

What Do We Stand For?

The Federation for Social Defence (German: “Bund für Soziale Verteidigung”, BSV) is an independent non-governmental organization based in Germany. The BSV stands for the development of peaceful alternatives to war, armed violence and the military. Our **objective** is to create a global community without war or violence, with social, political, ecological and economic justice. Conflicts should be solved nonviolently, without military means.



Annual conference of BSV 2015 in Heidelberg, discussing conflict transformation.

The BSV

The BSV is embedded in the national as well as the international peace building community. Its office is situated in Minden (North Rhine-Westphalia), where three part-time employees and one or two interns are working. A seven-headed board leads and guides their work. The BSV has currently about 450 members, including 40 organisations. About 1,000 - 1,500 people support the BSV regularly with their donations. A quarterly newsletter is read by 5,500 readers. The BSV is financed mostly by donations; some projects are financed by grants of foundations or state programmes.

What Do We Do?

Our specific work is divided up into the **three following fields**: 1. nonviolent intervention in international crises, 2. pacifism, criticism of the military and nonviolent alternatives, and 3. education for a nonviolent society. Within these fields we seek to realise our objectives by means of diverse strategies and methods. This takes place on different social levels – from school to international politics.

A focus lies on the publication of analyses and background-papers of actual conflicts. Regularly we organize conferences and symposiums about different specific topics.

Nonviolent Intervention in International Crises...

... refers to our international projects. For many years, we have been supporting different civil rights organisations and projects, e.g. in Belarus. This work includes:

- cooperation with partner organizations
- assistance and support with campaigns, action strategy or acquisition of financial resources
- political consulting, meetings and mediation

Earlier, important projects we have been involved with were the international Balkan Peace Team in the 1990s and a peace service project in Palestine in the 2000s.

Pacifism, Criticism of the Military and Nonviolent Alternatives...

... concentrates on the promotion of alternatives to military and campaigning against armament and wars. We do this by:

- participation in specific campaigns and actions of the peace movement
- conducting campaigns of our own, for example initiating a lobby campaign on Unarmed Civilian Peacekeeping
- development and presentation of alternative concepts to military and armament
- advocacy work on peace and human rights issues.

Education for a nonviolent society...

... aims at educating school children, teenagers and young adults in nonviolent means of dealing with conflicts. Our focuses lie on:

- work in schools (dispute settlement, anti-bullying)
- training activities for teachers
- material for extracurricular youth work
- For the future we plan to produce and provide graphical novels or videos and develop a simulation game.

Furthermore we are active in adult education with publications or events about our topics.



Nonviolent blockade of nuclear missiles in Büchel 2013.

Which Are Our Main Achievements?

- Publishing numerous papers about social defence, civil conflict transformation, nonviolent intervention, pacifism and resistance against the military and mediation programmes at schools
- Successful advocacy-work for the establishment of instruments of nonviolent conflict transformation by the German government, in particular the Civil Peace Service
- (Co-)initiating the campaign “Germany without army” (late 1980s)
- Supporting the dialogue between ethnic groups in conflict and the protection of human rights (Croatia, Serbia, Kosovo with the Balkan Peace Team which we co-founded)

- Introduction of the concept of Civilian Peacekeeping into the German discourse
- Organizing annual conferences and expert meetings on various topics, for example:
 - 2014 and 2015 on *Unarmed Civilian Peacekeeping*
 - *State of the Art of Civil Conflict Transformation (2015)*
 - *Peace is an Art (2019)*

Networking internationally

The BSV is a member of several national and international networks and organisations in order to gain more powers and possibilities in advocacy-work:

- *War Resisters' International* (wri-irg.org), a worldwide network of anti-militarist and pacifist groups. The BSV became a section of WRI in 2013 and signed its declaration.
- *Nonviolent Peaceforce Alliance* (www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org). The BSV supported the founding process of Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) since its beginning around the turn of the century. In 2014, the former member organisations of NP formed an Alliance to support the work of NP.
- *German Platform for Peaceful Conflict Management* (konfliktbearbeitung.net), is the name of a network of German organisations active in the field of peace building. The platform focuses on advocacy work and networking among its members
- *Cooperation for Peace* (koop-frieden.de), is an umbrella of German peace organisations, exchanging and coordinating activities of the German peace movement.



Alternatives to Military and Violence

The following four nonviolent concepts are the basis of our work.

Nonviolent Conflict Transformation

The aim of nonviolent conflict transformation is to prevent wars and violence and to end violent confrontations as well as to restore security and remove the causes successfully and in a sustainable manner. Nonviolent conflict transformation does not only take place internationally, but is an issue and task within our own society as well.

Civil Resistance and Nonviolent Actions

Nonviolent conflict transformation does not mean the avoidance of conflicts. We support nonviolent struggles of the peace movement and other social movements for justice, peace and environment.

Social Defence (or: Civilian-based Defence)

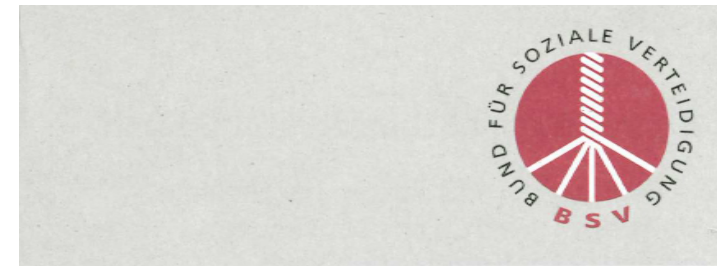
The concept of Social Defence includes the development and use of nonviolent, non-military means to repel violent assaults. Defence in this context refers to the preservation of life and the opportunities for social change as well as the pacifist resistance to oppression, exploitation and military violence on a global level.

Unarmed Civilian Peacekeeping/Protection

The civilian population, the non-combatants are those who often suffer most from war. Hence the need to protect civilians is an urgent task. In many situations, this protection can be provided by other civilians - teams of trained unarmed peacekeepers who establish and maintain a presence in conflict zones. The BSV campaigns for public attention to and the political acceptance of this approach.

For more information, please consult our website:

<http://www.soziale-verteidigung.de/english/> or write to us at info@soziale-verteidigung.de.



FEDERATION FOR SOCIAL DEFENCE

transform conflicts non-violently – abolish military and armament

Who we are -

What we stand for

**- Transform conflicts nonviolently!
Abolish military and armament! -**

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