

PRESS RELEASE

**INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF IFOR
HELD IN JUBA, SOUTH SUDAN, NOVEMBER 14-20, 2022**

The quadrennial International Council of the International Fellowship for Reconciliation (IFOR) was held at the Guest House of the Episcopal Church of South Sudan (ECSS), in Juba, from November 14 to 20, 2022, alongside a Public Conference.

The International Council was preceded by a **Public conference** held from November 12 to 13, 2022, under the theme: ***"Armed Conflicts and Peaceful Transitions in Africa: Lessons from Southern Sudan and around the World"***. This event was attended by political, administrative and religious authorities, activists from civil society organizations in South Sudan and international organizations, and the general public. This conference pointed the fact that the African continent is today the most affected by recurrent armed conflicts with consequences that may delay the development of that part of the world. Nevertheless, amidst the ashes of violence, suffering and tears that have no colour or borders, there are more and more signs of hope for ***another version of Africa, "... free, prosperous and integrated into the international community, where conflicts are transformed in a non-violent manner, and where justice, social harmony and peace reign"***.

As a prelude to the International Council, on the morning of November 14th, IFOR members in Africa held their **first Inter-African Meeting**.

The **International Council** (IFOR's supreme body) that followed was historic: for the first time in IFOR's more than 100 years of existence, it was held in Africa. In a hybrid format, its 60 delegates evaluated the progress made from 2018 to 2022 by its members and bodies, and appreciated the work accomplished, especially under often difficult conditions in Africa and South America. They expressed great concerns about our current context characterised by major crises and armed conflicts such as in the Great Lakes countries and the Sahel in Africa, Ukraine, etc. Faced with the many challenges of injustice and violence that threaten cohesion and peace in our world, although sometimes implemented by humble initiatives, it remains that nonviolence is the most credible way to defend the sacred gift of life, safeguard peace, promote human dignity, and protect the environment against climate change. Conscious of the common destiny of human beings, IFOR therefore reaffirms its commitment to pursue with greater determination, in solidarity with other actors, its mission in the service of reconciliation, justice and peace through nonviolence.

The Council therefore **set up Working Groups, adopted resolutions and recommendations**, including the implementation of a Strategic Action Plan in Africa for the years 2022 to 2027 entitled "Promoting Non-Violence, Reconciliation, Democracy and Peace in Africa", measures within the framework of the "Common Security Initiative 2022 and those on the right to conscientious objection to military service, as well as reflection on the future vision of IFOR, etc.

It also nominated a **new International Committee** (Board) to work for the next four years. **President:** Zoughbi-Zoughbi (Wi'am Palestine); **Co-Vice-Presidents:** Jean Pierre Massamba (MIR Congo) and Christian Renoux (MIR France); **Treasurer:** Christiane Lohse (FOR Germany); **Members:** Ariel Gold and Susan Smith (FOR USA -sharing seat-), Ruhi Das (BASTOB Bangladesh), Blas Garcia (SERPAJ Latin America).

It also appointed regional representatives to the **Representatives Advisory Committee**.

The participants gave thanks to God who is above all powers for so the many seeds of hope sown on African soil such as in South Sudan, a country undergoing political transition. They expressed their sincere thanks to the Government of the country, and its President Dr Salva Kiir, for all the facilities provided, to the Primate of the Province of the Episcopal Church of South Sudan (ECSS) and the Metropolitan Bishop of the Diocese of Juba, the Reverend Dr. Justin Badi Arama, and to the leaders of the other religious communities and their faithful for their participation and support.

Juba, November 20th 2022