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AFRICA

[Unrest in DR Congo over election law](#)

Thousands of Congolese took to the streets on 19 January to manifest against the new electoral law seen as an attempt of those in power to postpone the 2016 elections. The protest and the violence of the government set the tone for a crucial and tense period in the DR Congo. [Click here](#) to read an analysis of the current situation in the DR Congo by Nadia Nsayi, Policy Officer Central Africa Pax Christi Vlaanderen & Broederlijk Delen. ■

[Swedish Pax Christi member Life & Peace Institute on inter-community reconciliation in DR Congo](#)

The Life & Peace Institute, Pax Christi member organisation in Sweden, has set up community forums to discuss local land disputes in the Congolese province of Kivu. The aim is to encourage international and Congolese actors to pay more attention to the promotion of inter-community reconciliation in DR Congo. While these are small-scale programmes, their importance is vital because they take into account deep root causes, with potential for a more sustainable positive outcome. To learn more, watch this [video](#). ■

[Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference sends message of solidarity to France](#)

The South African Catholic Bishops' Conference, whose Justice and Peace Commission is a member of Pax Christi, issued a letter of solidarity with the people of France in the aftermath of the deadly shootings against journalists and civilians on 7 January. On behalf of the Catholic Church

in Southern Africa, the letter conveys condolences and prayerful support to the entire country, and in particular to those who lost their loved ones in the attacks. Read more [here](#). ■

AMERICAS AND CARIBBEAN

[New Pax Christi International Coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean](#)

Pax Christi International has a new coordinator for its regional network in Latin America and the Caribbean. The new coordinator is Céline Clavel and she will be based in Santiago de Chile. Céline has a degree in International Management and Development and before joining Pax Christi was the regional project manager for a Spanish NGO. She is fluent in English, French and Spanish. We warmly welcome Céline to our team.

Martha Inés Romero, who was coordinator for the last five years will accompany the transition process and will continue supporting our regional work according to her availability. We are deeply grateful for Martha Inés's dedication to develop the regional network and we wish her all the best in her new endeavours. ■

[Pax Christi USA signs onto letter for child welfare professionals at the border](#)

Pax Christi USA co-signed a letter asking the US Department of Homeland Security to consider having child welfare professionals at the Customs Border Protection stations at the southwest border. These professionals would assist both unaccompanied and accompanied children migrating to the US, advocating for their safety and protection. Read more [here](#). ■

Pax Christi New Jersey – Sacred Heart Annual Gathering for Peace and Justice

On 14 February, Pax Christi New Jersey and the Sacred Heart Church are organising their Annual Gathering for Peace and Justice. This year's theme is "The Silent Coup: The Overreach of Government and the Cause of Peace". For programme details and registration, click [here](#). ■

Comissão Pastoral da Terra marks National Day to Combat Forced Labour in Brazil

On 28 January, Brazilian Pax Christi member organisation Comissão Pastoral da Terra (CPT) marked the National Day to Combat Forced Labour by taking part in a series of demonstrations aimed at demanding the trial of those involved in the murder of three labour inspectors in the "Slaughter of Unai", ten years ago. CPT is also involved in various awareness raising activities for the prevention and eradication of forced labour in the country. Read more [here](#). ■

Guatemalan Pax Christi member deplors freedom of speech infringements in the country

In a statement dated 20 January, Grupo de Apoyo Mutuo (GAM), Pax Christi member organisation in Guatemala, expresses solidarity with the journalist Susana Morazán who has been the victim of a violent attack – a 'punishment' act for having criticized the government, according to GAM sources. The Guatemalan Pax Christi member organisation deplors systematic infringements on the freedom of speech in the country, and reiterates its support for free media. Read more [here](#). ■

ASIA - PACIFIC

Kevin McBride of Pax Christi Aotearoa/ New Zealand on the dangers of confronting violence with violence

In a recent reflection, Kevin McBride of Pax Christi Aotearoa/New Zealand looks at the deadly shootings in France from a non-violence standpoint examining ways in which more mutual understanding of each other's situation and needs might avoid resorting to violence as the only way to confront violence. Read more [here](#). ■

Justice and Peace Commission demands political integration and affirmative legislation for minorities in Pakistan

A new policy brief on political integration and affirmative legislation for minorities in Pakistan has been issued by the Justice and Peace Commission of the Pakistan Catholic Bishops' Conference – Pax Christi member organisation. It provides recommendations on how to make political participation of minorities more effective, including through appropriate policy provisions and institutional implementation mechanisms. Read more [here](#). ■

EUROPE

Pax Christi UK celebrates Peace Sunday

Pax Christi UK members and supporters gathered on 18 January for the Peace Sunday celebrations. Building on the 2015 World Peace Day papal message "Slaves no more, but brothers and sisters", the Peace Sunday looked at the links between war, violence, forced labour, modern day

slavery and trafficking. Pax Christi UK has produced a variety of resource materials for the Peace Sunday which are available [here](#). ■

