

Reconciled

IFOR Newsletter

October, 2021



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“Militaries and the industries that support them can no longer be viewed as exceptional and must take urgent and significant action to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and environmental footprint.”

Military Pollution, Page 13.

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Introduction

Dear IFOR community and friends,

Tempus fugit! Somewhat later than hoped (a first draft of this introduction having been written over the summer) and nearly three years after our gathering in Sicily, we bring you a fresh issue of *Reconciled*. Whilst the coronavirus is still evolving around the world, and the vaccines to counter it are being (unequally) administered, IFOR's work and that of its BGAs in search of a fairer world, likewise continues to develop.

Our news from around the branches in this edition encompasses Austria, England and Scotland, India, Italy, the USA and Zimbabwe. There is also information from African and Asian IFOR regions. We are grateful for all the updates sent in for this bulletin. IFOR branches have also been coordinating around the issue of the climate and, as a result of an initiative taken in the 'Monday meetings' (IFOR members who have been regularly meeting online on Mondays since the beginning of the pandemic, open to all), three webinars have taken place, in which have been heard the voices of FOR members actively engaging with local circumstances across all the continents. Furthermore, an IFOR Global Day of Action on the topic took place on 30th October, just as this bulletin was being finalised. We feature a piece on this initiative, and we bring you up to speed with our work at the UN, which has also included a successful edition of the Introduction to the UN Week, postponed from 2020.

From ICOM, we are pleased to share the following news with you. Though there are some clouds on the horizon for 2022, a positive financial result last year (including in part as a result of a generous legacy from the Peter Glusker Living Trust, recently fully disbursed) means that we have been in a position to look beyond the stabilisation of IFOR's finances, important as they are and will remain. This has taken three

principal forms. Firstly, we have asked Zaira Zafarana to dedicate a part of her time to rebuilding some of the international coordination capacity lost when Lucas Johnson vacated his post and our financial situation became acute. This work is to be undertaken alongside the duties of the coordinator of the UN and conscientious objection project. Our thinking and progress on this has been recorded in previously-shared minutes of meetings (of which, at the time of writing, a couple are outstanding), but we will communicate separately on this point in the near future. We thank Zaira for all her hard work, including her contributions to this bulletin.

Our longer-term hope – one that will nevertheless be for a future ICOM to address – would be for the International Coordinator post to be fully reinstated. This is one of a number of items addressed in the vision document that ICOM has prepared, and this is the second way in which we have been looking to the future. The vision takes a 15-year view as to the future of the International Fellowship. While preparatory work was undertaken in ExCom and ICOM last year, in February we put the document out for consultation. We are grateful to those branches that have given this their serious consideration. We know of a couple of other still-outstanding responses, but we would be glad to receive any considered feedback. Please send this to vision@ifor.org, or direct an email to the same address if your branch has not yet seen a copy. The next steps will be to incorporate all of this feedback into the draft that was shared in February.

Finally, we have been moving forward towards the Juba IFOR Council and public event, scheduled for early November 2022. We are currently working on the basis of an in-person event, though public health and/or the security situation will be taken into account at all stages. Other options include a hybrid- or fully online

event, and/or migrate to a different country/continent. ICOM is keeping an open mind on this, while encouraging the groundwork being undertaken for South Sudan. We are grateful to our branch there, ONAD, for their diligent preparatory work, and to Matt Meyer, chair of IFOR's Financial Advisory committee, who, with his extensive contacts, is working from a financial and coordination perspective. ICOM is currently in the process of forming a Council Preparation Committee (CPC) to take forward the specifically Council-related aspects of Juba 2022. If anyone would like to be part of this essential work, please let ExCom (excom@ifor.org) know.

In this same connection, the increasing proximity of our next IFOR gathering has seen the branches around the African IFOR region begin to mobilise, and indeed their plans are featured in the news shared in this bulletin. In particular, they plan to come together in Brazzaville next February to better coordinate their efforts. We wish them well for that meeting! If BGAs have suggestions for themes that the public conference could address, please email ExCom and they will be passed on.

We also mourn the loss of five giants of nonviolence from the Fellowship who have died in the period since the last edition of *Reconciled* was published: Rev. Richard Deats and Liza Smith, both from the US; and Alain Richard OFM and Fr. Alfred Bour of France. Richard Deats's obituary is taken from that sent out by FOR USA at the time, and Liza is remembered by some of those who served on the international accompaniment programme in Colombia, today FOR Peace Presence, of which Liza was a staff member for many years. By the same token, we honour the memory of Alain Richard, close to many around the IFOR and beyond, and founder of the Circles of Silence, who also died in June at the age of 97. We also reproduce Christian Renoux's words in commemoration of Fr. Alfred. As we were finalising this edition, news reached us of the death of Henk Blom, an active member of Kerk en Vrede. He is remembered here by Roel Meihuizen. May they all rest in peace and those who mourn them be comforted.

On a happier note, word has reached us that SERPAJ has launched a new bulletin (in Spanish), published three times a year. Keep an eye on the SERPAJ Facebook page for future (and past!) issues. In December, SERPAJ will hold an online assembly, where changes to continental leadership will be made. We wish them well for that, and also want to congratulate IFOR Austria on their centenary celebrations that will be held in November. Our thanks, too, to Iskra for her work on this bulletin, including its new design, and to Roel for his ongoing work on the books.

In the churches, we have received a message from Antje Heider-Rottwilm at Church and Peace, who has asked us to circulate an appeal to the World Council of Churches, for the members churches to consider their position, in the run-up to their next Assembly to be held at Karlsruhe in 2022,, on Just Peace, nuclear weapons, arms exports and military budgets. The petition can be found in English, French and German here: <https://www.ohne-ruestung-leben.de/friedensappell2022/>. Individual branches may wish to sign it. IFOR has already done so, and is now preparing a response to the call for side workshops at the Assembly under the theme of 'Brunnen' (wellsprings), by submitting an outline for a session on nonviolence. We thank John Cooper of FOR England and Scotland for drawing this to our attention, and for his collaboration.

And with that, we shall close. Please continue to look after yourselves, and feel free to be in touch on any matters that draw your attention. We wish everyone a peaceful and productive end to the year.

On behalf of ICOM, peace and all good,
Blas García Noriega and Peter Cousins,
IFOR Vice-Presidents.

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International Updates

IFOR Public Statements

Western Sahara

Statement on the U.S. Recognition of Moroccan Sovereignty over Western Sahara

On this day, December 14th 2020, which marks the 60th anniversary of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples,¹ IFOR is issuing a statement on the recent developments regarding the conflict in Western Sahara.

The International Fellowship of Reconciliation (IFOR) was founded over 100 years ago, and at the heart of the fellowship is the steadfast belief in multilateralism as a way to engage within the international community.

On December 10th, President Donald Trump issued a proclamation stating that the United States will recognize Moroccan sovereignty over Western Sahara.² A departure from decades of U.S. policy, the move follows last month's breakdown of the nearly 30-year ceasefire between Morocco and Western Sahara and the resumption of hostilities.

In 1991, the United Nations and the international community made a promise to the Saharawi people that a referendum would be organized, and that they freely and fairly would get to decide their own fate. 30 years later, that promise remains unfulfilled. Neither renewed fighting nor unilateral moves that disregard international law absolves the international community of this promise. On the contrary, it highlights the urgency of finally implementing the right to self-determination. Saharawi organizations have long sounded the alarm about the consequenc-

es of continued inaction and the eroding trust in the international community that follows.³

The initial reactions to the U.S. Administration's announcement have been somewhat encouraging, with many countries denouncing the move. IFOR calls on all UN Member States to also act collectively in demonstrating their commitment to abide by international law and to be accountable for the implementation of fundamental rights. In 2017, following the Trump administration's announcement that the U.S. would recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel – another example of unilateral action that disregarded international law – the UN General Assembly held an emergency special session and decisively backed a resolution that rejected the move.⁴ Such action is again appropriate and necessary to reaffirm the primacy of international law.

With the current administration on its way out, it is also imperative that the new leadership in the U.S. act. IFOR urges President-Elect Biden to, immediately upon taking office, reverse the Trump administration's decision and reaffirm the principles of international law, as the foundation for settling international conflicts, and multilateralism to strengthen international cooperation.

Further, IFOR calls once more for the UN Secretary-General António Guterres to immediately appoint a new UN Personal Envoy for Western Sahara⁵. The vacancy at this position, and the continued wait of a credible path to a peaceful resolution, leaves the door open for the kind of negative developments seen in the last month.

1. *General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960.* <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/Independence.aspx>
2. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/proclamation-recognizing-sovereignty-kingdom-morocco-western-sahara/>
3. *Open Letter to the UN Secretary General on the 45th Anniversary of the Western Sahara Conflict, released on November 14th by NOVA, a local non-violent Saharawi youth organization.*
4. *General Assembly resolution 11995 of 21 Decem-*
5. *IFOR Statement on the current situation in Western Sahara, released on November 13th 2020.* <http://www.ifor.org/news/2020/11/13/ifor-statement-on-the-current-situation-in-western-sahara>

Israel-Palestine

A fresh armed confrontation has emerged in the ongoing Israel-Palestine conflict. In this region, however, history is never far away. This month marks the 73rd anniversary of the creation of Israel following the adoption of the United Nations General Assembly Resolution n. 181 (1947),¹ and the following a so-called “Nakba” of 1947-48, where thousands of Palestinians lost their homes. This is still ongoing through forcible transfer, houses demolition, land grabbing and threats of further annexation of occupied land.

