



## Pax Christi International Position Paper

# Call to the International Community to Support Policies that Promote Nonviolent Approaches to Sustaining Peace

28 May 2018

For the first time since the end of the Cold War, **violence and violent conflict have increased**<sup>1</sup> due to inter- and intrastate tensions. According to the World Health Organisation, 1.4 million people lose their lives to violence<sup>2</sup> each year and 2 billion people are living in countries affected by fragility, conflict, and violence.<sup>3</sup> Unless significant change takes place, these numbers will grow, with **long-lasting consequences for the globe and all its people**, including increased hunger and crop failure, threats to water supplies, environmental degradation, generations of children lacking education, massive displacement and migration, the escalation of crime, and large-scale terrorism.

**Increased investment in weapons and military preparedness** by governments has not made the world a safer place. Global military spending levels are now more than two percent of global GDP<sup>4</sup> and, in 2018, are set to hit a post-Cold War high of \$1.67 trillion.<sup>5</sup> Instead of spending huge amounts on wars and weapons that harm people and the planet, the international community should **invest its resources in policies that promote nonviolent approaches to transforming conflict** and, in particular, in the \$6 trillion needed annually<sup>6</sup> to reach the United Nations' sustainable development goals (SDGs).

**The Catholic Nonviolence Initiative**, a project of Pax Christi International, is calling on the Church and public policy decision-makers to give primacy to nonviolent approaches for transforming conflict and protecting vulnerable communities. It aims to catalyze a paradigm shift away from repeated cycles of violence and toward a wide range of nonviolent options that can actually accomplish the integral and sustained peace for which humanity longs.

**The Church, from the Vatican to local communities, can play an important role in advancing sustainable peace globally** by building strategic and tactical bridges between grassroots nonviolent action and peacebuilding. The Church has the infrastructure – schools, parishes,

---

<sup>1</sup> OECD, "2016 States of Fragility Report", available at: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/conflict-fragility-resilience/listofstateoffragilityreports.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> WHO, "10 facts about violence", May 2017, available at: <http://www.who.int/features/factfiles/violence/en/>.

<sup>3</sup> World Bank, "Fragility, Conflict and Violence", 9 February 2017, available at:

<http://www.worldbank.org/en/research/dime/brief/fragility-conflict-and-violence>.

<sup>4</sup> SIPRI, "Trends in world military expenditure", April 2017, p. 1, available at:

<https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/Trends-world-military-expenditure-2016.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> Jane's 360, "Global Defense Spending to hit Post-Cold War high in 2018, Jane's by IHS Markit says", 18 December 2017, available at: <http://www.janes.com/article/76463/global-defence-spending-to-hit-post-cold-war-high-in-2018-jane-s-by-ih-s-markit-says>.

<sup>6</sup> Global Policy Watch, "Funding Needs for UN's 2030 Development Agenda", 28 May 2017, available at: <https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2017/05/29/funding-needs-for-uns-2030-development-agenda>.

universities, a Diplomatic Corps, financial resources, communications capacity – and a wealth of social teaching to offer. Importantly, church leaders around the world have influential roles in policy processes for peacebuilding through cooperation with public policy officials.

In his **2017 World Day of Peace message**<sup>7</sup>, Pope Francis said that military responses to conflict only breed more violence. He called for a renewed culture of nonviolence and increased attention to effective nonviolent strategies in global politics. He reaffirmed this message during his yearly address to the members of the diplomatic corps accredited to the Holy See.<sup>8</sup> Intergovernmental organisations, as well as their member states, have a crucial role to play, as the prevention of violence is a core principle of the work of many multilateral organisations, which were created as post-war projects to find peace.

**Policies promoting nonviolent options** for transforming conflict and protecting vulnerable people **have not been sufficiently prioritised in the public sector**. Yet nonviolent options have proven effective and less costly in many contexts for sustaining peace and security. Nonviolent strategies should be the first option in response to violent or potentially violent societal challenges. This would align with commitments made by governments at intergovernmental levels and with growing public outcry around the world for just peace and nonviolent solutions to intractable violence.

Pax Christi International has a long-term commitment to **active nonviolence as a way of life and as an effective political strategy**.<sup>9</sup> This is at the heart of our work on the ground for just peace and reconciliation, human dignity, human rights, and ecological sustainability. We believe that policies at a national and multilateral level rely too heavily on military arsenals and armed action. We therefore support an **increased focus on and financial commitment by national and international decision-makers to nonviolent policy options** that can contribute more effectively to inclusive and long-term human security as envisioned in the SDGs.

