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GLOBAL

Pax Christi International Peace Award 2014

The 2014 Pax Christi International Peace Award has been granted to the Jesuit Refugee Service Syria for its outstanding dedication in providing emergency relief to Syrians since the war began in 2011. Established in 1988, the Award is funded by the Cardinal Bernardus Alfrink Peace Fund and honours contemporary individuals and organisations who make a stand for peace, justice and non-violence in different parts of the world. The award ceremony will take place on 8 June 2014 in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, in the context of the International Peace Event. Press Release available in: [English](#), [French](#), [Spanish](#), [German](#), [Italian](#), [Portuguese](#), [Dutch](#) and [Arabic](#). ■

Encountering Peace: In Solidarity with Syria

During Lent 2014, Pax Christi International is organising 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. Everyone is encouraged to write a solidarity message, pray, fast, and help raise awareness about the plight of the civilian population in Syria by sharing the latest Pax Christi International Statement on Syria with their national authorities and with embassies in their country, especially those of the US, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and the European Union. Read more in [English](#), [French](#), [Spanish](#), [German](#), [Italian](#), [Portuguese](#), [Dutch](#), [Polish](#) and [Arabic](#). ■

AFRICA

PAX supports open letter to African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR)

PAX Netherlands supported 13 Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in South Sudan, which have sent an open letter to the members of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR). The South Sudanese CSOs call on the ACHPR to condemn human rights violations in South Sudan, advocate the immediate establishment of the Commission of Inquiry, and help promote a culture of respect for human rights and the rule of law. Read more [here](#). ■

SA Catholic Bishops' Conference on Reconciliation, Peace and Justice

On 11-14 March, the South African Catholic Bishops' Conference, whose Justice and Peace Commission is a member of Pax Christi, organised a conference to discuss their role in the promotion or reconciliation, peace and justice in accordance with the recommendations of the post-synodic exhortations "Ecclesia in Africa" and "Africae Munus". The conference was officially opened by Archbishop Stephen Brislin, President of the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference (SACBC). To read more, click [here](#). ■

NGOs ask Congolese government to pass human rights-related legislation

Pax Christi International joined a broad coalition of Congolese and international organizations in issuing a declaration calling on the Congolese government and

parliament to move forward with adoption of the specialised mixed chambers legislation and the International Criminal Court implementing legislation during the current session of parliament.

The next few weeks will be critical to ensure that the government actually moves forward as promised on these two pieces of legislation. The statement, issued on 31 March, is available in [English](#) and [French](#). ■

AMERICAS AND CARIBBEAN

[Pax Christi USA reflects on the anniversary of the death of Archbishop Romero](#)

On 24 March, Pax Christi USA published a reflection for the commemoration of the death of Archbishop Oscar Romero, who was murdered at the altar while celebrating the Eucharist. In the article, the authors Jean Stokan and Scott Wright reflect on Romero's testimony of love and faith. To read Pax Christi USA's reflections on Archbishop Romero, click [here](#). ■

[Member Organisations take action in support of activists in Sri Lanka](#)

Several Member Organisations signed onto a letter expressing deep concerns about several recent arrests in Sri Lanka of human rights defenders under the government's Protection of Terrorism Act.

Fr. Praveen and Ruki Fernando were arrested on 22 March while looking into the arrest two days before of a vocal leader of families of the disappeared, Ms. Jeyakumari. Both activists were released a few days later, but harassment from the government continued. ■

[Transnational mining and human rights violations in Latin America](#)

Martha Inés Romero, Pax Christi Regional Coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean, will be following a course entitled "Mecanismos de denuncia – cómo responsabilizar a empresas transnacionales mineras/extractivas por violaciones de derechos humanos y delitos ambientales" (Denouncing mechanisms - How to denounce transnational mining entities for human rights violations and environmental crimes).

Organised by [Misereor](#), the German Catholic Bishops' Organisation for Development Cooperation, the course aims to provide training on denouncing mechanisms at national and international level to Misereor partners and other institutions working on the issue of mining extraction in Latin America. ■

[Nonviolent conflict transformation and mining](#)

On 19 March, Vida Nueva Magazine, in collaboration with the Universidad Santo Tomás de Bogotá and the Conferencia de Religiosos de Colombia – whose Commission of Justice, Solidarity and Peace is a member of Pax Christi, organised a colloquium entitled "[Is ecology a problem of conscience?](#)" in Bogotá, Colombia.