It is in this light that the current re-escalation of violence must be seen. Israeli authorities planned to evict Palestinian residents in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood of East Jerusalem - which Israel has annexed, even though it is occupied territory under international law - and transfer their homes to Israel settlers, Palestinians held demonstrations around East Jerusalem and Israeli forces responded by firing teargas, stun grenades, and rubber-coated steel bullets, including a violent attack against worshipers during Ramadan inside al-Aqsa Mosque.² Hamas has launched rockets into Israel, and the Israeli army responded with a massive military action in Gaza which has been under blockade since 2007 and where the pre-existing humani-

tarian situation is extremely fragile.³

The International Fellowship of Reconciliation (IFOR) was founded over 100 years ago in response to the horrors of the First World War. Since then, IFOR has taken a consistent stance against war and its preparation. When people, organizations and state institutions commit themselves to peace, war can be prevented, conflicts transformed through nonviolent means and systems that foster fear and hatred dismantled. When truth and justice are restored, reconciliation and healing can take place and lasting peace can be established.

IFOR condemns all armed actions against civilians and civilian targets by the Israeli military and Hamas. Violence only leads to more violence. We mourn for all victims and their families.

The decades-long pattern of injustice, and violations of international law and fundamental rights has become unsustainable and inhumane.

IFOR welcomes this morning announcement of a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas.

IFOR supported the call for a ceasefire by the UN Secretary General, during the Security Council meeting held on May 16;⁴ the UN chief stressed

that the only way forward is to return to negotiations towards a two-State solution. Regrettably, the USA has reportedly blocked UNSC statements -for the third time in a week- that condemned Israel's military response and called for a ceasefire.⁵

The international community should be responsible for ensuring that there are no double standards when it comes to international law and human rights violations. While it shunned Hamas fifteen years ago, at the height of the 'war on terrorism', Israel has not honored UN General Assembly Resolution n. 194 (1948)⁶, nor has it complied with scores of the UN Security Council Resolutions including n. 242 (1967) and n. 338 (1973) calling for its withdrawal from the West Bank, including the illegal annexation of East Jerusalem and the Golan. Further UN Security Council Resolutions have also gone unheeded, including n. 2334 (2016), calling for the dismantlement of its settlements in "Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem", which constitute a "flagrant violation" of international humanitarian law and have "no legal validity". These resolutions implore Israel to stop settlement activities, dismantle the settlements, and fulfill its obligations as an occupying power under the Fourth Geneva Convention, which prohibits an occupying power from transferring its population into the land it is occupying. Currently, more than 675,000 Israelis are living in contravention of these resolutions, in settlements across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

The persistent, uneven application of international law should be a matter of the greatest urgency to governments around the world. As things stand, civil society fills the gap, expressing its concerns in ever sharper terms. Last month, Human Rights Watch issued a report denouncing Israel for apartheid and persecution.

As the cycle of violence increases, IFOR takes heart from and highlights the value of nonviolent actions such as civil disobedience, boycott and non-collaboration; we report, for instance, the courage of the young Israelis who refuse to serve in the military not to support the occu-

pation⁷ and the dockworkers refusing to load weapons onto ships bound for Israel not to support war⁸. Many in Israeli civil society and Jewish communities around the world⁹ denounce the human rights violations and support various nonviolent initiatives. We have also seen Palestinians running several nonviolent initiatives, insisting on a peaceful solution, refusing to no longer accept the violence and the destruction caused by the ongoing conflict.

IFOR calls on the governments in the region and around the world to assume their responsibility in upholding international law, contributing to a peaceful solution and considering the impact of their role in supplying weapons to the region, and thus backing armed confrontation and maintaining structural violence. IFOR calls on the Member States of the UN Security Council and the entire international community to support peace negotiations under UN supervision and to ensure the implementation of International law and Justice, in Israel and Palestine.

1. *A/RES/181 (II)* [https://undocs.org/A/RES/181\(II\)](https://undocs.org/A/RES/181(II))
2. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/05/11/jerusalem-gaza-israeli-authorities-reassert-domination>
3. <https://www.un.org/unispal/humanitarian-situation-in-the-gaza-strip-fast-facts-ocha-factsheet/>
4. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/05/1092042>
5. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/5/17/no-us-action-after-third-uns-c-meeting-on-israel-palestine>
6. *A/RES/194 states the "Right to return" for Palestinian refugees.* <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/document/ip-ares-194.php>
7. <https://www.972mag.com/sixty-teens-israeli-army-objectors/>
8. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/israel-palestine-arms-livorno-port-italy-b1848773.html>
9. *Including dozens of Jewish organizations such as B'Tselem, Jewish Voice for Peace, American Jews for a Just Peace, Gush Shalom, the New Israel Fund, the Movement for Reform and Progressive Judaism, the orthodox Neturei Karta.*

IFOR at the UN

Since the outbreak of the pandemic many activities at the United Nations have been affected, in particular some scheduled meetings have been postponed and for other initiatives the remote mode has been adopted. This has been the case in the main UN premises.

In Vienna there has been thus no particular activity in presence and IFOR participated in the regular online meetings of the NGO Committee on Peace.

Grand expectations are set on the upcoming **1st Meeting of the State Parties to the Treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons** (TPNW) which will be held in Vienna on 22-24 March 2022.

In New York, IFOR attended to the **65th session of the Commission on the Status of Women** from 15 to 26 March 2021. CSW65 took place in a hybrid format with mostly virtual meetings. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw65-2021>

In view of the upcoming **10th Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons** which will be held in New York on 4 - 28 January 2022, IFOR joined other concerned NGOs, such as ICAN, in a letter to the UN Office of Disarmament Affairs to ask for NGO access to the UN premises.

In Geneva, UN Human Rights headquarters, the sessions of the **Human Rights Council (HRC)** did not have any delay and, at some point, have been conducted with some in person restrictions. The contribution of civil society at the HRC has been ensured through virtual participation and IFOR has actively participated, likewise in the sessions of the **Human Rights Committee (HRCttee)**.

On December 18th 2020, IFOR participated in the **45th HRC "Oral presentation of the report on the situation of human rights in Ukraine"**.

IFOR took the floor and expressed concern regarding the right to conscientious objection

in Ukraine and referred to the case of the pacifist journalist, Ruslan Kotsaba, who has already spent 524 days in jail for an anti-war video posted in 2015 and titled "I refuse to mobilize".

All details are available here: <https://www.ifor.org/news/2021/1/26/ifor-speaks-at-the-un-human-rights-council-on-the-right-to-conscientious-objection-in-ukraine>

During the **46th HRC**, which took place in February-March this year, IFOR delivered several statements addressing issues such as conscientious objection to military service calling for an "immediate and unconditional release of all imprisoned conscientious objectors, civil disobedience, SDGs 2030, nuclear disarmament, criminalization of solidarity and referred to local concerning situation in countries such as Belarus, Colombia, Eritrea, Hong Kong, Myanmar, Singapore, Tajikistan, Turkey and Western Sahara.

IFOR spoke in the plenary on human rights defenders and addressed the case of Buenaventura in Colombia, with the collaboration of FOR Peace Presence.

Another statement highlighted the tragedy of the Eritrean refugees in the Tigray region and the Eritrean indefinite National Service.

IFOR also joined a call to the UN member States to "MOVE THE MONEY OUT OF MILITARY, TO FOOD" and a statement on the violation of human rights of migrants and refugees in the Balkan Route.

More details are available here: <https://www.ifor.org/news/2021/5/4/recap-of-ifor-participation-in-the-46th-un-human-rights-council>

At the **47th HRC** in June-July, IFOR participated in the Interactive Dialogue on human rights in Ukraine and delivered an oral statement in the plenary highlighting violations to the Right to conscientious objection to military service in Ukraine and referring the case of the pacifist journalist Ruslan Kotsaba who is again under tri-

al because he expressed opposition to the military mobilization for armed conflict in eastern Ukraine and recently, on June 25th, has been victim of an attack with a chemical substance by a far-right group.

More details are available here: <https://www.ifor.org/news/2021/7/13/ifor-speaks-on-refuse-to-war-and-conscientiousobjection-in-ukraine-at-the-47th-un-human-rights-council>

On August 24th IFOR participated in the **31st special session of HRC on Afghanistan**.

During the **48th HRC** IFOR supported the appeal launched by Peace Brigades International concerning the impunity of abuses against indigenous communities in Nicaragua, with a particular reference to the latest massacre on August 23rd in the Territorio Mayangna Sauni.

In collaboration with SERPAJ Argentina, IFOR also denounced the lack of application of human rights in the judicial instances regarding the case of Andalgalá, in Catamarca, Argentina, an area where there are glaciers and periglacial environment and where the Canadian mining company Yamana Gold is trying to explore and exploit the Agua Rica mining deposit. The State does not listen to the claims of the local and indigenous communities struggling for over 20 years and systematically violates environmental and national regulations that prohibit the exploration and exploitation of mining in glacial and periglacial environments.

In another statement IFOR expressed concerns about the militarization of the territory in Ukraine and about the violation of the right to conscientious objection. The right to conscientious objection has been also addressed in a statement concerning Singapore and in another one regarding the thematic missing report by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

IFOR took the floor as well to highlight the concerning links between climate change, resource exploitation and war system; IFOR also addressed the issue of Western Sahara.

On September 21st, Peace International Day, IFOR attended in person to the **2021 Geneva**

Peace Talks event together with the participants to the **IFOR “Introduction to the UN” program** [read more in the following section].

More details and the complete text of IFOR’s statements at the UN are available here: <https://www.ifor.org/news?category=UN>

IFOR as member of the **NGO Committee on Freedom of Religion or Belief**, in Geneva and in New York, has participated on May 7th in the virtual event “2021 FoRB Priorities at the United Nations” that will highlight various missions’ recent past and upcoming efforts to promote religious freedom and related rights in 2021 at the United Nations.

