

**22<sup>nd</sup> Käte Hamburger Dialogue****Peace- and Statebuilding in Afghanistan: Partial Success or Predictable Failure?****Tuesday, 19<sup>th</sup> October 2021 (18:00-19:30, CEST)****Online Event** via Zoom – Access will be provided after registration.

*Jointly organized by the Käte Hamburger Kolleg / Centre for Global Cooperation Research and Bonn International Centre for Conflict Studies (BICC), in cooperation with the Institute for Development and Peace (INEF), University of Duisburg-Essen*

After the attacks of 09/11 in 2001, an alliance of countries under NATO leadership intervened in Afghanistan. In the narrower sense, the mission was to combat al-Qaeda terrorism. However, this goal was incorporated into a larger project: the attempt to build state and civil society structures under the framework of peacebuilding in a fragmented state that had suffered under Taliban rule for the past five years and had previously been engaged in a devastating war.

With the inglorious withdrawal of Western states in the summer of 2021 and the rapid seizure of power by the Taliban, the project of peace- and statebuilding seems not only to have failed in Afghanistan but to be disavowed as an instrument of global politics in war-torn countries. In the public debate, the number of voices that considered state-building, democratization or even nation-building to be an aberration has quickly increased.

Is this scepticism justified? Or do political observers threaten to throw out the baby with the bathwater after the experiences in Afghanistan? A panel of international experts is addressing this question. Particularly, it discusses the following aspects:

- a) What mistakes did the international community of states make at the beginning of the mission? At which junctures was the wrong direction chosen?
- b) Were the Taliban underestimated as former rulers as well as now as the new ones? Should they have earlier been accepted as negotiation partners? How would an inclusive peace settlement have looked like?
- c) From the outset, should the state-building have focused on core functions? What would have been the role of the state budget, which helps determine the state's legitimacy and capacity? Did the heavy external aid primarily contribute to corruption and self-enrichment among the elites?
- d) Where have achievements been made in human rights and especially women's rights? Are these advancements now completely threatened, or can some standards be preserved under the Taliban's new rule?