The event featured the participation of Martha Inés Romero, Latin America and Caribbean Regional Coordinator of Pax Christi International, who spoke about nonviolent conflict transformation associated with mining. ■

Pax Christi works to counteract negative impacts of mining

On 8 March, communities in San Mateo de Huanchor, San Antonio, Carhuapampa and Chicla, together with the church San Mateo and Pastoral Social –Caritas Chosica from the Chosica diocese and Comisión Episcopal de Acción Social (CEAS), Pax Christi Perú and the International Secretariat, have gathered to reflect on the impact of mining in the region, and to study alternative proposals to counteract the effects.

As faith-based organisations, participants to the meeting committed to accompany these communities in their efforts of strengthening their capacities to build a living atmosphere from justice and nonviolence. Read more in [English](#) and [Spanish](#). ■

Comissão Pastoral da Terra holds meeting on women's participation in development

Comissão Pastoral da Terra, Pax Christi member organization in Brazil, held a meeting on the 7 of March, eve of the International Woman's Day, together with the Sindicato dos Trabalhadores e Trabalhadoras Rurais de Itaituba (STTR) and Movimento dos Atingidos por Barragens (MAB).

The topic of this event was to discuss the female participation on the development model for the people living near the Tapajós River and see how the major projects planned for the west of Pará will impact on their lives. To read more in Portuguese, click [here](#). ■

Serpaj Chile co-signs letter to President Bachelet on the Mapuche indigenous people

The International Secretariat of Pax Christi and Serpaj Chile, Member Organisation in Chile, recently endorsed a letter issued by Comisión de Observación y Resguardo de los Derechos Humanos de los Pueblos Originarios, an organisation working for the defence of the human rights of the indigenous people in Chile (CORDHPO) urging the Chilean President Michelle Bachelet to recognise all the political and judicial mistakes and to protect the interests of the Mapuche people and social workers in the region of Araucanía. Read more in [English](#) and [Spanish](#). ■

ASIA - PACIFIC

CBCI India commemorates Romero Day

On 24 March 2014, the Office for Justice, Peace and Development of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India, a Pax Christi International member organisation, organised a Holy Mass in commemoration of the 34th anniversary of Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero's assassination.

This was the 4th consecutive Romero Day Observance that the CBCI Office for Justice Peace and Development, along with the Salvadoran Embassy in New Delhi, has organised since 2011. A report from the event, submitted by Rev Dr Charles Irudayam, Secretary of the CBCI Office for Justice, Peace and Development, can be accessed [here](#). ■

NCJP Pakistan condemns mob/reprisal attacks on Hindu community in Larkana

The National Commission for Justice and Peace (NCJP) Pakistan, member organisation of Pax Christi International, has issued a [statement](#) condemning the recent mob/reprisal attacks on the Hindu community in Larkana.

On 19 March, NCJP representatives Fr. Emmanuel Yousaf, National Director; Naumana Suleman, Program Coordinator; and Cecil S. Chaudhry, Executive Director visited the Pax Christi International Secretariat, where they met with Pax Christi International's Secretary General José Henríquez and Senior Policy Advisor Fr. Paul Lansu. ■

NCJP Pakistan issues E-Mirror newsletter

The National Commission for Justice and Peace (NCJP) Pakistan has released the latest issue of the electronic newsletter E-Mirror containing information on their various activities and programmes, such as their International Human Rights Advocacy network meeting, the Youth and Music Festival and the Youth for Peace Seminar. To read the newsletter in English, click [here](#). ■

MIDDLE EAST

The Battle for Pluralism in the Arab World

On 25 March, Fr. Paul Lansu of the International Secretariat participated in a debate on pluralism in the Arab World, organised by Carnegie Europe in Brussels. The event was occasioned by the launch of the book "The Second Arab Awakening and the Battle for Pluralism" written by Marwan

Muasher, Jordan's former ambassador to the United States, foreign minister, and deputy prime minister. Read more [here](#). ■

Thunderclap's campaign to ensure humanitarian access in Syria

On 18 March, Pax Christi Flanders, Pax Christi USA, PAX Netherlands along with the International Secretariat, took part in the #LetUsThrough Thunderclap initiated by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Supported by 130 NGOs and thousands of individuals worldwide, the campaign demanded immediate, secure, substantial and permanent humanitarian access for all civilians, including countless children, in Syria. On 19 March, the Thunderclap displayed on electronic billboards in New York's Times Square and Tokyo's Shibuya District. Read more about the campaign [here](#). ■