On October 26th, on the occasion of the 76th session of the UN General Assembly, IFOR participated in a virtual conversation with Dr. Ahmed Shaheed, UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, to discuss his most recent report (presented to the Third Committee on October 19th), which focuses on the Freedom of Thought.

*IFOR is also member of the NGO Working Group on Human Rights Education and Learning.

IFOR is a member of the **NGOs Support Group on Western Sahara**.

An Open Letter addressed to the UN Secretary General, circulated on behalf of the Geneva Support Group on the occasion of the Security Council meeting on the situation in Western Sahara, which was held on April 21st.

On September 1st, an Open Letter has been addressed to the Members of the UN Security Council and to the UN Secretary-General *on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the deployment of the first MINURSO’s contingent in Western Sahara; the New York Support Group for the Independence of Western Sahara (298 member-organisations) recalled that the terms of the Settlement Plan submitted jointly by the UN Secretary-General and the Chairman of the OAU Assembly of Heads of State and Government, approved by the Security Council, provided that “the people of Western Sahara will choose, freely and democratically, between independence and integration with Mo-*

rocco" and that "The referendum should be held 24 weeks after the cease-fire comes into effect". As the ceasefire came into force on 6 September 1991, the referendum on self-determination of the Saharawi people should have been held between late February and early March 1992.

On October 11th, a statement has been delivered by the Support Group at the Fourth Committee on Special Political and Decolonisation of the General Assembly.

International Projects

Introduction to the UN

Empowering civil society representation at the United Nations funded by Otto per Mille of the Waldensian Church of Italy

On September 20th-24th took place (after a year postponement due to the pandemic) the 2nd edition of the [IFOR program](#) aimed to provide an opportunity to come and see the work of IFOR at the United Nations in Geneva and experience first-hand engagement within UN system.

This year 5-days workshop was part of the project "Empowering civil society representation at the United Nations" funded by Otto per Mille of the Waldensian Church of Italy.

9 young participants from different countries such as Austria, Colombia, Germany, Czech Republic, Italy, Netherlands, Spain had the opportunity to explore the UN system and the precise work IFOR does with particular regard to conscientious objection to military service and other issues such as human rights education, environmental rights, disarmament, decolonization and to meet with partner organizations and human rights defenders from Argentina, Greece, Norway, Western Sahara...

IFOR has additionally engaged at the UN in this past year providing assistance to local human rights defenders' groups and **submitted country-based reports** on Austria, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Singapore, Tajikistan, Turkey and Ukraine at the **Universal Periodic Reviews (UPR)** and **Human Rights Committee State reviews (HRCttee)**.

More details and the comprehensive reports are available here: <https://www.ifor.org/news?category=UN>

Participants attended virtually to working sessions of the Human Rights Council, found out more about civil society participatory procedures.

Some of the participants who attended the workshop are from IFOR's branches such as FOR Germany, SERPAJ and FOR Austria.

During the week, the 9 guests had the chance to visit the Geneva UN headquarters and attend in person to the special event of the Geneva Peace Talks on September 21st where they had the opportunity to listen from human rights defenders and activists from around the globe.

More details are available here: <https://www.ifor.org/news/2021/11/21/un-introductory-week>



The Rights to Conscientious Objection

“The Right to Conscientious Objection as a constructive alternative to militarization” funded by JRCT

The current project on conscientious objection to military service is funded by the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust and represents the main effort of IFOR within the UN system.

In addition to what has been reported in the previous section regarding statements on CO delivered in the past months at the **UN HRC**, IFOR has made a thematic statement at the 48th HRC highlighting *“that the planned report on conscientious objection could not be presented at this session. This important and meaningful work by the OHCHR and HRC has been highly anticipated. Conscientious objectors in different countries and civil societies organizations around the world are looking to it, and the consequent resolution, to use them in their efforts to support the right to conscientious objection to military service”*.

Together with maintaining a high attention to the issue during the plenary sessions of the HRC, IFOR has worked in the past months to research and prepare **reports on the situation of the right to conscientious objection and related issues in several countries, contributing to the Universal Periodic Reviews (UPR)** of the HRC. This specific work is accompanied by advocacy initiatives prior to each session.

In particular IFOR engaged in the [37th UPR](#) whose formal session took place in January 2021. Two reports have been previously submitted and the one concerning Austria raised, in particular, the concern about the recruitment of 17-years old, contrary to international standards. The one on Georgia outlines the discrepancy between the duration of alternative service and that of military service, and about the independence of the bodies which assess conscientious objector claims; additionally, there are concerns about the subjection of children of school age to military, including firearms, training.

IFOR prepared a report on the right to conscientious objection to military service in Singapore.

and submitted it to the [38th UPR](#) which took place in May. This has been a particularly important effort since Singapore does not recognize this right and did not ratify the Treaty which established the Human Rights Committee which is another UN body which runs state reviews which can concern also this right.

*During the adoption of the UPR outcome on Singapore, at the **48th HRC**, IFOR publicly stated in the plenary that “The right to conscientious objection is a human right inherent in article 18 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. It is a universal right based on the freedom of thought, conscience and religion.*

The Report of the Working Group registered the recommendation of Croatia regarding the creation of a civil service alternative to military service.

Unfortunately, this recommendation is not listed as enjoying the support of Singapore.

IFOR would like to emphasise that the refusal to kill, the rejection of violence and therefore of war as a system for the defence and security of a country and its citizens, is the prerequisite for ensuring peace and prosperity and avoiding destruction, including the violation of the right to life.

The current pandemic is proving that genuine security is not based on military force, but on health, prevention, international solidarity, to name a few.”

IFOR prepared a report on Greece and Tajikistan for the [39th UPR](#) which took place this autumn.

Greece has a longstanding record of violations of the right to conscientious objection to military service and other human rights of conscientious objectors.

The new government has moved towards annulling recent positive amendments about conscientious objectors, such as the reduction of the length of alternative civilian service by the previous government.

In Greece alternative service is still punitive and discriminatory and there is a lack of independence

and impartiality in the assessment of applications for conscientious objector status.

In Tajikistan the right to conscientious objection is still not recognized, although in 2004 the UN Human Rights Committee recommended that the State party should take all necessary measures to recognize the right of conscientious objectors to be exempted from military service. All recorded conscientious objectors in Tajikistan are Jehovah's Witnesses and this religious minority is the only available source of information.

The submission addresses the issues of the right to conscientious objection to military service, arbitrary detention of conscientious objectors, the right of the child and underage recruitment.

*IFOR engaged as well at the **Human Rights Committee (HRCttee)** sessions where countries are regularly reviewed by a technical committee, differently from the UPR which is part of the HRC and thus an intergovernmental procedure.*

IFOR participated in the **131st HRCttee**, which took place in March, submitted a report on [Finland](#) where there are several issues related to the right to conscientious objection such as, for instance, the need to ensure that the length and nature of the alternative to military service is not punitive in nature and that the forms of alternative service are compatible with the reasons for conscientious objection.

IFOR submitted a [report on Turkey](#) for the **132nd HRCttee**, which took place in June, highlighting the not recognition of the right to conscientious objection and the dramatic life conditions of conscientious objectors which has been defined as "civil death" by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

During the **133rd HRCttee**, which took place in October, IFOR submitted a [report on Ukraine](#) and engaged with the members of the Committee contributing to raise the issue of the right to conscientious objection to military service -in collaboration with the Ukrainian pacifist movement.

IFOR has also submitted a [report on Greece](#) with similar items as in the report submitted to the UPR and [one on Germany](#) where it addressed

CO of professional members of the armed forces, the new voluntary military service in the area of homeland security, the recruitment of 17-year-old voluntary children, the granting of asylum to conscientious objectors that flee their countries and cases of far-right extremism in the armed forces.

In the past months IFOR has planned on some thematic initiatives together with partner organizations.

For instance, it has organized a **webinars series on "Campaigning for Conscientious Objection to Military Service"** to learn about different campaign tools, find out what has worked for others, share lessons learned from actions and discuss what else is needed.

Campaigning for Conscientious Objection to Military Service

WEBINAR SERIES

The initiative has been run together with QUNO and WRI which, together with IFOR, have a long history in campaigning for the Right to Conscientious Objection. Many of our members have been and are objectors themselves.

We partner together and perform specific work on this field. For instance, IFOR addresses CO at the UN reporting on country situations at the Human Rights Council and Human Rights Committee and assist Cos in advocacy initiatives; QUNO collaborates in the UN advocacy and works on the international standards; WRI provides CO alerts and focuses on individual cases.

The webinar series included case studies from campaigns for CO around the world and addressed different topics such as: strategic litigation, UN human rights system, public awareness,

international solidarity...

On February 3rd we run the [1st webinar on “Strategic Litigation”](#) and colleagues from the CO movement shared information and ideas drawing on their experience of using strategic litigation and presented the case study of the Republic of Korea and Colombia.

On February 24th the [2nd webinar on “UN Human Rights System”](#) took place with the participation of the Chair of the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention.

The [3rd webinar on “Public Awareness”](#) took place on March 30th. Conscientious objection to military service is a human right and wherever there is any form of military service conscription people must be able to refuse to participate on grounds of conscience; moreover, because conscientious objectors around the world are still persecuted and jailed. Activists from Cyprus, Finland and Israel shared their experiences.

The [4th webinar on “International Solidarity”](#) took place on May 14th and focused on the case of Turkey with presentations from local objectors.

