

PeaceTalks

Addis Ababa

Africa leading for peace - my contribution to peace



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About the Peace Talks

The PeaceTalks is a global initiative that uses storytelling as a tool to build peace and inspire action. The vision of the PeaceTalks is to expand the space for dialogue about building peace and resolving conflict. Building peace is not just the effort and responsibility of technical specialists and officials. In fact, at the PeaceTalks, we believe all members of society play incredibly important roles in shaping peace at home and in their communities.

The core objectives of the PeaceTalks are:

- **DEMONSTRATE** that peaceful solutions to conflict exist all over the world.
- **SHOWCASE** and **AMPLIFY** inspiring stories and what is working to build peace.
- **INSPIRE ACTION** and **EDUCATE** on the role that we each play in promoting peace.

The PeaceTalks was co-founded in 2013 by the United Nations Office at Geneva, the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform and Interpeace, with the support of the Swiss Government. When it comes to conflict resolution, few platforms include a multiplicity of perspectives from all segments of society. The Peace Talks pioneered expanding the conversation beyond the realm of politics and the peacebuilding sector, so that new ideas, voices and creative solutions can emerge. The Peace Talks started in 2013 in Switzerland through the first-ever Geneva Peace Talks. 22 editions of the PeaceTalks live events have taken place in more than 8 countries with over 8,000 in person attendees and 200+ speakers, ranging from elementary school students to a former United Nations Secretary- General.

The Addis Ababa PeaceTalks are co-organized by **Interpeace, the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform (GPP), Amani Africa, and the Swiss Embassy in Ethiopia.**

Programme

16.00-17.00

- Welcome
- **Jean Paul Mugiraneza** – Senior Special Advisor to the President for Peacebuilding and Programme Development, Interpeace
- **Dr. Negusu Aklilu** – Environmental policy expert, climate adaptation practitioner, peacebuilding practitioner and dialogue facilitator, Ethiopia
- **Sarah Ntambwe Kyabu** – Human rights defender and peacebuilder, DRC
- **Aida Elsayed**, Secretary General at the Sudanese Red Crescent

Musical performance by:

- **Nardos Tesfaw**, prominent Azmari singers in Ethiopia
- **Emebet Woldetsdik**, Ethiopian singer and dancer
- **Haymanot Wagnew**, Ethiopian singer, dancer and drummer

The event will be moderated by:

- **Sarah Noble**, PeaceTalks Curator, Interpeace
- **Etenesh Tesfa**, Founder and General Manager of Sew Asset, Ethiopia

Translation French-English PeaceTalk of Sarah Ntambwe Kyabu – Human rights defender and peacebuilder, DRC


At 27 years old, I stand before you, and I imagine you might be wondering:

- So young, how can she be a peacebuilder?
- What has she learned from her journey or her experience, when her country remains a prey to conflict?

You would be right to ask those questions, because I myself would have preferred to choose differently from birth—yes, because it all began there! The day I was born tells a little story that sums up these words: war, refugees. My mother couldn't go to the hospital because bullets were flying everywhere. Traumatized, she waited 11 months before giving birth, and even then it happened suddenly at home. A refugee woman who had come seeking assistance ended up helping deliver me and alerted the neighbors, who then helped us get to the hospital. That's my little story. I believe that unconsciously, my drive to contribute to peace began right there.

At 27, although I do not bear the heavy burden of protecting an entire nation, my 20 years of experience—10 lived unconsciously and the other 10 lived consciously and actively, especially with the most vulnerable—have convinced me of one thing: *"To heal, one must protect rather than inflict one's pain on others."* And believe me, I know what that means. Often broken, I have thought it would be easier to give up—but I refuse. Because I have seen people, thought to be lost, find their way again.

I stand before you today with a deep conviction: that we can transform pain into hope, and the scars of war into a future of peace and solidarity. For the past 10 years, the organization I had the honor to found—**CHANGE YOUR WORLD**—has worked tirelessly in the Great Lakes region, especially in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, my country, to support children who are victims of conflict. These children, in our eyes, are potential future warlords seeking revenge. We work to break the cycle of war and violence born of vengeance.



These children are often invisible victims of war, carrying burdens they never chose.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to share a personal memory from 2018, a moment that led me to make a courageous decision. Beyond my love for children, I once overheard a child vowing to grow up quickly to avenge the death of his father by targeting an entire community. This moment sparked in me a deep desire to break the infernal cycle of war and revenge that has ravaged our region. That decision gave birth to **CHANGE YOUR WORLD**, an organization dedicated to guiding young people and children affected by armed conflict. These youths, often carrying heavy emotional burdens, could easily become unintentional agents of violence through revenge if left unsupported.

Our mission is clear: break these destructive cycles and build lasting peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and beyond, in the Great Lakes region.

