

# 2025

## ANNUAL REPORT

### THE CHARTER OF THE UNITED NATIONS

#### PREAMBLE

WE THE PEOPLES OF THE UNITED NATIONS

determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and

to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and value of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and

to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and

to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

and for these ends

to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbors, and

to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security, and

by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, to insure that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest, and

by the employment of international machinery for the promotion of economic and social advancement of all peoples,

have resolved to combine our efforts to accomplish these aims.

Accordingly, our respective governments, through representatives assembled in the City of San Francisco, who have exhibited their full powers found to be in good and due form, have agreed to the present Charter of the United Nations and do hereby establish an international organization to be known as the United Nations.

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# Preface

With the Center for International Peace Operations (ZIF), the Federal Republic of Germany possesses a dedicated, cost-effective and proven instrument to strengthen effective multilateralism as a cornerstone of a rules-based international order. As both a secondment organisation and centre of expertise, ZIF contributes personnel and knowledge to peace operations, humanitarian assistance and election observation missions. In doing so, it supports the crisis management efforts of the UN, EU, NATO, OSCE and other partners – thereby also contributing to Germany’s national security and the protection of peace and liberty. ZIF is structured as a non-profit limited liability company, with the German government as its sole shareholder, represented by the German Federal Foreign Office (FFO).



The significant rise in global conflicts has placed heavy demands on us – particularly on our staff posted abroad, our seconded personnel.

My first thanks, therefore, go once again to them. At its peak, there were 184 civilian experts – 99 men and 85 women in 2025. They have contributed to stabilising and resolving conflicts under conditions that were extremely challenging at times, whether in Ukraine, the Middle East, the Western Balkans, the Central African Republic or in any of the other 40 countries of deployment.

In 2025, Team ZIF also continued to break new ground at our Berlin headquarters, with the aim of utilising existing expertise and resources even more effectively, bridging skills gaps, driving innovation and pinpointing the factors that influence trends within our area of operations. With the support of an expert on foresight and in collaboration with our shareholder, we, as an organisation, have systematically explored what we would wish ZIF to look like in 2035. At the centre of our deliberations was the question of what strategic decisions we would need to take today to increase the likelihood of being a relevant and effective organisation at that point in the future.

Concrete outcomes include a focus on further strengthening the professional collaboration between ZIF HQ and our secondees, as well as the establishment of a data lab.

The normative point of reference for ‘ZIF 2035’ remains the UN Charter. We have dedicated this year’s cover to this long-standing commitment.

Drawing on the field experience of ZIF secondees, our own expertise in peace operations, stabilisation and peacebuilding, and a broad network of partners, we are well positioned to deliver targeted information, sound analysis, policy advice and practice-oriented dialogue.

An illustrative example of this is a knowledge exchange that ZIF established to address the issue of hybrid threats, a topic of critical concern for Germany. The exchange unites secondees from different mission and institutional settings and shares the insights generated from these discussions with the FFO.

We would like to thank the German Bundestag, the Federal Foreign Office and our governing bodies for their trustful, reliable and always constructive support.

*A. Irrgang*

Dr. Astrid Irrgang  
Executive Director



A view of the control room as Germany's former Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock, now President of the 80th UN General Assembly, briefs journalists on human rights.

# 1

## A Retrospective of 2025



# 1.1 Peace and Security

## Crises and Conflicts

In 2025, a record number of 61 armed conflicts was reported worldwide, with eleven countries experiencing war. With the return of inter-state warfare, state violence against civilians has also increased significantly in recent years: in 2025, states were responsible for 35% of global violence against civilians, compared to 20% in 2020. Last year saw the sharpest rise in global military expenditure since the end of the Cold War. This reflects increasing fragmentation and multipolarity, rather than strong collective momentum towards international conflict resolution.

Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine has lost none of its brutality even in its fourth year. Despite international efforts, there appears to be no genuine willingness on Russia’s part to engage in negotiations. In the Gaza war, the US administration brokered a fragile ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, allowing some humanitarian assistance to reach the severely affected civilian population once again. Whether the subsequent phases aimed at establishing a lasting peace under the auspices of the so-called ‘Board of Peace’ will materialise remains to be seen. Many other armed conflicts have taken place largely outside of the media’s attention in Germany and Europe: the war between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces threatens to permanently divide Sudan, while a growing number of massacres against civilians are being reported. The escalation between the government and the M23 militia in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the devastating civil war in Myanmar, the paramilitary violence of gangs in Haiti, and the renewed spread of Islamist terrorism and violence in the Sahel and West Africa are also causes for concern. All of these conflicts, as well as others not mentioned here, had devastating consequences for local populations in 2025 and will continue to shape regional security dynamics for years to come.

Consequences of the war: The UN General Assembly votes by a majority to adopt a resolution calling on Russia to unconditionally return Ukrainian children who have been abducted since the start of the war.



## Multipolarity

Even more so than in previous years, interest-driven power politics and confrontation have shaped the international order. The beginning of Donald Trump's second term as President of the United States in January 2025 was accompanied by the expected marked shift in the tone of foreign policy but also brought increasing uncertainty regarding the reliability of agreements, as well as the stability of established institutions. Fragmentation and the erosion of norms in international cooperation have continued to advance. As a result, ad hoc coalitions are increasingly becoming an instrument of choice for addressing problems and conflicts.

Germany, as a country that has benefited greatly from a rules-based international order and continues to do so in many respects, must navigate these changes and position itself accordingly – always in close coordination with EU member states and other partners. Following an early federal election, a new German federal government took office in May 2025 amid high expectations from international partners. Supporting international organisations and their reform, while at the same time forging new strategic partnerships, constitute key pillars for the Germany's foreign policy within a landscape of changing security policy paradigms. The aim remains to safeguard prosperity in Germany, protect international norms and promote the peaceful resolution of conflicts within the framework of international law and institutions.

Tana de Zulueta, head of the OSCE Election Assessment Mission observing the early federal elections, and her deputy, Daria Paprocka, in conversation with ZIF Executive Director Dr. Astrid Irrgang in February 2025.



## Humanitarian Needs

The term of the moment in humanitarian assistance is ‘hyper-prioritisation’. While many states’ willingness to fund humanitarian aid had already been declining in recent years, the sudden dismantling of the US development agency USAID came as a shock, leading to the termination of many life-saving programmes, particularly in the health sector. Beyond the United States, humanitarian funding has continued to decrease and has now fallen back to 2016 levels – despite the high number of conflicts and displaced people worldwide. In the Global Humanitarian Overview (GHO) 2025, UN Secretary-General António Guterres described the situation as ‘an indictment of our failure as an international community’. Austerity measures in many donor countries and declining political will offer little prospect of improvement in the coming years. UN agencies are being forced to concentrate remaining financial resources on the most severely affected populations, while many others remain in need of humanitarian assistance.

Conflict remains the primary driver of global hunger, as vividly illustrated by the fact that two famines have been declared within a single year in the Gaza Strip and parts of Sudan. More than 117 million people worldwide are displaced. The largest number of displaced persons are fleeing the war in Sudan, with over nine million internally displaced people and three million seeking refuge in other countries. Once again, levels of conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) have risen sharply, likely accompanied by significant underreporting. Globally, the fight against poverty has nearly stalled; in Africa, the trend is even reversing.

ZIF secondee Christian Keilbach is talking with refugees at a camp in northeastern Nigeria to organise humanitarian aid and food supplies as effectively as possible.



As a result of these developments, UN Emergency Relief Coordinator Tom Fletcher has initiated a so-called ‘reset’, a fundamental reform of the international humanitarian system. This aims to make humanitarian assistance faster, more efficient and more localised, while strengthening its legitimacy. It entails a focus on life-saving interventions using the limited financial resources available.

## United Nations

While the 2024 adoption of the Pact for the Future by UN member states gave renewed momentum to multilateral approaches to conflict management, 2025 sent mixed messages: on the one hand, expressions of support, but on the other, growing political and financial pressure on peace operations and on the organisation as a whole. In March 2025, UN Secretary-General António Guterres launched the system-wide UN80 reform initiative. This is intended to make the UN more agile, adaptable and effective in addressing complex global challenges, while operating with increasingly constrained resources. At present, appetite in the UN Security Council – as well as among potential host countries – for new large-scale peace operations remains limited, and only one new UN mission was authorised. Nevertheless, efforts continued to strengthen existing operations and to make them more ‘fit for purpose’, including with a view to potential future deployment contexts. Contributions to this included the Peacekeeping Ministerial held in Berlin at the invitation of the German Government, as well as the establishment of a Global Alliance for Peace Operations, through which civil society organisations generated conceptual input and concrete recommendations for member states. In 2025, particular emphasis was placed on the issue of strengthening local agency and engagement, as well as on expanding networks and coalitions aimed at advancing peace operations despite partial deadlock in the UN Security Council. Moreover, Germany was the 2025 Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, focusing in particular on the Women, Peace and Security as well as Youth, Peace and Security agendas within the context of peacebuilding.

The UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Tom Fletcher (UN OCHA), is one of the most vocal advocates for increased international humanitarian aid. Here, he briefs journalists on the situation in the Middle East.



## European Union

For the European Union, unity has been – and remains – the imperative. This is essential to ensure that its positions are heard internationally and that it has a seat at key negotiating tables. A notable development at the end of the year was the decision to provide Ukraine with a loan to secure its liquidity in 2026/27, backed by Russian assets held within the EU. Support for Ukraine also remained high on the agenda in Brussels more broadly. Alongside the current focus on the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, member states are increasingly turning their attention to the Middle East. Discussions on a possible reconfiguration of the two civilian CSDP missions, EUPOL COPPS and EUBAM Rafah, gained new momentum following the signing of the 20-point plan for Gaza and the ceasefire between Israel and Hamas. EU member states also began discussions on a potential new CSDP mission with Lebanon, where the EU could deploy a successor mission to the UN mission UNIFIL. Against the backdrop of near paralysis in other international fora, the CSDP would gather steam – provided that EU member states generate the necessary political will and capacity to shape outcomes.

