings, the LWF covering their travel expenses. Similarly, the LWF had for some time had contacts with the Guatemalan army through its Geneva office. The picture of contacts that had been established over time is clear.

This also applies to a very great extent to Norwegian Church Aid, which had been operating in Guatemala since 1978 and had therefore experienced very special problems in a difficult human rights situation. Petter Skauen said in an interview that it was precisely in the period 1980-82, which was a period of massacres and extreme violence, that NCA fully realised that peace was essential if they were to achieve anything at all in Guatemala: "The Guatemalans are a silent people. Around 1979-80 some of them began to open up rather more." When, during a visit to his partners in cooperation, Skauen presented a list of ideas for projects (including wells, housing,

agricultural projects) and asked them about their needs, the answer was “peace, no more violence, no more sudden death”.<sup>45</sup> The lack of trust was fundamental everywhere in Guatemala. During his visits to local communities in Guatemala, Petter Skauen also asked what they regarded as being their greatest problem. In twelve of fifteen places, the answer was “No tenemos confianza - we trust no-one”. Skauen therefore had a deep understanding of the need for peace and a corresponding desire to make a contribution to the peace process. If the principle of recipient responsibility in Norwegian development cooperation is to be taken seriously, an effort to promote the peace process would thus be the highest realisation of this principle.

The ecumenical delegation visited churches, organisations from “civil society”, the armed forces, the government and the URNG. Before the delegation began its visit, the LWF had already discussed the question of negotiations with the URNG’s European representative, Jorge Rosal. The question was repeated to the parties to the conflict during the visit and the response was positive, provided that the LWF would provide the invitations and make the arrangements.

After the delegation’s visit, the LWF started looking into the logistical aspects of a meeting of this nature. They had two alternatives: to approach the evangelical church (Evangelische Kirche) in Germany, which was strongly involved in social and ethical issues, or to approach Norway. The LWF first investigated possibilities in Germany, but concluded that it would take a great deal of time and effort and therefore opted for Norway. Secretary General Gunnar Stålsett contacted Minister of Foreign Affairs Kjell Magne Bondevik and State Secretary Knut Vollebæk, who gave an affirmative response as regards the location, security and financing of a negotiation meeting.

Several actors had already been involved before the meeting began. When the ecumenical delegation arrived in Guatemala in 1989, Petter Skauen was invited to participate in a low-profile role due to the NCA’s security situation. Prior to the Oslo meeting in 1990, Petter Skauen was asked to find three representatives of the government/the army to go to Oslo. He contacted Jorge Serrano, Mario Permut and Eduardo Villaforo (secretary of the National Reconciliation Commission (CNR)). There was considerable tension right up until the time they left, and there were several

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<sup>44</sup> Interview with Gunnar Stålsett, 29 January 1998.

<sup>45</sup> Interview with Petter Skauen, 2 February 1998.

phone calls to Petter Skauen the evening prior to their departure before they were quite certain that they would go.<sup>46</sup>

NCA refused the LWF's request that they act as local host for the meeting in Oslo due to concerns for the safety of their staff in Guatemala. The LWF therefore invited the Norwegian Council of Churches under the leadership of Trond Bakkevig to host the Oslo meeting.

The Oslo meeting was made possible through a combination of the LWF's initiative, NCA's long presence and network of contacts in Guatemala, and the willingness of the political leadership in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to support the peace effort. The context of the meeting was professionally arranged. The government delegation and the URNG delegation came on different aircraft and were housed in different hotels of equal standard. This gave legitimacy and the necessary distance to both parties. A cordial social event was arranged at the Heftye Villa in the evening. It is difficult to say how important this social programme was, but several of the participants had not met each other for twenty or thirty years and some of them conversed until the small hours. In a relationship between parties to a conflict which was otherwise characterised by deep mistrust, this more relaxed social gathering before the substantive negotiations was important.

During the talks that began the following day, the Roman Catholic Bishop Quesada Toruño was to have acted as "conciliator", but he was prevented from attending due to illness. After introductory speeches by the LWF and the parties, they were left to themselves. The meeting resulted in the Oslo Agreement, that was signed on 30 March 1990. The basis of the agreement was a distinction between the substantive negotiating themes and the operational themes (military matters such as a cease-fire, demobilisation etc.) The chronology of the negotiations was important. The negotiations on the substantive issues had to come first. This was important for the URNG, whose only real negotiating card was armed resistance. Pursuant to this agreement, Bishop Quesada Toruño was appointed "conciliator" for future negotiations. The further course of action was outlined in the form of a series of consultations involving both the URNG and a number of civil and political groups. These consultations were then to lead to direct negotiations between the guerrillas and the government at an unspecified time in the future.

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<sup>46</sup> Interview with Petter Skauen, 2 February 1998.

*Summary of the period: 1) Why Norway played a central role from the beginning: Norway was drawn into the peace process at the beginning specifically because the LWF had a Norwegian Secretary General at that time. However, the reason why the Secretary General approached Norway with a request that it finance and host the negotiations was not only that he was Norwegian. Norway pursued a development cooperation and foreign policy that gave priority to development and the peaceful resolution of conflicts, and a positive response to his request could therefore be anticipated. The LWF took the initiative, but the Norwegian network was rapidly set in motion to realise the idea. NCA's regional representative in Guatemala, who had considerable knowledge of the political landscape, identified potential participants on the government side and ensured that they actually arrived, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs financed the negotiations and guaranteed the security of the participants.*

*2) How did Norway fill the role it was then given in the peace process?: The financing of the URNG's travel expenses and their stay in Norway made their participation possible and also gave them the same legitimacy as the government side. Due consideration was also paid to the psychological aspects of such a difficult first meeting. Necessary distance was ensured by the delegations arriving on different aircraft and staying at different hotels, while the finest possible framework was provided for the social gathering at the Heftye Villa on the first evening. The reason for this was an understanding that the worst mistrust had to be dispelled before it would be possible to talk about substantive issues. Some of the catalytic effects of the conflict were thereby the first issues to be addressed. In the subsequent discussions between the parties, the Norwegian actors did not attempt to assume the role of arbitrator, but left them alone.*

## **6.6 Towards a Crisis in the Peace Process: 1991-93**

Negotiations continued in the period 1991-93, but the peace process entered a crisis in 1992-93. The process took place on several levels, both in formal negotiations between the CNR and the URNG, *the front channel*, and in a number of informal meetings and talks between the parties, plus a series of consultations with various groups in the civil sector, which resulted in four large ecumenical hearings, *the back*



*channel*. Norway actively supported efforts through both these channels by providing both aid funds and political follow-up.

The formal negotiations between the guerrillas and the CNR were moved to Mexico in 1991 for logistical reasons.<sup>47</sup> The newly-elected government of President Jorge Serrano Elías published its “Initiative for Total Peace” in April 1991. The initiative was discussed in the course of the next negotiations between the government and the URNG in Mexico. In the Mexico Agreement, which was signed on 26 April 1991, the parties agreed on the agenda for future negotiations and a description of the role of the conciliator, which was to be filled by Bishop Quesada Toruño, and an observer post for the UN. Three months later, on 25 July 1991, the parties signed another agreement in Mexico, the Queretaro Agreement on democratisation. This agreement discusses the importance and implications of a democratic regime, but contains no concrete proposals for implementation and does not touch on key human rights issues. As the parties approached the key human rights issues, the problems began to emerge and two further negotiating rounds in Mexico brought no more concrete results.

In Mexico, Norway had a good vantage point for monitoring events through the Norwegian embassy. Close contacts were established with the URNG leadership, who lived in Mexico, and after Norway became a member of the Group of Friends, this position was actively utilised. A large proportion of Norwegian aid for the peace process in Guatemala was channelled through the embassy in Mexico.

In addition to closely monitoring the negotiations in Mexico, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also received representatives of the URNG for discussions in Norway on 21 January and 29 June 1992, and in connection with the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to Rigoberta Menchú on 10 December 1992. Bishop Quesada Toruño was also invited to the Peace Prize ceremony and had talks at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 11 December. Guatemala’s Minister of Labour, Mr. Solórzano, who was also invited, had talks with Foreign Minister Stoltenberg the same day. The talks continued, and on 14 January 1993, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also received an official delegation from Guatemala headed by Amilcar Burgos, presidential adviser and member of the Guatemalan peace commission. The visits to the Ministry and talks

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<sup>47</sup> Interview with Rolf Berg, 12 January 1998.

with the parties at the embassy in Mexico helped to keep the Norwegian actors informed and to press and encourage the parties to keep the negotiations going.

During periods when the negotiations faltered, efforts were also made to persuade the parties to meet outside Mexico for less formal talks. The LWF organised a meeting between President Serrano and the URNG leadership in Geneva on 22 May 1992, which was also attended by State Secretary Egeland. Efforts were made to arrange a similar meeting between the parties in connection with the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony, but the situation was so deadlocked that this was impossible.<sup>48</sup> Instead, as mentioned above, individual talks were arranged between the Ministry and the visitors.

In order to be able to analyse the effects of the Norwegian contributions during this period, however, it is necessary to discuss some of the events in more detail.

During the negotiations in Mexico, Norway had no formal role but the Norwegian embassy kept in close touch with Bishop Quesada Toruño, who acted as conciliator during the negotiations. The embassy also had regular meetings with the guerrilla leadership from 1992 and weekly contacts from 1993. (There were also some contacts between the embassy and the government side, although these contacts were primarily kept warm through NCA, the chargé d'affaires in Guatemala and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Norway.)