Book launch: “People of Good Will: Pax Christi 1948 – 2013”

A monograph on the history of PAX – formerly IKV Pax Christi Netherlands – entitled “People of Good Will: Pax Christi 1948 – 2013” will be launched on 4 February, in Utrecht. The book, written by the historian Maarten van den Bos looks at the relationship between religion and politics, and the peace movement. Read more [here](#). ■

Pax Christi France statement on ‘Charlie Hebdo’ shooting

In a statement dated 8 January, Pax Christi France deplores the tragic attack on French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo which left twelve people dead. The French Pax Christi section reiterates the importance of values such as justice, respect, freedom and tolerance, so that different communities can live together peacefully. Read more [here](#). ■

Pax Christi Italy message of solidarity with Charlie Hebdo’ shooting victims

In a message issued on 9 January, Pax Christi Italy expresses solidarity with the ‘Charlie Hebdo’ shooting victims in France. Reiterating Pope Francis’ World Day of Peace message “No longer slaves but brothers”, and the appeal for tolerance launched by Pax Christi France, the Italian Pax Christi section calls for a peaceful coexistence of differences, against all forms of violence, in particular against ethnic and religious intolerance. Read more [here](#). ■

Pax Christi Wallonie-Bruxelles condemns the ‘Charlie Hebdo’ attacks

Pax Christi Wallonie-Bruxelles joined a statement by several Belgium-based NGOs working against discrimination condemning the 7 January deadly attacks on the French satirical magazine ‘Charlie Hebdo’. Signatories to this statement reiterate their commitment to working for a just world and for inclusive societies. Read more [here](#). ■

Pax Christi Austria joins commemoration events in Innsbruck

On 11 January, Pax Christi Austria took part in a series of commemoration events held in Innsbruck, in memory of the ‘Charlie Hebdo’ terror attack victims in France. The gathering brought together representatives of different religious communities who gave a clear testimony against violence and xenophobia. Read more [here](#). ■

MIDDLE EAST

Antennes de paix /Pax Christi Montréal hosts ‘A voice for peace in Gaza’ debate

Antennes de paix /Pax Christi Montréal hosted a debate with the Gaza-born humanitarian Izzeldin Abuelaish, the first Palestinian doctor to practice medicine in an Israeli hospital. Dr. Abuelaish presented his autobiography, an attempt to reconcile with the past and the death of his children following a bomb attack on his house by the Israeli army.

The debate also explored the conditions for durable peace between Israelis and Palestinians. Read more [here](#). ■

Fr. Paul Lansu: "Normal life does not exist in Gaza. The world needs to come and see."

Pax Christi International's Senior Policy Advisor Fr. Paul Lansu reflects on his latest trip to Gaza in the context of the 2015 Holy Land Coordination. Read more in [English](#) and [German](#). ■

Pax Christi Flanders welcome Palestine's move to join ICC and urge Europe's support

Palestine's accession to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court is a welcome move that will help deter war crimes and end impunity in the region, and should be supported by European countries, say human rights groups, including Pax Christi Flanders and Broederlijk Delen, in a [recent statement](#). "The ICC should not be seen as an obstacle to peace negotiations, but rather as a crucial instrument to break the decade-old culture of impunity in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict." ■

Pax Christi members join advocacy action in support of Palestine's accession to international treaties

Pax Christi USA and the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns support the "Third Thursday for Israel-Palestine" action of the Faith Forum on Middle East Policy. The current call for action is "Don't punish Palestinians for joining international treaties". To learn more about this initiative, check [Pax Christi USA](#)'s and [Maryknoll](#)'s websites. ■

H.B. Michel Sabbah on Christians in Israel and the Middle East

H.B. Michel Sabbah, Latin Patriarch Emeritus of Jerusalem, and former President of Pax

Christi International, delivered an address on Christians in Israel and in the Middle East, during the academic congress "New Trends of Research on Palestinian Christian Identity in Israel", in Jerusalem, on 20 January 2015. The address in full length is available [here](#). ■

DISARMAMENT/ DEMILITARISATION

Pax Christi Germany welcomes federal decision to halt arms exports to Saudi Arabia

In a statement dated 26 January, Pax Christi Germany welcomes the decision of the German Government to provisionally halt already approved arms sales to Saudi Arabia and neighbouring states. In view of ongoing conflicts and the human rights situation in these countries, Pax Christi Germany believes that arms sales to Saudi Arabia undermine prospects for stability and peace in the region and should be completely stopped. Read more [here](#). ■

Pax Christi UK helps 'Wrap up Trident'!