A delegation from the Federal Foreign Office, the Federal Ministry of the Interior, and ZIF visited Ukraine in December 2025 and met with Rolf Holmboe, the head of the EU Advisory Mission.



## OSCE

For the OSCE, 2025 was shaped by the 50th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, as well as the first year in office of the new Turkish OSCE Secretary General, Feridun Sinirlioğlu. The Finnish Chairmanship designated resilience as the central theme of its term and focused its efforts on supporting Ukraine, upholding OSCE principles, and addressing current security challenges in Europe. In addition, Finland launched the 'Plus 50 Fund', intended to reinforce the implementation of the Helsinki principles through extrabudgetary contributions from participating States. The 32nd OSCE Ministerial Council took place on 4–5 December 2025 in Vienna. Despite budgetary constraints, OSCE field operations continue to deliver important work reliably across all three dimensions. In spite of ongoing challenges, the OSCE remains an important platform for dialogue, particularly with regard to a possible end to the war in Ukraine.

## African Union

The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) focused its efforts towards the peaceful resolution of conflicts primarily on the escalating situation in Sudan, instability in the Sahel region and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Further attention was directed at the escalation in South Sudan as well as at Guinea-Bissau, where, following elections at the end of the year, the military staged a coup and installed a transitional president. In addition, AU member states and the AU Commission jointly prioritised strengthening of African-led initiatives in the field of peace and security. This included a joint high-level seminar in Algiers between the PSC, the African members of the UN Security Council, and the AU Commission in December 2025. The seminar aimed, inter alia, at enhancing coordination across different fora on peace and security issues, and in turn advancing coherent positions among the three African non-permanent members of the UN Security Council. Jointly countering terrorism and violent extremism in cooperation with the UN was also high on the agenda, as was implementing UN Security Council Resolution 2719, which enables the financing of AU peace support operations through assessed UN contributions.



## NATO

With US President Donald Trump's return to office, the Alliance was increasingly forced to manage internal tensions and uncertainty regarding the solidity of its cohesion. One outcome of this was the agreement reached at the NATO Summit in The Hague in June to allocate 5% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to defence expenditure by 2035 (3.5% for core defence spending and 1.5% for defence-related expenditure). This represents a historic increase in defence spending and a material reinforcement of the principle of collective defence. In The Hague, the Allies also agreed to expand transatlantic defence industry cooperation to support these goals. Strong support for Ukraine remains a priority.

# 1.2 Facts and Figures



## German Contributions

5.69%

of the UN budget  
(Federal Foreign Office, 2025)

11%

of the OSCE budget  
(Federal Foreign Office, 2025)

### Police contributions

96

individuals  
(BMI, February 2026)

### Military contributions

991

individuals  
(Bundeswehr, January 2026)

**Civilian contributions**  
(seconded personnel only)

153

individuals  
**83 male, 70 female**  
(ZIF, December 2025)

## Crises and Conflicts

1 in 6



**people globally**  
were affected by conflict in 2025,

approximately

831 Mio.

people.  
(ACLED, 2025)



61

**armed conflicts**  
were recorded worldwide, more than  
at any time since the Second World War  
(Uppsala Conflict Data Program, 2025)

>240.000

**people**  
were killed in armed conflicts  
(ACLED Conflict Index, 2025)



**Non-state armed groups** were responsible for



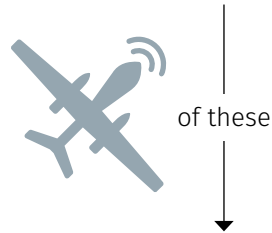
of **violence against civilians** and

**59 %**

**civilian casualties** in conflicts.  
(ACLED, 2025)

**496**

**non-state armed groups** have used **drones** in attacks over the past five years



**58**

**for the first time** in 2025.  
(ACLED, 2025)

**91**

**autocracies**



**88**

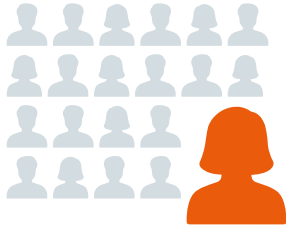
**democracies**

for the first time, there are **more autocracies than democracies** worldwide.

(Democracy without Borders, 2025)



## Humanitarian Aid



1 in 70

people worldwide are displaced (refugees and internally displaced persons).

Of the  
42.500.000

refugees

66 %

were hosted in neighbouring countries. (UNHCR, 2025)



1 in 4

people globally is affected by moderate or severe food insecurity.

Between 2015 and 2024

the number of affected people increased by

↑ 42,6 %

(Oxfam Inequality Report, 2026)

~ 70 %

of people experiencing acute food insecurity in 2025 lived in fragile or conflict-affected countries. (WFP, 2026)

↑ 87 %

more cases of conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) were reported in 2024 than in 2022. (International Rescue Committee, 2026 Emergency Watchlist)

At the current pace, the goal of „Zero Hunger“

2025



would only be achieved by

2137

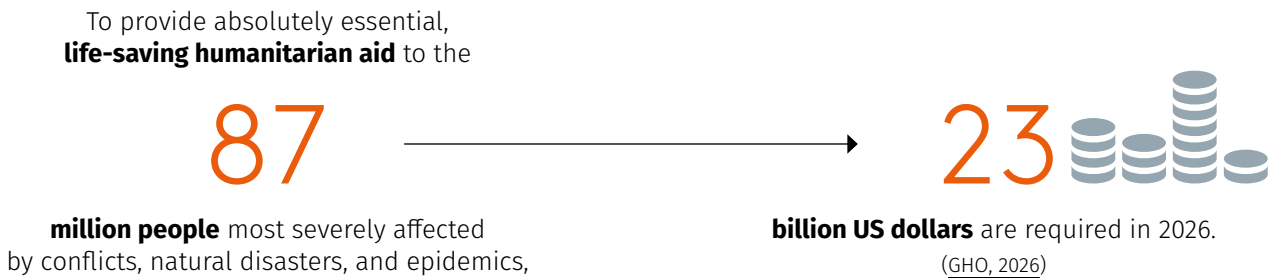
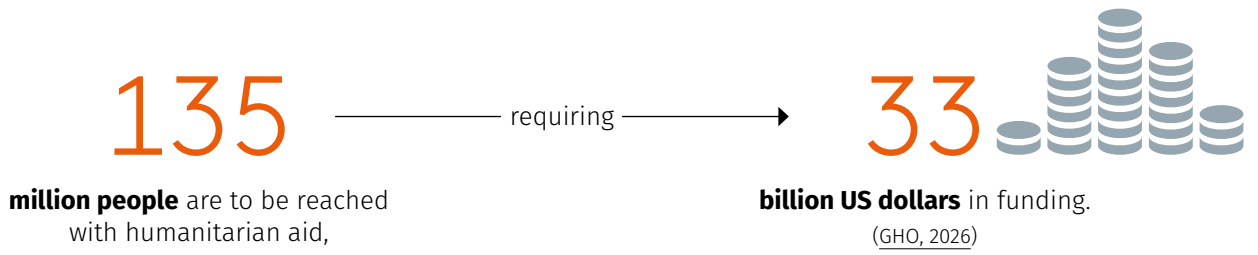
(Global Hunger Index, 2025)

In 2025, a total of

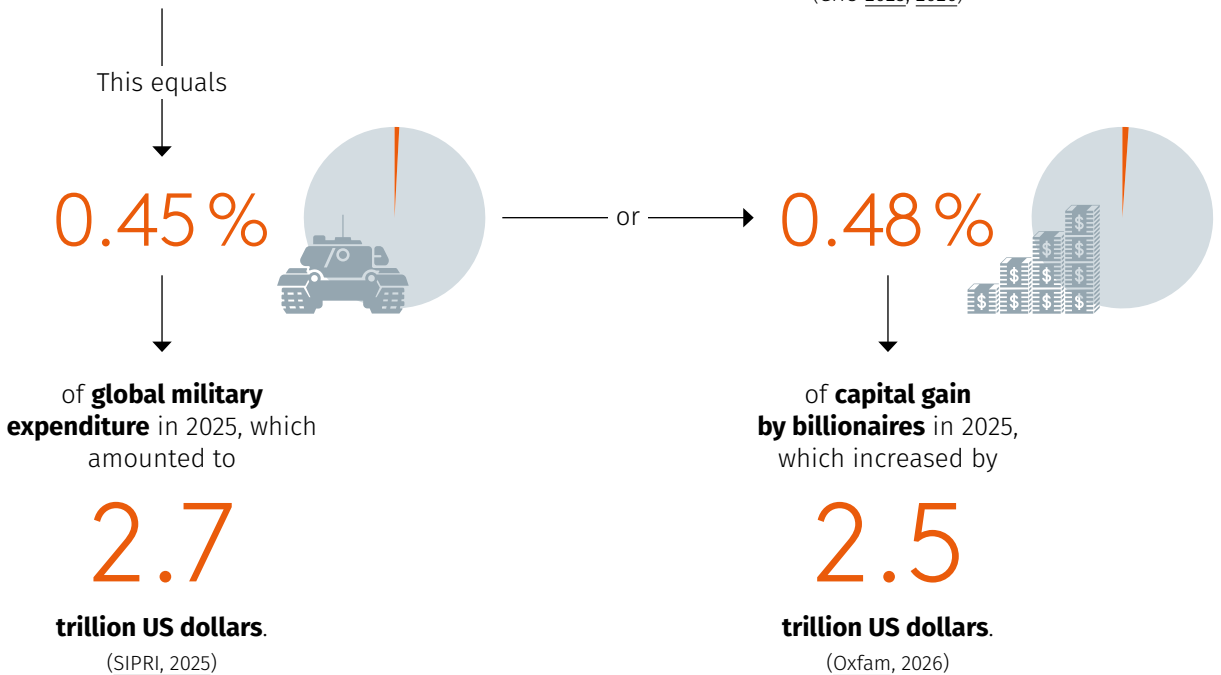
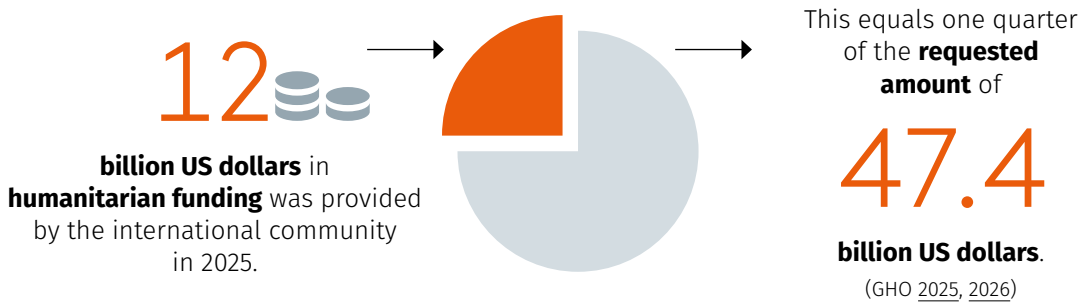
326

humanitarian aid workers were killed in the line of duty. (UN OCHA, 2026)