It was also during this period that Norway joined the Group of Friends, which was not entirely unproblematic.<sup>49</sup> Mexico was originally against including Norway, partly because if Norway was allowed to join the Group of Friends, the US would have to be admitted too, which Mexico was sceptical about. The Mexican stance must be seen in the light of Mexico's general attitude to and policy towards the conflict in Guatemala. Mexico's basic attitude was that they wanted to be extremely cautious (*muy cuidadoso*) about intervening in Guatemalan affairs. The country's experience of having a big neighbour to the north affected Mexico and increased its awareness that, in relation to Guatemala, Mexico is itself a big neighbour to the north. The situation was further complicated after the URNG leadership was allowed to enter Mexico (the guerrillas resided in Mexico on a series of 6-month residence permits). "In Guatemala,

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<sup>48</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs memo on "The Peace Process in Guatemala - Discussions in Oslo", 1 December 1992.

<sup>49</sup> Interview with Rolf Berg, 12 January 1998.

they acted as if Mexico supported the guerrillas because the guerrilla commanders were living there. They almost believed Mexico had a duty to persecute the URNG, particularly the Guatemalan army. Many official meetings between Guatemala and Mexico concerned this matter.”<sup>50</sup> The flow of refugees from Guatemala to Chiapas exacerbated the problems. On the other hand, it also contributed towards increasing Mexico’s interest in a peaceful solution to the conflict.

Both the URNG and the government side clearly wanted a Group of Friends to be established, but they had different preferences as to which countries they wanted to be members of the group. This became apparent in a number of discussions between the parties and representatives of the authorities of some of the potential member countries. During talks between State Secretary Egeland and URNG representatives Ricardo Ramirez and Luis Becker in Oslo on 11 November 1992, it became apparent that the URNG wanted a group of this nature to be established and thought that it might consist of Norway, Mexico, the US, Spain and possibly France and Costa Rica.<sup>51</sup> However, President Serrano had pre-empted the guerrillas since a support group linked to President Serrano’s 11 February 1992 initiative in the peace process had already been established. The group, which consisted of Colombia, Venezuela, Mexico and Spain, was established after an initiative at the G-3 meeting in Venezuela the same day.<sup>52</sup> Colombia’s and Venezuela’s membership in a future Group of Friends on which both parties to the conflict could agree was therefore difficult to avoid, even though the URNG did not want Venezuela and Colombia to be included. However, the guerrillas did want the US to be included.

Even so, negotiations between the URNG and the government side in Mexico on 20 March 1992, produced agreement on the Group of Friends. They agreed to establish a “grupo de amigos” consisting of Colombia, Spain, the US, Mexico, Norway and Venezuela.<sup>53</sup> This was a compromise between the parties’ wishes.

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<sup>50</sup> Interview with Gustavo Iruegas, 16 January 1998.

<sup>51</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs memo. “Guatemala. Discussion between State Secretary Egeland and URNG representatives Ricardo Ramirez and Dr. Luis Becker, 10 December 1992.” 11 December 1992.

<sup>52</sup> Report from the Royal Norwegian\* Embassy in Washington. “Guatemala - Discussion in the State Department”. 2 March 1993.

<sup>53</sup> Agreement was reached during a negotiating round that did not otherwise lead to any subsidiary agreement. The Norwegian Embassy in Mexico City received notification through a press release issued after the meeting. (Report from the Royal Norwegian Embassy, Mexico. “Guatemala. The Peace Process. Results of the last negotiating round in Mexico”, 23 March 1993.

Throughout the period 1991-93, Norwegian initiatives, support and views were communicated through discussions at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the embassy in Mexico, with the Group of Friends (of 1992), Norwegian Church Aid and Norway's representative in Guatemala. On the URNG's part, some points in particular were repeated in discussions with the Norwegian actors. Firstly, they concerned the time perspective. "The peace process would have to take time and they were afraid that, by entering into an agreement too early and thereby giving up power and strategic positions, they would enter into something for which the President had not received the army's approval."<sup>54</sup> The guerrillas wanted to ensure that substantive subsidiary agreements were negotiated to their conclusion before a demobilisation agreement was implemented. While the URNG wanted guarantees of democracy and human rights, followed by political agreements that would eliminate the causes of the conflict, *then demobilisation*, the government wanted demobilisation to come first.

The government's views were further elucidated during a discussion with Mr. Egeland on 14 January 1993 when an official delegation from Guatemala visited Norway. At that time the main focus of discussion was on human rights issues. The delegation's leader informed Mr. Egeland that President Serrano was now willing to enter into a compromise on these issues. He was now ready, as the URNG had demanded, to accept immediate UN verification of a subsidiary agreement on human rights provided that the subsidiary agreement on human rights was signed by 15 February at the latest and a final peace agreement was signed no later than 15 May 1993. He could also accept the appointment of a Truth Commission as soon as there was agreement on the human rights aspect of the negotiations, but it would not be able to begin its activities until thirty days after the signing of the final peace agreement.<sup>55</sup> This timetable was far from being observed and many important themes of negotiation were still outstanding.

Norway's views on the chronology and division of negotiations into substantive and operational negotiating themes were concurrent with those of the Group of Friends. They agreed that the substance of negotiations had to come before the cease-fire, since the armed struggle was the URNG's only real negotiating card.

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<sup>54</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs memo. "Peace Negotiations in Guatemala. Meeting at the office of the Secretary General of LWF, Dr. Gunnar Stålsett, Friday 3 January 1992". 6 January 1992.

<sup>55</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs. "Minutes of a meeting between State Secretary Egeland and an official delegation from Guatemala, 14 January 1993 in Oslo".

Both the Group of Friends and Norway exerted pressure on the government and the armed forces to accept this.

After the subsidiary agreement on democratisation was signed in Queretaro, Mexico on 25 July 1991, no further subsidiary agreements were signed until January 1994, although the negotiations continued. Towards the end of 1992 the peace process entered a period of crisis during which the parties communicated with each other in writing through the Guatemalan Archbishop's secretary in Mexico. The crisis peaked when President Serrano carried out a "coup against himself" on 25 May 1993. He suspended the Constitution and tried to dissolve the national assembly, the supreme court and the constitutional court. After this attempted coup, Serrano was replaced by former Human Rights Ombudsman Ramiro de León Carpio. The National Reconciliation Commission (CNR) was now dissolved and the role of "conciliator" ceased to exist. The Government Peace Commission, COPAZ, which was established in its stead, was to continue the negotiations with the URNG.

The problems were exacerbated after Serrano's coup and with de León Carpio's new proposed plan for further peace negotiations. The URNG was sceptical to the proposal. Rolando Morán, leader of EPG/URNG, expressed his concerns at a meeting at the Norwegian Embassy<sup>56</sup> in October 1993. The URNG was now disillusioned, surprised and dissatisfied with the proposal, which was regarded as an attempt to marginalise the guerrillas. The URNG took the view that the government was now disregarding Oslo, Mexico City and Queretaro, and they regarded the plan as an ultimatum in which the URNG was not treated as a negotiating partner. Morán stated that it was wrong of de León Carpio to ask the UN to contact the URNG in order to exert pressure on the guerrillas in this way. (Nevertheless, the URNG was willing to attend a possible meeting).

On 18 October 1993, the Group of Friends also had a meeting with representatives of the Guatemalan government delegation to the negotiations. There they met, among others, Hector Rosada, head of the government peace commission, COPAZ, General Tarasena and Mario Permut. Hector Rosada informed them that the government wished to revise the Oslo, Mexico and Queretaro agreements and return to the Esquipulas II agreement, and would ask the UN Secretary General to convene a

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<sup>56</sup> Report from the Royal Norwegian Embassy, Mexico. "Guatemala. The Peace Process. The URNG's views on the President's peace plan." 11 October 1993.

meeting between the parties. It became clear that they thought the URNG's role in previous negotiations had been "over-dimensioned" and that they were now impatient with the guerrillas.<sup>57</sup>

The Group of Friends, through Mexico, Norway and Spain, expressed their views in relatively similar terms. They were sceptical about the government's new negotiating plan, since it deviated significantly from the basis that had been negotiated in previous agreements. They also expressed concern about the desire to divide substantive from operational themes. The Group of Friends was also concerned that the government wished to "unilateralise" the human rights element. An agreement had been close at hand.

On the other hand, Norway also pressured the URNG leadership, both through the embassy in Mexico and through discussions at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs<sup>58</sup>, to persuade them to accept the fact that not every problem could be solved in detail in the subsidiary agreements. Another important point which Norway followed up was the effort to fully involve the UN in the negotiations. The government and the army in particular, but also the URNG, were somewhat sceptical about this, for different reasons. In the case of the Guatemalan army, the experience of El Salvador was frightening and purges within the army were associated with the UN presence. The guerrillas, on the other hand, were concerned about the seriousness that would now pervade the negotiations. Although on several occasions the URNG had expressed a desire to have the UN more closely involved in the negotiations, they also wanted to retain Quesada Toruño as conciliator, and what role they expected the UN to play was rather unclear.