Pax Christi UK members gathered in London on 24 January to put Trident (i.e. UK's nuclear weapons programme) on the agenda for the general elections in a creative action by wrapping up the UK Ministry of Defence and other government buildings with giant pink scarf. The aim was to send a clear message that nuclear weapons have no place in the UK. Prior to this, Pax Christi UK had gathered for prayer in St Martin-in-the-Fields and read statements from all the churches denouncing the use and possession of nuclear weapons. Read more [here](#). ■

PAX issues report on use of explosive weapons in populated areas

On 28 January, the PAX, member organization in the Netherlands, presented its latest report "Unacceptable Risk" on the use of explosive weapons such as bombs, grenades and rockets, which every year claim the lives of large numbers of civilians, including many children. Read more [here](#). ■

Pax Christi Flanders asks Belgian Bishops to endorse Pope Francis' disarmament message

Pax Christi Flanders asked the Belgian Bishops' Conference to publicly endorse Pope Francis' call for the global elimination of nuclear weapons, made during the December 2014 Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons. Read more [here](#). ■

HUMAN RIGHTS

Pax Christi International co-signs joint CSO statement on the right to peace

Pax Christi co-signed a joint civil society statement on the right to peace presented at the informal consultations with the Chairman-Rapporteur of the Inter-governmental Working Group on the Right to Peace, on 30 January 2015, in Geneva. Signatories call for a meaningful declaration on the right to peace that recognizes the existence of the human right to peace as an autonomous right, deeply rooted in international human rights law.

The statement in full length is available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#). ■

Pax Christi Germany calls for reaffirmation of consensus against racism and discrimination

On the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz and the International Day of Commemoration of the Victims of the Holocaust, Pax Christi Germany reiterates the importance of wide social consensus against discrimination and racism, and calls upon the German political class to translate speeches against anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and fundamental rights infringements into concrete policy proposals. Read more [here](#). ■

Serpaj Chile social project to focus on promotion of human rights and a culture of peace

Chilean Pax Christi member organisation Serpaj will implement a social project which seeks to reduce risk factors associated with violent and transgressive behavior, and enhance child and teenager protection in the Los Lagos region of Chile. Supported by the Secretariat for Crime Prevention of the Chilean Ministry of Interior, the project will be carried out within the broader framework of promotion of human rights and a culture of peace. Read more [here](#). ■

Human rights center Frayba marks week of solidarity with displaced community of Banavil, Mexico

On 25-31 January, the human rights center Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas (Frayba), Mexican Pax Christi member organisation, held a week of solidarity with the displaced families of Banavil who in 2011 were gun-threatened to leave their homes and are still today prevented from returning to their community. Due to the serious violations of human rights, the demand for justice and

penalty for the persons responsible of the assaults continues, according to Frayba. Read more [here](#). ■

PEACE EDUCATION

PAX announces theme for 2015 Peace Week

PAX, member organization in the Netherlands – announced the theme of its 2015 Peace Week which will take place on 19-27 September under the motto “Peace Connects”. The event will bring together more than 70 local initiatives organising hundreds of different activities, including local peace embassies, lectures, movie nights, celebrations, debates on peace and security, as well as the PAX Peace Night. To learn how to get involved, click [here](#). ■

Pax Christi Wallonie-Bruxelles to hold debate on tensions between Muslims and non-Muslims in Brussels

On 3 March, Pax Christi Wallonie-Bruxelles will hold a debate on the relations between Muslims and non-Muslims in Brussels. Particular attention will be given to the two groups’ perceptions of one another, and best ways to overcome daily tensions for a peaceful co-existence. To learn more and to register for the event, click [here](#). ■

Pax Christi UK youth campaigns for justice in Palestine and Israel

Members of Pax Christi UK's student group at Trinity Catholic School in Leamington Spa, UK wrote to their member of parliament, Chris White MP, to express their concern at the violence in Israel and Palestine. They were particularly concerned with the unjust arrest of Palestinians and the difficulties

faced by Israeli Conscientious Objectors and urged the UK government to work hard to help secure a just and peaceful solution to the conflict. Read more [here](#). ■

Pax Christi Flanders info evening: Israel and Palestine Peace Tour participants tell their story

For the past years, Pax Christi Flanders and Broederlijk Delen have been organising a biennial peace trip to Israel and Palestine, an initiative aimed at providing an introduction to the cultural, religious and historical wealth of the region.