Pax Christi France signs open letter to French Presidency on Syrian conflict

15 March 2014 marked the third anniversary of Syrian war. In this context, Pax Christi France and Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture (ACAT) joined the #WithSyria campaign and sent an open letter to the French president François Hollande urging him to take part in it. Read more in French [here](#). ■

For a just peace in Syria

Mosaico di Pace, the monthly magazine of Pax Christi Italy, published an article written by Pax Christi International Co-President Marie Dennis entitled "[Per una pace giusta in Siria](#)" ([For a just peace in Syria](#)). In this article, Marie Dennis talks about the

participation of Pax Christi International in two meetings held before the “Geneva II” peace talks on Syria: “Consiglio Ecumenico delle Chiese” and “Women Lead to Peace”. Marie Dennis highlights once again the importance of finding a solution to the Syrian war and calls on the UN to apply the resolutions that ensure the full participation of women in the peace processes. ■

Reflection on Syrian women

Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns, Pax Christi member organisation in the USA, has recently published a reflection on Syrian women and their involvement in peace processes, by Marie Dennis, co-President of Pax Christi International. For more details, click [here](#). ■

EUROPE

Pax Christi Austria's General Assembly and commemoration of World War I

Pax Christi Austria held its annual general assembly on 14-15 March. The first day participants had the opportunity to interact with Dr. Peter Kostelka, former parliamentarian and President of the Austrian Study Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution in Schläining. They discussed recent research projects undertaken by the Center and its position regarding recent events in Eastern Europe.

To commemorate the 100th anniversary of the World War I the Austrian section, together with peace activists from Germany, Slovenia, Italy, Austria, and elsewhere, is organising a special event from 14 to 17 July 2014. The event will feature a walk in the Plöckenpass, a high mountain

pass in the Carnic Alps mountain range at the border between Austria and Italy. To read more about this event in German, click [here](#). ■

Pax Christi France holds its annual colloquium

The annual colloquium of Pax Christi France took place on 29 March at the Catholic Institute in Paris. This year's event was entitled « 1914 - 2014, les blessures de l'histoire. Des mots pour le dire... » (1914 – 2014, Wounds of History. Words to talk about them...). Read more [here](#) (in French). ■

PAX supports the plea for strong EU regulation on conflict resources

PAX Netherlands has joined a group of over 60 European NGOs calling for binding EU rules ensuring that European businesses do not contribute to conflict financing or human rights abuses in the production and trade in natural resources. A strong legislative framework would require all companies operating in the EU to check their supply chains to reduce the risk of conflict financing and human rights abuses. PAX is also active on a Dutch level to work hard for better government regulation to prevent companies to get involved in conflict minerals and to ensure victims of atrocities get access to justice and remedy. Read more [here](#). ■

Pax Christi France statement on the crisis in Ukraine and Crimea

On 20 March, Pax Christi France issued a statement on the crisis in Ukraine and Crimea, expressing its concern about the violent and complex situation, following the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation. Pax Christi France calls on

citizens to remain alert to what is happening at the gates of Europe and to stand in solidarity and prayer with the Ukrainian people in this time of Lent. Read the full statement in French [here](#). ■

[Pax Christi International on the Crisis in Ukraine](#)

On 10 March, Pax Christi International issued a statement expressing its concern with regard to the latest developments in Ukraine. Pax Christi International calls religious leaders and all the faithful in Ukraine, as well as in the Russian Federation and in other countries involved in the political tensions, to act as mediators and bridge-builders, bringing people together instead of dividing them, and to support nonviolent ways to find peaceful and just solutions to the crisis. The statement is available in [English](#), [Spanish](#) and [German](#). ■

[Pax Christi Austria on the crisis in Ukraine](#)

Pax Christi Austria has released a statement signed by its Secretary-General Jussuf Windischer on the Ukrainian crisis. The statement shows regret for the latest events in the country and calls on the governments and authorities to refrain from military solutions and people of good will to pray. The statement also calls on the Austrian government to adopt a neutral role and to take the non-affiliation to military alliances seriously. To read the complete statement in German, click [here](#). ■

[Pax Christi France on peace and women's participation in peace processes](#)

On 8 March, on the occasion of the International Women's Day, Pax Christi France initiated a process of reflection on

women's contribution to peace in the world. Read more in French [here](#). ■

DISARMAMENT/ DEMILITARISATION

[Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference](#)

The Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) for the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) will hold its third session from 28 April to 9 May 2014 at the United Nations Office in New York. The purpose of the PrepCom is to prepare for the Review Conference in terms of assessing the implementation of each article of the NPT and facilitating discussion among States with a view to making recommendations to the Review Conference. Pax Christi International will attend the PrepCom. Read more [here](#). ■

[GDAMS 2014: Global Day of Action on Military Spending](#)

The 4th edition of the Global Day of Action on Military Spending will be held on Monday, 14 April 2014. The GDAMS initiative was co-founded in 2011 by the International Peace Bureau and the Institute for Policy Studies. This year's day of action coincides, once again, with the release by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) of their annual statistics on global military spending.