During this period, Norway tried all possible channels to get the negotiations under way again. On the initiative of Norway, Israel was also drawn into the peace process for a certain period.<sup>59</sup> The purpose was, if possible, to initiate a dialogue with some of the conservative Jewish groups linked to the government side in Guatemala. In autumn 1993, Jan Egeland contacted Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin on this

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<sup>57</sup> Report from the Royal Norwegian Embassy, Mexico. "Guatemala. Meeting of the Group of Friends, Mexico City, 18 October." 19 October 1993.

<sup>58</sup> Interview with Rolf Berg, 12 January 1998. Interview with Herberth Liner, 14 January 1998.

<sup>59</sup> Interview with Jan Egeland, 7 January 1998.

matter. Contact was facilitated with Samuel Hadas from the Israeli foreign office.<sup>60</sup> Hadas had formerly been Israeli ambassador to Spain and later became Israeli ambassador to the Vatican. In Oslo, several meetings were arranged between Samuel Hadas and Mario Permut, head of the Jewish community in Guatemala. Permut is lawyer for the Guatemalan landowners and is also involved in arms dealing.

This connection was also followed up with a subsequent visit to Israel by representatives of the Guatemalan government and the URNG. During the visit, the parties had talks with both Foreign Minister Shimon Perez and Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

Although the formal negotiations between the government and the guerrillas moved slowly after 1991 and entered a crisis in 1992-93 and all possible channels were used to get them started again, a great deal happened in the civil sector during this period. It was at this time that they seriously began to enter the stage. The LWF organised consultations with various groups from Guatemalan civil society, including women's and Mayan organisations, landowners, industrialists, employers and the university. Peru, Spain, Mexico and Canada hosted these consultations, which were the forerunner of the series of ecumenical hearings that took place in the period 1993-95.

The first of the ecumenical hearings took place in Washington in November 1993. In addition to many organisations from the civil sector, all the parties involved in the conflict were invited to the hearing. Several problems arose along the way. Prior to the hearing, the LWF made active efforts to facilitate entry permits to the USA for the URNG. The URNG had regarded the fact that they could not obtain an entry visa as a serious problem for some time. They could not present their case to the UN. To both the LWF and the Norwegian authorities, the URNG had clearly expressed that this matter had high priority.<sup>61</sup>

As mentioned previously, the question of drawing the UN more strongly into the peace process was a difficult issue. The Guatemalan government and army were sceptical about what had happened in El Salvador after the UN entered the stage, and

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<sup>60</sup> Report from the Royal Norwegian Embassy, Mexico, including fax from the Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores Guatemala, 18 July 1994 and press cuttings from Guatemalan and Israeli newspapers. 20 July 1994.

the URNG had also been sceptical. That is why it was important to go to the UN. The US finally came round to giving the URNG visas, but only to go to the UN in New York, not to Washington. However, the hearing opened the door for the URNG, since they had been invited and now had to be allowed to go to Washington as well. The State Department hosted a lunch for the URNG in connection with the hearing.

The civil sector also tried to help to get the formal negotiations going again in 1993. In a letter dated 28 October 1993 and addressed to the Group of Friends, the coordinators for the civil sector requested the Group of Friends to persuade the parties to attend a new negotiating meeting.

*Summary: 1) Why Norway came to play a central role in the peace process: During this period, it became clearer that some of the other countries that might have played a more important role in the peace process were not regarded as neutral. The URNG did not want Colombia and Venezuela to be members of the Group of Friends. Mexico was balancing with difficulty between the presence of the URNG leadership in the country on the one hand and its role as facilitator of negotiations on the other. Mexico was pursuing a cautious policy of non-intervention and could therefore hardly become a driving force in the peace process. The US had an unfortunate past in the region, but was now actually welcomed by the guerrillas but not by the Guatemalan government, probably because the US had changed its views on human rights issues in Guatemala.*

*2) How Norway filled its role in the peace process: This was a difficult period when negotiations were largely at a standstill and therefore involved risky investments on the part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Nevertheless, the Ministry did not give up and continued to support the process both financially and politically, thereby giving the parties time and financial resources. The URNG's mobility and legitimacy were increased by their obtaining entry visas to the US, to travel to both the UN in New York and Washington.*

*During this period, through discussions with the parties and through the Group of Friends, Norway also attempted to influence the attitudes of the parties on a number of basic issues relating to the negotiations. Norway upheld the view that the*

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<sup>61</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs memo. "The Peace Negotiations in Guatemala. Meeting between the State Secretary and Secretary General of the LWF, Dr. Gunnar Stålsett, Friday 3 January 1992." 6 January 1992.



*substantive issues had to be settled before there could be any agreement on demobilisation. This was based on an understanding of the causes of the conflict and the necessity of doing something about both the socio-economic channels and the human rights situation in order to achieve a sustainable peace. On the other hand, Norway demonstrated a realistic evaluation of the situation and of the dynamic of the process. Norway also attempted to persuade the URNG not to make overly detailed demands since it feared that this would ruin the prospects of achieving any agreement at all.*

*Awarding the Nobel Peace Prize to Rigoberta Menchú was another expression of the view that something had to be done about the deep divisions in Guatemalan society, where the Indian population ranks lowest in terms of income, education, health and general rights. How the award was interpreted by the government and military circles and the consequences it may have had for this side's confidence in Norway are more complicated questions. In general, it may be said that there was somewhat less contact with the government side during this period than with the guerrillas, and even less with the army. Incidentally, this was pointed out by representatives of the URNG themselves - that the army had to be more involved in the dialogue if a realistic result was to be achieved.*

*Norway also provided financial support for the ecumenical hearings that began during this period. This reflected recognition of a multifarious third party to the conflict - civil society, which was not directly represented by any of the warring factions but nevertheless was the most strongly affected by both the armed conflict and the causes of it.*

### **6.7 The Negotiations are Concluded: 1994-96**

During the period 1994-96 the formal negotiations made a great deal of progress and the final peace agreement was signed in Guatemala City on 29 December 1996. The progress in the negotiations must particularly be ascribed to the UN's new role as moderator in the conflict. Norway continued to play an active role in the peace process on several levels throughout this period. The Norwegian contributions to the

negotiations that took place in Mexico were made through the Norwegian embassy in Mexico and the Group of Friends, who incidentally played an increasingly important role in the process. Norway also hosted the negotiations in 1994 and the signing of the cease-fire agreement in 1996. One of Norway's most important contributions during this period was to invite representatives of the Guatemalan army to Norway, and later also members of the landowners' organisation, CACIF. Attention was more strongly focused on the role of civil society in the peace process and Norway continued to provide financial support for the ecumenical hearings and hosted one of them. Aid for Guatemala increased and the memorandum on the focus of Norwegian development cooperation with Guatemala was produced in 1994.

The entirely new factor in the situation from 1994 onwards was the formal appointment of Jean Arnault, representative of the UN Secretary General, as moderator in the conflict. The first rounds of negotiations between the URNG and the government peace commission, COPAZ, took place in Mexico in 1994 and resulted in three subsidiary agreements. The first of them was signed in Mexico City on 10 January 1994 after a meeting convened by the UN. Following a period when the government had wished to renege on the foundation that was laid in the Oslo Agreement and subsequent agreements in Mexico, the parties now returned to this foundation. The negotiations between the government and the URNG were to comprise more than military issues. The agreement upheld the agenda from the earlier Mexico agreement and the parties agreed to request the UN Secretary General to appoint a moderator. The Group of Friends was also formally invited to support the peace process and the UN was given the responsibility of verification. Furthermore, an assembly of representatives from civil society was asked to discuss the themes of the negotiations and make recommendations to the negotiators. (The formal establishment of the Civil Society Assembly( ASC) did not take place until the subsidiary agreement on human rights was signed on 29 March 1994).

In the next subsidiary agreement, which was signed in Mexico City on 29 March 1994, the parties agreed on a timetable for further negotiations. This round of negotiations also resulted in the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights, which was signed the same day. Some of the most important points in the agreement concerned combating impunity from legal prosecution, legislative reforms, including amendments to the Criminal Procedures Act and a new Act concerning military

service, professionalisation of the security forces, strengthening the powers of the Human Rights Ombudsman, and verification via the UN by deploying a verification team, MINUGUA, and establishing a trust fund for the work of MINUGUA.<sup>62</sup>

The next two subsidiary agreements were signed in Oslo on 17 June and 23 June 1994. The first concerned the resettlement of refugees and internally displaced persons. The agreement covers physical resettlement, legalisation and the integration of refugees in their original communities or areas. This required the establishment of a technical commission sixty days after the agreement had been signed to plan the implementation of practical projects and the establishment of a trust fund at the UNDP, which would administer project funds.<sup>63</sup>

The subsidiary agreement on the Truth Commission, which was signed on 23 June, was particularly difficult to achieve. The parties clearly wanted this negotiating round to take place in Norway. The Norwegian embassy in Mexico was approached by UN Deputy Secretary General Goulding, who asked whether the meeting on the Truth Commission could be held in Norway.<sup>64</sup> He had himself been asked if this was possible by Hector Rosada, head of the government peace commission, COPAZ. Goulding confirmed that the URNG also agreed to this proposal. The reason why the parties wanted Norway to host these negotiations appeared to be that they wanted peace and quiet. During the previous negotiating round in Mexico, representatives from the civil sector in Guatemala turned up to press the URNG on the question of the Truth Commission. The government wished to avoid this. In various conversations with the URNG commanders, it also emerged that it could be problematic when representatives of the civil and social sectors periodically adopted views tougher than their own.<sup>65</sup>

The agreement on the Truth Commission was a follow-up to the agreement on human rights of 29 March 1994. The agreement confirmed that a Truth Commission would be established when the final peace agreement had been signed. The Commission would shed light on or disclose human rights abuses in connection with

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<sup>62</sup> Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights, 29 March 1994. UN ref. no. A/48/928 - s/1994/448.