Since our beginning, our commitment has been unwavering. “**Le Centre Jour**, advocating sustainable peace,” established in the heart of our region, has become a symbol of hope. We’ve created a safe space where these children and youth can dream, learn, and rebuild—placing them at the very center of the change process.

With the help of local and international partners and devoted volunteers, we have achieved extraordinary work. Among our accomplishments:

- **Social reintegration programs:** Helping young people reconcile with their past and build a future free from violence.
- **Educational initiatives:** Providing access to education and vocational training—essential tools for independence.
- **Community dialogue:** Promoting social cohesion through open and constructive discussions between communities.
- **Mediation efforts:** Organizing advocacy meetings between different parties involved in conflicts.

But our work is far from over. Building lasting peace requires perseverance and collective commitment. Together, we must continue to support our children and youth, show them that a future without violence is possible, and promote regional cohesion to sustainably transform the Great Lakes region into a place where wars and tensions are resolved peacefully, where human rights and environmental protection are priorities, and where dialogue is valued.

I firmly believe that every life saved, every spark of hope brought, is a victory against war. By joining forces, we can truly change our world.

Thank you deeply for your support, your presence, and your commitment. Together, let's make this dream a reality.

**Your humble servant of peace,
SARAH KYABU NTAMBWE**

Speakers

(in order of appearance)

Jean Paul Mugiraneza

Jean Paul Mugiraneza is the Senior Special Advisor to the President for Peacebuilding and Programme Development. With over 22 years of experience in public service, governance, and peacebuilding across the Great Lakes region, West Africa, and Europe, he brings deep expertise in institutional development and post-conflict recovery. Formerly Regional Director for Interpeace in Eastern and Central Africa, he led strategic program oversight across Somalia, Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi, and the DRC. A native of Rwanda, Jean Paul holds a Bachelor of Law from the National University of Rwanda and a Master's in Public Administration from the University of Quebec. Following the Genocide against the Tutsi, he played a key role in rebuilding decentralized governance systems. He has served as Executive Secretary of Rwanda's National Decentralization Secretariat, chaired the Political Commission in Kigali City Council, and sat on the National AIDS Commission board. He has also lectured in Social and Constitutional Law.



Dr. Negusu Aklilu

PhD Negusu Aklilu is an environmental policy expert, climate adaptation practitioner, turned to peacebuilding practitioner and dialogue facilitator. He holds a doctoral degree from University of Massachusetts, Boston, specializing in the socio-environmental dimensions of China-Africa partnership, and is a Yale Fellow. He has founded and coordinated Destiny Ethiopia Initiative that conducted national transformative scenario planning in 2019 with 50 influential and insightful leaders, who drew four scenarios of possible futures for Ethiopia, namely, Broken Chair, Hegemony,



Divided House, and Dawn. He also co-initiated the Multi-stakeholder Initiative for National Dialogue (MIND), a consortium of eight local organizations, which laid foundation for the launch of national dialogue process in Ethiopia. Negusu designed and facilitated dialogues among actors such as historians, youth, women, media professionals, activists, religious and cultural leaders, justice professionals, and political parties. Negusu aspires to transform political culture in Ethiopia by championing open dialogue, reconciliation, pragmatic collaboration, impartiality, and inclusivity.

Sarah Ntambwe Kyabu

Born in Goma in 1996, is a beacon of hope in the war-torn eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. Affectionately known as “Maman Sarah,” she is a dedicated human rights defender and peacebuilder. As the founder of “Change Your World,” Sarah’s innovative “Day Center” approach has transformed the lives of over 3,000 street children and war victims, helping them reintegrate into society.



In 2024, she took her advocacy to the UN Security Council, where she briefed members on the Great Lakes region, emphasizing dignity and regional cohesion. Her initiatives have positively impacted more than 13,000 women and children affected by conflict, providing essential support. Sarah has also been involved in high-level peace processes, including the Nairobi talks. Her relentless dedication has earned her multiple accolades, including recognition from the UN Security Council and the title “Young Hope of the DRC,” symbolizing the resilience of Congo’s youth.

Aida Elsayed

Aida Sayed Abdallah, was appointed Secretary General of the Sudanese Red Crescent Society, in November 3, 2022, to provide Management and leadership to the Sudanese Red Crescent Transformation Process. This included ensuring an efficient Management team both at SRCS Headquarters and 18 Branches. Ensure efficiency in all Finance, Programmes, and Operations as well as strengthening both internal RCRC Movements cooperation and external Collaboration and partnership, with UN and other National and International Organizations



From the onset of the war in Sudan, through her Leadership and guidance from the SRCS Governance lead by SRCS President, the SRCS mobilized all its 18 Branches and over 40,000 Volunteers to respond to the humanitarian need of the affected Sudanese population. To date the SRCS is able to operate in areas where fighting is ongoing, as well as all other states receiving IDPs.