#### **EXAMPLE OF NONVIOLENCE WORK: DHUMA, MEMBER OF PAX CHRISTI PERU**

*Human Rights and Environment Puno (DHUMA) helps indigenous communities in Peru by providing them with information about their rights and making their voices heard through strategic litigation to resist destructive projects of the extractives industry. The filing of Administrative Procedures of Opposition before mining claims are approved is proving to be an effective nonviolent tool for protecting indigenous people's rights. In 2017, members of Pax Christi Peru raised their voice at the UN negotiations for a Binding Treaty on Business and Human Rights to draw attention to the access to legal remedies for indigenous peoples.*

---

<sup>7</sup> The message can be consulted here: [https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/peace/documents/papa-francesco\\_20161208\\_messaggio-l-giornata-mondiale-pace-2017.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/peace/documents/papa-francesco_20161208_messaggio-l-giornata-mondiale-pace-2017.html).

<sup>8</sup> Vatican, "Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to the members of the diplomatic corps accredited to the Holy See for the traditional exchange of New Year Greetings", 9 January 2017, available at: [https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2017/january/documents/papa-francesco\\_20170109\\_corpo-diplomatico.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2017/january/documents/papa-francesco_20170109_corpo-diplomatico.html).

<sup>9</sup> Examples of our nonviolence work can be found in the background papers made for our Nonviolence and Just Peace conference of April 2016: <https://nonviolencejustpeace.net/framing-papers/> and in *Choosing Peace*, May 2018, by Pax Christi International Co-President Marie Dennis, available at <https://www.orbisbooks.com/choosing-peace.html>.

## Public policies for nonviolent strategies

Pax Christi International urges the international community to invest in public policies that develop and promote nonviolent strategies. These policies are **innovative, interdisciplinary, and comprehensive measures** addressing peace and security challenges through **peaceful means instead of the use or threat of violence**. Policies that promote nonviolent options will transform conflict, prevent violence, build durable peace in post-conflict situations, promote good governance and address the root causes of direct and structural violence. They will help foster and strengthen resilience of individuals, families, communities and societies<sup>10</sup>, and promote sustaining peace.

Below are some examples of public policies for nonviolent strategies<sup>11</sup>:

- Diplomacy and negotiation to prevent or transform conflict before it becomes violent.
- Mediation and facilitation of peace processes.
- Cooperation in sports as we have seen with the effect of the Olympic games towards rapprochement on the Korean peninsula.
- Inclusion of women as key actors in community and national violence-prevention activities.
- Support for nonviolent resistance campaigns<sup>12</sup>, often inspired by faith, through diplomatic backing and capacity building.
- Development of nonviolence education materials for schools and teachers.
- Funding for employment and job training programs for youth.
- Support for trauma healing, truth and reconciliation, and restorative justice programs.
- Awareness-raising trainings with military personnel working in conflict areas on how to protect children and human rights in challenging situations.

The **legal and policy documents** of organisations such as the United Nations (UN), the European Union (EU), the Council of Europe (CoE), the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the Organisation of American States (OAS), the African Union (AU) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) **give them a clear mandate to choose and implement nonviolent approaches** to resolving disputes that endanger local, national, regional, or international peace and security. One example is Article 33 of the UN Charter, the foundational treaty of the UN signed in 1945:

- 1. The parties to any dispute, the continuance of which is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security, shall, first of all, seek a solution by negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements, or other peaceful means of their own choice.*
- 2. The Security Council shall, when it deems necessary, call upon the parties to settle their dispute by such means.*

---

<sup>10</sup> Pax Christi International, together with COMECE and Justice & Peace Europe, wrote a position paper regarding the 2017 EU Joint Communication on Resilience, available at: <http://www.paxchristi.net/news/pax-christi-international-together-comece-and-justice-peace-europe-submits-statement-eu#sthash.tb416NOW.dpbs>.

<sup>11</sup> More examples can be found in "Building Peace Together: a practical resource" by the Quaker Council for European Affairs, February 2018, available here: <http://www.qcea.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Building-Peace-Together.pdf>.