<sup>63</sup> Agreement on the Resettlement of Population Groups Uprooted by the Armed Conflict. 17 June 1994. UN ref. no. A/48/954-s/1994/751.

<sup>64</sup> Report from the Royal Norwegian Embassy, Mexico. "Guatemala. The Peace Process in Guatemala. The beginning of the end?" 29 March 1994.

<sup>65</sup> Report from the Royal Norwegian Embassy, Mexico. "Guatemala. Conversation with Gaspar Llom, member of the URNG command." 20 April 1994.

the armed conflict and prepare a report on its findings. The work of the Commission would not individualise responsibility nor have legal consequences. The sources of information would not be published. The Commission was to be operational for six months from the signing of the peace agreement with an option for a six-month extension.<sup>66</sup>

After the agreement on the Truth Commission was signed, the URNG had problems both in its own ranks and in its relations with the civil sector. The civil sector regarded the agreement as weak and clearly expressed its views to the URNG.<sup>67</sup> One representative of the guerrilla leadership also pointed out that they had been criticised by their own people for the agreement on the Truth Commission and that this might lead to a toughening of the guerrillas' negotiating position.

This actually happened towards the end of 1994. The establishment and deployment of the UN human rights verification team took longer than expected. Moreover, in August 1994 the Human Rights Ombudsman in Guatemala announced that the human rights situation in the country had actually worsened after the signing of the human rights agreement. The URNG now demanded that the government side conform to the human rights agreement before they would agree to continue the negotiations.<sup>68</sup> They also demanded that the verification team be established. In Guatemala there was general unrest about the fact that it took so long to establish the UN verification team. Moreover, economic and social indicators in Guatemala were pointing downwards and this caused strikes and unrest. The government's privatisation policy met with strong opposition in the civil and social sectors.

A vicious circle was developing. Due to the unwillingness of the parties to take part in further negotiations, the UN also hesitated in establishing and deploying the human rights verification team. At a meeting between the Group of Friends and Deputy Secretary General Goulding, the Group of Friends was presented with a number of proposals relating to the verification team.<sup>69</sup> Most of the proposals

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<sup>66</sup> Agreement for the Establishment of the Commission to Clarify Past Human Rights Violations and Acts of Violence that have Caused the Guatemalan Population to Suffer - 23 June 1994. UN ref. no. A/48/954 -s/1994/751.

<sup>67</sup> Report from the Royal Norwegian Embassy, Mexico. "Guatemala. The Peace Process. 11 August 1994.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Report from Norway's permanent delegation to the United Nations, New York. "UN. Meeting between the Group of Friends of Guatemala and Deputy Secretary General Goulding". 14 September 1994.

concerned postponing the resolution to establish the verification team or postponing the date of deployment. Norway and Mexico strongly opposed these proposals and wanted to accelerate the process. They were supported by the US, Spain and Venezuela. The Secretary General of the LWF had also sent a letter to the UN Secretary General on 4 August pointing out the importance of having the verification team in place.<sup>70</sup> The human rights situation in Guatemala had deteriorated recently and if it became any worse it might destabilise the entire situation.

On 19 September 1994, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution for the establishment of MINUGUA, initially for a period of six months, and on 23 November 1994 MINUGUA established its first regional office in Guatemala City. The UN had now been criticised by most parties for its lack of ability to act and send the human rights verification team to Guatemala. Jean Arnault stated that the Secretary General had not been entirely convinced that the human rights agreement of 29 March alone justified a major UN operation. However, the agreements concerning the repatriation of refugees and the Truth Commission, signed in Oslo in June, had got the UN secretariat moving.<sup>71</sup>

During a visit to Guatemala by State Secretary Mathiesen in June 1995, an agreement was signed with MINUGUA concerning a Norwegian contribution of USD 1 million. Gerald Plantegenest, deputy head of MINUGUA, set great store by this support, which was the first MINUGUA had received for its Trust Fund and made it possible to get started on the team's most important tasks, particularly strengthening the national institution working on human rights and the "impunidad" (impunity) problem.<sup>72</sup>

While Norway had received several visits from the URNG and government representatives in the period 1991-93, the first time a delegation of prominent military officers (headed by General Marco Antonio González Taracena) visited Norway was on 23-26 January 1994.<sup>73</sup> The idea that it was necessary to include the army more

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<sup>70</sup> Letter to the UN Secretary General from the Secretary General of the Lutheran World Federation, 4 August 1998.

<sup>71</sup> Report from the Royal Norwegian Embassy, Mexico. 25 August 1994. "Guatemala. The Peace Process. Conversation with the UN moderator."

<sup>72</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs memorandum. 8 August 1995. "Development cooperation with Guatemala and the follow-up to State Secretary Mathiesen's visit."

<sup>73</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs memorandum. 8 August 1995. "Guatemala. Return visit". 21 April 1994.

closely in the peace process had long since matured in Norway.<sup>74</sup> Guatemala's ambassador to Norway, Lars Pira, launched the idea and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, under the leadership of Jan Egeland, demonstrated the necessary political courage to realise it.<sup>75</sup> The invitation was issued by Norwegian Church Aid in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Sweden originally offered to co-sponsor the invitation but withdrew its support "for budgetary reasons".<sup>76</sup> The idea of inviting the military leaders was also submitted to the Group of Friends, none of whom were directly negative.<sup>77</sup>

The Guatemalan delegation was given information about Norwegian experiences from participation in peace-keeping forces and work on human rights. The programme included a visit to Onsrud camp. The delegation showed great interest in the training of UN personnel.<sup>78</sup> Otherwise there was emphasis on providing a pleasant social programme. In meetings with the military leaders, the Norwegian representatives emphasised the importance of not moralising.<sup>79</sup> It was regarded as important to break the military men's sense of isolation. The visit had a long-term perspective and the Norwegian hosts pointed out that Norway had also had to re-evaluate its image of the enemy. A group of Norwegian journalists who had recently been in Guatemala knew about the visit and it was therefore widely reported in the Norwegian press. Some of the articles criticised the military leaders relatively harshly. Nevertheless, this is not what the delegation remembered best. When the officers were told/had had the content of the articles translated for them by Guatemala's ambassador, Lars Pira, they were less concerned about the criticism but clearly surprised and delighted that they had been correctly quoted, which apparently seldom happened in the Guatemalan press.<sup>80</sup>

The visit was regarded as successful by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and an invitation from Guatemala's Minister of Defence to Norway's Minister of Defence for a similar visit by a Norwegian delegation to Guatemala was issued during the visit. This indicates that the visit was regarded as important by the Guatemalan military

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<sup>74</sup> Interview with Jan Egeland, 7 January 1998.

<sup>75</sup> Interview with Lars Pira, 22 January 1998.

<sup>76</sup> Interview with Arne Aasheim, 6 March 1998.

<sup>77</sup> Interview with Fredrik Arthur, 27 January 1998.

<sup>78</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs memo. "Guatemala. Return visit." 21 April 1994.

<sup>79</sup> Interview with Arne Aasheim, 6 March 1998; interview with Petter Skauen, 2 February 1998.

<sup>80</sup> Interview with Lars Pira. 22 January 1998

staff. The invitation made it clear that Guatemala's Ministry of Defence considered it important to increase contacts with professional groups in other countries in order to strengthen awareness-raising human rights efforts among military personnel.

After this visit there were more contacts with the army. Lieutenant Colonel Otto Noack, who served in an important liaison function between President de León Carpio and the military leadership in Guatemala, came to Norway on 13-14 April 1994 and his meetings included a conversation with Advocate General Arne Willy Dahl. During the conversation it became clear that after a peace agreement was signed Guatemala would have to reorganise its armed forces in accordance with the new political realities in the country. In that connection it would be important to work on the armed forces' attitudes to human rights.<sup>81</sup> The delegation's January visit was followed by a return visit to Guatemala in May by three senior Norwegian officers: General Vagleik Eide, Advocate General Arne Willy Dahl and Colonel Stein Andreassen. Contacts between the Norwegian and Guatemalan military forces were subsequently formalised.

Another consequence of contacts with the Norwegian military establishment that was equally important was that the possibility of going to Norway provided a safety valve when the political temperature in Guatemala became too high. There was always an open channel to Norway. This became particularly apparent in the fairly heated atmosphere in connection with a series of US documents that were handed over to the Guatemalan Ministry of Justice in 1996. In May 1996, the US State Department published 6,350 documents concerning human rights violations in Guatemala. The documents showed that Guatemalan military personnel were involved in drug dealing, murder, massacres and human rights violations. "The hawks in Guatemala's military forces reacted strongly to this. The cup was more than running over. All doors were closed - except the Norwegian one. Norway functioned as a safety valve and the invitation to go to Norway at about that time helped to reduce the tension from dangerous to manageable."<sup>82</sup>

Contacts continued in 1995 and 1996. At the end of January 1995, Defence Minister Enríquez visited Norway with Colonels Noack and Perez Molina. During the visit, a secret informal meeting took place between the military delegation and the

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<sup>81</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs memorandum. "Guatemala. Return visit." 21 April 1994.