A [Thunderclap campaign](#) has been launched in the context of GDAMS 2014. The goal is to get as many people as possible to lend their voice to GDAMS

campaign and tweet together to create a critical mass of posts on social media. Pax Christi International is a supporter of this initiative. To learn more, including how you can get involved, click [here](#). ■

PAX movie on killer robots

PAX Netherlands made an animated movie about killer robots, which aims to explain why these weapons should be banned. Although killer robots do not exist yet, the rapid advances in military technology show that the capability to deploy fully autonomous weapons is on its way.

Killer robots can select and engage targets without any meaningful human intervention; this is why PAX calls for an international ban on these weapon systems. Watch the movie [here](#). ■

Disarming Times

A new issue of Pax Christi Australia's quarterly publication "Disarming Times" is now available. It features reflections on an Anzac Day Service, Syria's civil war, the use of drones and the denial of life, as well as an overview of upcoming events organised by or with the collaboration of Pax Christi Australia. Read more [here](#). ■

HUMAN RIGHTS

War crimes and socio-political developments in Croatia

Centre for Peace, Non-Violence and Human Rights, Pax Christi International member organisation in Croatia, published a new report on war crimes and the social and political developments that have or

may have an impact on the prosecution of crimes. To access the report in Croatian, click [here](#). ■

International Forum on Human Rights "De la Memoria a la Esperanza"

On 17-19 March, Centro de Derechos Humanos Fray Bartolomé de las Casas (Frayba), Pax Christi Member Organisation in Mexico, organised an International Forum on Human Rights "[De la Memoria a la Esperanza](#)".

The event marked the 25 anniversary of the organization and aimed to facilitate sharing of experiences on advocacy and the exercise of the human rights of Indigenous Peoples building alternative ways of living nowadays.

The leadership of Pax Christi International sent Frayba a letter congratulating them for the anniversary and their important service to the Latin American region. Read the letter in Spanish [here](#). ■

HUMAN SECURITY

PAX Netherlands co-signs letter asking for better protection of civilians in the DRC

PAX Netherlands, together with several Congolese and international civil society groups, co-signed a letter calling on the UN peacekeeping mission to DR Congo MONUSCO to improve their efforts to protect civilians against the Lord's Resistance Army.

As stated in the [letter](#), MONUSCO should be able to do more with the resources they have. ■

PEACE EDUCATION

Haiti: deconstructing violence through peace education

Commission Episcopale Nationale Justice et Paix, Pax Christi member organisation in Haiti, issued its 49th report on metropolitan violence in the area of Port-au-Prince. The reflection that accompanies the report focuses on the deconstruction of institutional violence through peace education. Read more in French and Creole [here](#). ■

Catholic Social Teaching in India

The Office for Justice, Peace and Development – Catholic Bishops' Conference of India, Pax Christi member organisation in India, organised a workshop on Catholic Social Teaching on the 19 and 20 of March. The workshop was conducted by the Archbishop William D' Souza of Patna, who invited all the Christians in Bihar to actively engage in promoting justice. Participants were a mixed group of priests, nuns and lay people. The aim of the workshop was to prepare them for a proactive social engagement and enable them to observe Lent meaningfully. To read more about this event, click [here](#). ■

Pax Christi Flanders organises special "Peace Day" in Ypres

On 6 March, Pax Christi Flanders and the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies to the University of Leuven organised a special "Peace Day" in Ypres. The theme of the event was the World War I. Nearly 300 professors and students attended. Read more [here](#). ■

PEACE SPIRITUALITY

Days of Prayer and Action for Colombia 2014

Every year since 2006, churches in Colombia, United States and Canada have celebrated the Days of Prayer and Action for Colombia, a gesture of unity for the peace in the country. Members of the congregations in these three countries will gather with the focus of the peace building in Colombia and invite all people of good faith to join the Days of Prayer and Action for Colombia that will be held on the 6 and 7 of April 2014. Martha Inés Romero, Latin America Coordinator of Pax Christi International, will be a member in the coordination group for this event. Read here more information in [Spanish](#) and [English](#). ■

