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## GLOBAL

### Encountering Peace: In Solidarity with Syria

As Lent 2014 begins, Pax Christi International is launching a worldwide campaign, "Encountering Peace," to express solidarity with the people of Syria and to promote a negotiated solution to the extreme crisis gripping that country. As Pax Christi members around the world "encounter" in solidarity the people of Syria who are devastated by ongoing violence, we will fast and pray and advocate for an end to the violence and for a successful "encounter for peace" at the negotiations table. The Encountering Peace Campaign will take place from 5 March to 20 April 2014, to coincide with the Christian observance of Lent. In addition to prayer and fasting by individuals, Pax Christi member organisations are encouraged to organise opportunities for prayer, education, fasting and action in parishes, schools and religious communities. Read more in [English](#), [Français](#), [Español](#), [Deutsch](#), [Italiano](#), [Português](#), [Nederlands](#), [Polski](#), [العربية](#). ■

### Building peace by embracing diversity

Pax Christi International and its sections work continuously on developing workshops and events that reinforce the example of multiculturalism. As a global organisation and at an individual level within each section, Pax Christi believes that we are all equal and should be treated under the same rights, regardless of our origin or destination. In order to convey the idea of diversity, Pax Christi works actively on several anti-racism programmes and celebrates

every step achieved on the way to equality. Read more about some of our network's recent activities on [our website](#). ■

### 2014 Public Peace Prize

The first edition of the Public Peace Prize, organised in the framework of the 24 hours for World Peace campaign, took place during the month of February. This award was created to acknowledge peacemakers who are little known or unrecognized. All nominations were public and the public itself acted as jury. A total of 28 candidates have been proposed by 90 people. The results were announced on 3 March 2014. For details on the winners, click [here](#). ■

## AFRICA

### Pax Christi Flanders on the Framework Agreement for Peace in Eastern DRC

A year after the signing of the Framework Agreement for Peace in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, the country remains in a fragile state, with weak political institutions. The regime of President Kabila is still struggling with a crisis of legitimacy following the controversial 2011 elections and the dissatisfaction with his policy. Broederlijk Delen and Pax Christi Flanders reflect on the peace process after the historic agreement. Read more [here](#) and [here](#) (in Flemish). ■

### PAX issues letter with recommendations on South Sudan peace negotiations

PAX calls upon negotiators and international actors, like the UN, the EU, the US and Norway, to aim for specific actions to be taken up in the South Sudan peace negotiations and to provide the required

long-term support to achieve them. According to PAX, some of these actions should be very practical, such as logistic support to the 'peace agents' and information on the state of safety around their bases by UNMISS – UN's Mission in South Sudan, while others need more long-term effort, such as the reform of the national army and police. Read the full list of recommendations [here](#). ■

### **Bishops of Southern Africa urge people to vote during forthcoming elections on 7 May**

The Southern Africa Catholic Bishops' Conference (SACBC), Pax Christi member organisation, reminds Catholics to make every effort to vote as responsible citizens during the forthcoming elections in South Africa scheduled for 7 May 2014. The Bishops also urge people to support those parties and organisations which work for the good of all citizens. Read the statement of the Bishops of Southern Africa [here](#). ■

### **20 years of democracy in South Africa**

The Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference (SACBC), Pax Christi member organisation, and Leadership Conference of Consecrated Life issued a joint letter reflecting on the past 20 years of democracy in South Africa.

