

Meeri-Maria Jaarva

Meeri-Maria Jaarva is the Director of Operations at the Crisis Management Initiative (CMI), a Finnish non-governmental organisation founded by former President Martti Ahtisaari. She joined CMI in September 2000 as assistant, after which she has worked as Programme Director and as adviser to President Ahtisaari in his missions as the Personal Envoy of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office for Central Asia and Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General for the Humanitarian Crisis in the Horn of Africa. During the CMI-mediated Aceh peace talks, Ms Jaarva acted as the Project Manager and the principal adviser to the mediator. Ms Jaarva holds a Master's degree in Political Science from the University of Helsinki.

Crisis Management Initiative (CMI)

Crisis Management Initiative (CMI) is an independent, non-profit organisation that innovatively promotes and works for sustainable security. CMI works to strengthen the capacity of the international community in comprehensive crisis management and conflict resolution. CMI's work builds on wide stakeholder networks. It combines analysis, action and advocacy.

Resolving conflicts by cooperation between Track II actors and regional organisations: the case of Aceh

CMI and the conflict in Aceh

- Background: contacts in early 2004, intensified towards the end of the year
- Negotiation process: five rounds of talks between January and July 2005, signing of the Memorandum of Understanding in August 2005
- CMI's role now: part of the dispute settlement mechanism

Key contributing factors to success

- Political will of the parties
- The skills and resolve of the negotiators
- Right timing
- Multitrack process: flexibility of the NGO facilitator combined with the leverage of the regional organisations and key states
- CMI's consciously limited role: ensuring impartiality and transparency
- Well functioning monitoring mechanism provided by the EU and the five ASEAN countries

Lessons learned from the process

- Commitment of the conflict parties is key. An outside facilitator can help to conduct the negotiations but cannot help if there is not local willingness to find a peaceful solution and to compromise for that.
- The conflict parties have to accept the facilitator and have confidence on the impartiality of the facilitator because building confidence between the parties takes time.

- The starting point of the negotiations was “A peaceful solution with dignity for all.” A workable solution has to be such that neither party to the conflict loses its face in front of its supporters.
- A key element was the principle that nothing is agreed before everything is agreed. This meant that neither party could claim any victories during the process and use media to communicate their constituencies how successful they had been in the negotiations. This gave a space for the negotiators to work.
- It was crucial that the peace agreement was followed by a credible international monitoring mission that ensures that both parties implement their obligations.
- A peace agreement is not an end, it is the beginning. The implementation of the treaty and democratic changes in the society is the true test of the agreement and will take several years.