<sup>12</sup> Campaigns of nonviolent resistance have been more than twice as effective as their violent counterparts in achieving their stated goals. With impressive support from citizens, whose activism takes the form of protest, boycotts, civil disobedience and other forms of nonviolent noncooperation, these efforts cut off regimes from their main sources of power and produce remarkable results. See Stephan, Maria J. and Erica Chenoweth, "Why Civil Resistance Works. The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict", *International Security* 33, 1 (2008).

## Policy momentum and opportunities

Pax Christi International welcomes the “sustaining peace” resolutions of the UN General Assembly (70/262) and Security Council (2282) and UN Secretary General António Guterres’ strong plea to member states to step up efforts for **prevention, conflict resolution, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, and sustainable development**.<sup>13</sup> The Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the UN recently made a similar call for recommitment and scaling up of peacebuilding efforts.<sup>14</sup> These requests are generating policy momentum for an increased focus on and the budget for nonviolent practices by members states as well as the UN system.

However, the **implementation of such policies is as important as their initial adoption**. The EU Global Strategy recognises that the prevention of violent conflict is more efficient and effective than engaging with crises after they break out.<sup>15</sup> Despite this, recent meetings of EU foreign affairs ministers focused on defence, anti-terrorism and border management rather than on prevention, protection and addressing root causes of migration or terrorism.<sup>16</sup>

Too often **policymakers overlook nonviolent approaches to sustain peace and security that have repeatedly been proven** to be effective in reducing violence and conflict. Furthermore, they **fail to invest in the research to identify the most effective programs or to support the local peacebuilders**. For example, research by Mercy Corps, in partnership with Princeton and Yale Universities, suggests that multifaceted approaches, which concurrently address economic challenges and governance-related grievances, can reduce the risk of political violence among youth more than stand-alone interventions.<sup>17</sup> Significantly more investment in similar research is needed to ascertain the most effective nonviolent approaches.

### **EXAMPLE OF REGIONAL SUPPORT FOR A NONVIOLENT POLITICAL TRANSITION**

*Although the military were involved in the transition of leadership in Zimbabwe in 2017, the entire process was peaceful and nonviolent. A local Jesuit priest was the mediator between Robert Mugabe and the military leaders. Civil society groups used social media to invite people to demonstrate to show their desire for change. South Africa sent a delegation the day after the military took over. The African Union will provide assistance, including sending observers, for the upcoming elections foreseen to be held in July. Such support from the international community enabled Zimbabwe’s process to progress nonviolently.*

---

<sup>13</sup> “At Security Council, UN chief Guterres makes case for new efforts to build and sustain peace”, 10 January 2017, available at: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2017/01/at-security-council-un-chief-guterres-makes-case-for-new-efforts-to-build-and-sustain-peace/>.

<sup>14</sup> Statement by the Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the UN during the High-Level Meeting on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace, New York, 25 April 2018, available at: <https://holyseemission.org/contents/statements/5ae34dcd65287.php>.

<sup>15</sup> EU, Global strategy for the European Union’s Foreign and Security Policy, June 2016, p. 29, available at: <http://europa.eu/globalstrategy/en/global-strategy-foreign-and-security-policy-european-union>.

<sup>16</sup> European Council Foreign Affairs Conclusions, 14 December 2017, EUCO 19/17, available at: <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-19-2017-INIT/en/pdf>, and the European Council Foreign Affairs conclusions of 22 and 23 June 2017, available at: <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-8-2017-INIT/en/pdf>.

<sup>17</sup> Mercy Corps, “Can Economic Interventions Reduce Violence? Impact of Vocational Training and Cash Transfers on Youth Support for Political Violence in Afghanistan”, February 2018, p. 2, available at: [https://www.mercycorps.org/sites/default/files/CanEconomicInterventionsReduceViolence\\_Afghanistan\\_MercyCorps\\_Feb\\_2018.pdf](https://www.mercycorps.org/sites/default/files/CanEconomicInterventionsReduceViolence_Afghanistan_MercyCorps_Feb_2018.pdf).