On 29 January, an information evening was held where participants of the latest peace trip – which focused on the role of youth in conflict – gave an account of their experience in the field. Read more [here](#). ■

PEACE SPIRITUALITY

Pax Christi International endorses Global Catholic Climate Movement Statement

Pax Christi International endorsed a statement by the Global Catholic Climate Movement calling for Catholics’ involvement in issues of climate change and joint awareness raising actions for stronger international climate agreements. In light of growing evidence of business and consumer engagement in climatically destructive policies and practices, the statement calls for protection of the common good by acknowledging all forms of life that populate God’s creation. Read more [here](#). ■

Pax Christi Austria marks World Peace Day with prayer and candlelight procession for peace and justice

Pax Christi Austria along with local partners and supporters marked the World Peace Day on 1 January 2015 with a prayer service for peace and justice, in the Capuchin Church of Innsbruck. The reading of Pope Francis' World Peace Day message was followed by a silent candlelight procession for those living in conflict and war zones worldwide. Read more [here](#). ■

2015 Holy Land Coordination – Final Statement

Gaza, Hebron, Bethlehem, Jerusalem and Sderot were some of the cities at the center of the annual visit (10-15 January 2015) of the Holy Land Coordination, the delegation of bishops from Europe, North America and South Africa testifying the Church's concern for the Christian communities. The HLC2015 delegation comprised about fifty people, including bishops and representatives of international church bodies. Pax Christi International – invited as an observer - was represented by Fr. Paul Lansu. The final HLC2015 statement in English, French, Italian and German is available [here](#). ■

ADVOCACY AND CAMPAIGNING

Pax Christi UK to support Burghfield Lockdown against nuclear weapons

On 2 March, Pax Christi UK is aiming to support a faith-based presence/blockade at UK's nuclear weapons factory, AWE Burghfield near Reading in Berkshire. This blockade will begin a month of sustained

direct action against the renewal of Trident (UK's nuclear weapons programme) in the lead up to the UK's 2015 General Elections. The aim is to send a loud and clear signal to government that taxpayers' money must be spent on human needs not illegal out of date weapons of mass destruction. To learn how to get involved, click [here](#). ■

Pax Christi USA signs onto statement that immigration reform is a “pro-life” issue

Pax Christi USA signed onto a statement with 100 other Catholic leaders challenging “pro-life” Catholics in the US Congress to make immigration reform a “pro-life” issue. The statement urges US authorities to defend the sanctity of human lives at all stages. In this context, Congressional representatives are urged to come together and vote for a comprehensive immigration reform bill. Read more [here](#). ■

Pax Christi attends roundtable on peaceful responses to the crisis in Ukraine

On 28 January, Pax Christi International attended a roundtable on peaceful responses to the crisis in Ukraine, co-organised by the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office in Brussels. The meeting aimed to assess the medium and long term impact of the current crisis, including different international approaches to the conflict, and to identify peacebuilding responses to end current violence and to tackle the root causes of the conflict. Read more [here](#). ■

PAX co-signs letter to US President Obama calling for an arms embargo for South Sudan

PAX Netherlands has joined an initiative by 29 South Sudanese and international human rights groups urging US President Barack

Obama to call for and support a comprehensive United Nations arms embargo on the parties to South Sudan's brutal conflict. Read more [here](#). ■

RESOURCES FROM THE PAX CHRISTI INTERNATIONAL MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

- The latest issue of the "Mosaico di pace" magazine of Pax Christi Italy is available [here](#).
- A special issue of the quarterly PAX ZEIT publication of Pax Christi Germany looking at the threat of Islamic theocracy in Iraq and Syria is available [here](#).
- The January 2015 of "ON THE LINE" news bulletin of Pax Christi USA is available [here](#).
- The latest issue of the Congo news brief JAMBO issued by Broederlijk Delen and Pax Christi Flanders is available [here](#).
- New analyses are available from Pax Christi Wallonie-Bruxelles: "[Afrophobie, antikémisme, négrophobie, de quoi parle-t-on?](#)" and "[Guerre, mémoires et réconciliation: quelles voies?](#)"
- Pax Christi UK's January 2015 Peace Education Newsletter is available [here](#).
- "The Work of Christian Peacemaking" – A general resource scheme of work produced by Pax Christi UK comprising six lessons which investigate various themes of Christian peacemaking. The syllabus enables the learner to think critically about the theology and scripture that informs the work of Christian peacemaking. Read more [here](#).

- A new reflection on the 'Fourth Sunday of Ordinary Time' is available from the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns. Reflections by Maryknoll missionaries relate the Sunday Gospel readings to the world of the poor and marginalised. Read more [here](#).
- Further resources from the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns include January-February 2015 [News Notes](#), and [Middle East Notes](#), January 2015.
- The latest issue of the "Horn of Africa Bulletin" from the Life and Peace Institute, Pax Christi member organisation in Sweden, is available [here](#). ■

INTERNATIONAL CALENDAR

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

Pax Christi International will be celebrating its 70th anniversary in 2015!

We invite you to attend the celebrations, taking place in Bethlehem, on 13 - 17 May 2015. Bethlehem was chosen as a symbol of Pax Christi's commitment to peace and reconciliation.

The celebrations' theme will be:
"Pilgrims on the Path to Peace"

For details, visit www.paxchristi2015.net.

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