<sup>82</sup> Interview with Fredrik Arthur, 27 January 1998.

URNG at the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.<sup>83</sup> On 6 February 1996, a meeting was arranged between four officers from the Guatemalan army and two of the URNG commanders in Oslo. The meeting was arranged by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in cooperation with Norwegian Church Aid and was widely covered in the Guatemalan press. The newspapers *Prensa Libre*, *Siglo Veintiuno* and *La Hora* reported on the meeting several days running. They wrote that, as a consequence of the meeting, the parties had declared that it might be possible to sign a final peace agreement in 1996. The Oslo meeting was positive because it proved that it was still possible to achieve communication between the army and the guerrillas.<sup>84</sup>

In August 1996, Colonel Hellstrøm went to Guatemala and met with the head of the Guatemalan army, General Sergio Camargo. During their talks, Camargo referred to the fact that the Guatemalan army had traditionally been subject to relatively substantial US influence and they were now inclined to turn to Europe for inspiration and knowledge. In his view, in Europe there were three different pillars; the EU, the Latin countries and the UK/Scandinavia, and he was particularly interested in the latter. It was relevant to cooperate with Norway in three areas: personnel training, officer exchanges and the use of military instructors.<sup>85</sup>

Mexico's ambassador to Norway, Gustavo Iruegas, points to contacts with Guatemalan military personnel as one of the most important Norwegian contributions to the Guatemalan peace process. "Norway treated them professionally. No other country made contact in the same way; neither Spain, Mexico, Colombia nor Venezuela did that".<sup>86</sup>

In October 1995, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also invited representatives of the landowners' organisation, CACIF (Coordinating Committee of Farming, Commercial, Industrial and Financial Associations) to Norway. This contact, like many others, was facilitated through Norwegian Church Aid's regional representative in Guatemala, Petter Skauen. On 12 October the delegation had a meeting with State

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<sup>83</sup> Memorandum to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, 20 February 1995. "Guatemala. Status in the peace process".

<sup>84</sup> The meeting was reported in the following Guatemalan newspapers: *Prensa Libre* 18/1/96 (p. 3), 7/2/96 (p. 4 and 10), 8/2/96 (p. 3 and 10), 11/2/96 (p. 14), 12/2/96 (p. 3); *Siglo Veintiuno* 6/2/96 (p. 25), 7/2/96 (p. 12 and 42), 8/2/96 (p. 3 and 10), 9/2/96 (p. 3), 12/2/96 (p. 43); *La Hora* 7/2/96 (p. 8), 8/2/96 (p. 8).

<sup>85</sup> Report from the Royal Norwegian Embassy, Guatemala. 13 August 1996. Case: "Colonel Hellstrøm's visit to Guatemala. Conversation with General Sergio Camargo."

<sup>86</sup> Interview with Gustavo Iruegas, 16 January 1998.



Secretary Egeland. The importance of CACIF's active participation in the peace process was underscored. Norway also emphasised that it was important to make use of the favourable trends as regards involving the international community in the peace process. Donor countries and financial institutions had demonstrated their willingness to support the democratisation process, also after a peace agreement was signed. The CACIF representatives were also reminded of the financial crisis at the UN, which in a given situation might make it difficult to maintain a presence, such as MINUGUA. The same view that had been communicated to the government on many occasions was also presented here: that insisting on the URNG laying down its arms immediately did not contribute towards improving the negotiating climate. Military activity was the URNG's only real negotiating card. Moreover, a cease-fire was on the agenda as a separate theme.<sup>87</sup>

There were also contacts between Guatemalan and Norwegian political parties. In April 1996, six Guatemalan congressmen from PAN, FRG and FDNG visited Norway to learn about procedures in the Norwegian Storting (the national assembly).<sup>88</sup>

Norway continued meanwhile to provide financial support for the ecumenical hearings. At the hearing in Guatemala on 26-29 April 1994, the army was also represented, by officers up to the rank of General. President de León Carpio formally opened the hearing and the chairman of the government's peace commission (who had originally been critical of the meeting) attended on the opening day. The civil sector was broadly represented. The URNG did not participate because the meeting was held in Guatemala. The landowners, the private sector and the political parties were also missing. However, according to the Norwegian delegates, the exchange of opinion that took place between the civil sector and the army was new in a Guatemalan context.<sup>89</sup>

Norway also increased its development aid to Guatemala in 1994. The increase was a consequence of Norway's role in the peace negotiations and of the generally positive trend in the peace process. Norway now wished to further support the peace

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<sup>87</sup> Skauen, Petter, Norwegian Church Aid. Activity report, December 1995.

<sup>88</sup> Prensa Libre, 9 April 1996, p. 4.

<sup>89</sup> Memorandum to State Secretary Egeland. "Guatemala. Ecumenical meeting on peace and democracy, 26-29.4.94."

and democratisation process in Guatemala.<sup>90</sup> The Ministry of Foreign Affairs instructed NORAD to spend more funds from the Regional Allocation for Central America on measures in Guatemala. The funds were primarily channelled through Norwegian NGOs: Norwegian People's Aid, Norwegian Church Aid, the Norwegian Refugee Council and Redd Barna. All the Norwegian NGOs were operating projects associated with strengthening the human rights situation and assisting returning refugees. In this way, Norway supported the implementation of the subsidiary agreements that had already been signed by increasing development aid.

Norway also provided direct support for Guatemalan organisations. As early as 1994, funding was provided for the Human Rights Ombudsman (PHD), the Government Peace Commission (COPAZ), the Catholic Archbishop's Human Rights Office (ODHA) and the Presidential Human Rights Commission (COPREDEH) to publicise the content of the human rights agreement.<sup>91</sup> Moreover, Norway contributed NOK 7 million to the UNHCR in 1994, funds that were particularly important at that time because the organisation was in a state of financial crisis.

Another subsidiary agreement was signed in 1995 on the rights of the Indian population (Agreement on Identity and Rights of Indigenous Peoples). After the subsidiary agreements on the resettlement of refugees and the establishment of the Truth Commission had been signed in Oslo in June 1994, negotiations on the rights of the indigenous population were first resumed on 20 October 1994, in Mexico. In this case, the parties had widely differing standpoints for some time. The URNG demanded that changes be made to the Constitution and that it state that the Guatemalan people are primarily a Mayan people. The government was unwilling to discuss constitutional changes. Moreover, the URNG demanded that the traditional local Mayan councils have the same status as local municipal councils and locally-elected mayors. The URNG also demanded that a national Mayan Council be established, with consultative status and the right to take initiatives on judicial matters.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs memorandum. "Visit to Guatemala by a delegation from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs/NORAD." 10 February 1994.

<sup>91</sup> List of measures for Guatemala for the period 1989-96. NORAD, 7 November 1997.

<sup>92</sup> Report from the Royal Norwegian Embassy, Mexico. 10 November 1994. "Guatemala. The Peace Process. Meeting with the government commission COPAZ."

Norway exerted pressure on both parties, particularly the guerrillas, to demonstrate greater flexibility on this issue.<sup>93</sup> On the other hand, the Norwegian actors were particularly keen to press the government side in the coming negotiations on strengthening civil society and the role of the army in a democratic society. A compromise was finally reached on the question of the rights of the indigenous population: the government gave up its resistance to the demand that the Constitution should reflect the fact that Guatemala is a multi-ethnic society, while the URNG gave up its demand for the traditional local Mayan councils to be given equal status with the municipal councils.

The agreement recognises that Guatemala is a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-linguistic nation and includes recognition of twenty-one Mayan languages, Garífuna and Xinca, which requires constitutional amendments. The parties promise to make efforts to achieve this. The agreement also recognises the use and prevalence of indigenous languages and will promote their use by establishing a commission to officialise Mayan languages. Consideration for traditional customs will be demonstrated by establishing commissions consisting of representatives of the authorities and the indigenous populations' organisations on themes such as education, participation and land rights.

Some sections of civil society were of the opinion that there was too much secrecy surrounding the negotiations. At a meeting at the Norwegian embassy in Guatemala on 28 March 1995, Rosalina Tuyuc, leader of CONAVIGUA, the National Co-ordination of Guatemalan Widows, expressed satisfaction that the agreement on the rights of the indigenous population had been signed, but regretted that the text was still not available in Guatemala and it was therefore difficult to comment further on the agreement. This was typical of the secrecy that had characterised the entire negotiating process.<sup>94</sup> However, Ms Tuyuc had approved of the presence of MINUGUA. The verification team had a moderating and stabilising effect on the situation and had particularly contributed towards prolonging the existence of the trade unions.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Report from the Royal Norwegian Embassy, Mexico. 3 April 1995. "Guatemala. The Peace Process. Evaluation of future prospects."

<sup>94</sup> Report from the Royal Norwegian Embassy, Guatemala. 29 March 1995. "Meeting with Rosalina Tuyuc, leader of CONAVIGUA."