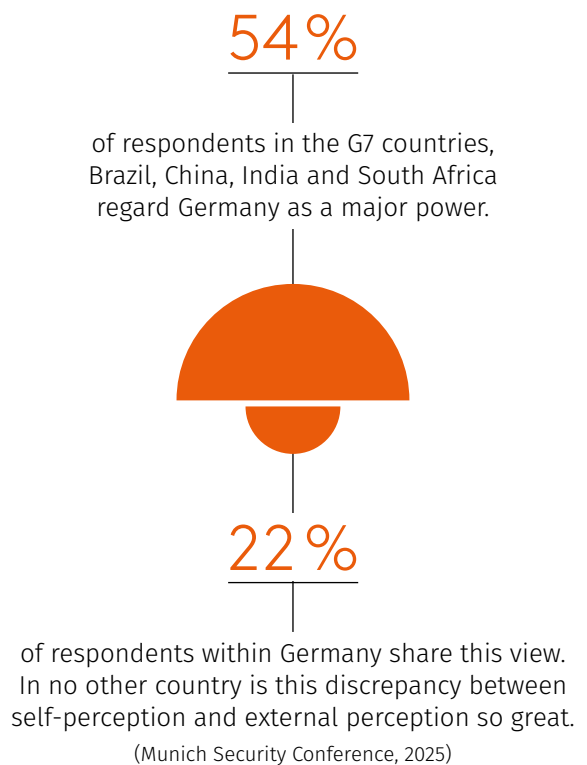
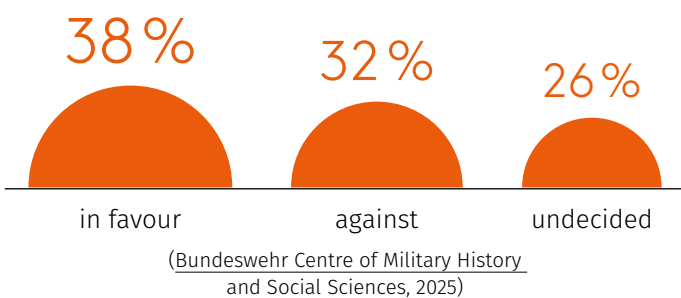
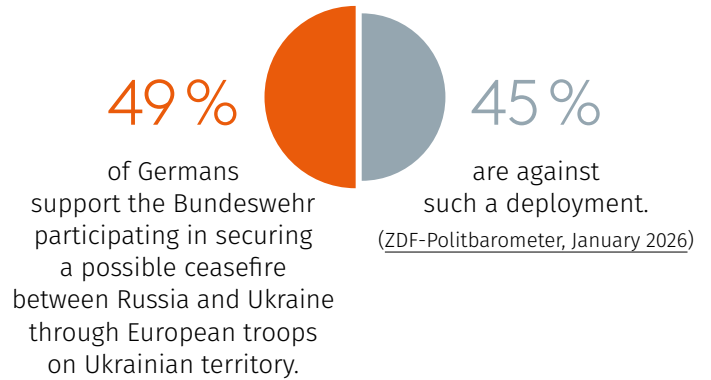
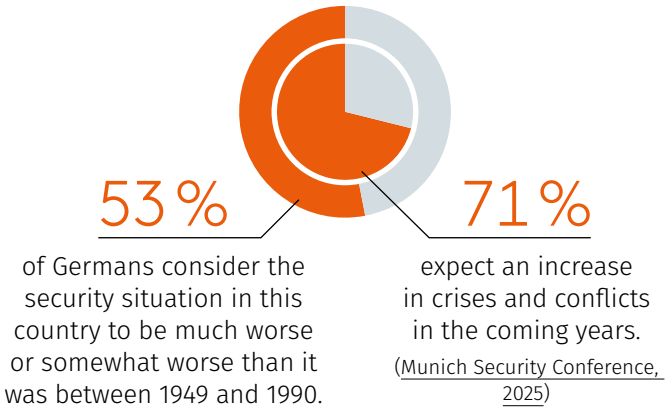
Forecast 2026:



Current status in 2025:



## Spotlight: Germany in the World



# 2

## ZIF – Focus Areas and Priorities 2025



## 2. ZIF – Focus Areas and Priorities 2025

ZIF is operating in an international environment characterised by increasing conflict, fragmentation and humanitarian crises. In view of dwindling financial resources, it must prioritise its activities more rigorously, while at the same time ensuring that innovation is not sidelined. It does so in close cooperation with its shareholder, the FFO, and through constant dialogue with a strong network of national and international partner institutions. The challenges posed by cyber threats and disinformation, polarised societies and bleak economic prospects are considerable – and this is precisely what underscores the need for effective, politically robust civilian crisis management.

ZIF contributes to the **implementation of German foreign policy focus areas** and priorities. Targeted secondments can operationally underpin Germany's strategic foreign policy objectives and political commitments and **translate political promises into concrete action**. Similarly, in its other areas of activity – training, capacity building, dialogue and communication – ZIF is closely aligned with the German government's political priorities. Following the formation of the new government last year, we adjusted our focus areas to accommodate new political priorities in close consultation with the FFO, while retaining established areas of engagement.

In 2025, ZIF concentrated on recruiting experts in the fields of security policy, hybrid threats, strategic communication, transitional justice and accountability, and SSR.

At the same time, the budget constraints required ZIF to **strictly prioritise** its spending. With regard to the composition of our seconded personnel, this meant that, in close consultation with the FFO, all secondment decisions had to be weighed with particular care and, regrettably, some contracts could not be renewed. Consequently, the annual average number of secondments fell compared with previous years.

Support for **Ukraine** remains a key focus of ZIF's work. Among other things, it has deployed staff to advise the Ukrainian authorities on how to preserve evidence admissible in court and ultimately to enable the legal prosecution of crimes against international law. This support is now yielding a significant professional return on investment for German criminal justice.

## 7

## mission

## leadership positions

(HoM and DHoM) were filled by staff seconded from ZIF as of 31 December 2025.

**Secondment****Senior Adviser on the Prosecution of International Crimes at EUAM Ukraine**

Objective: to strengthen national capacities in the area of the prosecution of international crimes sustainably.

The seconded expert advises and supports national partners in the investigation and prosecution of international crimes. Among other things, he works with regional and national public prosecutors' offices on cases, conducts training for investigators and prosecutors, and coordinates measures with the judiciary and with international partners on the ground.

ZIF also supported Ukraine through other strategically important secondments, for example by seconding a staff member to the Investigation of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence Unit and to the management of the Lviv Field Office. In addition, there were secondments to the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the Council of Europe relating to Ukraine. Five in-mission training sessions organised by ZIF on the topics of stress management and team and conflict management supported EUAM Ukraine in its operational capacity and resilience for its challenging mission. At the end of the year, the Executive Director undertook a joint mission visit to the EUAM, together with members of the Working Group on International Police Missions (AG IPM) and the FFO and was able to see for herself the important work being carried out by our secondees and the entire mission on the ground.



FFO Head of Department Dr. Julia Monar visiting ZIF's internal training day in November 2025 to discuss foreign policy priorities with the ZIF team.



Sina Gussek, a seconded expert, worked with colleagues to organise an exhibition on women, peace, and security at the EEAS’s headquarters in Brussels. The photo on display features, among others, ZIF seconded expert Kirsten Joppe (then with EUAM Ukraine).

**Moldova** is also a regional focus of our work, with the particular aim of strengthening national capacities and countering the destabilisation caused by hybrid threats such as disinformation. ZIF therefore seconded several experts to the EUPM Moldova, and conducted in-mission training on team and conflict management on the ground. The 2025 parliamentary elections were the focus of particular attention due to Russian attempts to influence the elections. ZIF election observers took part in an ODIHR election observation mission in the country.

**Secondment**

**Strategic Communications Adviser at the NATO Liaison Office in Chişinău, Moldova**

Objective: to improve information security in the run-up to the parliamentary elections.

The seconded officer is responsible for implementing measures relating to strategic communication and the fight against disinformation, and advises, amongst others, the Moldovan Ministry of Defence. She is responsible for the practical implementation of NATO’s Defence Capacity Building Package in the areas of strategic communication, countering disinformation and public diplomacy.

“ The dialogue format proved particularly valuable, as it gave the Ministry exclusive access to the relevant operational perspectives of ZIF secondees whilst also presenting the findings of a recent ZIF study on hybrid threats. This combination of ZIF expertise enabled a particularly informed and realistic discussion on a key foreign policy issue for Germany.

MONIKA BENKLER, ZIF PPI TEAM

The issue of **hybrid threats** remains high on the ZIF agenda, with an increasing number of seconded staff working on this issue or whose posts and deployment locations are affected. ZIF is able to pool existing operational expertise and put it to good use by contributing to the expert debate and supporting decision-makers. Last year, ZIF published the study “Hybrid Threats: A New Dimension for Peace Operations” which offered concrete recommendations for German foreign policy in this field. As part of a related discussion at the FFO involving four secondees and attended by various departments and diplomatic missions, current challenges for peace operations in the “hybrid threats” domain were examined in depth, alongside innovative approaches and operational recommendations for enhanced German engagement. The professional networking provided significant added value for everyone involved. Consequently, at the end of the year, the ZIF institutionalised this knowledge exchange by creating a task force on hybrid threats.