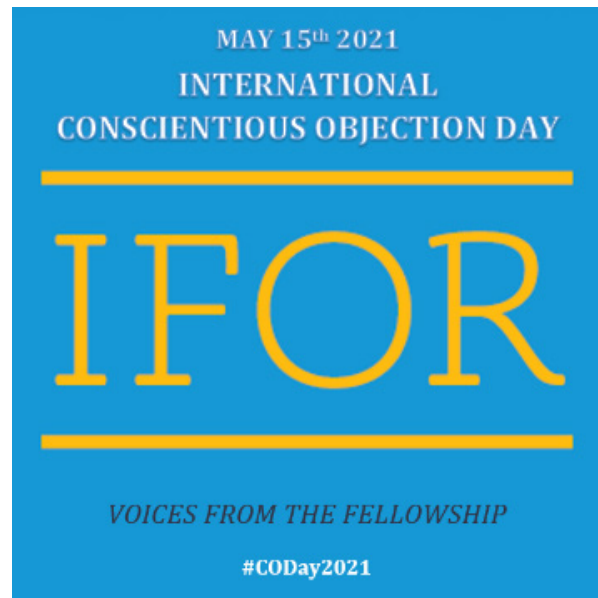
On June 16th the [5th webinar on “Conscientious Objection and Asylum”](#) took place with the participation of organizations supporting COs fleeing their countries and applying for protection.

IFOR has been invited to join an **international advisory board** to support a specific project regarding the right to conscientious objection to military service in Turkey. [The project has been launched](#) at the end of last year by the Conscientious Objection Association (Vicdani Ret Derneği) in Istanbul. The association started a campaign and lobby work to gather international support for pushing the human right to conscientious objection in Turkey. The project also includes research and documentation of the particular difficult situation of draft evaders and conscientious objectors.

IFOR actively collaborates with **EBCO** which is the European network for groups and organizations dealing with conscientious objection. IFOR provides assistance at the UN and is collaborating with the EBCO’s board for related issues and participated in this year General Assemblies which

took place virtually on May 5th and October 2nd .

EBCO publish yearly a report on CO and the details about the EBCO 2020 Annual Report can be found [here](#).



On the occasion of the **International Conscientious Objection Day - May 15th**, IFOR organized the initiatives “Voices from the fellowship”, publishing the testimony of members of IFOR from around the world who did object to military service.

All details regarding the special publication are available here: <https://www.ifor.org/news/2021/5/14/cdd4y6h5nhgm9oeunlwzh-quh7ykyye>

Sign-on Statements

Colombia

In June, IFOR signed onto the following statement on the Colombia government's violent response to protests in Colombia. A recording of the statement in Spanish, with English subtitles, and a full list of signatories, [can be found here](#).

As emphasised in the outgoing Rapporteur's report, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated social and economic inequalities and, if urgent action is not taken, we will face an epidemic of police killings on an unprecedented scale.

The case of Colombia illustrates this trend. A large number of organisations are deeply concerned about the brutal repression of protests that began two months ago, generated by poverty, inequalities and systemic racism. As of 28 June, human rights organisations have recorded 83 people who have lost their lives as a result of the action of security forces and armed civilians.

Police, the Mobile Anti-Riot Squad and the army

have used firearms with lethal ammunition extensively against demonstrators. Indiscriminate and excessive use of "less lethal" weapons, including multiple projectile launchers, has also been documented.

Mr. Rapporteur and members of the Human Rights Council, we urgently call on you to urge the Colombian authorities to take the necessary measures to respect and guarantee the right to life in the context of protests; to document and investigate all cases of arbitrary deprivation of life, identifying those who gave the orders; and to ensure that those responsible are tried by a civilian judge and under no circumstances by a military court.

In the same vein, it is urgent to support the Special Jurisdiction for Peace in the clarification of the more than 6,000 extrajudicial executions under investigation, most of which were committed between 2002 and 2008, in order to guarantee their non-repetition.

Military Pollution

Governments commit to meaningful military emissions cuts at COP26

The Conflict and Environment Observatory has issued the following call in advance of the COP26 meeting in Glasgow, to which IFOR has appended its name.

The 2015 Paris Agreement left cutting military greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to the discretion of individual nations.

Militaries are major emitters and should not be excluded from GHG reduction targets. Govern-

ments must demonstrate their commitment to the Paris targets by setting military GHG reduction targets at COP26. For these commitments to be meaningful, they must meet the criteria set out below.

Military emissions, expenditure and reporting

Militaries are huge energy users and contribute significant GHG emissions, as well as causing wider adverse environmental impacts from training, activities and operations. Militaries are typically the largest energy consumers among

government agencies but historically there has been a reluctance to disclose data on their emissions.

Global military expenditure rose by 2.6% in 2020 to almost US \$2 trillion, in spite of a fall in global GDP of 4.4% due to the COVID-19 pandemic.¹ Such increases in military expenditure risk mirrored increases in emissions, as well as diverting funding from sustainable development, and climate change mitigation and adaptation.

The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change obliges signatories to publish annual GHG emissions, but military emissions reporting is voluntary and often not included. When reported, it is generally incomplete and excludes emissions from equipment and supply chains, and those related to the impact of conflict-operations. This can include emissions from infrastructure damage, conflict-linked environmental change and post-conflict reconstruction.

Meaningful commitments

Militaries and the industries that support them can no longer be viewed as exceptional and must take urgent and significant action to reduce their GHG emissions and environmental footprint. While NATO's recent acknowledgement of this is welcome, recognition is only the first step. **Update:** In June 2021 NATO agreed to 'assess the feasibility of reaching net zero emissions by 2050,' which would apply to its activities. Meanwhile NATO member states agreed '...to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions from military activities and installations without impairing personnel safety, operational effectiveness and our deterrence and defence posture.' This is a positive step forward but still far short of what the planet needs to see. Concrete commitments and clear steps towards military emissions reductions must be on the table at COP26 in November.

Governments must use COP26 to commit to reducing military GHG emissions. For these commitments to be credible and meaningful, they must:

- *Set clear GHG emission reduction targets for the military that are consistent with the 1.5oC target specified by the 2015 Paris Agreement;*
- *Commit to GHG emission reporting mechanisms that are robust, comparable and transparent, are based on the GHG protocol, and which are independently verified;*
- *Set clear targets for the military to conserve energy, reduce reliance on fossil fuels and switch to environmentally responsible renewable energy;*
- *Contain clear reduction targets for the military technology industry;*
- *Prioritise GHG reduction initiatives at source and not rely on schemes to offset GHG emissions;*
- *Publish GHG reduction policies, strategies and action plans, with annual follow-up reporting on performance;*
- *Address how reducing military expenditure and deployments, and altering military postures can reduce emissions;*
- *Commit to incorporating climate and environmental assessments in decision-making for all procurement, activities and missions;*
- *Highlight the relationship between climate change and environmental degradation, and demonstrate a commitment to reducing the overall environmental impact of all military activities and missions;*
- *Commit to optimising the management of military lands to improve carbon sequestration and biodiversity;*
- *Commit to increase climate and environmental training for decision makers, including on how militaries can mitigate climate change and environmental degradation;*
- *Demonstrate leadership, openness and a willingness to collaborate and exchange information on good practice with non-military stakeholders;*
- *Commit to allocating the appropriate resources to ensure all climate and environmental protection policies can be fully implemented.*

IFOR Fellowship Initiatives

Global Day of Action on nuclear disarmament



POLITICAL ACTION: Engage politicians, policy makers and public opinion leaders and authorities about the need for disarmament; thank those who ratified the Treaty and call on those who did not yet. Call on City and Regional Councils to pass resolutions supporting the TPNW.

The 1st Conference of the State Parties will take place in Vienna on March 22-24, 2022 and is also

Some branches of IFOR continued in the past months to gather weekly on Monday's meetings to exchange and make proposals for collective actions and thus to organize IFOR global initiatives together with the International Office.

January 22nd IFOR Day of Action on nuclear disarmament has been launched to celebrate the enter into force of the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) which reached the 50th signature on October 24th, 2020. IFOR is member of ICAN and supports nuclear disarmament.

The Day of Action involved several branches and groups outside of IFOR. Many initiatives took place on social media and are reported on IFOR's Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/InternationalFellowshipofReconciliation>

The Day of Action called for:

COMMUNITY ACTION: Share solidarity to victims of environmental disasters due to nuclear resources exploitation, testing and waste.

SPIRITUAL ACTION: Provide a point of spiritual focus and reflection.

open to observer and Norway became the first NATO member to commit to participating at the First Meeting of States Parties of the TPNW. The commitment was included in the government's coalition agreement, released on October 13th.

More details on this Day of Action are available here: <https://www.ifor.org/news/2021/1/16/its-time-to-celebrate-the-nuclear-ban-and-continue-to-make-peace-the-new-normal>

Within the Monday's meetings was raised the need to discuss and explore more on climate catastrophe and the link between climate change and peace issues.

Internal webinars have been planned in the past months to fulfil the need raised.

Climate Change is the defining issue of our age. It is the cause of catastrophe, while its effects are conflict and fractured peace. Looking more deeply, as the IFOR movement does, it is clear that issues of migration, social instability, inequity, injustice, and war all require tackling climate change.

Internal Discussion on Climate Catastrophe

We started an **internal discussion** on Climate Change and shared on possible common actions. In the 1st IFOR internal webinar on May 29th we heard IFOR voices from around the globe on tackling Climate Change and associated issues such as land exploitation, military pollution, climate refugees...



Members from South Sudan, Togo, Uganda, Colombia, Argentina, Bangladesh, India, Germany and UK shared their local related experience.

Over forty members from different regions of the world attended the webinar.

In the following webinar, on July 10th, we discussed the findings and an exchanged on the development of a possible IFOR global action(s) connecting Climate Change and Peace Issues.

The attention focused on four areas: military, resource exploitation and indigenous people rights, climate migrants and refugees, polluter pay.

In this 3rd internal webinar held on September 11th the focus was to further shape proposals and put into concrete action!