Aida Sayed, has been a staff of Sudanese RC for over 30 years. She joined SRCS as Head of Community Health, a programmes that included establishment and management of the Primary Health Care. She is a holder a degree on Nutrition from the Ahfad University, Omdurman.

Musical performance by:

Nardos Tesfaw

Nardos Tesfaw is one of the most prominent Azmari singers in Ethiopia today. Originally from Gondar, Ethiopia, she has a singing career that spans 25 years, with the most recent 17 years with Fendika Cultural Center in Addis Ababa. Nardos is known for her golden voice as well as her command of lyric improvisation. She has recorded original songs, and has traveled all around the world with Fendika. The U.S., the Netherland, Belgium, France, Denmark, Sweden, Austria, Qatar, Abu Dhabi, Hungary, Morocco, Israel, Germany, Switzerland, Norway, Japan, India are some of the countries Nardos has performed in as a lead soloist of Fendika. She is the most sought-out Azmari singers for local and international collaboration, and has collaborated with Fantu Mandoye (Ethiopia), Tadele Bekele (Ethiopia), Daniel Lema (Sweden), Arat Kilo (France), Daniel Lemma (Sweden), Fendika/Trio Kazanchis (Switzerland), the Ex (the Netherlands), Large Unit (Norway), and many other musicians and bands. Her songs are included in recordings Fendika, Bira Biro (Ethiocolor), Fendika and Large Unit, and Gojo. She is the subject of the documentary Stand Up, My Beauty! (2021)



Emebet Woldetsdik

Emebet Woldetsdik is an Ethiopian singer and dancer based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. She has developed her singing talent through the tutoring and mentoring of renowned Azmari singers such as Nardos Tesfaw and Abeba Abhoy, and musician Robel Solomon. Emebet was one of the featured young vocalists in the 2018 Felega Festival, an Azmari music festival funded by the International Fund for Promotion of Cultures, UNESCO. Her songs are included in recordings Fendika and Large Unit, and Gojo.



As a dance artist, Emebet trained and performed with Melaku Belay and the Ethiopian National Theater. Emebet regularly performs with Ethiocolor as a dancer and a vocalist. She improvises traditional Ethiopian dance movement to Ethiopian Jazz music by Negarit. Emebet has performed in the Netherland, Belgium, France, Hungary, Qatar, Morocco, Israel, the US, Sweden, Switzerland, Norway, and Japan.

Haymanot Wagnew

Haymanot Wagnew is an Ethiopian singer, dancer and drummer originally from Gondar and currently based in Addis Ababa. She emerged as a young talent during the 2018 Felega Festival, an Azmari music festival funded by the International Fund for Promotion of Cultures, UNESCO. She has since worked as an artist at Fendika Cultural Center and discovered her unique and multifaceted artistry.



Co Master of Ceremonies

Sarah Noble

Sarah Noble is a Canadian-born peace advocate based in Geneva, Switzerland, with over 20 years of experience in strategic communications, fundraising, and partnerships across global peacebuilding and humanitarian sectors. She is the Curator and co-founder of PeaceTalks at Interpeace, where she has led impactful events across multiple countries to amplify voices for peace. A passionate believer in storytelling as a catalyst for healing and social transformation,



she emphasizes its role in addressing global challenges. In her TEDx talk, *Storytelling is Our Real-Life Superpower*, she explores how narratives can inspire change and shape a more hopeful future. Sarah also serves as Head of Global Engagement at the Caux Initiatives of Change Foundation, focusing on inner development and the intersection of arts and peace. She is also the proud mom of two young children and is deeply motivated by a desire to be a good ancestor.

Etenesh Tesfa

Etenesh Tesfa is a dynamic Ethiopian master trainer, moderator, and master of ceremony with over 15 years of experience in leadership training, adult learning, and team development. She holds a Master’s degree in Leadership and a Bachelor’s in Foreign Languages and Literature from Addis Ababa University, complemented by more than 30 professional certifications in facilitation, behavior management, and soft skills. Etenesh has worked across diverse sectors, including corporate training, multi-level marketing, and consultancy. She has held leadership roles such as Training and Development Manager at Minaye PLC and Eco-System Manager at E-Within.



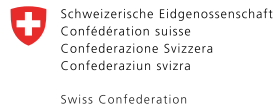
Currently, she is the founder and general manager of Sew Asset training and consulting firm, where she designs and delivers impactful training programs for organizations.

She is a skilled MC, she has led high-level events including national dialogues. Etenesh is recognized for her engaging presence, storytelling talent, and commitment to empowering communities through knowledge and connection.

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