Amid globally increasing uncertainty and fragmentation, ZIF activities aim at **strengthening the resilience and capacity of international organisations** to address global challenges. Once again, ZIF, together with the UN System Staff College (UNSSC), hosted the annual retreat for Deputy Special Representatives of the Secretary-General (DSRSGs) in UN peace operations. This year’s discussions focused, among other things, on addressing the challenges arising from reform processes and budget cuts in peace operations. As in previous years, the dialogue agenda included a capacity-building element: the DSRSGs were provided with practical tips and tools to strengthen their leadership skills in times of upheaval and developed concrete measures for immediate implementation in their respective missions. Overall, cooperation with and support for the UN in 2025 featured prominently in ZIF’s work – a more detailed report on this can be found in Chapter 5.



Lisa Heemann was seconded to ODIHR, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights in Warsaw, and worked primarily in the areas of human rights and gender-based violence.

Of course, ZIF's support also extended to other organisations involved in multilateral conflict management. For example, we supported the EEAS by seconding staff to work on key policy processes.

### Secondment

#### Policy Officer, Analysis Division, Directorate for Security Policy, EEAS in Brussels, Belgium

Objective: The secondee contributes to the preparation and implementation of policy initiatives in the field of crisis management, in particular the EU Strategic Compass and the Civilian CSDP Compact.

She monitors and analyses developments in EU member states regarding the CSDP and their contributions to the EU's capability goals. To this end, she also establishes networks with other EU institutions, public and private stakeholders, and actors from civil society and the research sector. The seconded officer thus contributes to strengthening the CSDP and its missions.



In December 2025, ZIF hosted a UN Police workshop attended by officers from the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic, and South Sudan, as well as representatives from the respective UN missions.

32

**trainings and workshops**

with a total of 533 participants  
(from the Germany and abroad)

**Capacity-building for missions and tailor-made training programmes** are particular strengths of ZIF and are highly valued and in demand among our partner organisations. Last year, for instance, the Training Team delivered a series of three online workshops on trust-building for the UN Pilot Network for Uniformed Female Peacekeepers. These provided a safe space for exchange and knowledge-sharing on a topic regularly cited as a challenge by female UN mission staff. At the request of the EU Mission in Armenia (EUMA), the ZIF team developed a training programme for monitors and translators to equip them with more effective and sensitive approaches when interacting with the civilian population. Four online training sessions, held in May 2025, were very well received by the participants, enabling a follow-up in-person session to be successfully conducted in Jeghegnadsor in October. In addition, the ZIF Training Team organised a meeting where translators from the monitoring missions in Georgia (EUMM) and Armenia could exchange ideas, thereby facilitating cross-mission knowledge transfer.

#### **Five-day ACCESS training with UN OCHA for humanitarian professionals in the MENA region**

We trained staff from both international and local humanitarian organisations in negotiation techniques. In the countries of the MENA region in particular, humanitarian access must be negotiated on a daily basis, including with commanders of armed groups, representatives of de facto authorities and conflict parties. It is precisely when dealing with these actors that ZIF, with its broad expertise in the field of peace operations, can put cross-sectoral knowledge to profitable use.

**Impact:** The training supported Germany's engagement in humanitarian diplomacy through capacity building at the operational level; German policy at the day-to-day operational level became more effective and visible. It enabled participants from Iran, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Yemen and the Palestinian territories to engage in a professional exchange on coherent approaches to action, rather than piecemeal ad hoc solutions, when dealing with these actors.

8

**ZIF Xchanges**

on, inter alia, the situation in the Middle East, Sudan, and challenges in international humanitarian assistance.

With its **strong networks and its expertise gained relating to missions**, ZIF consistently provides an important platform for national and international stakeholders to engage in **dialogue, networking and the exchange of knowledge**. The PPI Team organised a peer exchange for ZIF secondees in senior positions in various missions, in which participants were able to discuss, in a confidential setting, the challenges of change management in leadership roles, particularly given the current high pressure for reform within organisations. Once again, ZIF organised a side event at the Munich Security Conference (MSC), in collaboration with its Swedish partner SIPRI. On the topic of "Bypassing Geopolitical Blockages: How to Regionalise Crisis Management?", an experienced, multidisciplinary group gathered for a focused and practical discussion. For our Berlin community, we organised a total of eight ZIF Xchanges, including sessions on trends in peace operations, the state of international humanitarian aid, and Sudan. In December 2025, ZIF welcomed a group of 20 police officers from UN missions and national police authorities in the

“... the whole team [...] managed to create a welcoming and constructive atmosphere that fostered collaboration among the participants and resulted in ambitious but concrete recommendations, including a follow-up mechanism to support their implementation.

DAVID HAERI, DIRECTOR POLICY, EVALUATION AND TRAINING DIVISION, UNITED NATIONS, ON THE POLICE DATA WORKSHOP AT ZIF

Democratic Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic and South Sudan to Berlin for a workshop organised in collaboration with the UN Department of Peace Operations (DPO). Over three days, participants developed concrete measures to assess and further enhance the success of UN Police and their national partners in the areas of public security and the protection of civilians, restoring and extending state authority, and institutional development and capacity building. The workshop demonstrated that the success of UN Police and their national partners is closely intertwined.

The **field experience** of our experts constitutes a valuable resource for FFO, the wider Federal Government, and the German Bundestag. Through a range of formats, ZIF has systematically prepared and made this operational knowledge accessible. For example, in a briefing for the foreign and security policy association of parliamentary staff in the German Bundestag on Moldova, participants were able to gain an overview of developments on the ground as well as possible courses of action for Germany and the EU.



Dr. Fabian Löwenberg, Deputy Head of Mission for EUCAP Somalia, opens a police station.

**Long-standing as well as new strategic partnerships** are of particular importance in times of increasingly scarce resources. ZIF therefore carefully maintains established connections, while also actively advancing collaborations in new thematic areas and networks. In 2025, we continued to coordinate closely at director level and through regular meetings in the field of security with our partner organisations in Sweden, the Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA) and the Crisis Management Centre Finland (CMC Finland), as well as with the Migration and Conflict Directorate in the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. ZIF once again took the European lead in further developing the issue of duty of care for seconding organisations – together with the receiving organisations, the OSCE and the EU. ZIF concluded a new secondment agreement with the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS), while the agreement with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) was renewed and adapted. For the first time, ZIF seconded experts to the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) on Sexual Violence in Conflict as well as to the SRSG on Children and Armed Conflict. In addition, an agreement was negotiated with the Permanent Mission of Palau to the United Nations, followed by a secondment to support Palau’s chairmanship of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS). The first secondment to the newly established NATO Climate Change and Security Centre of Excellence (CCASCOE) in Montreal was also realised in 2025.



Dr. Astrid Irrgang and Shoko Noda, Director of the UNDP Crisis Bureau, sign a secondment agreement that will enable further personnel support from the ZIF.

27

**regional exchange formats**  
of our Security Team with  
secondees in 2025

ZIF is continuously working to track and enhance the **impact** of its activities, wherever possible, and to improve its **measurability**. For the latter, a reliable data basis that can be evaluated swiftly is particularly important. Especially for our secondments, but also in other areas of our work, we have therefore advanced instruments for data collection and analysis and established a data lab. The semi-annual reporting format for secondees was also revised in order to broaden the information base on the effectiveness of secondments and missions.

In light of a global situation perceived as uncertain and unstable, public debate in Germany is characterised by considerable concerns about the future. At the same time, the necessary expansion of our defence capabilities is receiving increasing public attention. This makes it all the more important **to explain ZIF's mandate to the public**.

We undertake this task with conviction and use a wide range of different formats and tools for its implementation. In 2025, we presented our work and key issues in international civilian crisis management to a total of 21 visiting groups. Our exhibition #ohneFrauenkeinFrieden (“no peace without women”) gives voice to many female peacekeepers, with and without uniforms, and was shown at the French Embassy and at the FFO. In total, we sent out 13 ZIF newsletters to more than 3,800 recipients, including a special edition for the newly constituted Bundestag. ZIF also actively promoted civilian crisis management across various social media channels. LinkedIn remains particularly important: here, we appeared as Team ZIF with 362 posts. Polarisation and disinformation are increasingly putting organisations with an external communication mandate under pressure to counter false narratives. In four network meetings on crisis communication, we therefore fostered exchange with other foreign policy partner organisations on experiences and possible courses of action.

432

**individuals**  
learned about ZIF's mandate  
and activities as part of  
visiting groups

#### ZIF format

#### „Friedensexpert:in im Gespräch“

Our format “Friedensexpert:in im Gespräch” brings operational field experience directly to people. Former secondees share practical experiences from their mission work and illustrate, using concrete examples, how international organisations operate in conflict areas. In 2025, our peace experts were deployed across Germany, holding 28 events primarily aimed at young people. In seminars, project days and educational formats, they vividly conveyed the complexity of conflicts, the importance of dialogue, and the scope for action in international crisis management – often in an interactive manner and with insights into everyday working life on the ground. The consistently positive feedback and growing demand demonstrate the impact: we strengthen understanding of multilateral peace operations and make civilian crisis management more visible as an important component of German foreign policy.



Andrea Thies, a former secondee in Kosovo and Afghanistan, among other places, is currently touring educational institutions across Germany as a “Friedensexpert:in im Gespräch” to share her field experience — a programme made possible by ZIF.

Internally as well, ZIF did not stand still: we completed the **organisational development of our administration**. The Finance and Internal Administration Teams as well as Legal and Secondment Management were restructured. The result is a clearer delineation and consolidation of responsibilities and thus also clearer and more transparent lines of accountability. The IT & Facility Management Team continuously worked to adapt ZIF and its IT infrastructure to the current requirements of our work and to make it more resilient to crises. Among other things, the local firewall system was renewed, email encryption via S/MIME was introduced, and fixed-line telephony was centralised via MS Teams, making it independent of location.