This webinar provided an opportunity for the entire fellowship to convene and network to consider how branches/groups/affiliates and the wider IFOR movement can respond to the pressing issue of Climate Change.

During the discussion, a particular attention was paid to the upcoming COP 26 in Glasgow.

Meanwhile IFOR has joined two international calls on military pollution, launched by the civil society for the COP 26.

You can read more details here: <https://www.ifor.org/news/2021/8/25/ifor-joins-international-call-to-action-for-cop-26-on-military-pollution>

It has been such a great experience and a unique opportunity to gather as a fellowship and exchange on Climate Change.



Global Day of Action on Climate Catastrophe



effects of all activities in the military sector” and on the following demands:

1. Disclose the destructive impacts by the military based on hard facts,
2. Data collection and full transparency on the military’s carbon footprint,
3. Mandatory reporting of all military GHG emissions in line with the UN Framework Convention (Paris Agreement, 2015) in the respective national climate reports
4. Inclusion of military GHG emissions in further climate negotiations,
5. End war.

October 30th Global Day of Action on RE-SOURCE EXPLOITATION, VIOLENT CONFLICT AND MILITARISM: DRIVERS OF CLIMATE CATASTROPHE followed the 3rd internal webinar.

IFOR Global Day of Action focused on the field of militarism and the comprehensive war system and was made out of different initiatives connected to #compassion #accountability and #change and rooted in nonviolence. War, production of armaments, militarization of the territory, military investment, security are some of the topics addressed through in person, virtual, informal, institutional initiatives.

Climate change is connected to Peace issues, in particular this is evident in the field of armed conflict.

War has a direct impact on the ground, also causing destruction on the land, contamination, pollution and reducing or destroying crops, livestock farming and healthy water sources.

IFOR is now urging to put the spotlight on a significant aspect that has a global impact, and that is: “The environmentally and climate destructive

The production of weapons often requires the retrieval of often exploited resources and often involves waste products and pollution. The use of weapons itself has negative consequences for the environment. One of the most striking examples is nuclear weapons, the production, testing, storage and use of which pose a constant danger to humankind and the entire planet, to the point of devastating and irreparable consequences.

The militarisation of the territory and the actions of armed groups also cause devastation in the environment in which people live, leading to unbearable and harmful living conditions.

In addition, many violent conflicts are generated to gain control over resources, often in resource-rich countries, usually in the global south.

Investment in armaments and the military is immoral both because it is an investment in the destruction of living beings and territory and because it displaces resources needed to protect and safeguard the environment and life on the planet. There are many urgent investments



#ClimateCatastrophe
#COP26 #IforDayOfAction

In 2020, there were 120 conflicts globally.*
We need to make sure the environmental
damage caused by these conflicts and any
other military activity is properly **recorded,**
reported and repaired.

*Violent crisis, limited war & war
source: <https://www.ifor.org/>, conflict barometer 2020

International Fellowship of Reconciliation



to prevent catastrophes and to repair the damage already caused, and as long as security is thought to be provided by the military, catastrophe will continue.

The security of individuals and of the planet that hosts us is determined by “care for our common home”, by respect for the environment and for resources, and by using them sparingly and not selfishly or in the interests of the few.

Nonviolence highlights the need for and usefulness of alternative choices to those of a Culture of Violence, choices that engage all social actors, choices aimed at preserving all forms of life and

repairing forms of injustice and inequity among the inhabitants of the Earth.

IFOR had a great mobilization on social media, on its Facebook page, and a special publication on November 6th as well, International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict.

More details and the info about the different initiatives run by branches and other organizations for the Global Day of Action are available here: <https://www.ifor.org/international-day-of-action-1#global-day-of-action>

IFOR Regional Work

In the past months there has been a regional mobilization of IFOR's branches in different regions.

Europe

European branches gathered on April 17th for the yearly EuFOR meeting, this time virtually, to exchange on local initiatives and discuss on communal areas of action such as nuclear disarmament, arms trade and fair and migration, for instance.

Asia

On August 5th Asian branches gathered for the first time virtually and discussed several issues such as human rights of minorities and made contributions on Myanmar for the Un and international work of IFOR.

As to the Americas region, several exchanges took place among members of IFOR to support ongoing campaigns and efforts to tackle and defend human rights, in particular in South America.

Africa

IFOR Branches, Groups, and Affiliates in Africa are mobilising!

The African branches have been meeting regularly online in the last months. More details are available in the following written report.

The IFOR International Council of November 2018 (Catania, Italy) decided to maintain the Africa Working Group (composed of Africans and non-Africans). It entrusted it with the following tasks: (1) To organise meetings of the Africa Working Group in Africa; (2) To work towards holding the next IFOR Council on African soil; (3) To develop and implement the IFOR Africa Programme; (4) To empower and increase the



Americas

As to the Americas region, several exchanges took place among members of IFOR to support ongoing campaigns and efforts to tackle and defend human rights, in particular in South America. SERPAJ will also hold a continent-wide, online assembly on December 4th, where elections to the leadership body will be made.

involvement of women in BGAs in Africa and to ensure that their participation in the next International Council is enhanced; (5) Reinviolate, in addition to training and education activities, former BGAs in Africa that are no longer active, increase the number of BGAs in Africa by monitoring and accelerating their membership process, and encourage stronger cooperation between BGAs in the region; (6) Support the development of a Pan-African Non-Violence and Peacebuilding Network.

Since April 2021, the AWG has been meeting in zoom. Despite communication difficulties caused by lack of adequate computer equip-

ment, poor internet quality, power cuts, etc., these meetings are enthusiastically and dynamically attended by the two African representatives to the RCC, the two African members of ICOM, two members of the Juba 2022 Preparatory Committee, and the leaders of the African BGAs. They are further enriched by the participation of Zaira Zafarana from IFOR. They are therefore a platform for exchange, reflection and initiatives open to all IFOR artisans who work in Africa or are linked to this IFOR Region. During the previous meetings, we shared on a Focus on “situations of violence and initiatives of reconciliation, non-violence and peace in Africa today”, on the “Vision of IFOR”, on the preparation of the Juba 2022 Meeting, and on the preparation of the Brazzaville Workshop.

Indeed, a face-to-face Workshop will take place from 218 to 2714 FebruaryNovember 20212 in Brazzaville (Republic of Congo). The objectives of this coordination team meeting will be to (i) develop and establish the IFOR Africa Programme, (ii) develop an IFOR Africa Strategic Plan, (iii) prepare for the 2022 Juba Meeting.

The AWG wants all IFOR BGAs to be involved in the process of designing and developing the IFOR Africa Programme and its Strategic Plan, so that they can take ownership of it and participate in its implementation. Therefore, with the support of the International Secretariat, a Consultation Questionnaire was sent to all BGAs in May 2021. During the workshop sessions, other people from African and non-African BGAs will be able to participate by zooming in. We hope that all these participations will enrich the work that is being done.

It is a joy that finally IFOR has chosen the city of Juba (South Sudan), in Africa, to hold the next Council in 2022. South Sudan is the most recent country to be admitted to the UN, 10 years ago. Its history has been marked by armed conflict, but it is above all a land where the people are living rich experiences of reconciliation and peace-building. It is therefore a responsibility for the BGAs of Africa to contribute more actively to the preparation and implementation of this

international event in 2022.

It is in this context that a task force is being set up to reflect on and propose actions for “Empowerment and strengthening the involvement of women in BGAs in Africa”.

We also need to find strategies to revitalise BGAs in Africa that are no longer active, to increase the number of BGAs in Africa, and to strengthen cooperation between BGAs in the Africa Region. The International Secretariat and the Africa Working Group are facing the following difficulties: no response to emails, incorrect or unresponsive phone numbers. We have no logistical or financial possibility to travel to the site.

The AWG has made contact with an organisation called the Africa Peace Research and Education Association (AFPREA), which is affiliated to the International Peace Research Association (IPRA). It will be possible to organise a meeting between our two organisations in Juba. While maintaining the identity of IFOR, we hope to have other credible partners to develop the pan-African network for non-violence and peacebuilding. BGAs are encouraged to identify and forward information on other possible partners to support this work. Within this framework of pan-Africanism, the Africa Working Group paid a well-deserved tribute to Dr Kenneth Kaunda (who died on 17 June 2021 in Lusaka, Zambia, in his 97th year). This illustrious figure is the father of Zambian independence, the “African Gandhi” who wisely and non-violently supported the liberation movement of other peoples across Africa.

Local Updates from Branches, Groups and Affiliates

FOR Zimbabwe

The Girl Child Survival Kit Initiative

The Girl Child Survival Kit Initiative is one of the Non-violence and Empowerment programs being run by the Fellowship of Reconciliation Zimbabwe. It is a project that has been done after observing institutional violence and marginalisation of the girl child, and closure and collapse of educational system due to Covid pandemic in Zimbabwe.

The project identified 22 vulnerable girls aged between 16 and 18 years' old who were struggling to proceed with their education, making them vulnerable to early marriages, abuse and violence. The situation has also been worsened by the Covid pandemic which has not only cut off family incomes but has led to closure of many community educational facilities.

Without basic education and basic life survival skills, the future of these girls, and to a larger extent the future of the girl child, is heavily compromised.

History and past experiences has also shown us that such girls end up being manipulated to be 'willing' tools in the hands of violent politicians as and when they want to achieve their political agendas.

It is against this background that the Girl Child Survival Kit Initiative project came to life.

We began with just 22 girls who will go through a series of Active Nonviolence Training and Empowerment Workshops.

Topics to be covered include:

- Nonviolent Conflict Prevention
- Nonviolent Conflict Management
- Nonviolent Conflict Resolution
- Basic Communication Skills

The Empowerment section of the trainings empower them with life support skills like tailoring, chicken farming and confectionery, among others.