While giving thanks, they also deplore the fact that many people still live in intolerable conditions lacking access to quality care. The letter urges all people to work together for the eradication of crime and murder, drug trade and human trafficking. Read the full letter [here](#). ■

### **Life & Peace Institute meets with Great Lakes Special Envoy Mary Robinson**

The Life & Peace Institute, Pax Christi member organization in Sweden, recently attended a consultation in Addis Ababa between civil society organisations and the UN Special Envoy to the Great Lakes Region, Mary Robinson. The consultation was hosted by the Oxfam liaison office to the African Union. The purpose was to deliberate on how civil society can contribute to peace process in the DRC and the Great Lakes Region. Read more [here](#). ■

### **Denis Hurley Peace Institute commemorates 10 years from Archbishop Hurley's death**

From 13 to 16 February the Denis Hurley Peace Institute, Pax Christi member organisation in South Africa, commemorated 10 years from Archbishop Hurley's death. Events included the annual lecture by Fr Sean O'Leary and the blessing of the foundation stone for Dennis Hurley Centre. See pictures from the event [here](#). ■

## **AMERICAS AND CARIBBEAN**

### **Pax Christi USA signs petition calling for diplomacy in dealing with Iran"**

Pax Christi USA has signed a letter to US Congress members asking them to choose diplomacy over sanctions in engaging with Iran. The letter urges people to oppose additional sanctions or any other action that could undermine the negotiation process with Iran over latter's nuclear programme. To sign the petition, click [here](#). ■

### **Pax Christi USA endorses Friends of Sabeel conference in Philadelphia**

Pax Christi USA has endorsed the upcoming conference of Friends of Sabeel - North America. The topic is "The Role of the US in Israel-Palestine: Current Realities and Creative Responses". The conference will take place on 28-29 March 2014, and will examine the role of the United States in the Israel-Palestine conflict, exploring ways in which Americans can effectively advocate for a just peace. Read more about the conference [here](#). ■

### **Pax Christi Long Island initiates InSight campaign against gun violence**

After a shooting at a local elementary school, some members of Pax Christi Long Island met to consider how to respond to the prevalence of gun deaths. A small committee of the Pax Christi Long Island Council began the *InSight* campaign to educate and encourage communities on Long Island to seek sensible gun regulations.

Nineteen groups, including religious congregations, peace and justice and civic organisations and churches of various denominations, joined the effort to turn talk into action. Read more on this campaign [here](#). ■

### **Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns supports the Open Shuhada Street Campaign**

The Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns, Pax Christi member organisation in the USA, supports the Open Shuhada Street Campaign, a Palestinian initiative of [Youth against Settlements](#) aimed at drawing attention to the plight of Hebron residents. The campaign hopes to raise awareness

about the Israeli occupation focusing on Shuhada Street as a symbol of the settlement issue, the policy of separation in the entire West Bank, the lack of freedom of movement, and the occupation at large. Read more [here](#). ■

### **Comissão Pastoral da Terra expresses its concern for the eviction of families in Campos Lindos**

The National Coordination of Comissão Pastoral da Terra, Brazilian Pax Christi International member organisation, expresses its concern on the imminent risk of eviction suffered by nearly 80 peasant families in the region of Campos Lindos. The National Coordination has issued a statement requiring the eviction to be immediately suspended and to ensure the rights of the families who, for the past 18 years, have lived under the pressure of the sudden eviction and the uncertainty of the future. To read more in Portuguese, please click [here](#). ■

## **ASIA - PACIFIC**

### **Human Dignity in Catholic Social Thought**

The Office for Justice, Peace and Development (CBCI), Pax Christi International member organisation in India, published a book entitled 'Human Dignity in Catholic Social Thought'.

The book encapsulates the Catholic teaching on human dignity and includes biblical perspectives on the topic. By publishing the book, CBCI hopes to cultivate respect for human dignity, promote fraternity, equality, justice, and peace. Read more [here](#). ■

## **CBCI Commission for Justice, Peace and Development, India elects new leadership structures**

The Office for Justice, Peace and Development, CBCI, Pax Christi member organisation in India, elected Most Rev. Gerald Almeida as the new chairman of the organisation. Most Rev. Abraham Viruthikulangara and Most Rev. Abraham Mar Julios were elected as members. Read more [here](#). ■

## **MIDDLE EAST**

### **UN Security Council Resolution on Syria: Allow unhindered humanitarian access**

As Olympic Games opened in Sochi on 7 February, Pax Christi International joined a group of 37 humanitarian, human rights, and peace organizations calling for a UNSC Resolution to open Syria to aid. Read more on [our website](#).