3

**Secondment  
Activities**



# 3.1 Secondments 2025

(sorted by international organization, as of 31 December 2025)

<b>OSCE field presences</b>	m	f	Total	<b>United States Office of the Security Coordinator (OSC)</b>	m	f	Total	<b>UN Secretariat</b>	m	f	Total	
OSCE Mission in Kosovo	1	1	2	OSC	0	1	1	Complex Risk Analytics Fund	0	1	1	
OSCE Mission to Moldova	0	1	1	<b>Organization of American States (OAS)</b>	m	f	Total	UN System Staff College	1	0	1	
OSCE Mission to Skopje	2	0	2	MAPP Colombia	2	1	3	UN University – Centre for Policy Research (UNU – CPR)	0	1	1	
OSCE Programme Office in Dushanbe	2	1	3	<b>EU CSDP missions</b>	m	f	Total	O-SRSG on Sexual Violence in Conflict (SVC)	0	1	1	
OSCE Project Co-Ordinator in Uzbekistan	0	1	1	EUAM Iraq	1	2	3	O-SRSG for Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC)	0	1	1	
OSCE Presence in Albania	0	1	1	EUAM Ukraine	8	2	10	<b>UN Peace Operations</b>	m	f	Total	
OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek	1	0	1	EUBAM Libya	0	1	1	UN Mission in South Sudan	0	1	1	
<b>OSCE Secretariat and Institutions</b>	m	f	Total	EUCAP Sahel Mali	0	1	1	UN Transitional Assistance Mission in Somalia	0	1	1	
Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC)	1	1	2	EUCAP Somalia	2	0	2	<b>UN Development Programme (UNDP)</b>	m	f	Total	
Department of Human Resources (DHR)	0	1	1	EULEX Kosovo	3	3	6	UNDP Crisis Bureau	1	0	1	
Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA)	1	1	2	EUMM Georgia	0	1	1	UNDP Senegal	1	0	1	
Office of the Secretary General (OSG)	2	1	3	EUNAVFOR Atalanta	1	0	1	<b>UN World Food Programme (WFP)</b>	m	f	Total	
Transnational Threats Department (TNT)	0	1	1	EUPM Moldova	1	1	2	WFP HQ Rome	0	1	1	
Office of Special Representative/Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings	1	0	1	EUPOL COPPS	3	1	4	WFP Egypt	0	1	1	
Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)	2	0	2	EU SDI Gulf of Guinea	2	1	3	<b>UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)</b>	m	f	Total	
OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM)	0	1	1	EUM Armenia	3	1	4	UNHCR Senegal	1	0	1	
OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (PA)	1	0	1	EUBAM Rafah	2	1	3	<b>UN International Children's Fund (UNICEF)</b>	m	f	Total	
OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media (RFoM)	0	1	1	EU NAVFOR Med Irini	1	0	1	UNICEF Niger	0	1	1	
<b>Foreign Governments</b>	m	f	Total	<b>European External Action Service (EEAS)</b>	m	f	Total	<b>International Organization for Migration (IOM)</b>	m	f	Total	
OSCE Finnish Chairmanship	0	1	1	EEAS outside CivOpsHQ	6	11	17	IOM Iraq	0	1	1	
Office of the Prime Minister of Montenegro	1	0	1	EEAS within CivOpsHQ	3	2	5	<b>UN Resident Coordinator's Offices (RCO)</b>	m	f	Total	
Permanent Mission of Palau to the UN	0	1	1	<b>EU Special Representatives (EUSR)</b>	m	f	Total	UN RCO Democratic Republic of the Congo	1	0	1	
<b>Special Courts</b>	m	f	Total	EUSR for Central Asia	1	0	1	<b>NATO</b>	m	f	Total	
International Criminal Court – Office of the Prosecutor	3	1	4	EUSR for the Great Lakes Region	1	0	1	NATO Mission Iraq	0	1	1	
Kosovo Specialist Chambers and Specialist Prosecutor's Office	2	0	2	EUSR for the Horn of Africa	1	1	2	NATO HQ Operations Division	1	0	1	
Special Criminal Court of the Central African Republic	2	0	2	EUSR for the Sahel	1	0	1	NATO HQ Human Security Unit (within PASP)	1	0	1	
<b>Council of Europe</b>	m	f	Total	EUSR for the South Caucasus and the Crisis in Georgia	1	0	1	NATO HQ Emerging Security Challenges Division	0	1	1	
Council of Europe Secretariat	1	1	2	EUSR for the Middle East Peace Process	1	0	1	DCB Package for Bosnia and Herzegovina	1	0	1	
Council of Europe Office Chisinau	1	0	1	EUSR for the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue	1	1	2	DCB Package for Tunisia	0	1	1	
Council of Europe Office Tirana	0	1	1	<b>EU Delegations</b>	m	f	Total	Defence Institution Building School (DIBS)	1	0	1	
Register of Damage for Ukraine	0	1	1	Delegation of the EU to Kazakhstan	1	0	1	NATO Climate Change and Security Centre of Excellence (CCASCOE)	1	0	1	
<b>Office of the High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina (OHR)</b>	m	f	Total	Delegation of the EU to Nigeria	0	1	1	NATO Liaison Office Moldova	0	1	1	
Office of the High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina	0	1	1	European Economic and Trade Office in Taiwan	1	0	1	NATO Advisory and Liaison Team (NALT) Kosovo	1	0	1	
				Delegation of the EU to Zambia	0	1	1					
				Delegation of the EU to China	0	1	1					
				Delegation of the EU to the UN in New York	1	0	1					
				<b>European Commission</b>	m	f	Total					
				Foreign Policy Instruments	0	1	1					
				Directorate-General Enlargement and Eastern Neighbourhood (DG ENEST)	0	1	1					

in Peace Operations

60

at Headquarters

39

in Humanitarian Operations

5

Other

49



**153**  
Total

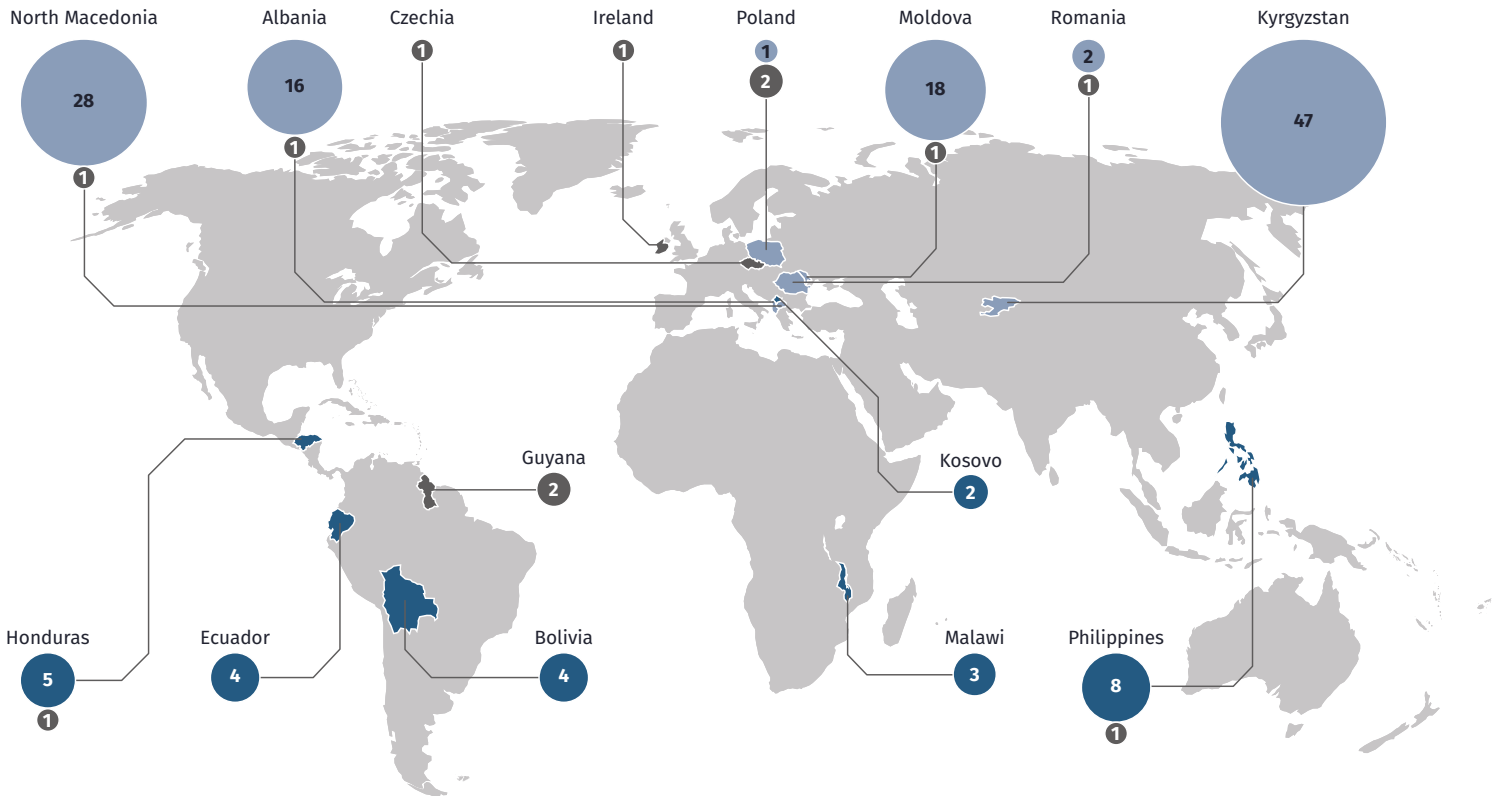
# 3.2 Election Observations 2025

Election observation is one of the core instruments for promoting democracy, human rights and the rule of law. German election observers for OSCE and EU missions are selected, prepared and deployed by ZIF.

**•112**  German election observers in OSCE/ODIHR\* missions

**•26**  German election observers in EU missions

**•12** **additional** German Core Team\*\* members



\* The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) is responsible for OSCE election observations.

\*\* Core Team members are selected directly by the respective organizations and are not nominated through ZIF.