## Our 12 policy proposals

In 2018, as we commemorate the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Pax Christi members and partners are confronted with human rights challenges stemming from violence and conflicts in their regions. The Catholic Church is already responding to our plea to reintegrate “nonviolence into the heart of Catholic teaching on war and peace.”<sup>18</sup> Pax Christi International calls on national and international political leaders and policymakers to move in a similar direction, tapping into nonviolent alternatives and engaging **creative and innovative public policy options to support nonviolent strategies toward just peace.**

In particular, we suggest that the following policy decisions be taken:

### **1. Increase national, regional<sup>19</sup> and international budgets for conflict prevention and peacebuilding (SDG 16) and for achieving all of the SDGs by 2030.**

Trillions of dollars are wasted on violence and war, such as the \$300 million (USD) per day spent by nuclear-armed nations on their nuclear forces.<sup>20</sup> Redeployment of these resources to nonviolent approaches to conflict transformation and violence prevention would achieve better and more lasting benefits. Governments will be able to comply with their commitments to reach the SDGs and greatly expand efforts for sustaining peace by 2030 through investments in inclusive sustainable development and local capacities to build positive peace.

### **2. Strengthen early warning and response systems, including through the involvement of local communities and effective follow-up with long-term peacebuilding efforts.**

Early warning and response systems by regional and international organisations such as the EU, the AU, the OAS, the OSCE, ASEAN and the UN, as well as at a more local level, have helped to prevent conflicts and violence around the world. Early warning should lead more often to preventive responses and has to be followed up by longer-term peacebuilding efforts for sustaining peace. This should involve local actors and especially women and youth. A way to strengthen this at the UN level is by empowering the Peacebuilding Commission with the proposed “peacebuilding audit” as an early warning/early action tool.

### **3. Review peacekeeping operations and the Responsibility to Protect (R2P), refocusing on nonviolent methods of prevention and protection.**

The international community has committed to protect vulnerable communities from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity through R2P, and to move from violent conflict to peace with the help of peacekeepers. Yet, constructive criticism of such efforts must be taken seriously. The emphasis of any R2P intervention must be on nonviolent strategies for prevention and protection. Peacekeeping missions need clear mandates in support of political solutions to conflict, rigorous training in nonviolent strategies to prevent or reduce violence, careful vetting to prevent abuse, more women peacemakers, sufficient resources and effective mechanisms of accountability.

---

<sup>18</sup> Bishop Robert W. McElroy, “Pope Francis brings a new lens to poverty, peace and the planet”, America magazine, 23 April 2018, available at: <https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2018/04/23/pope-francis-brings-new-lens-poverty-peace-and-planet>.

<sup>19</sup> Pax Christi International supports the call to the EU by the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO) for increased investment in conflict prevention and peacebuilding in its overall budget for after 2020: [http://eplo.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/EPLO\\_Position-on-MFF-2021-.pdf](http://eplo.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/EPLO_Position-on-MFF-2021-.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> See this website of the Nobel Peace Prize-winning International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) of which Pax Christi International is a member: <http://www.icanw.org/the-facts/catastrophic-harm/a-diversion-of-public-resources/>.

**4. Push the UN Security Council to step up its core task of conflict prevention with scaled-up, proven-effective nonviolent strategies.**

UN Security Council action can prevent the outbreak of violence by making better use of the tools at its disposal under Chapter VI of the UN Charter. It should engage in more discussions on emerging and evolving crises followed by preventive responses, for example, by giving political backing to the good offices of the UN Secretary General and other mediators.<sup>21</sup>

**5. Monitor the reform of the UN peace and security architecture, emphasising the peacebuilding responsibilities of the entire system and other regional and non-state actors.**

The proposed UN Departments of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations should not subordinate the prevention, peacemaking and peacebuilding contributions of other actors to political prerogatives or security-oriented approaches associated with intrusive peacekeeping operations. Peacebuilding must be the overarching concept at the centre of the UN system's work.

**6. Align the UN "sustaining peace" agenda with UNSCR 1325 and the principles and commitments associated with the Women, Peace and Security Agenda.**

Research that examined nonviolent movements in Argentina, Chile, Egypt, Liberia, Palestine, Poland, Syria and the U.S. shows that sustainable peace is more likely if women are meaningfully involved.<sup>22</sup> Women's agency, voice and capacities are critical to local dialogues, better policies and more equitable and sustainable peace deals. The Women, Peace and Security Agenda is a powerful tool for moving from exclusionary to democratic decision-making, from gender inequality to gender justice, and from conflict and violence to sustaining peace.

**7. Support Unarmed Civilian Peacekeeping as an effective civilian protection approach.**

Unarmed Civilian Peacekeeping (UCP)<sup>23</sup> is a methodology for the direct protection of civilians by unarmed civilian peace teams, for localised violence reduction, and for supporting local peace infrastructures. It often has influenced armed actors to reduce violence.<sup>24</sup> The international community can support UCP through diplomatic backing and resources for their work.