On 22 February, Pax Christi International joined a coalition of 18 international humanitarian, human rights and peace groups welcoming the unanimous adoption of the UN Security Council resolution demanding safe and unhindered humanitarian access, including across conflict lines and across borders, to people in need throughout Syria. Read more [here](#). ■

### **Pax Christi Wallonie-Bruxelles on the ongoing conflict in Syria**

In a recent article, Pax Christi Wallonie-Bruxelles analyses the ongoing conflict in Syria. The article points out that almost three years after the start of protests against Bashar al-Assad, his regime is still in place

and citizens continue to be the main targets of attacks, as shown by the bombing in Aleppo and the starvation of the people in Muadamyiah and the Palestinian refugee camp in Yarmouk. The article also states that terror among the population increases, humanitarian aid is often blocked and arbitrary executions are becoming more frequent. Read more in French [here](#). ■

### **Palestinian refugees in the Syrian war**

The situation of Palestinian refugees in Syria is one of the most compelling circumstances of refugees ever. By January 2014, approximately 50% of the 540.000 Palestinian refugees registered in Syria had been displaced within the war-torn country, with further 50.000 seeking shelter in Lebanon, 10.000 in Jordan and thousands more in other countries. Fr. Paul Lansu of the Pax Christi International Secretariat has written an article reflecting on the reality of Palestinian refugees in Syria and suggesting concrete action to be undertaken by the European Union to address this issue. Read more on [our website](#). ■

### **Pax Christi Flanders issues update on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict**

Broederlijk Delen and Pax Christi Flanders follow closely developments in Israel and Palestine. Their latest update on this issue focuses on the international attention to the outcome of the peace talks and describes the worrying situation in Gaza due to the deteriorating economic condition and the ongoing violence. Read more (in Flemish) [here](#). ■

### **Syria: Living under Siege**

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

published a new paper entitled 'Living under Siege', which details the devastating impact of sieges in Syria imposed by Syrian Government forces and pro-Government militias, as well as by armed opposition groups. You can find the full paper on OHCHR's website and see the response from the Syrian Government [here](#). ■

## EUROPE

### **Pax Christi Italy organises 100 km walk to celebrate 60th anniversary of Italian Constitution**

From 17 to 24 August, Pax Christi Italy will lead a 100 km walk to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Italian Constitution and the commitment to live on the path of peace. The event will include meetings with witnesses of the Resistance and the Constituent Assembly as well as talks on the spirituality of civic sense. Many socialization and sharing activities are included in the programme. To learn more about the event and book your place, click [here](#). ■

### **Pax Christi Flanders endorses statement against use of drones**

Pax Christi Flanders endorsed a statement of the Executive Committee of the World Council of Churches (WCC) on the use of drones. The WCC expresses their deep concern about these devices, which are being increasingly used.

According to the statement, drones are "a serious threat to humanity" and "the right to life", and their use jeopardizes relations between states. Read more (in Flemish) [here](#). ■

### **Pax Christi Germany participates in a protest against arms trade**

On 26 February representatives of Pax Christi Germany and "Aktion Aufschrei - Stop the arms trade!" (Aktion Aufschrei - Stoppt den Waffenhandel!) organised a protest in Berlin. With dummy tanks, choral singing and banners they marched in front of the Reichstag to demand a complete ban on the export of arms. They have also collected 95,000 signatures in support of this ban and presented them to the Bundestag Vice President Edelgard Buhmann. Read more in German [here](#) and [here](#). ■

### **Olivier Forges from Pax Christi Flanders visits Ukraine**

Olivier Forges from Pax Christi Flanders visited Ukraine just days before violence broke out. He spent three days with 100 Ukrainians in 5 cities discussing the desire for change and the dream of a peaceful society in Ukraine. During the workshops participants from all ages described how their friends and families were torn apart by the political opposition. Read his story in Dutch [here](#). ■

