



Basel Peace Forum 2025

Summary of the Forum:

Program Link: [Basel Peace Forum 2025 Program](#)

Sessions Attended:

- Building Peace: How to Deal with Fragmentation
- How to Support the Well-being and Mental Health of Peacebuilders
- Forms and Functions of Ignorance in Global Politics
- Visualizing Peace
- Imagining Peace

Key Takeaways:

1. *Building Peace: How to Deal with Fragmentation*

- ◆ Fragmentation:
 - Non-state actors (armed groups) have doubled in the last decade.
 - 20% of conflicts involve over 10 actors, with growing trust issues among them.
 - Non-state actors are often valued by the number of arms they possess, leading to unintended consequences (e.g., incentivizing armament).
 - Fragmentation occurs horizontally (many actors) and vertically (tracks 1, 2, and 3). Shared principles and trust remain lacking.
- ◆ Shifting Global Order:
 - The rise of multipolarity (new players both regional and like China) adds complexity.
 - No single global model—unipolar, bipolar, or multipolar—has proven to resolve the root causes of conflicts (economic inequality, lack of rights, democratic representation).
- ◆ Solution-Oriented Approach:
 - Fragmentation should not be judged but reflected in the way peace processes are built.
 - Build pragmatic negotiation structures to foster consensus and cohesion.
 - Civil society (NGOs, unions, political parties) plays a vital role as a counterbalance.

2. *How to Support the Well-being and Mental Health of Peacebuilders*

- ◆ Challenges:
 - Increasingly complex procedures in large NGOs and international organisations lead to frustration.
 - Exposure to trauma from power imbalances and high donor demands.
 - Contradictions: needing to share vulnerabilities but fearing loss of funding.
 - Hypocrisy: supporting activists vs. the thriving arms industry.
- ◆ Solutions:
 - Provide psychological and physical preparation (e.g., counseling, peer support).
 - Build a culture that normalizes vulnerability without stigma.
 - Focus on training, long-term structures, and field-level support.
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- ◆ Practical Actions:
 - Tools: peer support, safe spaces, SOPs for trauma discussion.
 - Levels: help peacebuilders and improve organizational practices.
 - Avoid paternalism—co-develop systems with local actors.

3. Forms and Functions of Ignorance in Global Politics

- ◆ Ignorance can be:
 - Collective amnesia or deliberate/selective blindness.
 - Apathy as a self-preservation strategy against disorder.
- ◆ Critical Thinking:
 - Examine ignorance's role in peacebuilding, mediation, and transitional justice.
 - Stay alert to blind spots and biases in these sectors, including in own activities.

4. Visualizing Peace

- ◆ Challenges:
 - No current visual representation fully captures peace's complexity (equality, justice, diversity, etc.).
 - Visuals shape how peace is perceived and realized.
- ◆ Insights:
 - Peace is contextual (e.g., Northern Ireland's peace walls).
 - Art-based processes (e.g., community mural projects) promote inclusive dialogue and collective imagining of peace.

5. Imagining Peace

- ◆ Contrasts:
 - War is dramatic and heroic; peace appears mundane and lacks allure.
 - Yet, peace is more cost-effective: conflict costs \$2,000/person/year, while peace processes are significantly cheaper.
- ◆ Practical Steps:
 - Understand how each party in a conflict imagines peace.
 - Use this as a starting point to reshape post-conflict realities.
- ◆ B8 of Hope Contribution:
 - Shared experiences of participants imagining peace in scenarios where the opposing community disappears—sparking reflection on the cost of what a certain resolution ~~peace~~ truly means.

Networking Highlights:

- Meetings with Limor Yehuda (representative of B8 of Hope grantee A Land for All), Gal Harmat (Swisspeace researcher on gender and peace), Dana Landau, Laurent Goertschel (Swisspeace director), representatives of SDC and of the Swiss FA and others.
- New connections with researchers and educators interested in B8 of Hope.
- Fewer opportunities this year to discuss Israel-Palestine directly with panelists.