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**PAX
CHRISTI
INTERNATIONAL**



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INTERNATIONAL

Pax Christi International Peace Award 2015

The 2015 Pax Christi International Peace Award has been granted to the Women, Peace and Security Collective for Reflection and Action (*Colectivo de Pensamiento y Acción Mujeres, Paz y Seguridad*) in Colombia for making visible and encouraging the essential contribution of women to peacebuilding in their country and for their work to promote an ethical transformation of Colombian society as the path towards sustainable peace. The Peace Award Ceremony will take place on 16 May 2015, in Bethlehem, Palestine, during the Pax Christi International's 70th Anniversary celebrations in that city.

The press release in full length is available in [English](#), [Spanish](#) and [German](#). ■

AFRICA

Pax Christi International attends 24th African Union Summit

Mussie Hailu, Pax Christi International representative at the African Union, took part in the 24th African Union Summit held in late January, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, under the theme "2015 Year of Women's Empowerment and Development towards Africa's Agenda 2063". Delegates adopted the Agenda 2063 framework document and decisions on climate change, the post-2015 development agenda, trade, health and other issues.

The Summit also included a presentation of the final report of the High Level Panel on

Illicit Financial Flows. The summit conclusions are available [here](#). ■

Flemish Pax Christi section calls for more vigorous and visible Belgian support to the peace process in Eastern Congo

In a recent analysis, Nadia Nsayi, Policy Officer for Central Africa at Pax Christi Flanders & Broederlijk Delen discusses challenges and opportunities for more vigorous and visible involvement of the Belgian government in supporting the peace process in the DR Congo.

Belgium is requested to press on the European and international level for a sustainable solution to the FDLR (Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda) – one of the most dangerous rebel groups in Eastern Congo, as well as to the protracted instability in the country, notably in view of the upcoming parliamentary and presidential elections. Read more [here](#). ■

Justice and Peace Commission in DRC demands electoral transparency for upcoming presidential elections

The Justice and Peace Commission of the Episcopal Conference of the DR Congo, Pax Christi member organisation, demands the Independent Electoral Commission of DR Congo to present a clear electoral calendar for the upcoming presidential, parliamentary and local elections scheduled to take place in 2015 – 2016.

This is deemed necessary in view of the violent protests and clashes between police and civilians, triggered by the presumption that incumbent president Joseph Kabila, in power since 2001, would attempt to amend the current constitution in order to become eligible for a third term in office. Read more [here](#). ■

Pax Christi Germany in solidarity with DR Congo

Pax Christi Germany's "Solidarity with Central Africa" Commission deplors the casualties of the recent burst of national protest in DR Congo generated by President Kabila's attempt to revise the electoral law in the Congolese constitution to extend his stay in power. Read more [here](#). ■

AMERICAS AND CARIBBEAN

Pax Christi Montréal calls for a diplomatic solution to the Ukrainian conflict

Endorsing the appeal for a diplomatic solution to the conflict in Ukraine, launched by the International Secretariat of Pax Christi in mid-February, Antennes de paix/Pax Christi Montréal urges the Canadian Government to refrain from sending weapons to Ukraine and to seek a dialogue-based alternative to support the Ukrainian Government. Read more [here](#). ■

Comissão Pastoral da Terra celebrates its 40th anniversary

In 2015, the Brazilian Pax Christi member organisation Comissão Pastoral da Terra celebrates its 40th anniversary. To learn more about the various anniversary activities planned, click [here](#). ■

"We Grow Together: Pax Christi USA and Catholic Communities of Color" workshop

Pax Christi Texas hosted a workshop entitled: "We Grow Together: Pax Christi USA and Catholic Communities of Color".

Participants' reflections from the event are available [here](#). ■

Maryknoll signs letter to US Congress opposing the 'Fast Track' Trade Bill

On 17 February, the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns, Pax Christi member organisation in the US, joined a large coalition of religious groups in sending a letter to the US Congress to express strong opposition to the fast track trade promotion authority for trade agreements being negotiated. Fast track enables trade bills to move rapidly through the approval process, thus blocking efforts to fully explore their impact, especially on vulnerable people and the environment. Read more [here](#). ■

National Episcopal Commission Justice & Peace of Haiti on the country's election impasse

The National Episcopal Commission Justice & Peace of Haiti, Pax Christi member organisation, issued a statement deploring the electoral impasse the country is undergoing following the failure of the Haitian government to reach an agreement for the scheduling of parliamentary elections. The elections have been repeatedly postponed since 2011 as the president and opposition parties have failed to agree on terms and timing of the electoral process. Read more [here](#). ■