The girls are also going for lessons in the five critical High School subjects in Zimbabwe. This will culminate in their sitting national examinations.

We do appreciate the support provided by FOR England and Scotland through the International Peacemakers' Fund.



In this picture are Akadim and Makios (FOR-Zimbabwe), and some staff members at the school where the girls are doing their academic les-

sons.

It is our conviction that a combination of non-violence trainings and practical socio-economic skills is an effective way to create, nurture and build a culture of peace and non-violence as a way of life and a means of transformation,

FOR USA

FOR USA has been active around the International Sanctuary Declaration campaign. In partnership with this campaign and the Ecumenical Committee on Church Asylum (Germany), FOR USA hosted three webinars on the subject.

They can be viewed on the FOR USA YouTube page, at the following links:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DmHx-UqlanVc>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a9gfIs-F6BkA>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a9gfIs-F6BkA>

The text of the International Sanctuary Declaration is available at the following website, and is still attracting signatures: <http://tinyurl.com/global-sanctuary>.

On a related note, the International Peace Bureau World Peace Congress this October will

FOR India

The Fellowship in India has been through a challenging period. The pandemic has in a way been a direction giver as the guidelines on safety protocol, use of masks, social distancing and forbidding gatherings of any kind have opened new ways of keeping in touch with one another and using technology. The first wave of the pandemic had passed with a trail of loss of lives and livelihoods. Our country experienced the trauma of millions of people going on foot

particularly in Africa. Such a combination is easily acceptable and co-owned by community leaders.

Together we can create a nonviolent remnant in our world!

gather peacemakers from around the world in Barcelona, Spain, through the inspiring theme “[Re] Imagine Our World: Action for Peace and Justice.” You can participate virtually in this live global event by registering at www.ipb2021.barcelona.

In August 2021, FOR-USA hosted a pre-Congress online event, partnering with the International Sanctuary Declaration Campaign and the International Peace Bureau, focused on “Religion, Peace, and Sanctuary.” The program featured six expert voices from around the world for an in-depth discussion on the impacts of proxy wars, economic exploitation, and climate catastrophe on forcibly displaced peoples and environmental destruction. The speakers discussed the roles of colonial powers, multinational corporations, and the military industrial complex on these crises. The video recording may be accessed at Youtube.com/user/FellowshipUSA/videos.





in reverse migration back to their villages from the cities all over India with all public transport shut down on government orders. Just as we were in a brief period of near normalcy after the first wave of the pandemic, the elections and the mass religious gatherings appear to have contributed to a severe second wave of the pandemic.



This second wave has caught the nation in an unprepared state, with a paucity of vaccines, medicines, hospital beds and oxygen. The younger people have increasingly fallen victim. We are paying a huge price as we go through this phase of total lockdown. Now we are being warned that a third phase of the pandemic will descend. Lockdown, unemployment, hospital bills paid with borrowed money and the trauma of losing loved ones, sole breadwinners, orphaned children are just a few items in the huge list of burdens that the people are experiencing. Most of us have someone whose death was caused by COVID 19. We mourn and pray for the bereaved and their families.

During this period, we have had several virtual meetings. Some meetings are around a specific

theme or around a current event. We try to end every meeting with an action point which could be bringing matters to the attention of the government or civil servants for redress. Sometimes it would be for resource collection to meet urgent needs of family affected.



Intra-state migration from villages to the cities due to floods or droughts is a growing problem. This is distinct from migration from neighboring countries which may have political reasons or group/religious conflict. We are bringing this issue of migration to the attention of national leadership so that they may take this up in forums like the United Nations because climate change migrants are the same the world over. People migrate when agriculture and livestock production fail to ensure even a minimum nourishment for their families. The industries which use fossil fuels and the nations which are the destination points of raw ore mined need to draw up action plans to minimize global warming, the cause of climate change.

Some of our programs have specific target groups like medical professionals, police, political workers, self-help groups, teachers, school



and college students. Part-lecture and part-interaction models are used with role plays. In all the programs invariably the need for reducing conflict and the desire for peace will be a part. Building up a socially cohesive society with encouragement for social and economic upward movement is often an expressed need which our programs cater to by way of shared learning. The mediation and conflict resolution programs which are conducted have the subject of sustainable wellbeing introduced with nonviolence being the method and means. This has been found to be acceptable and useful to those who attend our programs.

The Acharya K.K. Chandy annual commemorative series lectures continue on a specific peace subject every year. The past three years we were concentrating on spirituality and well-being. Dr K. P. Pothen, our past President, headed the public affairs wing of the Fellowship and was quick in giving suggestions and commenting on



matters which were in current news and discussion. The two schools which he established at Indore, Madhya Pradesh were the venue for a number of meetings, discussions and programs. We pay our homage to his memory and his selfless involvement for the cause of peace and reconciliation.

FOR England & Scotland

Pentecostal Perspectives on Peace
 The Annual Council (meeting) of the FOR is an important moment in the England and Scotland branch calendar. It provides a chance to look back and celebrate what we have achieved in the last year, as well as for thought and challenge to shape the year ahead. Alongside usual branch business, there is always a keynote talk that challenges and inspires from a different perspective. In recent years, this has included a personal story from the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission and Pacific views on an Atomic-Weapon Free World. This year we were delighted to be joined by Shermana Fletcher, from Churches Together in England, who shared some of her own story under the title 'Pentecostal Perspectives on Peace'. It was a wide-ranging and passionate talk, left us all energized about engaging a wider spectrum of Christians.

A Christian Calling to Serious Disruption?
 The British Government has wanted to pass legislation that would significantly reduce the right to protest in the UK. FOR England and Scotland, as part of the Network of Christian Peace Organizations, organized a special webinar exploring Christian approaches to non-violence and how the bill would impact our ability to act. Speakers came from the Black Lives Matter, environmental and Catholic movements and between them all a challenging and inspiring evening was had.

Director attends webinar on Decolonizing Peace
 The Director of FOR England and Scotland recently attended a webinar on Decolonizing Peace. The webinar came about following a substantial piece of research by secular peace body, Peace Direct. The webinar and accompanying report, focus on different ways the power (I'm) balance between grant giver and grant recipient

needs to be readdressed – at every level – from strategy to delivery. As we consider if we wish to spend more time readdressing power balances in IFOR, it is worth reading the report to help stimulate your thinking: <https://www.peacedirect.org/publications/timetodecoloniseaid/>

Students Make Bunting for Peace

Craftivism is growing in popularity around the UK. It's the art of using needle, thread and time to sit and stitch a thoughtful message and move from pre-printed placard to personal

FOR Austria

Peace is possible – when it is secure!

Impulses for a non-violent design of society and state

Tri-annual conference of FOR Austria, 12 - 14 November 2021 in Linz

In view of the multiple crises of the present (democracy, refugees, climate, economy, pandemic...) we ask ourselves the questions at this conference: How are peace and security related to these challenges? How much peace and how much security do we need and how can they be achieved?

Our starting point is the process "rethinking security" that has been underway in Germany for several years (www.sicherheitneudenken.de). Existing initiatives of the United Nations (Agenda 2030 for sustainable development), the OSCE or the EU and the state policy of Austria (e.g. neutrality, disarmament, civilian peace service) are included as well as concepts of peace research and activities of civil society peace movements. Common, comprehensive and human security goes far beyond the military concept of state security. And what can the basic attitude and methodology of active nonviolence contribute to a just and sustainable "peace by peaceful means"?

The programme of the conference includes a public panel discussion on peace, security and

message. FOR England and Scotland is reaching the conclusion of a two-year partnership with the Student Christian Movement. One of our final shared activities is to create some Peace Bunting, made up of many different triangles of messages for peace, that will be taken to the DSEI Arms Fair in London this September. Once displayed there, it will travel to many different SCM events as a constant reminder of our shared witness to peace.



nonviolence; workshops and groups on different aspects of the theme; a guided walk to the monuments to active nonviolence and

to Franz Jägerstätter, conscientious objector to Hitler's army, and his wife Franziska; a celebration of FOR Austria's 100th founding anniversary with messages from Hildegard Goss-Mayr, IFOR Honorary President, Bishop Scheuer and Superintendent Lehner of Linz; and a summary of ideas and activities probably leading towards a process of shaping Austrian politics in a more peaceful and nonviolent way.

We warmly welcome guests from abroad, especially from IFOR BGAs, to our conference, which will take place in German. For more information and registration:

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MIR Italy

“The Dove and the Twig - An Ecopacifist Project”, new publication of MIR Italy

Peace and ecology are two values and two objectives that must be correlated in order to safeguard life on Earth.

In order to spread the ecopacifist project, MIR-Movimento Internazionale della Riconciliazione, the Italian branch of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation, has realized the book “La colomba e il ramoscello” (The Dove and the Twig) just published by Edizioni Gruppo Abele.

Recalling prophetic voices - such as those of Gandhi, Langer, Dolci, Galtung, Salio, Pope Francis and others - and texts of the great religions in favor of peace, disarmament and protection of the ‘common home’, the book proposes the ecopacifist perspective as an indispensable link between nonviolent and ecological commitment.

“The Dove and the Twig” is an important stimulus to the ecological and pacifist movements, some of which are presented in the book, in view not only of their active and positive collaboration, but also of an effective integration of the various forms of commitment against all kinds of violence and for the reconciliation between man and his precious and delicate biological context.

Not only the destruction caused by wars, but also environmental disasters of climatic origin, are more and more clearly of human responsibility, in particular of the minority part of humanity more consumerist, energy-consuming, unequal and violent, which causes the greatest suffering to the poor, but in the future to all the inhabitants of the Earth.