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

At the Guatemalan presidential elections in 1995-96, the former mayor of Guatemala City, Alvaro Arzú Irgoyen from the PAN party, won a narrow victory over Mr. Portillo, the presidential candidate from the FRG party. The election result increased the political influence of the reform-friendly elements of the commercial sector. Before the elections, while he was still a presidential candidate, Arzú had had secret meetings with the URNG, facilitated by the Italian Sant' Egidio Community, a lay Catholic group. After the first round of elections, the Group of Friends had also arranged a meeting with the presidential candidates in Mexico. During the meeting, both Arzú and Portillo stated that they accepted the peace agreements that had already been negotiated but that they would take part in the remaining negotiations.<sup>96</sup>

The URNG had already declared early in 1995 that they would take part in the elections and that they did not regard it as a contradiction to take part in elections and engage in peace negotiations at the same time. However, the URNG was in a difficult position. If they were to take part as a political party, the movement had to be legalised. This was one of the reasons why the URNG chose to take part indirectly through the FDNG (New Guatemala Democratic Front), which had been formed by thirty different organisations from civil society in July 1995. During talks at the Norwegian embassy in Mexico, the URNG expressed its frustration about the asymmetry of resources in connection with the elections. The URNG representatives maintained that a good election campaign would cost about USD 2 million and that PAN had USD 16 million at its disposal compared to the FDNG's mere USD 120,000.<sup>97</sup>

While the election campaign was still in progress and de Leon Carpio was still President, there was a massacre of repatriated refugees in Xamán in the province of Alta Verapaz. On 5 October 1995, a group of 25 soldiers from Military Zone 21 entered the Xamán area and opened fire against repatriated refugees who were preparing for their first celebration of their return to Guatemala. Eleven people were killed, including two children.<sup>98</sup> The massacre showed that the protection of repatriated refugees was not good enough. However, there was immediate strong

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<sup>96</sup> Report from the Royal Norwegian Embassy, Mexico. 13 November 1995. "Guatemala. Meeting of the Group of Friends of the Guatemalan Peace Process".

<sup>97</sup> Report from the Royal Norwegian Embassy, Mexico. 12 October 1995. "Guatemala. Conversation with the URNG, 11th of this month."

<sup>98</sup> Amnesty International, 1997. *Guatemala: State of Impunity*.

international and Guatemalan condemnation of the massacre. The Bishops' Conference and the Human Rights Ombudsman in Guatemala strongly condemned the massacre and Defence Minister Enriquez resigned. The UN human rights expert, Monica Pinto, reacted strongly and MINUGUA's report clearly and unequivocally pointed out that the military forces had had no *reason* to act as they did.

This was, in many ways, a test of MINUGUA's effectiveness and presence. Within a few hours of the massacre, MINUGUA was in place in the area, listening to witnesses and collecting evidence. On this basis, a press release soon afterwards had to refute the army's version of the massacre, which was that the refugees had provoked the incident. Nor did MINUGUA find any evidence that the massacre was planned by the military leadership. Nevertheless, through its correct handling of the affair, MINUGUA was able to move the discussion away from the former anti-guerrilla rhetoric that so often before had prevented attacks on the military forces' impunity from criminal prosecution. The URNG also stated that it was satisfied with President Carpio's handling of the situation, but expressed concern for the safety of refugees.<sup>99</sup>

Major progress was made in the peace process in 1996, when the final subsidiary agreements were signed in Mexico, Norway, Sweden and Spain and the final peace agreement was signed in Guatemala City on 29 December. The Agreement on Socio-economic Aspects and the Agrarian Situation was signed in Mexico City on 6 May 1996. In Guatemala, reactions to the agreement were mixed. One crucial element of the agreement concerns the establishment of a Trust Fund, FONATIERRA, to promote the access of tenant farmers and landless peasants to agricultural land. The fund is also intended to help these farmers by providing low-interest loans on favourable terms. Another important point in the agreement concerns the modernisation of the property register, new tax legislation and a 50% increase in taxation by the year 2000, plus the introduction of a tax on uncultivated land.<sup>100</sup>

CACIF president Humberto Preti's reaction to the agreement was extremely positive. Rodrigo Asturias also expressed satisfaction on behalf of the URNG, and the ASC said it was generally satisfied. As consensus on the agreement was close at hand,

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<sup>99</sup> Report from the Royal Norwegian Embassy, Mexico. 12 October 1995. "Guatemala. Conversation with the URNG on 11th of this month."

<sup>100</sup> Agreement on Socio-economic Aspects and the Agrarian Situation - 6 May 1996. UN ref. no. A/50/956.

the URNG also submitted an application to Norway for USD 200,000 in development aid to finance various activities linked to the URNG's work on the peace process in the months ahead. In this connection, the URNG maintained that they would stop collecting war tax as soon as the agreement was signed.<sup>101</sup> On 19 April, the Norwegian embassy in Mexico informed the URNG that its application had been approved. These funds were important as a replacement for the war tax and helped to make this step possible for the URNG.

However, several organisations in Guatemala were dissatisfied with the Agreement on Socio-economic Aspects and the Agrarian Situation. The CNOC, CUC and CONIC maintained that the agreement was not sufficient to solve the land conflicts. CONIC asked fundamental questions about the effect of the Trust Fund, since there would not be much land available for re-distribution anyway. One important reason for this, according to CONIC, was that the agreement refers to Article 40 of the Constitution, where legal expropriation does not include land that is fallow/not in use.<sup>102</sup> CONIC also criticised the lack of clarity in the definition of property rights in the agreement. They maintained that the agreement allowed for land that had been illegally stolen from small farmers to now be registered as legal property.

On 19 September 1996, the Agreement on Strengthening of Civilian Power and the Role of the Armed Forces in a Democratic Society was also signed in Mexico City. This agreement emphasises the need to restructure national security functions. In general terms, the role of the army will be limited to defending the country against external enemies.<sup>103</sup> The responsibility for internal security will now come under the national civil police force, which will also be restructured. A new 20,000-strong police force and a new police academy under the Ministry of the Interior are to be operational by 1999. The civil patrols are to be disbanded, the army's budget to be reduced by 33% by 1999 and measures implemented for the re-integration of former members of the army.

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<sup>101</sup> Information from the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Oslo, to the Embassy in Mexico. 11 April 1996. "Case: The URNG's application for assistance".

<sup>102</sup> Murga, Gustavo Palma, 1997. "Promised the Earth: Agrarian Reform in the Socio-Economic Agreement", in Armon, 1997. *Negotiating Rights: The Guatemalan Peace Process*. Accord Conciliation Resources.

<sup>103</sup> Agreement on Strengthening of Civilian Power and the Role of the Armed Forces in a Democratic Society - 19th September 1996. UN ref. no. A/51/410-s/1996/853.

Towards the end of the peace process, another event occurred that caused a major drama. On 25 August 1996, Olga Alvarado de Novella, an 86-year-old businesswoman from Guatemala City, was kidnapped by members of the URNG. The kidnappers demanded a USD 6 million ransom. At the end of October, a person was arrested carrying compromising documents. The person responsible turned out to be one of the leading commanders of ORPA, known as Commandante Esaias, one of guerrilla leader Rodrigo Asturias' closest associates.<sup>104</sup>

When Asturias was confronted with the evidence, he declared that the decision to kidnap Novella was taken at the central level in Mexico, in accordance with the URNG's practice of collective responsibility.<sup>105</sup> The reactions from the government side were strong. This was a breach of trust. Negotiations were temporarily suspended and there were strong demands from both the UN and the Group of Friends for the URNG to take responsibility. The episode culminated in Rodrigo Asturias resigning his post as guerrilla leader. Norway also played a role in this difficult situation. It was Petter Skauen, with Rigoberta Menchú, who had to undertake the difficult conversation with Asturias after it was clear that the URNG was responsible for the kidnapping.

The final cease-fire agreement was signed in Oslo on 4 December 1996. The agreement operates with a timetable of 60 days for separation and reunification of forces and disarmament and demobilisation of the URNG.<sup>106</sup> It defines criteria for the separation of army and guerrilla forces by establishing safety zones, military verification being carried out by 155 international advisers under MINUGUA. A commission is also to be established consisting of representatives from the UN, the URNG and the authorities to be responsible for the practical implementation of the demobilisation process. The official ceremony took place in the Oslo City Hall. The parties had previously stated that it was just and natural for the signing ceremony to take place in Norway.

The remaining subsidiary agreements on constitutional and electoral reform and on the basis for the legal integration of the URNG in Guatemalan society were signed in Sweden on 7 December and in Spain on 12 December 1996.

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<sup>104</sup> Amnesty International, 1997. *Guatemala: State of Impunity*.

<sup>105</sup> Report to the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs from the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 28 October 1996.

<sup>106</sup> Agreement on a Definitive Ceasefire - 4th December 1996. UN ref. no. S/1996/1045.

At the signing in Guatemala City on 29 December, all the subsidiary agreements entered into force and all the timetables were clarified. The agreement contains several hundred activities that are to be carried out in connection with the nine subsidiary agreements. Implementation is to take place in three phases, starting 15 January 1997 and ending at the end of 2000.<sup>107</sup> The final agreement proposes that an international verification mechanism be set up for a period of four years to monitor all the peace agreements. MINUGUA's function will be one component of this mechanism.