ASIA - PACIFIC

Pax Christi International in solidarity with Teesta Setalvad

Pax Christi International invites everyone to sign the petition "[Citizens in Solidarity with Teesta Setalvad and Javed Anand](#)" to show support with the activist for greater inter-religious dialogue in Asia, Teeta Setalvad, recipient of the 2001 Pax Christi International

Peace Award. She and her husband, Javed Anand, have been for years embroiled in a legal battle with the western Indian state of Gujarat as a result of their struggle for justice for the victims and survivors of the Gujarat riots of 2002 (i.e. a three-day period of inter-communal violence which resulted in hundreds of deaths of Muslims and Hindus, and thousands of injuries). ■

Pax Christi Aotearoa/New Zealand co-signs open letter on military deployment to Iraq

In response to the announcement that the New Zealand armed forces will begin specific training for a possible deployment to Iraq, more than 30 representatives of national peace, justice and faith organisations, including Pax Christi Aotearoa/New Zealand, have sent an open letter to New Zealand Government strongly opposing any military deployment and stressing there are more useful contributions New Zealand can make. The letter in full length is available [here](#). The New Zealand Government's response to the open letter is available [here](#). ■

Pax Christi Australia co-signs statement on medical siege in Iraq's Liberty Camp

Pax Christi Australia co-signed a [civil society statement](#) expressing concern about the humanitarian and human rights condition of Camp Liberty residents in Iraq. The statement demands removing the inhumane and unlawful medical siege on the camp and ultimately securing the lives of Camp Liberty residents. The UN and the international community are called upon to take appropriate action compelling Iraqi government to remove the cruel siege immediately and guarantee residents' unrestricted access to medical services. ■

New National Board of Pax Christi Philippines

The new National Board of Pax Christi Philippines was elected on 17 February. Jasmin Nario-Galace, Executive Director of the Center for Peace Education at the Miriam College is the new President. Other members are Mirma Tica, Myla Leguro, Jaime Villafuerte, Josefina Villanueva, Evelyn Nera, and Beverly Orozco. ■

CBCI Office in India holds seminar on "Church and Sustainable Development"

The CBCI Office for Justice, Peace and Development, Pax Christi member organisation in India, organised a regional seminar on "Church and Sustainable Development". Attended by 65 participants, the seminar looked at issues such as human rights and environmental justice through the lens of Catholic Social Teaching. A report from the event is available [here](#). ■

EUROPE

Pax Christi International calls for a diplomatic solution to the Ukrainian conflict

Given the recent escalation of violence that claimed many lives in Eastern Ukraine, Pax Christi International renewed its appeal for peace and for a negotiated solution to the conflict. We are in solidarity with all who suffer and remain hopeful that paths to reconciliation and peace in Ukraine will be developed soon.

At the same time, we urge our members around the world to pray for those who have been killed and injured as a result of hostilities. Read more [here](#). ■

Pax Christi UK and others encourage peace efforts in Ukraine

Pax Christi UK and partners have written a letter to the UK Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Philip Hammond, calling that every effort be made to demilitarize the crisis in Ukraine. The letter states that humanitarian aid and other confidence-building measures are crucial and suggested that, looking forward, the UK and EU must seek to provide reassurance to all the people of Ukraine. Read more on the [Pax Christi UK website](#). ■

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 France to hold colloquium on climate justice

The 2015 Pax Christi France colloquium on climate justice will take place on 21 March at the Catholic Institute of Paris under the theme "If you want Peace, protect the Creation". The event will bring together the scientific community, the civil society and church representatives to reflect on challenges posed by climate change and concrete ways to tackle them. For details and registration, click [here](#). ■

MIDDLE EAST

Pax Christi Italy against military response to the conflict in Libya

Recalling the tragedy of thousands of migrants who drowned in the Mediterranean and the ongoing violence in Libya, Pax Christi Italy urges Italy to open humanitarian corridors and take measures to facilitate the arrival of migrants in safety, and to refrain from sending military support to areas prone to violent conflict, in particular to Libya where Italy is already engaged militarily since 2011. The press statement in full length is available [here](#).

"The military option is not the solution to the conflict in Libya" - Renato Sacco, National Coordinator, Pax Christi Italy, in interview with Vatican Radio – The full interview in Italian is available [here](#). ■

PAX demands release of prominent Syrian human rights defenders

PAX Netherlands joined a statement issued by 70 human rights groups demanding the Syrian government to release the prominent Syrian human rights defenders Mazen Darwish, Hani Al-Zitani and Hussein Gharir, all staff of the Syrian Center for Media, arrested three years ago and arbitrarily deprived of their liberty on the basis of their human rights activities. Read more [here](#). ■