With this book, MIR intends to continue on

the path of education for integral peace, non-violence in relations between human beings, distributive justice, fraternal solidarity, ecological conversion, lifestyles and respect and care for nature.

Movimento Internazionale
della Riconciliazione

La colomba e il ramoscello

Un progetto ecopacifista



MIR Italy has officially presented the book in a public event on the evening of September 3rd, 2021 in Florence, on the occasion of the National Assembly of the Movement.

For more details: <https://www.miritalia.org/2021/07/30/la-colomba-e-il-ramoscello-un-progetto-ecopacifista-nuova-pubblicazione-del-mir/>

In memoriam



Remembering Rev. Richard Deats, a life-long peace movement leader and influential teacher of nonviolence

Photo by FOR U.S.A.



A prolific writer and speaker, Rev. Deats strengthened grassroots movements by leading nonviolent action trainings in conflict zones around the world.

Rev. Richard Deats, a long-time global peace movement leader and one of the most influential teachers of the philosophy and practice of nonviolent action in 20th century movements, died in Nyack, New York on April 7 from compli-

cations related to pneumonia, according to his son, Mark Deats. He was 89.

“As a long-time leader of the global peace movement organization, the Fellowship of Reconciliation, and editor of Fellowship magazine, Richard Deats was one of the most well respected, well connected, and most influential peace movement leaders in the United States and the world during the last half of the 20th century,”

said Rev. John Dear, a close friend and former executive director of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, or FOR.

“Deats worked closely with peace leaders around the world, including Martin Luther King, Jr., Coretta Scott King, Rev. Jim Lawson and other civil rights leaders, several of Mahatma Gandhi’s heirs, Thich Nhat Hanh and various Buddhist leaders, Rev. Daniel Berrigan, and Archbishop Desmond Tutu,”

Dear said. Deats joined Mrs. King at the White House when Ronald Reagan signed into law the national holiday honoring Martin Luther King, Jr.

In the early 1980s, Deats helped organize and present hundreds of workshops on nonvio-

lence attended by tens of thousands of people throughout the Philippines which laid the groundwork for the People Power nonviolence movement that brought down the Ferdinand Marcos dictatorship in 1986. He also led 13 peace delegations to the Soviet Union in the 1980s that helped ease tensions and build relations at the height of the Cold War.

Born on February 8, 1932 in Big Spring, Texas, Deats attended McMurry College in Abilene, Texas in the early 1950s, where he became active in the Methodist Student Movement. Deats' life changed one day in 1951 when as an undergraduate he heard the British pacifist leader Muriel Lester speak about Gandhi and nonviolence.

Lester was on a global speaking tour on behalf of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation, and had been a close friend of Mahatma Gandhi, who stayed with her for three months in London during the 1931 Round Table Conference. Lester convinced Deats that Gandhi's methodology of nonviolent change worked better than violence, and that Christianity was also rooted in nonviolence.

Deats soon became involved with the U.S. branch of the Fellowship of Reconciliation and volunteered the following summer to work in a refugee camp in Germany. Deats later published an anthology of Lester's writings, 'Ambassador of Reconciliation: A Muriel Lester Reader.'

Working with the International Fellowship of Reconciliation, he helped organize the first speaking tour of a young Vietnamese Buddhist monk, Thich Nhat Hanh, who would later become a world-renowned author and teacher of Buddhist mindfulness and would be nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize by King. Thich Nhat Hanh stayed with Deats and his family in Manila in 1965 and they remained colleagues for decades.

In 1972, Deats accepted a position at the Fellowship of Reconciliation's national office in Nyack, New York, where he would live and work for the rest of his life.

For the next three decades, he traveled the world and promoted peace, nonviolence and reconciliation through FOR, much as Muriel Lester did in the 1950s. He wrote countless articles, gave many speeches, and led innumerable trainings on active nonviolence as a methodology for grassroots movements and social change.

Deats concluded that active nonviolence has become a powerful, central force in the role of global liberation movements. While some have described the 20th century as the most violent in human history, Deats spoke hopefully of the growing awareness of the teachings of Gandhi and King, and argued persuasively that their influence will have lasting impact on our shared future.

"If a global democratic civilization is to come into being and endure, our challenge is to continue developing nonviolent alternatives to war and all forms of oppression," he added. "We must continue to challenge the age-old assumption about the necessity of violence in overcoming injustice, resisting oppression and establishing social well-being."

Deats is survived by his wife, Jan of Nyack, New York; their four children, Mark of River Vale, New Jersey; Stephen of Brooklyn, New York, Katherine of New York City; and Lisa of Jerusalem; 15 grandchildren; and eight great-grandchildren.

Excerpts from an obituary by Ethan Vesely-Flad and Rev. John Dear, originally published on 7th April, 2021 at Waging Nonviolence: <https://wagingnonviolence.org/2021/04/remembering-rev-richard-deats-peace-movement-leader-teacher-nonviolence/> With thanks to Ethan for permission to reproduce these parts here. On the following Facebook page can be viewed Richard's memorial service at Grace Episcopal church, Nyack, with a moving tribute by former FOR staffer, Jack Payden-Travers (beginning at 47:00 minutes into the video recording): https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=470776900683825&ref=watch_permalink.

Liza Smith remembered

Here, Liza Smith is remembered by those who worked with her on the Colombia accompaniment project of FOR USA, today FOR Peace Presence.

Chris Courtheyn

Liza and I co-led a training of future human rights accompaniers in Colombia. In our section on privilege and solidarity, I read a passage from Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* about solidarity, dialogue, and liberation. Afterwards, Liza told me that she had a reading group with former FOR accompanier Isaac Beachy; they had been planning to read *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and she invited me to join. The book explores how systems of oppression work whereby the oppressed internalize their inferiority and oppressors maintain a superiority complex that blames the poor for their poverty. It insists upon dialogue between the oppressed and people from the oppressor class who seek to overcome systems of inequality and violence. Solidarity work like that done by FOR's accompaniment project with campesinos and conscientious objectors in Colombia is attempting to build such alliances and dialogue. But it is difficult to do without reproducing inequalities and paternalistic attitudes of "helping" others free themselves. Though not all, most FOR accompaniers were citizens of global north countries and white. Dialoguing with those who are also committed to justice but different from us is a huge challenge, and organizations like FOR mandated that international accompaniers walk alongside our partners in struggle but never become protagonists. Liza eloquently said once, "What we are doing in our accompaniment work is to decolonize ourselves. To undo whatever superiority complex we bring with us that

Photo by FOR Peace Presence



prevents real solidarity." She had the amazing ability to be an ally and also clearly articulate these dynamics with words. In our concluding session about Freire's book, we talked about his notion of "trusting the oppressed," which does not mean simply believing anything that the poor say, but that trust is a question of commitment to justice, listening, and dialogue. Liza concluded: "As an accompanier or in Colombia in general, I cannot assume that as a gringa I don't have anything to offer or say. I have to empower myself to speak from a place of knowledge and experience, which changes the nature of the relationship. When you empower yourself, it becomes more of a real dialog. But you must have the knowledge and experience. It takes lots of listening to get there."

As one of the coordinators of the Fellowship of Reconciliation's international accompaniment project in Colombia, in 2010, Liza came to visit the team in

San José de Apartadó, where we were accompanying the Peace Community's struggle to defend its lands. This work involves intense moments, such as sending urgent action alerts to the solidarity network after threats to our Colombian partners or standing alongside community leaders as they confront armed groups encroaching into their territory. But accompaniment is also filled with countless experiences of fun and joy. I shared one of my most memorable such moments with Liza during that visit in 2010. She brought her guitar. One afternoon while she was playing and singing just inside the house, some girls came in to join us. One was named Luisa. Liza asked them what we should sing about. Luisa began telling us stories about niñas y brujas (girls and witches). Liza was strumming her guitar and began to sing a few words about brujas and niñas. Luisa then joined in with her beautiful voice and freestyled to the rhythm as her notes impressively jumped up and down the scale. Liza glanced at me, with her eyes wide open and smile shining so brightly, as if to say, "Wow, how awesome is this?!", while we amazed at Luisa's singing riff to Liza's vocal and guitar melodies

Dominique Auliso

From the first time I met Liza in the FOR training in Nyack, New York, I remember feeling that I was in the presence of a wise and loving person. The more I got to know her, the more I was impressed by her gentle way with herself and others. She is one of the few people I know who managed to do urgent, often volatile, social justice work, while also giving energy to her life as a musician. She demonstrated that her music and her spiritual practice were not at odds with her justice work. They gave her balance, joy and sanity in the midst of violence and state repression. Liza's commitment to maintaining the integrity of FOR's work while honoring the humanity of every person she encountered was truly admirable. I think of Liza often when looking for guides and movement leaders who pave the way. She showed me what it means to live with fierce hope for a better world and with a wide open heart. I am so grateful to Liza for her leadership, her kindness, and her example.

Gina Spigarelli

The first time I met Liza at the mansion in Nyack, NY, she summed up my application to FOR by saying, "this seems to be a continuation of the work you've been doing." I probably blushed, since this was a much better summation of how I felt continuing on in my human rights work than I was able to come up with for the hiring committee. Liza had the combined gift of observation and language. The way she expressed her truth was soft and sincere, even in its complexities. I have many magical memories of time shared with Liza: of whiskey happy hours and bohemian parties in her shared home community in Bogotá, walking alongside her to activist spaces and her introducing me to the Colombians who fought the urban fight from the capital. She introduced me, for the first time, to many people I still work with today. Walking alongside her in the rural Peace Community or sitting feet away from each other in our cold fifth floor office in Bogota, where her computer was stacked on books and we had lunch on the sunny patio reprieve from the dark office spaces. We were constant patrons to the downstairs restaurant, particularly their chocolate factory. We saw Lila Downs dancing like a lizard at her concert, and glittered ourselves for Pride, we had delicious dinner dates, and danced salsa in sweaty clubs. I always appreciated conversation with Liza and her steady analysis of the ways things were. And things, of course, were not always easy. I appreciated seeing Liza sing, both in her own home and on stage in Bogotá. I appreciated that she wasn't afraid of tears. I appreciated that Liza was both strong and sensitive, understated and kind. She was brave, even when nervous. And Liza held traumas near, both her own and those of others. I learned a lot from Liza, and quote her often. Especially her calm reading of the different spaces we moved within Colombia: "It is incredible the different realities we live on this planet."