### **Club of Catholic Intelligentsia publishes letter on how to help Ukraine**

Club of Catholic Intelligentsia (KIK), Pax Christi member organisation in Poland, is collecting applications from people who can take care and accompany the wounded Ukrainians treated in Polish hospitals. They also collect information from people who may at some time take to their homes those victims who do not require constant hospitalization. KIK is working along

with other organisations to ensure consistent and systematic assistance to victims residing in Poland. Read more in Polish [here](#) and [here](#). ■

### **Pax Christi UK participates in “Peace, Power and Protest: Prophets for a New World” Event**

Pax Christi UK together with Student Christian Movement and Fellowship of Reconciliation held a joint annual conference entitled “Peace, Power and Protest: Prophets for a New World”. The event, which took place on 14-16 February, offered the chance to reflect on what Jesus meant by peace, how we can bring healing and reconciliation to our communities and how faith can speak truth to power. The Pax Christi Icon of Peace was a prayer focus throughout the event. Read more [here](#). ■

### **Pax Christi UK issues new peace planning leaflet**

Pax Christi UK has issued a new peace planning leaflet offering ideas and resources to help those interested plan their peace events and activities for the year ahead. The leaflet includes information on Lent, nuclear disarmament, Global Day of Action on Military Spending, World War I commemorations and more. You can download the leaflet [here](#). ■

## **DISARMAMENT/ DEMILITARISATION**

### **Global Day of Action on Military Spending**

Pax Christi International supports the Global Day of Action on Military Spending (GDAMS)

initiative. The 4th edition of GDAMS is scheduled for 14 April 2014 and it will feature different themes and activities in accordance with domestic political circumstances. To learn how you can get involved, [click here](#). Further GDAMS 2014 resources produced by Pax Christi UK and other representatives of the UK NGO community can be found [here](#) and [here](#). ■

### **Disarmament for Development: call to faith-based organisations**

Faith-based organisations are invited to join the Disarmament for Sustainable Development Campaign. The main aim of this initiative is to press for an end to the over-funding of military establishments and for the creation of new funds to tackle human insecurity and common threats to the planet. Fr. Paul Lansu has written a [background document](#) which can be used for further action within the religious communities. ■

### **Pax Christi USA demands end of defence funding through Overseas Contingency Operations**

Pax Christi USA signed a letter addressed to the members of the US Defense Appropriations Committee demanding an end to the practice of funding the US Pentagon through Overseas Contingency Operations. The letter highlights that since the US is no longer engaged in any active wars, the country's defence budget must come down far more to match past post-war drawdowns.

The letter urges the committee to make budget decisions rooted in the values of justice and compassion, thus promoting true human security. Read the letter [here](#). ■

## **Pax Christi France and Justice et Paix reopen debate on nuclear disarmament**

Pax Christi France, Justice and Peace, and the Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences at the Catholic Institute in Paris published a book entitled 'Peace without the bomb'. The aim of the book is to reopen the debate on nuclear disarmament. The thesis of the book is that the argument in favor of the policy of deterrence, which prevailed during the Cold War, is no longer valid. According to the authors "our security, our territory and our independence are more directly and immediately threatened". Read more (in French) [here](#). ■

## **PAX presents the report 'Deadly Decisions - 8 objections to killer robots'**

On 26 February, PAX presented the report "Deadly Decisions - 8 objections to killer robots" at the annual NGO conference of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots in London. The report highlights 8 objections to killer robots and explains why a comprehensive and pre-emptive ban on these weapons is necessary. Read more [here](#). ■

## **Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons**

The 2nd International Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons was held in Nayarit, Mexico, on 13-14 February 2014. An international diplomatic process toward that goal was conceived. A critical mass for change may emerge from the 146 governments, 61 civil society organizations, UN agencies and international organizations which were present. Non-governmental organizations represented at the event included the