Data/Source: Center for International Peace Operations (as of 11/2024)

## 3.3 Trainings and Coachings

3 × Short-Term Election  
Observation Training (STO)

48

participants

3 × Comprehensive  
Core Course (CCC) with the  
Training Partner Platform (TPP)

58

participants

Long-Term  
Election Observation  
Training (LTO)

16

participants

2 × Women, Peace  
and Security – Gender  
Sensitive Approaches in  
Peace Missions (WPS)

25

participants

Youth, Peace  
and Security in Peace  
Operations and  
Peacebuilding

11

participants

2 × Stress Resilience  
Workshop

29

participants

5 × Hostile Environment  
Awareness Training (HEAT)

97

participants

3 × Online & in-person  
Conversation Techniques

43

participants

**Pre-deployment  
Training**

**20**  
participants

**5× Team and  
Conflict Management**  
(online and in-mission-Training)

**68**  
participants

**3× ACCESS Training**  
**24**  
participants

**Conflict Analysis  
Training**

**14**  
participants

**Humanitarian  
Briefing**  
**15**  
participants

**2× Leadership Course**  
with the Training Partner  
Platform (TPP)

**23**  
participants

**Confidence Building  
Webseries, UN Pilot Network**

**40**  
participants



With in-mission training, ZIF responds directly to the specific needs of the missions – here, training participants and staff from the EU Mission in Armenia (EUMA), along with the ZIF team of trainers.

# 4

## Policy, Partnerships and Innovation



# 4.1 Events, Dialogues and Briefings

## ZIF Events and Side Events (selection)

- Annual **UN SRSB Breakfast**: “Making a compelling case for peace (operations)”
- Co-hosting the **DSRSB Dialogue** with the UNSSC, including an exchange with the Berlin Peacebuilding Community of Practice on enhancing local engagement
- Side event at the **Munich Security Conference**: “Bypassing Geopolitical Blockages: How to Regionalize Crisis Management” in cooperation with the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)
- Co-hosting the online session **DSRSB Ideas Generator**: “Key issues for the UN Peacekeeping Ministerial from a field perspective” with UNSSC
- Two events at the **Berlin Climate Security Conference**: Side Event “Bridging the Climate, Peace, and Security science-policy divide with innovation and new partnerships” in cooperation with XCEPT and the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI), as well as a half-day Workshop “The implications of climate change and environmental degradation for dialogue and mediation processes in peace operations and crisis management” with the Centre of Excellence for Civilian Crisis Management (CoE), SIPRI, CMC Finland, and FBA
- Co-hosting, moderating and speaking at the **Peace Operations Review Week** in New York
- Co-hosting and co-training at the **ZIF-UN OCHA Global Access Training** in Amman
- Online workshop of the **Global Alliance for Peace Operations**



Dr. Astrid Irrgang with participants of the ZIF side event “Bypassing Geopolitical Blockages: How to Regionalize Crisis Management” at the 2025 Munich Security Conference.

- **Global Alliance for Peace Operations Symposium** – in connection with the UN Peacekeeping Ministerial
- Co-hosting a workshop on the **Comprehensive Planning and Performance Assessment System** with the UN DPO
- Co-hosting the **online workshop for authors' validation** of the EPON meta-study in cooperation with NUPI
- Co-hosting an **informal dinner with delegates of EU member states in CIVCOM** on “Exit, Transitions & Closure of CSDP Missions/Operations” in cooperation with SIPRI
- Co-hosting a workshop on the results of the **Challenges Annual Forum 2024** and the **Aswan Forum 2024** in cooperation with the Permanent Missions of Germany, Egypt and Sweden to the UN in New York
- **Eight ZIF Xchange Spaces**, including with UNICEF Deputy Executive Director Ted Chaiban and Deike Potzel (FFO) on the situation in the Middle East, with EU Special Representative Dr. Annette Weber on Sudan, on challenges in humanitarian assistance with Member of Parliament Renata Alt and UN agencies, as well as launching the ZIF studies “Five Trends in UN Peace Operations. And Five Calls to Action” and “Hybrid Threats: New Dimension for Peace Operations”
- Presentation of “**Headlines Before They Happen 2025**” for staff of the German Bundestag as well as for ZIF staff, election observers and secondees
- Launch event for the “**Handbook of Masculinities, Conflict, and Peacebuilding**”, including a peer exchange with secondees
- Hosting the second meeting of the **Peacebuilding Community of Practice**, together with the FFO



Deike Potzel, Special Envoy for Humanitarian Aid in the Middle East and Head of Department at the FFO, and Ted Chaiban, Deputy Executive Director for Humanitarian Action and Supply Operations at UNICEF, were among those who discussed how humanitarian aid can continue to succeed in the future at a ZIF XChange event held in February 2025.

- Briefing on Moldova for the **foreign and security policy association of parliamentary staff** in the Bundestag
- Two virtual **Town Halls** for members of the ZIF election observation pool
- Co-hosting two meetings of the **HDP Nexus Community of Practice**, in cooperation with the Diakonie and the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ)
- **Brown bag lunches**, including on the evaluation of the Munich Security Conference, on foreign and security policy in the party manifestos for the 2025 Bundestag election
- **Exchange on hybrid threats** in the context of peace operations at the FFO with participation from several departments as well as diplomatic missions abroad
- Co-hosting the autumn meeting of the **AG IPM** in Berlin with the Berlin Police
- Four **civil-military forums** (series organised by the military liaison officer at ZIF)



Secondee Philipp Schweers was a panelist at the Berlin Peace Forum in October 2025 and shared his operational expertise on the topic of hybrid threats.

## Briefings and Contributions for Third Parties (selection)

- Input at the workshop of the **Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES)**: “African non-military conflict intervention practices. Insights for policy-making”
- Co-host and moderator of a session at the EEAS’ **Brussels Climate Security Dialogue** with adelphi
- Moderating the panel on peacebuilding at the **UN Peacekeeping Ministerial 2025**, hosted by the FFO and the Federal Ministry of Defence (FMoD) in Berlin
- Panel contribution at the Colloquium of the Network for International Affairs – **nefia e.V.** 2025 on “Soft power, hard power: The future of humanitarian and development cooperation”
- Participation and contribution to the **MSC Partner Brainstorming 2025**
- Co-host and moderator of a session at the **Stockholm Forum**: “To keep CSDP relevant: How to refocus, transition or close EU missions & operations” in cooperation with CMC Finland and SIPRI
- Lecture to a delegation as part of the **visitors’ programme for UN ambassadors** at the FFO
- Input for the **working group Security Policy & Transatlantic Relations** titled “The future of peace operations with Dr. Astrid Irrgang”, for the Department of Study Funding of the FES
- Briefing of the **Ukraine Task Force** at the **Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)**
- Input and participation in the **AG IPM spring meeting** in Lübeck
- Input at the **Berlin Forum on Global Cooperation 2025** on “From crisis to resilience? The future of humanitarian aid”
- Design and delivery of a workshop on the Women, Peace and Security agenda in cooperation with secondees as part of the **FFO’s international diplomatic training programme**
- Panel presentation on “Security guarantees and options for a peace operation in Ukraine” at the **Rondeli Security Conference** in Tbilisi at the invitation of the FES
- Input and presentation on international election observation together with a ZIF election observer for the alumni colloquium of the **International Parliamentary Scholarship Programme of the German Bundestag**
- Lecture on “Women, peace and security” at the **Montessori Centre ANGELL Freiburg**
- Input and panel contribution on “10 years UNSCR 2250 – Quo vadis, YPS agenda?” at the **German Coalition for Youth, Peace and Security e.V.**
- Online lecture on the tasks of ZIF and peace operations at the **Federal Working Group on Multilateralism & the UN of the Green Party**
- Input for **DEval** – evaluation programme of the Civil Peace Service
- Online lecture for the **Hans Böckler Foundation** on “Brussels and beyond: Peace operations and security guarantees for Ukraine”
- Online input as part of the **UN DPO Trailblazer Awards** on “Justice where it matters: Peace operations, ownership and hybrid legal systems”

- Lecture and panel moderation at the conference marking 25 years of the **German Foundation for Peace Research** in Osnabrück
- Lecture “Eternal peace – a utopia? The work of ZIF and peace operations in Eastern Europe” at the **Hans Böckler Foundation**
- Input at the strategy conference of the **Centre for East European and International Studies**
- Lectures on peace operations and the work of ZIF at **universities and seminars**, including at Forward College, Elisava University, the University of Osnabrück, Technical University of Dresden, and Humboldt University of Berlin

## Governing Body Meetings

- International Advisory Board: 15–16 May 2025
- Supervisory Board: 11 November 2025
- Shareholders’ Meeting: 03 December 2025

## ZIF and the Integrated Approach (selection)

- On a joint study visit to EUAM Ukraine in Kyiv with the FFO and the AG IPM
- In meetings of the AG IPM
- German Peacekeeping Day
- Meetings of the Advisory Board for Internal Leadership of the FMoD
- In regular exchange formats with relevant BMZ departments
- Meetings of the national Training Partner Platform (TPP)



The civilian laureates of Peacekeeping Day in June 2025: Petra Neumann (Council of Europe’s Ukraine Damage Register), Cornelia Taylor (Deputy Head of Mission of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo), Jörg Krempel (Deputy Head of Mission of EUPOL COPPS in the Palestinian Territories), flanked by Member of the Bundestag Tobias Winkler and Minister of State Serap Güler.