#WithSyria coalition marks 4-year anniversary of conflict in Syria

The #WithSyria coalition – of which Pax Christi International is a member – will mark the 4-year anniversary of the Syrian conflict, with *Turn the Lights Back on for Syria* – a campaign aimed at showing political

leaders that there is urgent need for greater engagement in Syria, that there is hope embodied by daily acts of Syria's heroes, and that the world stands with Syria and its heroes. To learn more about this campaign and to get involved, click [here](#). ■

DISARMAMENT/ DEMILITARISATION

Pax Christi leadership co-signs letter urging the scrapping of UK's Trident Programme

Pax Christi International Co-Presidents Marie Dennis Bishop Kevin Dowling co-signed a civil society letter to British Ambassador to the USA, Sir Peter Westmacott, urging the scrapping of UK's nuclear weapons programme, known as Trident. The letter can be found [here](#). ■

Pax Christi International attends Geneva meeting on humanitarian mine action

On 10 February, Pax Christi International took part in an informal roundtable hosted by the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) to provide the Geneva-based community with the latest updates from the field (i.e. Afghanistan, Palestine, Somalia) and allow discussions on key issues, challenges, and possible responses. ■

Pax Christi at "Gathering Momentum toward Nuclear Zero"

Pax Christi International Co-President Marie Dennis was a guest speaker at the event "Gathering Momentum toward Nuclear Zero", organised by the Dorothy Day Catholic Worker Community, on 6 February 2015, in Washington, DC. Read more [here](#). ■

PAX urges the Dutch government to take a stand against US Congress proposal for nuclear weapons placement in new NATO countries

Two US Representatives in the House Armed Services Committee have written to US Secretary of State John Kerry and US Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel to request information related to deploying US nuclear weapons into new NATO countries. PAX, member organisation in the Netherlands, is urging the Dutch government to let the US government know that this would be utterly unacceptable. Read more [here](#). ■

Pax Christi USA opposes new authorisation for US use of military force

Pax Christi USA co-signed a petition against new authorisation by the US Congress for the use of military force, seen as a broad approval for more war. Signatories further call for the immediate repeal of the authorisations passed by the Congress in 2001 and 2002. Read more [here](#). ■

HUMAN RIGHTS

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

Pax Christi International co-signed a civil society statement on the right to peace to be submitted to the [28th Regular Session of the UN Human Rights Council](#), which takes place in Geneva from 2 to 27 March. Signatories appeal to the Human Rights Council to declare the Right to Peace, to strongly condemn war and the use of violence to solve disputes and conflicts, and

to reiterate the inalienable right to live in a world where war and conflicts are progressively eliminated through mutual understanding, tolerance, development, respect of human rights and peaceful relationships. ■

Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns endorses 'End Modern Slavery Initiative Act'

The Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns, Pax Christi member organisation in the US, endorsed the [End Modern Slavery Initiative Act of 2015](#) aimed at creating a focused, sustained effort in concert with the private sector and foreign governments to eliminate sexual and labor slavery worldwide. This effort will complement other legislation focused on improving enforcement within the United States. ■

The Human Rights Centre Frayba denounces forced displacements in Mexico

The Human Rights Centre Frayba, Pax Christi member organisation in Mexico, reports the forced displacement of 57 tojolabales, (i.e. indigenous community in the southern part of the Mexican state of Chiapas), action perpetrated by the Historic Independent Central of Agricultural Workers and Peasants, a group who enjoys the protection of the municipal government of Las Margaritas.

Frayba demands the Mexican government to guarantee human rights protection for the displaced individuals, and to investigate and punish those responsible for the tojolabales' displacement and property damage. 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 SPIRITUALITY

Pax Christi International endorses inter-religious march for peace

Representatives of different lay and religious communities, including Christian, Jewish and Muslim groups, call for a national march in Brussels on 15 March under the theme "Together in Peace – Liberty and Respect". This symbolic action, endorsed by Pax Christi International, is aimed at raising awareness about the importance of living together in peace while respecting each other's freedom of expression, thought, conscience and religion. To learn more about this initiative and to participate, visit: www.togetherinpeace.be. ■

Pax Christi UK holds Ash Wednesday witness at UK Ministry of Defence, London

Around 150 people, members of Pax Christi UK and partner groups, gathered in London on Ash Wednesday, 18 February, to challenge the UK Government's nuclear weapons policy. Opening the time of

prayer, Pat Gaffney, Pax Christi UK General Secretary said that Christian witness of this kind has taken place for the past 33 years on Ash Wednesday at the UK Ministry of Defence, bringing prayer and the symbols of the day – charcoal and ash – to unmask the horrific reality of nuclear weapons concealed by the government. Read more [here](#). ■