*Summary: 1) Why Norway came to play a central role in the peace process: During the period 1994-96, Norway strengthened its contacts with the Guatemalan army by arranging several visits to Norway and return visits to Guatemala, and improved contacts were established with the landowners' organisation, CACIF. None of the other countries in the Group of Friends established similar good contacts with all the most important actors in the conflict. The close contacts with military personnel from Guatemala proved to be particularly important during critical phases in the negotiations on the Truth Commission, and Petter Skauen's contribution was crucial in this respect. The formal and informal contacts with civil society (particularly the ASC) were also more frequent after the establishment of a post of Norwegian chargé d'affaires and subsequently ambassador in Guatemala. (Even though these contacts had also been maintained informally through the Norwegian NGOs.)*

*Aid for Guatemala continued to increase throughout this period and in some contexts Norway used development aid as both a medium of pressure and an incentive in its contacts with the parties. The substantial aid provided for UN agencies such as MINUGUA, UNHCR and UNDP also gave Norway a certain amount of influence.*

*2) How Norway filled its role in the peace process: During this period, the Norwegian actors assumed an increasingly impatient attitude to all parties to the process, including the UN. They wanted progress in the negotiations and concrete results. A relatively pragmatic Norwegian attitude was revealed: they wanted substance in the negotiations, but were willing to sacrifice some of the details to*

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<sup>107</sup> Agreement on the Implementation, Compliance and Verification Timetable for the Peace Agreements - 29th December 1996. UN ref. no. A/51/796-S/1997/114.



*conclude the agreements more rapidly. Pressure was exerted, sometimes on the URNG, sometimes on the government side, with relative balance over time.*

*The Norwegian network of contacts with parties to the conflict was good, but in hindsight it may be added that contacts with the landowners could, with advantage, have been strengthened earlier, as they were with the army. It is also questionable whether civil society had sufficient access to the negotiating process itself. There was no lack of Norwegian aid funds, either for the ecumenical hearings or for general purposes, whether direct aid or channelled through Norwegian People's Aid, the Norwegian Refugee Council, Redd Barna and Norwegian Church Aid, plus a large number of smaller organisations. Norwegian aid to Guatemala increased sharply from 1994, but the question remains whether the civil sectors were allowed the influence they could or should have had on the negotiations themselves, even though the ASC submitted their consensus documents before the negotiations started. Norway was aware of the fact that one important reason why both the government side and the URNG wanted to hold the negotiating round on the Truth Commission in Norway was that they needed peace and quiet. In Mexico it was easier for organisations and sectors of civil society to present their demands. When Norway exerted pressure on the URNG concerning their detailed standpoints, Norway was also exerting pressure on civil society, which in many cases had more comprehensive demands than the URNG. At the same time it is clear that the agreement on the Truth Commission accelerated the deployment of MINUGUA, which civil society wanted and applauded. The issues relating to Norwegian pragmatism and the judgements that were made will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.*

*In general, however, it should be added that Norway showed considerable responsibility in following up the subsidiary agreements with development aid, both through Norwegian NGOs, Guatemalan organisations and the UN agencies MINUGUA, UNHCR, UNDP and UNICEF.*

## **7. The Norwegian Model**

The previous chapters show that Norway played a significant role in the Guatemalan peace process. This chapter discusses in more detail the question of *why* Norway came to play this role and *how* Norway filled it. The first question must be discussed in the

light of both the factors that made Norway suitable to play an important role in the peace process and the factors that limited the influence of the other international actors. The second question will be discussed in the light of the content of the Norwegian contributions, focusing on the interplay between Norwegian aid for, and political follow-up of, the peace process.

One explanation of why Norway played a significant role in the peace process must start with the beginning, i.e. the Oslo meeting in 1990. Throughout the various subsequent phases of the process, reference was often made to the foundation that was laid at this meeting. It was important in both content and symbolic terms.

The Lutheran World Federation, through Gunnar Stålsett, brought the first negotiations to Norway. Historically, the time was well chosen in terms of the situation in Central America, the international situation, with a thaw between East and West, and Norwegian foreign policy, which was becoming increasingly deeply involved in international peace diplomacy. The LWF received a positive, rapid response from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as regards financing and security measures. In Guatemala, the presence of Norwegian Church Aid, through Petter Skauen, made the whole thing feasible. His reputation for trustworthiness among the Guatemalan population, his personal contacts and friendships, were crucial in terms of the human aspect of a meeting of this nature. We can glimpse the contours of close cooperation between Norwegian NGOs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the religious network, driven forward by concerned individuals.

That was the beginning, but what followed was just as important and more difficult. If particular factors that kept Norway an important actor in the peace process are to be singled out, they must be the following: political courage was demonstrated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, under Egeland's leadership, in sustaining its financial and political support for the peace process, even when it entered long periods of stagnation and crisis and appeared to be of no avail. Involvement, patience and stamina are also key words to describe the contribution of Norwegian Church Aid, the embassies in Mexico and Guatemala and the LWF. It also appears to be important that the combination of this network and concerned individuals ensured that Norway established good contact with all the most important groups involved in the conflict, including the army. This is what distinguishes Norway from the other countries that played a role in the peace process. Due to these good contacts, Norway gradually

learned more or less exactly how far it was possible to push the various groups in the conflict without the temperature becoming too high, thereby undermining the entire process.

Norway also exerted active pressure to persuade the parties to accept a more important role for the UN in the negotiating process. From 1994, the UN was given the role of moderator in the conflict and made a decisive contribution until the final peace agreement was signed in 1996. After the UN's new role became a reality in 1994, Norway closely followed by the process in connection with the establishment of the UN verification team for human rights, MINUGUA. When the establishment and deployment of MINUGUA were delayed, Norway was one of the countries that exerted the most pressure for it to take place rapidly and effectively. Since Norway was also one of the countries that quickly provided financial support for the UNHCR, MINUGUA and UNDP, Norway had a certain amount of influence on developments.

Norway's role must also be viewed in the light of other countries' participation in the peace process. The most important are the other members of the Group of Friends: Mexico, Spain, the US, Venezuela and Colombia.

Mexico was the most important of these countries, since most negotiating rounds took place there. Considering the natural limitations that Mexico was struggling with, the Mexicans performed their role with flexibility. Mexico had received large groups of refugees from Guatemala in the province of Chiapas. Moreover, the leadership of the guerrilla movement, URNG, was based in Mexico on successive six-month visas. In Guatemala, this was regarded by government circles - particularly the army - as Mexican support for the guerrillas. These factors, combined with the country's experience of itself having a powerful neighbour to the north, influenced Mexico's attitude, which was mainly that Mexico should be cautious about intervening in Guatemala's affairs. For natural reasons, Mexico could not become a driving force in the peace process, but was, on the other hand, generous on the logistics side, hosting most of the negotiations when the parties to the conflict wished it to do so.

Spain, with its historical, cultural and linguistic ties to Latin America, could have played a more central role in the peace process had it not been for the incident at the Spanish Embassy in Guatemala in 1980. The incident began with a group of 39 demonstrators, mainly peasants, carrying out a non-violent occupation of the embassy.

This type of thing often occurred during that period. The Spanish Ambassador was also in the building. The Guatemalan police raided the embassy, employing violence and opening fire, and the building caught fire. One embassy employee died, one jumped out of a window and approximately twenty people were killed. Nobel laureate Rigoberta Menchú's father also died in connection with this fire. Spain broke off diplomatic relations with Guatemala and the event was not forgotten, either by the Spanish or the Guatemalan authorities.

Another factor made relations between Spain and Guatemala difficult. It concerned a substantial loan which Spain had given Guatemala for the construction of a paper factory. This project was not implemented in a sustainable manner and Guatemala did not repay its debt to Spain.

The US was limited by its dubious history, not only in Guatemala but throughout Central America. Due to its previous support for military regimes in Guatemala, the US had no credibility, either among the guerrillas or in civil society, and particularly not among the human rights organisations. However, the US has swung from one extreme to the other. A series of documents revealing the CIA's involvement in human rights violations in Guatemala led to investigation and strong pressure from the US to have the guilty parties in Guatemala punished. Even though the URNG gradually adopted a more amicable attitude to the US, these events were not particularly constructive in a situation where the military forces in Guatemala were already hard pressed and the political temperature was dangerously high.

Colombia also lacked credibility because of unsolved and fairly serious problems at home. Sweden, too, contributed to the peace process, primarily by providing funds, but it did not develop the same contact with the Guatemalan army as Norway did.

As a small country with no strategic great power interests such as the USA, for example, and with a foreign policy geared to peace and development, Norway had the necessary credibility in Guatemala. Due to the geographical distance, Norway did not suffer from the same type of problems as Mexico. Nor did Norway have any important economic or trade policy interests to consider in Guatemala (or in the region in general). This advantageous starting point, combined with the long-term presence and trustworthiness of the NGOs in Guatemala, particularly Norwegian Church Aid, made Norway a suitable candidate for a crucial role in the Guatemalan peace process.

The next question is how or how well Norway filled the role it gradually assumed in the Guatemalan peace process. Development aid and political follow-up must also be viewed in close conjunction here. A certain amount of pressure was exerted on the parties over time, and indications of reductions or increases in aid were sometimes used tactically, to push the negotiations forward. At the same time, it was also true that a peace agreement would make it possible to provide more and other types of aid, while a breakdown of the peace process would make some of the aid more difficult to provide.

During the peace process, both Norwegian and international actors had to relate to the causes as well as the consequences of the war. The causes included the deep socio-economic divisions in Guatemalan society, the lack of democracy and human rights, and also the catalytic effects of the war, for instance strong polarisation, repressive mechanisms caused by the war, such as the civil patrols, and oceans of mistrust among a traumatised people, almost none of whom trusted one another. How Norway related to these problems has already been discussed in relation to both the content of the peace process and which groups/actors Norway made efforts to establish contact with and include in the process. It has also been discussed in relation to the focus of Norwegian aid to Guatemala, both directly for the negotiating process and more generally.