Pax Christi Assisi organises a three-days retreat called "Spogliarsi per una chiesa povera"

Pax Christi Assisi - Italy organises a retreat in the city of Assisi from the 10 to 13 of June for priests, religious and lay people who want to reflect on the lessons found in the reference text "[Di cosa deve spogliarsi la Chiesa?](#)" written by the Bishop of Rome. The retreat will be conducted by Giovanni Nicolini and will have the aim of determining how to respond to the continuous renewal proposals that come to us from Pope Francis. For more information (in Italian) about this event, click [here](#). ■

Pax Christi Germany participates in the global action of Pax Christi International

On 26 March, the Frankfurt group of Pax Christi Germany held a day of fasting and

praying in the framework of the campaign "[Encountering peace: in solidarity with Syria](#)". Read more in German [here](#). ■

Pax Christi UK President Bishop McMahon appointed new Archbishop of Liverpool

On 21 March, Pope Francis appointed Dominican Bishop Malcolm Patrick McMahon of Nottingham, England, as the new Archbishop of Liverpool. Bishop McMahon is President of Pax Christi UK. Speaking at a press conference on this occasion, Bishop McMahon said he was "looking forward to working with fellow Christians from other Churches and communities, people from all religious traditions, and civic and political leaders, building up the good relationships which already exist between us, in our endeavour to serve the common good". Read more [here](#). ■

Kerry Diocesan Justice, Peace and Creation Committee publishes Lenten programme

Kerry Diocesan Justice, Peace and Creation Committee, Pax Christi member organisation in Ireland, published a Lenten programme brochure detailing all their activities until the end of Lent. Join people from all over the diocese to listen and enjoy different presenters on various aspects of faith and life over the coming weeks. Download the brochure [here](#) and read Bishop Ray's Message for Lent and Easter [here](#). ■

7 March 2014: Women's World Day of Prayer hosted by Egypt

Women's World Day of Prayer is a global, ecumenical movement of informed prayer and prayerful action, organised and led by

Christian women who call the faithful together on the first Friday in March each year to observe a common day of prayer and who, in many countries, have a continuing relationship in prayer and service. This year's event, held on 7 March, was prepared and hosted by the women of Egypt with the theme "Streams in the Desert". For more details, click [here](#). ■

ADVOCACY

UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

The 13th Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues will take place from 12 to 23 May 2014 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. The Special Theme is: "Principles of good governance consistent with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: articles 3 to 6 and 46". Mary McDonald, Pax Christi International representative at the UN in New York, will attend the meeting. Read more [here](#). ■

Pax Christi International participates in the Network of Religious and Traditional Peacemakers

The first Advisory Group meeting of the Network of Religious and Traditional Peacemakers is taking place in Helsinki, Finland, on 2–3 April 2014. Initiated by the UN Mediation Support Unit, the UN Alliance of Civilizations, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, Religions for Peace and Finn Church Aid in 2013, the Network aims at improving the quality and efficiency of mediation efforts globally by ensuring that religious and traditional leaders are playing a positive role in mediation.

Pax Christi International was invited to be part of the Advisory Group and Secretary-General José Henríquez attended the meeting. Read more [here](#). ■

Belgian Pax Christi Sections support "Made in Illegality" Campaign

Twenty Belgian organisations including Pax Christi Wallonie-Bruxelles and Pax Christi Flanders are demanding Belgium to comply with its international obligations and to stop all trade with the Israeli colonies and any direct or indirect support.

The "Made in Illegality" Campaign aims to remind the Belgian state of its legal obligations to break any financial ties, economic and trade, with Israeli settlements. To learn more about this campaign, click [here](#). ■

PAX CHRISTI IN THE MEDIA

The Pax Christi International Peace Award has been featured by

- Radio Vatican in [French](#), [German](#), [Italian](#)

- [Kerknet Niews](#) (Flemish)

- [Independent Catholic News](#) (English)

Pax Christi International Secretary-General José Henríquez contributed to a reflection on Pope Francis' commitment to solidarity and peace, published by the "Our Sunday Visitor" Newsweekly. Read more in [English](#).

Pax Christi International's Senior Policy Advisor Fr. Paul Lansu spoke about the "Encountering Peace: In Solidarity with Syria" Campaign at Radio 1 Belgium. Read more in [Flemish](#).

The "Encountering Peace: In Solidarity with Syria" Campaign has also been featured in the Kerknet Niews in [Flemish](#). ■

INTERNATIONAL CALENDAR

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

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