New book on nonviolence from Pax Christi USA Ambassador of Peace Nancy Small

Pax Christi USA Ambassador of Peace Nancy Small has just published a new book, "Seizing the Nonviolent Moments: Reflections on the Spirituality of Nonviolence through the Lens of Scripture". Read more [here](#). ■

Kerry Diocese in Ireland marks World Day of Social Justice

The Kerry Diocesan Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation Committee, Pax Christi member organisation in Ireland, marked the World Day of Social Justice, on 20 February, with activities around the issue of 'restorative justice'. Several reflections have been issued for this purpose. Read more [here](#). ■

Lenten Fast for Climate Justice

During Lent 2015 (18 February – 2 April), the Global Catholic Climate Movement – an initiative endorsed by Pax Christi International – is organising a global fast for climate justice, joining the year-long #FastForTheClimate interfaith effort. Catholics from more than 40 countries will fast during each of the 40 days, praying for action to solve the climate change crisis. To learn more and to get involved, click [here](#). ■

ADVOCACY AND CAMPAIGNING

Pax Christi International to attend 59th session of UN Commission on the Status of Women

Pax Christi International will attend the 59th session of the [UN Commission on the Status of Women](#) which takes place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from 9 to 20 March 2015. The main focus of the session will be on the [Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action](#), including current challenges that affect its implementation and the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women in the post-2015 development agenda. ■

Pax Christi International attends CSO meeting on the protection of civilians in armed conflict

On 25 February, Pax Christi International attended a debate on current and potential roles for the European Union in the protection of civilians in armed conflict. The event was organised by the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office, a civil society network of which Pax Christi is a member. Read more [here](#). ■

Pax Christi International attends NGO Committee on Peace meeting in Vienna

On 28 January, Pax Christi International took part in the meeting of the NGO Committee on Peace in Vienna, a forum for exchange of information and views on peace issues among NGO representatives and various departments of the UN and its specialised agencies. ■

Pax Christi UK to support Burghfield Lockdown against nuclear weapons

On 2 March, Pax Christi UK will join a faith-based presence/blockade at the 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 advocacy work for Syria in Geneva

PAX, member organisation in the Netherlands, held several advocacy meetings in Geneva this past month to present its Syria work in the broader context of the toxic remnants of war debate. Presentations at the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) Directors meeting on the environmental impact of the conflict in Syria were followed by meetings with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the UN (UN OCHA), the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the International Committee of the Red Cross. ■

PAX CHRISTI INTERNATIONAL IN THE MEDIA

- [Pax Christi calls for diplomatic solution to Ukrainian crisis](#)
Independent Catholic News, 13/02/2015
- [Pax Christi International vraagt steun voor uitvoering vredesakkoord](#)
KerkNet Nieuws, 13/02/2015

- [Pax Christi International Peace Award made to women's group](#)
Independent Catholic News, 23/02/2015
- [Colectivo de Pensamiento y Acción Mujeres gana el Premio de Paz 2015](#)
Radio Vaticano (Spanish Edition), 24/02/2015
- [Colombia: Premio Pax Christi a Collettivo donne, pace e sicurezza](#)
Radio Vaticana (Italian Edition), 24/02/2015
- [Alle donne colombiane il Premio per la Pace 2015](#)
MISNA Missionary International Service News Agency, 24/02/2015
- [Alle donne colombiane il Premio per la Pace 2015](#)
PRESENZA International Press Agency, 24/02/2015
- [Pax Christi Internacional premia les dones colombianes](#)
Ràdio Estel - Catalunya Cristiana, 26/02/2015
- [Gli uomini fanno la guerra, le donne costruiscono la pace](#)
Tropeadintorni Mensile Indipendente, 27/02/2015
- [Vredesprijs voor Colombiaanse Vrouwen](#)
KerkNet Nieuws, 01/02/2015

RESOURCES FROM THE PAX CHRISTI INTERNATIONAL MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

- Pax Christi Wallonie-Bruxelles issued an analysis entitled "Regard chrétien sur la réconciliation. Un rappel historique de la naissance de Pax Christi" (Christian view on reconciliation. A historical overview of the birth of Pax Christi) – Read more [here](#).

- The February issue of Pax Christi Italy's "Mosaico di Pace" magazine contains a special dossier on 'Iraq – between war, weapons and terrorism' edited by National Coordinator Renato Sacco – [Read more here](#).
- Lenten reflection/leaflet from Pax Christi Metro New York – available for download [here](#).
- Joe Goode, Pax Christi Atlanta, reflects on nonviolence for social change – [Read more here](#).
- February issue of Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns – [Middle East Notes](#).
- Pax Christi UK's [Peace Education Newsletter](#) – February 2015

INTERNATIONAL CALENDAR

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

To unsubscribe from this list, contact: hello@paxchristi.net.

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