Isaac Beachy

I remember Liza wore cool hats. She always had some cool looking ball cap or would rock a fedora. She had this one red hat, I think it was felt, that was just really out of this world. I remember her wearing it a couple of times with a black suit. Often this was her get-up when she would have a show. I think she thought it made her look badass and she was right.

Liza loved story. She really believed in the power of storytelling to reach people when other ways wouldn't. She got me into 'This American Life'. She said it was one of her favorite programs. One time I was returning to the Bogota apartment from the states. Leaving and returning to Colombia was always emotionally difficult for me, but this time I was also coming back having just broken up with my girlfriend of two years. Liza and Jon were in the bogota apartment to welcome me back. I think they had planned me a party (hard to remember), but I wasn't really in any sort of mood to party. Seeing how I was feeling, they called off the party and just sat and talked with me. She was there for me.

Peter Cousins

After Liza's death, I wrote the following tribute to Liza on Facebook: "Liza Smith interviewed me for more than one of my jobs in Colombia, and she became a colleague and friend over the years. She knew the highways and byways, not to mention the rivers and mountains, of the country, and spoke of international accompaniment work as 'putting your body on the line' for people at risk. She succumbed to cancer, but not before putting her body on the line while up against that too."

There was a great deal more I could have added. Many people have commented on her love of music-making, and I have memories of this too. Somewhere I've got an album of hers, to which I will listen with greater poignancy in future. Liza's commitment to the accompaniment project was absolute, and she was a driving force in the spin-off from FOR-USA, and its form thereafter. It was through Liza and her relationships with the people from ACOOC in Bogotá, that I first really became aware of FOR's historic commitment to conscientious objectors – she drew the links between things. Liza would make time for you, and take you seriously. It's funny what you recall, but one thing I remember is my exit interview from the project after two years as an accompanier. She listened closely to everything I had to say, and I know the feedback was heard and acted upon. Many others have talked of similar experiences. Liza's whole-heartedness and 'whole-bodiedness' characterised her, and all the memories we have of her stem, I'm sure, from this.

Rachel Dickson

Liza was a caretaker, she patched up my knee when I fell into a hole in the dark in La Unión, and she was always there and open for any form of communication. She whole-heartedly believed in consensus and giving everyone an opportunity to speak and explain their choices and opinions. Non-violent communication was totally her jam.

I ran into some issues during my time in Colombia, and Liza really asked me to dig deep in a way no one ever had before. She insisted on self-awareness. I could point to all of the ways I'd been wronged, but could not admit, even to myself, my own shortcomings, weaknesses, and spiritual and emotional voids. Liza held me accountable, and gave me the opportunity to reflect. Not everyone gives those opportunities, but Liza did.

While I never got the chance to tell Liza how grateful I was for her presence in those years that were quite formative for me, gathering over Zoom both before her transition and after, with so many friends, colleagues, and family members across the world, was truly inspirational for me. I reconnected with people I hadn't talked to in years, and I was reminded of how many lives Liza touched.

Sarah Weintraub

When I first met Liza we were thrown together to plan and lead a delegation of US Americans touring and learning about the peace and human rights movements in Colombia. From the moment we sat down in a Bogota cafe and Liza pulled out her spiral notebook and quality gel pens and started writing notes on our plans, I thought -- yes! I want to be friends with this person! I was going through a horrible break-up during that delegation and Liza was a rock for me during that hard time. I saw in her someone who can experience heartbreak and can withstand it. As we remained friends over the following seventeen years I saw this in her again and again, especially in each of our relationships to Colombia and the joys and devastations we each experienced there. Liza lived with an open heart, she allowed her heart to be broken by the world, and she sought this intimacy with the world, even when it brought pain. I am so grateful for her generous friendship and for her shining example of how to live in the world.

In Loving Memory of Henk Blom

Photo by Groenlinks Zwolle



It is with sadness that Doopsgezind Wereldwerk announce the death of Henk Blom, former vice-chair. He passed away in the early morning of October 1st, surrounded by his wife and 3 daughters, 2 weeks before his 80th birthday. I had the luck that for 25 years we, together with others, walked the path towards a world of peace and justice.

Half-way through the nineties, Henk became chair of Doopsgezinde Vredesgroep (the Dutch Mennonite Peace Group, a former IFOR branch). He remained chair until the merger of Doopsgezinde Vredesgroep with another Dutch Mennonite organisation, to become Doopsgezind Wereldwerk (the Dutch Mennonite peace- and relief group) where he was for several years vice-chair. After that he was involved in a working group for peace work in Honduras and helped with the set-up of Christian Peacemaker Teams Netherlands (CPT-NL). Until last year he was also a board member of Kerk en Vrede, the Dutch IFOR branch.

Henk was born and raised in Leiden in a Catholic family. Later he moved to Middelburg where he worked as a social worker. There he switched to the Mennonites, the church of his wife, and became active in a local council of churches. With them he visited the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, both destroyed with an atomic bomb. That journey left a great impression on him and convinced him more that peace is the only way to a world as described in the Gospels. It was for him an honour and joy that in 2006 he was able

to attend the IFOR council in Tokyo and, a few years later, an IFOR meeting in New York City.

In 2001 Henk, I and a third person visited Bosnia, where we discussed with local groups about supporting their work in rebuilding their communities. On that journey we learned more about each other and celebrated our birthdays. His birthday was two days later than mine. There I witnessed how dedicated he was to peace work, always on the look-out for making connections.

We both visited the meetings of Church and Peace, the European network of peace groups, churches and activists. There he heard about a new concept of peace work, Sicherheit Neudenken (Rethinking Security), set up by the Lutheran Church in Baden, Germany. Henk saw this as an opportunity for the work of Kerk en Vrede, where he introduced it and was a great advocate for this work, almost till the end of his life.

On October 7th family and friends came together in the Mennonite Church in Zwolle, where we said farewell to him and remembered his life. Representatives of 12 different organisations, including his own Mennonite Community said warm words about his life and work. Together a portrait of a passionate peace worker and family man was portrayed. With his legacy to support us, we have to walk further on that path towards a world of Peace and Justice.

Roel Meihuizen

Alfred Bour

Dear friends,

It is with great sadness that we learned of the death of our dear friend Alfred Bour yesterday [23rd September, 2021].

He had been involved in our movement since the late 1970s. He worked a great deal with Jean and Hildegard Goss. He was for many years a member of the National Committee and of the Committee of the Cahiers de la Réconciliation, and also for many years President of our movement.

Tribute to two greats of non-violence: Alain Richard and Kenneth Kaunda

“Those who have died have never left” (1). In the afterlife, the testimony of their glorious lives extends their presence among the living. Two ardent promoters of non-violence immerse us in this “belief”: Franciscan Alain Richard, founder of the “Circles of Silence” to denounce the indignities of undocumented migrants in administrative detention centres, who died on Thursday 24 June 2021, in Avignon (France), in his 96th year; and Dr Kenneth Kaunda, former President of Zambia, who died on 17 June 2021 in Lusaka (Zambia), in his 97th year.

IFOR shares words from people who knew them:

A Great Lion of Africa has passed to the ancestors. At 97, one can hardly complain about the quality or longevity of Kenneth David Kaunda's rich life: founding father and first President of independent Zambia, founder and President of the Organization of African Unity, liberation movement leader concerned with “the riddle of violence” and friend to the liberation movements of Mozambique, Zimbabwe, SWAPO,

He founded and animated the local group of MIR-Lyon with his friend Jean-Louis Valatx and provided several training sessions for our movement in France and in Africa (Ivory Coast with Hildegard).

He spent 8 years in Rwanda, called by the bishops of the country and sent by our movement to provide training in nonviolence in the aftermath of the genocide. In recent years, he had been living in Issoudun and had taken time to write several books on formation and spirituality.

Christian Renoux

South Africa/Azania...and even of US peace movement leader AJ Muste! I first met KK at his home in Lusaka, over dinner and drinks with Baba Bill Sutherland as we prepared for our publication, **Guns and Gandhi in Africa** (Africa World Press, 2000). He later provided the Foreword for my book with my dear Burundian sister Elavie Ndura, **Seeds of New Hope: Pan African Peace Studies for the 21st Century**. He wrote: “Seeds of New Hope brings together a new generation of scholars and activists, working to build what Africa's founding fathers and mothers hoped to bequest.” He was certainly a man of many contradictions...but isn't that true of all of us? One of the last of his generation of heroes, collectively their vision, spirit, and passion MUST live on...with new strategies, tactics, greater unity and a fierceness to eradicate ALL forms of oppression and ALL human rights abuses everywhere. A LUTA CONTINUA! (**Professor Matt Mayer**, International Peace Research Association /IPRA ; FOR USA).

Angèle Bassolé-Ouédraogo was born on 8 February 1967 in Abidjan. She has a degree in literature and journalism and studied in Africa and Canada. A poet and editor, she is the author of three collections of poetry, including “les morts ne sont pas morts”, and the latest, Sahéliennes, was published this year by Editions L'Interligne.