Ecumenical ATT Campaign and Ecumenical No-Nukes Net. Read more [here](#). ■

## **Pax Christi USA signs petition against new military base in Japan**

Leading scholars, peace advocates and artists from the US, Canada, Europe and Australia released a statement opposing the construction of the new US Marine base at Henoko, Okinawa, planned by the US and Japanese governments as a replacement facility of Futenma airbase located in the middle of Ginowan City. The statement urges "support for the people of Okinawa in their struggle for peace, dignity, human rights, and protection of the environment". Pax Christi USA supports this statement and has signed a petition asking the US government to cancel the new military base. To learn more about this initiative, click [here](#). ■

## **HUMAN RIGHTS**

### **Human Right to Peace**

Pax Christi International, together with the International Association of Peace Messenger Cities, the Spanish Society for International Human Rights Law, the International Observatory of the Human Right to Peace, and other groups will submit a joint written statement on the human right to peace to the Human Rights Council during its 25th session (March 2014). Read more in [English](#) and [Spanish](#). ■

### **Political dialogue on human rights, democracy and development**

On 12 February, Comissão Pastoral da Terra, Pax Christi International member

organisation in Brazil, participated in a political dialogue between civil society organisations and representatives of the judicial, executive and legislative power. The dialogue entitled "Human Rights, Democracy and Development - Challenges to the State" aimed to launch a broad consultation process in order to evaluate how human rights movements and organisations perform. To read more about this in Portuguese, click [here](#). ■

### **Grupo de Apoyo Mutuo releases annual report on violence and human rights in Guatemala**

Grupo de Apoyo Mutuo, Guatemalan member organisation of Pax Christi International, released a report on violent acts and human rights violations in the country during the past year. The report offers an extensive review of the types of violence suffered by the victims according to different variables such as location, gender, age, and establishes a comparison between violence trends over the past two years. To download the document, click [here](#). ■

### **Centro de Derechos Humanos Fray Bartolomé de las Casas celebrates its 25th anniversary**

Centro de Derechos Humanos Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, Pax Christi International member organisation in Mexico, celebrates its 25th anniversary on 19 March. On this occasion, the Human Rights Centre will organise an [International Forum on Human Rights "De la memoria a la esperanza"](#). Topics for discussion will include human rights of indigenous people, memory, justice and freedom, militarisation and armed conflict. To read more about the

history of the Human Rights Centre in Spanish, click [here](#). ■

### **Centro de Derechos Humanos Fray Bartolomé de las Casas wins Human Rights Award**

Centro de Derechos Humanos Fray Bartolomé de las Casas won the "Special Mention of the Human Rights Award 2013" organised by the National Consultative Commission on Human Rights, a French institution for the promotion and protection of Human Rights. With this award, France recognises the commitment of the Fray Bartolomé centre to supporting the rights of forcibly displaced people. To learn more about this initiative, click [here](#). ■

### **Serpaj Chile on Human rights issues in Chile**

Serpaj Chile, Pax Christi member organisation, has released a report summarising human rights issues in Chile during the first month of 2014. To read the report in Spanish, click [here](#). ■

## **HUMAN SECURITY**

### **Peace Conference to mark the 100th anniversary of WWI**

On 4 March, Pax Christi International's Senior Policy Advisor Paul Lansu took part in a round table discussion at a peace conference marking the 100th anniversary of World War I. The event was organised by the Confederal Group of the European United Left/Nordic Green Left (GUE/NGL) in the European Parliament. Paul Lansu's speech can be found [here](#). To learn more about the conference, click [here](#). ■

## PEACE EDUCATION

### [Pax Christi Italy organises a workshop on non-violence education](#)

Pax Christi Italy will organise a non-violent education workshop on 29-30 March 2014. This workshop is addressed to educators, trainers, teachers and entertainers at the headquarters of Pax Christi in Tavarnuzze (Florence) under the name "The ecology of the relationships". For more information on this training workshop, please visit the website: [www.paxchristi.it](http://www.paxchristi.it) ■

### [Pax Christi UK and Peace Education Network organise workshop on school for peace](#)

On 17 March, Pax Christi UK and Peace Education Network will organise a workshop on how to build a school for peace. Staff and students from Trinity Catholic School will lead participants in exploring how commitment to nonviolence would change a school. For more information or to book a place on this free workshop, visit the Peace Education Network website [here](#). ■

### [Pax Christi UK Youth organises school workshops](#)

Pax Christi UK organises workshops for young people in schools, parishes, and at youth events across England and Wales. These workshops encourage critical reflection on issues of peace and nonviolence and the role of peacemaking as part of the Christian life.