As regards the content of the negotiations, it is quite clear that, particularly at the initial stage, Norway exerted pressure on the government side to accept the fact that it had to negotiate on substantive issues, i.e. the problems the war was about, before it could expect the guerrillas to sign an agreement on demobilisation. This was fundamental.

At the same time, the Norwegian actors had a fairly clear idea of how far they could push the government side/the army if they were to achieve any agreement at all, and on this basis they exerted pressure on the URNG not to present overly detailed demands. This balancing act took place over time and not necessarily in relation to each negotiating theme. The pressure on the government side was strongest at the beginning. The guerrillas were pressed to give in somewhat with respect to the agreement on the Truth Commission. They were also pressed somewhat on the agreement on Indian rights, but in that case the demands of the Civil Society Assembly (ASC) were so clear and so strong that they helped to produce a good

agreement. On the other hand, Norway was prepared to exert pressure on the government side (including the army and the landowners) as regards the role of the armed forces in future Guatemalan society.

Considering the reasons for the war and the grotesque human rights violations during the war, the URNG's demands for the organisation of the Truth Commission were entirely justified. Was it right of Norway to exert pressure in the form of urgency to finalise this agreement? The URNG was subsequently criticised by civil society, which was clearly dissatisfied with the agreement. If the agreement on the Truth Commission is considered in isolation, there may be some doubt. However, there is another side to this issue that must not be neglected. The fact that the agreement on the Truth Commission was signed was an important reason for the UN agreeing to establish and deploy MINUGUA, which was the first real tangible and practical result of the peace process and primarily benefited civil society. MINUGUA helped to slow down and gradually also significantly reduce political violence in the country.

The Norwegian pressure on the URNG and to some extent also on civil society to persuade them to accept a mediocre agreement on the Truth Commission might well have been criticised more strongly had it not been for the fact the Norway assumed such substantial responsibility for the follow-up. After the agreement was signed, the pressure was rapidly focused on the UN to accelerate the deployment of MINUGUA, and Norway was also quick to provide financial support for MINUGUA.

All in all, during the Guatemalan peace process, Norway therefore pursued a policy of working to get the problems that caused the war onto the negotiating agenda, balanced against a desire to achieve results and an understanding that continued war is worse than an imperfect peace agreement.

As the peace process progressed, Norway refined its awareness of which groups were affected by the conflict and represented power factors, and were therefore important to try to include in the peace process. Contacts with the URNG and the Government Peace Commission were good at an early stage. Understanding of the need to improve contacts with the army and civil society came somewhat later, and with the landowners relatively late in the process. The Norwegian network of NGOs, primarily Norwegian Church Aid, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the embassies, and links with the LWF made all these contacts possible. Human relationships proved to be

particularly important in a country that was first and foremost characterised by deep mistrust between most of the participants.

The various groups had different needs, and this also affected the use of the instruments Norway had at its disposal: development aid, formal meetings and establishing contacts, and more informal social meetings and talks which particularly focused on contacts and the human aspects. The URNG needed financial resources, legitimacy and greater geographical freedom of movement, but perhaps it did not experience so much human isolation. Norway made the URNG more mobile by financing travel and pressing for entry visas to the USA and the UN. In combination with numerous invitations to Norway, this also increased their legitimacy.

In the case of the Government Peace Commission, the army and the landowners, there was less need for financial resources to enable them to participate in the peace process. On the other hand, the army in particular needed to break out of its isolation, make contacts, be recognised and have a vision of the possibility of surviving as an institution and as individuals, even in a peaceful, democratic society. In this respect, the Norwegian contributions were particularly well thought-out and successful. The invitation for Guatemalan army officers to visit Norway clearly made a strong contribution in this direction. If there is anything to criticise on this point, it must be that Norwegian contacts with the landowners, who proved to hold the most conservative views on reform, might have come earlier. This criticism is naturally based on the success of an original new approach, i.e. the invitation to the army, but it is perhaps worth considering in future.

The question of whether sufficient attention was paid to civil society in the peace process is complicated. The ecumenical hearings were supported by Norwegian aid funds and Norwegian Church Aid invested a great deal of time and energy in organising them. Nevertheless, a considerable number of statements by representatives of the ASC expressed dissatisfaction at the lack of access to the negotiations themselves, and also about some of the agreements, such as the agreement on the Truth Commission.

Civil society was the hardest hit by the war. It had many needs, but perhaps security from human rights violations came first of all, closely followed by the need for material survival and channels for self-expression and political participation. These needs could not be met without peace and development. Norway helped to give

civil society a voice in the peace process, but it is clear that its representatives were kept at some distance from the negotiations themselves, particularly during the negotiations about the Truth Commission. In hindsight, it is difficult to judge how correct this was, because the question of what would otherwise have happened is hypothetical. However, it is clear that part of the reason why it took so long to reach consensus on the next agreement, on Indian rights, was that the URNG's attitude was more rigid because of the criticism from civil society concerning the agreement on the Truth Commission. It is possible that the time gained in connection with the agreement on the Truth Commission was lost in connection with the subsequent agreement precisely because civil society had not been sufficiently heard. All in all, I nevertheless take the view that Norway acted correctly because the agreement on the Truth Commission accelerated the deployment of MINUGUA, which has protected the civilian population from human rights violations.

Once again, follow-up and responsibility are important factors. Norway has subsequently also provided financial support for the REHMI project in Guatemala. This project was initiated by the Archbishop's Human Rights Office to give the victims of human rights violations during the war an opportunity to tell their stories and have them recorded and publicised. The project is in many ways a correction to and criticism of the design of the Truth Commission, since the names of both abusers and victims are included in the REMHI report. At the same time, it has also functioned as a channel of information for the work of the Truth Commission.

The Norwegian actors risked a great deal to include the most important groups in the conflict in the peace process, bring them together and keep the lines of communication open. Through this effort, Norway particularly focused on one of the most important catalysts in the war, i.e. mistrust, which was fundamental. Some of this mistrust had to be dissipated in order to be able to converse and negotiate on the causes of the war at all. During the many talks, informal meetings and negotiations, the parties' objectives also changed somewhat. While at the beginning the parties negotiated tactically in order to "win the war", they gradually negotiated more strategically, thinking of their own survival and co-existence in a possible future society free of war. The many visits to Norway were not insignificant in this respect and helped to create new visions.



## **8. Conclusion**

Norwegian development aid and political follow-up of the Guatemalan peace process have gone hand in hand. Negotiations, visits, informal meetings and discussions between the parties and consultancy services, have been financed from Norwegian aid funds and made possible with the help of Norwegian actors from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norwegian Church Aid, the Lutheran World Federation and the Norwegian embassies in Mexico and Guatemala. In the period 1990-96, aid for Guatemala increased in general, both the part that was channelled directly towards the peace process and the part that was linked to implementation of the many subsidiary agreements under the peace agreement, where the other Norwegian NGOs in Guatemala also made an important contribution.

It is clear that Norway tried to use all possible channels in the Guatemalan peace process. On the international arena, Norway was keen to cooperate with the Group of Friends, particularly Mexico, which hosted most of the negotiations. Norway made active efforts to involve the UN in the peace process and was also quick to provide aid funds for the UNHCR, MINUGUA and the UNDP. Untraditional channels such as Israel were also drawn into the negotiations.

A small team from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the embassies in Mexico and Guatemala, Norwegian Church Aid and contacts with the Lutheran World Federation constituted the Norwegian input into the peace process. The process took a long time, and without this network of concerned individuals, there is some doubt whether it would have been possible to maintain the Norwegian effort. Norway has NGOs and embassies in other conflict-torn countries where it is involved in development cooperation. The potential for new contributions to peace should therefore be present. However, it is clear that it will require concerned individuals who are trusted and a Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs that fully supports the process.

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- 4.88 Import Support, Tanzania
- 5.88 Nordic Technical Assistance Personnel to Eastern Africa
- 6.88 Good Aid for Women?
- 7.88 Soil Science Fellowship Course in Norway
- 1.89 Parallel Financing and Mixed Credits
- 2.89 The Women's Grant, Desk Study Review
- 3.89 The Norwegian Volunteer Service
- 4.89 Fisheries Research Vessel - "Dr. Fridtjof Nansen"
- 5.89 Institute of Development Management, Tanzania
- 6.89 DUHs forskningsprogrammer
- 7.89 Rural Water Supply, Zimbabwe
- 8.89 Commodity Import Programme, Zimbabwe
- 9.89 Dairy Sector Support, Zimbabwe
- 1.90 Mini-Hydropower Plants, Lesotho
- 2.90 Operation and Maintenance in Development Assistance
- 3.90 Telecommunications in SADCC Countries
- 4.90 Energy support in SADCC Countries
- 5.90 International Research and Training Institute for Advancement of Women (INSTRAW)
- 6.90 Socio-cultural Conditions in Development Assistance
- 7.90 Non-Project Financial Assistance to Mozambique
- 1.91 Hjelp til selvhjelp og levedyktig utvikling
- 2.91 Diploma Courses at the Norwegian Institute of Technology
- 3.91 The Women's Grant in Bilateral Assistance
- 4.91 Hambantota Integrated Rural Development Programme, Sri Lanka
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- 1.92 NGOs as partners in health care, Zambia
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