- Visiting groups and seminars with youth officers of the Bundeswehr and military attachés of the Federal Academy for Security Policy (BAKS)
- Revision and subsequent implementation of the training course “Women, Peace and Security” in cooperation with the Hochschule für Polizei Baden-Württemberg

## Contingent Meetings and Exchanges with Secondees

- Two contingent meetings in Brussels
- Contingent meeting in New York
- Official travel and contingent meeting in Israel and the Palestinian territories
- Digital contingent meeting with secondees in the Middle East
- Digital contingent meeting with EUMM Georgia
- Digital contingent meeting with the Council of Europe
- Digital contingent meeting with humanitarian secondees
- Mission visit and contingent meeting with EUMA
- Official travel to Ukraine with the FFO and the AG IPM, and contingent meeting with Ukraine secondees
- Two meetings of the civilian coordinators (once online, once in person)
- Regular regional exchange formats on security with secondees in the Middle East, the Balkans, Africa (including Colombia), and the post-Soviet region
- Specialist exchange with secondees on the African continent on the impact of the current geopolitical situation on operational contexts
- Exchange to validate draft study on “Hybrid Threats: New Dimension for Peace Operations” with secondees in the thematic field

## Fairs and Public Outreach (selection)

- Two-day interactive stand at the Open House of the Federal Government
- Stands at the International Career Fair of the FFO, at the Humanitarian Congress, at herCareer, and at the “Weltweit” fair
- 28 presentations by returned civilian experts at schools and universities across Germany as part of the format “Peace Expert in Conversation”
- 21 presentations and workshops with visiting groups
- Journalists’ breakfast on the occasion of Peacekeeping Day 2025

## ZIF in Advisory Boards and Committees

- Advisory Board for Internal Leadership of the FMoD
- International Advisory Board of the Austrian Centre for Peace
- Board of Trustees of the German Foundation for Peace Research
- UN Policy Advisory Board of the FFO



## ZIF Briefing

- Ukraine. Peace operation, security guarantees and deterrence

## Further formats

- The future of United Nations peace operations: Compendium of policy papers and policy recommendations for the UN Peacekeeping Ministerial 2025 (policy compendium)
- 51 Peace operations updates
- 13 ZIF newsletters
- 11 synthesis reports

## Interviews and opinion pieces (selection)

- “With Georgian dream in power, what next for EU monitoring mission?” (EUobserver)
- “Lamentations and outrage are no substitute for security policy” (bruchstücke interview)
- “Peace consolidation: Germany’s civilian contribution” (German Review on the United Nations 2/25)
- “Sanctions against Russia – not ineffective, but not consistent enough” (bruchstücke interview)
- “No security without civilian crisis management” (Table.Media)
- “What is the value of UN peacekeeping?” (Frankfurter Rundschau)
- Interview on peace operations in Sudan (Hessischer Rundfunk – HR2 podcast “Der Tag”)

# 5

## Spotlight: ZIF Support to UN Peace Operations



## 5. Spotlight: ZIF Support to UN Peace Operations

Cooperation with and support for the UN were particularly influential in shaping ZIF's work in 2025.

At the beginning of the year, ZIF published Five Trends in UN Peace Operations. And Five Calls to Action, highlighting challenges and opportunities in the year ahead. While world-wide conflict-related suffering was – and remains – on the rise, peace operations were contracting. Despite having proven a flexible and effective tool in diverse contexts, pressures had mounted in an unprecedented way. ZIF looked at the five central trends that affected the deployment and effectiveness of peace operations and explored five concrete opportunities for adapting them to a new global context.

Early in the year, ZIF – together with the Global Governance Institute (GGI) and Amani Africa Media and Research Services (Amani Africa) – also founded the Global Alliance for Peace Operations (GAPO). The Alliance is a network of think tanks, research institutions and other civil society organisations working on peace operations. It was initially founded in consultation with the GMod and the FFO to facilitate the systematic engagement of civil society alongside the intergovernmental discussions at the UN Peacekeeping Ministerial 2025 (PKM) due to be hosted by Germany in Berlin in May. The Alliance quickly gathered steam and brought together organisations from around the world. In connection with the PKM, it hosted an online workshop, a symposium and seven side events and published two compendiums – one with 8 policy papers and one with 19 shorter issue papers – all produced collaboratively by groups of Alliance members. Since then, the Alliance has continued to stimulate the exchange and transfer of knowledge



In November, the Global Alliance for Peace Operations hosted a Peace Operations Review Week in New York. ZIF co-organised the event and, among other things, organised a panel discussion at the Permanent Mission of Germany.

among a global community of partners, foster synergies between representatives of communities of researchers, think tanks and civil society, and to advance cooperation and share knowledge on opportunities, challenges and future avenues for UN peace operations.

Since its inception in December 2024, the ZIF-initiated Peacebuilding Community of Practice (PB CoP) for Berlin-based organisations has been meeting regularly, involving implementation partners where possible. The FFO also participates in the meetings. In 2025, the PB CoP focused on supporting Germany as the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission. In order to deliver concrete examples to support advocacy and decision-making, ZIF collated a compendium of best practices and innovative approaches to peacebuilding at the local level. This received great praise from the German chair as well as relevant partners in the UN system as a helpful comprehensive product. In an exchange between the Berlin PB CoP and select DSRSGs (in town for the DSRSG Dialogue) in October, implementing organisations presented three of the initiatives in the compendium, followed by a discussion of challenges and opportunities of local engagement. The PB CoP will continue beyond Germany's chairmanship, as peacebuilding remains a priority for the FFO.

Under the heading of "Making a Compelling Case for Peace (Operations)", ZIF again welcomed the heads of UN peacekeeping missions to a breakfast in July, in connection with the SRSR retreat hosted by the FFO. The SRSR Breakfast brings together heads of mission and other high-ranking UN decision-makers with the Berlin expert community in an open exchange. This year, it focused on hybrid threats, disinformation and strategic communication as growing challenges for peace operations.

“ The establishment of the Global Alliance in connection with the UN Peacekeeping Ministerial in Berlin in 2025 was a significant achievement. We have thereby mobilized and pooled collective expertise on peacekeeping missions and were able to demonstrate this not least at the symposium held the day before the PKM. The more than 80 participants included leading figures in peacekeeping from both research and practice, as well as national representatives. The great interest shown by the member states underscored their thirst for exchange and, above all, their search for approaches to put UN peacekeeping missions on a new footing.

ANNIKA HANSEN,  
DEPUTY HEAD, TEAM PPI AT ZIF



The GAPO is a civil society coalition of institutions that conduct research and provide consulting services in the field of peace operations, initiated and coordinated by the ZIF, among others. GAPO organised a side event in Berlin in conjunction with the Peacekeeping Ministerial.

The 16th DSRSG Dialogue then took place in Berlin on October, jointly organised by ZIF and the UNSSC and supported by the FFO. The DSRSGs met amid severe budget cuts to peace operations, as well as to UN agencies, funds and programmes, which were forcing staff reductions, among other things, as well as amid the UN80 reform process launched by UN Secretary-General António Guterres in spring 2025 to overcome the financial, geopolitical, and administrative crisis currently facing the UN. Perhaps because of these pressures, the DSRSGs expressed their appreciation for the Dialogue as an important space for collegial exchange, strategic learning, and the further development of civilian leadership in peace operations.

The Pact for the Future had tasked the UN Secretariat to carry out a Review on the Future of All Forms of Peace Operations. ZIF contributed to this effort in several ways. Having been a member of the EPON from its inception in 2017 and co-authoring/contributing to EPON reports, ZIF partnered with the NUPI and Norwegian Capacity (NORCAP) to produce an input paper for the Review: a meta-level, AI-supported synthesis of insights from 16 EPON studies of UN peace operations and thematic studies. The final report – Sustaining Effective UN Peace Operations in the Future: Insights from the Studies Undertaken by the Effectiveness of Peace Operations Network (EPON) – provides a very brief policy-oriented analysis, with concrete examples, which identifies the key factors that influence the effectiveness and success of peace operations and was shared with the UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) and DPO drafters of the Review in October.



During Peace Operations Review Week in November in New York, members of the GAPO spent a week discussing the sustainability of missions, including Germany's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Ricklef Beutin.

Then, on 5–7 November, building on the positive synergies created through interdisciplinary, global collaborations, such as the Challenges Forum, the EPON, the GAPO and other partners, Peace Operations Review Week brought together the expert community working on issues related to peace operations and global crisis management. The Week consisted of 16 workshops on a host of issues related to peace operations, all of which were at capacity with member states, UN colleagues, practitioners and other experts. ZIF helped to coordinate the week, was directly involved – as co-organiser, speaker or moderator – in seven events, two of which were hosted by the German Permanent Mission to the UN, and collated the subsequent outcome document, which captured key insights and recommendations for the Review drafters.

In December 2025, ZIF welcomed police officers from UN missions and national police authorities to Berlin. The workshop, organised with UN DPO, focused on defining criteria for success in the area of policing. Together, the 20 participants from the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic and South Sudan, along with their police colleagues from the respective UN missions, developed concrete steps to create indicators for measuring success and to identify and use relevant data sources. In addition, the workshop provided ZIF with an opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of impact measurement in the context of UN peace operations. For ZIF, a strong commitment to an effective UN remains of central importance for ensuring global security.



The founders of the GAPO: Professor Joachim Koops (Global Governance Institute), Dr. Annika Hansen (ZIF), Solomon Dersso (Amani Africa), and Dr. Wibke Hansen (ZIF)—at their information booth during the Peacekeeping Ministerial in Berlin.

# 6

## Opportunities, Risks and Prospects



## 6. Opportunities, Risks and Prospects

It can be assumed that the challenging conditions in which ZIF operates – in particular globally declining financial resources and a shift away from liberal values and international norms – will remain a constant parameter of the foreseeable future. International organisations, as well as internationally operating institutions such as ZIF, must prove themselves in this global transformation – or risk being marginalised.

In doing so, success will depend on creativity, bold reforms, new partnerships and a mental step out of the “comfort zone” of the peace dividend.

An increasing number of citizens views multilateralism and the idea of a rules-based international order as a constraint on national sovereignty and freedom of action. However, the concept of international crisis management is rooted in precisely this order. It enables collectively assumed responsibility, the enforcement of international norms, and the provision of support in crisis and conflict zones. A shift away from cooperation and the erosion of international institutions for conflict resolution therefore clearly represent a risk for ZIF’s “area of business”.



Thinking ahead to shape the future: With this goal in mind, the ZIF’s international advisory board visited Futurium during the annual board meeting 2026 in Berlin.



A ZIF staff member accompanies an EUMA patrol during a mission visit.