Read more on how you can get involved [here](#). ■

## PEACE SPIRITUALITY

### [Ecumenical vigil and prayer for Palestine](#)

On 21 March, the Pax Christi Charleroi group will hold an ecumenical vigil and prayer for Palestine, based on the Kairos Palestine document - "a cry of hope, with love, prayer and faith in God". To learn more about this initiative and to register for the vigil, click [here](#). ■

### [Pax Christi USA publishes a book of Lenten reflections](#)

Each year Pax Christi USA publishes a book of reflections for each Lenten day. This year's booklet is entitled 'Embracing Possibilities: Reflections for Lent 2014', and is co-written by Kathy Schmitt, Fr. Chris Ponnet, and Pax Christi USA Ambassador of Peace Tom Cordaro. To read a sample of the book click [here](#). ■

### [Diocese of Kerry celebrates Youth Ministry Awards](#)

Diocese of Kerry, Pax Christi member organisation in Ireland, celebrated the Youth Ministry Awards on 27 February. The two-year course accredited by St. Mary's University College, Queens University, Belfast, was delivered by the Redemptorist Youth Ministry Team, coordinated by Fr. Noel Kehoe in collaboration with the Diocese of Kerry. Read more [here](#). ■

### [Pax Christi Metro New York participates in panel on the legacy of Mandela](#)

On 7 February, Rosemarie Pace from Pax Christi Metro New York participated in the

Interfaith Harmony Forum organised by the United Nations. She addressed the Christian perspective on the theme of 'Tolerance, Forgiveness, and Reconciliation in recognition of Nelson Mandela'. Members of Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist, and Hindu faith traditions also shared their insights into how faith promotes tolerance, forgiveness, and reconciliation. Read more [here](#). ■

## ADVOCACY

### UN Small Arms Programme of Action

On 18 February, the Geneva Forum hosted a public discussion on the 5th Biennial Meeting of States of the UN Small Arms Programme of Action. Bob de Viana delegate of Pax Christi International, attended the event. Read more [here](#). ■

### Women in Peace Processes: challenges ahead

The Pax Christi network acknowledges the important role that women play in conflict transformation processes and, in particular, in peace negotiations. Women represent 50 percent of the population; consequently, efforts should be deployed for a proportional representation of women during such negotiations. Read more on [our website](#). ■

## PAX CHRISTI IN THE MEDIA

Independent Catholic News:  
[Pax Christi signs open letter calling for UNSC Resolution on Syria](#)

Thomson Reuters Foundation:  
[Welcome UN Resolution on Access to Aid](#)

Radio Vatican – Russian Edition:  
[Pax Christi Calls for Olympic Truce in Syria at the time of the Winter Olympics in Sochi](#)

Radio Vatican – German Edition:  
[Pax Christi International: „Olympischen Waffenstillstand“ für Syrien](#)

Radio Vatican – Italian Edition:  
[Pax Christi invoca la tregua olimpica per la Siria durante i Giochi di Sochi](#)

Kerknet:  
[Appel Voor Olympische Wapenstilstand In Syrië](#)

Fr. Paul Lansu's comment on Israeli Parliament's approval of controversial law distinguishing between Christians and Muslim Arabs in Israel:

[International Solidarity Movement](#)

[Kerknet Niews](#)

[Electronic Resistance](#) ■

## INTERNATIONAL CALENDAR

Click [here](#) to view the International Calendar of upcoming events.

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