In order to counter these trends and rebuild trust, fundamental reforms of international organisations are required: decision-making must become more agile, more representative and more equitable, and outcomes more tangible for those who are the intended beneficiaries – or those who contribute funds.

Reform processes are demanding, often accompanied by resistance, and rarely yield immediate success. As diplomacy teaches us, the mere maintenance of channels of communication is valuable in itself – as is the preservation of capabilities, for example within the UN or the European alliance, which may become critical at decisive moments.

A particular task lies in the formation of new alliances among those “middle powers” that share Germany’s values and objectives. Within its mandate to provide practical support to German foreign policy, ZIF also regards outreach to new partners as both an opportunity and a driving force. Together with our secondees, we are reflecting in a very practical way on [Canadian Prime Minister Carney’s agenda-setting speech](#) in Davos in January 2026 on “variable geometry”, together with our secondees, in relation to our field of work.

Although ZIF has so far not been affected by actual budget cuts, rising personnel costs, increased prices and inflation have constrained financial flexibility and resulted in reduced growth.

Each secondment represents a cost-effective, efficient and visible investment in the soft power of the Federal Republic of Germany, in the active support of international conflict management, and thus in freedom, security and prosperity. Civilian crisis management and military deterrence must be considered together in order to reduce security dependencies and prevent further damage to prosperity caused by conflicts in our world, and to promote a life in dignity for as many people as possible.

In an increasingly fragmented world, Germany – closely anchored in the European alliance – can once again become a shaping and innovative actor: not a bystander, but a driver of change. Breaking up outdated structures, advancing internationalisation, and rethinking security and innovation together. These three areas of action illustrate the need for a paradigm shift domestically. To achieve this, spaces for creativity and disruption must be created, risk-taking enabled, bureaucracy reduced, talent attracted and retained, security-relevant insights strategically integrated, and co-operation between government, academia and business strengthened.

Success stories must be identified, understood, and, wherever possible, applied to other contexts..

This is what ZIF stands for.

**DU FÜR DEMOKRATIE.**

**Wahlen weltweit erleben.  
Als internationale:r Wahlbeobachter:in.**

Bist du politisch neugierig und hast schon bei Wahlen in Deutschland geholfen?  
Bewirb dich im Januar für deine nächste Challenge:  
als internationale:r Wahlbeobachter:in.

Mehr Infos:  SCAN ME

Unser Kontakt: [wfbewerbungsmanagement@zif-berlin.org](mailto:wfbewerbungsmanagement@zif-berlin.org)

**zif** Zentrum für Internationale Friedenseinsätze

To reach new target groups for the ZIF Election Observation Pool, the ZIF launched a poster campaign in late 2025, with the slogan “Du für Demokratie” (“You for Democracy”).

# 7

## Funding



# 7. Funding

2025 budget in EUR

7.382.000

**Institutional**

26.531.000

**Secondments**

200.000

**Third-party funds**

Donor: Federal Foreign Office

8

## Third-party Funded Project



# 8. Third-party Funded Project

## Strengthening Mediation and Dialogue Capacities

**Funding period:** 01/08/2023 – 31/12/2025

**Funding amount:** EUR 824,720.00

**Donor:** Federal Foreign Office

### Objectives

Increasing the effectiveness of (international) mediation and dialogue processes, inter alia through:

- Professionalising mediation procedures by deepening the expertise of relevant actors in the field of peace mediation;
- Promoting knowledge transfer on mediation-related topics and selected contexts between actors engaged in mediation;
- Establishing and expanding strategic partnerships with national and international actors for the implementation of joint training measures and operational expert exchange formats.

### Activities

In its activities, the project worked in 2025 with 19 different national and international institutions, embassies, and civil society actors in order to ...

... systematically build **capacities for effective mediation engagement:**

- Delivering various tailored formats for imparting and deepening the fundamentals of peace mediation within the framework of initial and mid-career training for diplomats, in cooperation with the foreign ministries of selected EU member states as well as other European and non-European countries (including Germany, Switzerland, Finland and the Baltic States).

- Implementing a practice-oriented in-mission training for civilian experts of the Community Outreach Unit of the OSCE Mission in Skopje, as part of a new partnership focusing on dialogue-based mediation work between ethnic communities.
- A total of 211 international participants (48% female) were able, within the framework of six capacity-building activities, to develop and expand their knowledge and expertise of the instrument of peace mediation.

... support **practice-oriented knowledge transfer for resilient peace mediation and peacebuilding:**

- Organising a ZIF Xchange on the role of multipolarity in the future of peace mediation and a workshop on the impacts of the climate crisis on peace mediation, in cooperation with the International Diplomatic Training of the FFO.
- Organising a peer exchange with the EU Group of Friends of Mediation for exchange and peer consultation on the EU's own mediation engagement and that of its member states.
- Expanding thematic project priorities through an online workshop on digital resilience in peacebuilding, in cooperation with the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office.
- In five different exchange formats, around 91 participants (64% female) had the opportunity to exchange good practices on an equal footing and to strengthen networks.



**Impact**

- Participants use mediation and dialogue methods more effectively as foreign policy instruments.
- The project contributed to improved and more systematic knowledge transfer in mediation-relevant subject areas.
- Participants and users of project outputs make more targeted use of innovative approaches and strategic entry points for mediation and dialogue engagement.
- The project has encouraged deeper cooperation between mediation-relevant actors, inter alia through networking and confidential exchange formats.

← The project supported the OSCE Mission in Skopje by building the capacity of the Community Outreach Unit in October 2025.



Promoting exchange: In October 2025, the project hosted a peer exchange with the EU Group of Friends of Mediation in Brussels.

# List of Abbreviations



# List of Abbreviations

<b>ACLED</b>	Armed Conflict Location and Event Data	<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>AG IPM</b>	Working Group for International Police Missions	<b>GHO</b>	Global Humanitarian Overview
<b>AOSIS</b>	Alliance of Small Island States	<b>HDP Nexus</b>	Humanitarian Development Peace Nexus
<b>AU</b>	African Union	<b>HEAT</b>	Hostile Environment Awareness Training
<b>BMI</b>	German Federal Ministry of the Interior	<b>HoM</b>	Head of Mission
<b>BMZ</b>	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development	<b>HQ</b>	Headquarter
<b>CCASCOE</b>	NATO Climate Change and Security Centre of Excellence	<b>KFOR</b>	Kosovo Force
<b>CCC</b>	Comprehensive Core Course	<b>LTO</b>	Long-Term Election Observation
<b>CivOpsHQ</b>	Civilian Operations Headquarters (in the EEAS)	<b>MENA</b>	Middle East and North Africa
<b>CMC Finland</b>	Crisis Management Centre Finland	<b>MSC</b>	Munich Security Conference
<b>CoE</b>	Centre of Excellence for Civilian Crisis Management	<b>NATO</b>	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
<b>CRSV</b>	Conflict-Related Sexual Violence	<b>NORCAP</b>	Norwegian Capacity
<b>CSDP</b>	EU Common Security and Defence Policy	<b>NUPI</b>	Norwegian Institute of International Affairs
<b>DCB</b>	Defence and Related Security Capacity Building	<b>ODIHR</b>	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
<b>DG ENEST</b>	Directorate-General Enlargement and Eastern Neighbourhood	<b>OSCE</b>	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
<b>DHoM</b>	Deputy Head of Mission	<b>PB CoP</b>	Peacebuilding Community of Practice
<b>DPO</b>	Department of Peace Operations (at the UN Secretariat)	<b>PKM</b>	Peacekeeping Ministerial 2025
<b>DPPA</b>	Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (at the UN Secretariat)	<b>PPI</b>	Policy, Partnerships & Innovation
<b>DSRSG</b>	Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General	<b>PSC</b>	Peace and Security Council
<b>EEAS</b>	European External Action Service	<b>SIPRI</b>	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
<b>EPON</b>	Effectiveness of Peace Operations Net-work	<b>SRSR</b>	Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General
<b>EU</b>	European Union	<b>SSR</b>	Security Sector Reform
<b>EUAM</b>	EU Advisory Mission	<b>STO</b>	Short-Term Election Observation
<b>EUBAM Rafah</b>	EU Border Assistance Mission for the Rafah Crossing Point in Israel	<b>TPP</b>	Training Partner Platform
<b>EUCAP Somalia</b>	EU Capacity Building Mission in Somalia	<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>EUFOR Althea</b>	European Union Force Althea	<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>EULEX</b>	EU Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo	<b>UNDSS</b>	UN Department of Safety and Security
<b>EUMA</b>	EU Mission in Armenia	<b>UNHCR</b>	UN High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>EUMM</b>	EU Monitoring Mission in Georgia	<b>UNICEF</b>	UN International Children's Emergency Fund
<b>EU NAVFOR</b>	EU Naval Force	<b>UNIFIL</b>	United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon
<b>EUPM</b>	EU Partnership Mission in Moldova	<b>UNMISS</b>	UN Mission in South Sudan
<b>EUPOL COPPS</b>	EU Police Mission in the Palestinian Territories	<b>UN OCHA</b>	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
<b>EU SDI</b>	EU Security and Defence Initiative in support of West African countries of the Gulf of Guinea	<b>UNSSC</b>	UN System Staff College
<b>EUSR</b>	EU Special Representative	<b>UNU-CPR</b>	United Nations University Centre for Policy Research
<b>FBA</b>	Folke Bernadotte Academy	<b>USD</b>	US dollars
<b>FES</b>	Friedrich Ebert Foundation	<b>WFP</b>	World Food Programme
<b>FFO</b>	Federal Foreign Office	<b>WPS</b>	Women, Peace and Security
<b>FMoD</b>	German Federal Ministry of Defence	<b>XCEPT</b>	Cross-Border Conflict Evidence, Policy and Trends research programme
<b>GAPO</b>	Global Alliance for Peace Operations	<b>YPS</b>	Youth, Peace and Security
		<b>ZIF</b>	Center for International Peace Operations



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A ZIF colleague and a participant at the ZIF side event “Bypassing Geopolitical Blockages: How to Regionalize Crisis Management,” which we hosted together with our Swedish partner SIPRI at the Munich Security Conference.

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