**8. Facilitate exchanges between governments, intergovernmental organisations and civil society for capacity building in diplomacy and mediation.**

Over the years, policymakers from governments and intergovernmental organisations, and experts from civil society, have developed and successfully applied relevant skills in diplomacy and mediation. In an organised format, diplomats and mediators can provide information on the impact of and lessons learned from their work in different contexts, resulting in materials that can be disseminated for capacity building purposes.

**9. Use nonviolent communication for conflict resolution of political disputes.**

When diplomats, politicians and local leaders vigorously apply the rules of nonviolent communication, including in public statements and social media, violent conflicts could be

---

<sup>21</sup> Security Council Report, "Can the Security Council prevent conflict?", February 2017, available at: [http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/research\\_report\\_conflict\\_prevention\\_2017.pdf](http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/research_report_conflict_prevention_2017.pdf).

<sup>22</sup> US Institute for Peace, "Women in Nonviolent Movements", 29 December 2016, available at: <https://www.usip.org/publications/2016/12/women-nonviolent-movements>.

<sup>23</sup> Pax Christi International members have taken part in the World Council of Churches Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (WCC-EAPPI): <https://www.eappi.org/en>.

<sup>24</sup> Furnari, Ellen, Rachel Julian & Christine Schweitzer, "Unarmed Civilian Peacekeeping: Effectively Protecting Civilians without Threat of Violence" (2016) *Working paper*, p. 9, at: <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-48015-3>.

reduced or eliminated within and between countries. The aim is to connect with others, recognising common needs through compassionate thinking and language instead of judgment, coercion and domination. Effective practices for nonviolent communication in the political arena should be developed and applied at every level.<sup>25</sup>

#### **10. Support local communities to identify and build capacity in contextually appropriate approaches for nonviolent resistance.**

Nonviolent civil resistance campaigns have been more than twice as effective as their violent counterparts in achieving their stated goals.<sup>26</sup> At a local level, communities benefit from nonviolent approaches<sup>27</sup> to social and political transformation, enabling them to resist powerful forces, including armed groups, repressive governments, and exploitive corporations in pursuit of greater respect for their human rights and the reduction of violence.

#### **11. Involve religious leaders in peacemaking and mediation processes at all levels.**

Religious leaders often enjoy significant credibility and are generally well-known in violence-affected communities with access at every level of the society. As moral and spiritual guides they also are able to interpret sacred texts and invoke religious imagery for conflict transformation.<sup>28</sup> In the Catholic tradition, the Holy See, bishops' conferences, local Catholic leaders and organisations like Pax Christi International have acted as mediators or helped facilitate peace talks in many countries around the world. Other faith leaders have done the same and both have frequently worked together on an interfaith basis to prevent violence from breaking out or to transform conflict.

#### **12. Enable youth to participate in a meaningful way in peace and security agendas and facilitate interregional exchanges between them.<sup>29</sup>**

Young people are among those most affected by crisis and violence. They know best what their needs are and often can identify policy solutions, such as those promoting education, employment and political participation, to address root causes of violence. In addition to participating in peace and security agendas, exchanges by young political leaders from different regions would help to foster mutual understanding and dialogue.<sup>30</sup> It's crucial that young people facing socio-economic obstacles can also participate by giving them extra support through, for example, help with costs for special needs and extra training and guidance.

*[Pax Christi International](#) is a Catholic peace movement with 120 member organisations around the world working on peace, respect for human rights, justice and reconciliation. Our [Catholic Nonviolence Initiative project](#) includes the promotion of nonviolent policy options for conflict transformation and reduced militarisation at all levels as one of our advocacy priorities. Our peace movement is represented at the UN (New York, Geneva, Vienna and Paris), the Council of Europe, and the African Union, and has contacts with EU institutions as well as the Vatican.*

---

<sup>25</sup> Havva, Kok, "Nonviolent Communication", Political Conflict, 2 USAY Y.B. Int'l. Pol. & L. 349 (2009).

<sup>26</sup> Stephan, Maria J. and Erica Chenoweth, "Why Civil Resistance Works. The strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict", International Security 33, 1 (2008).

<sup>27</sup> Pax Christi International has been training members and partners in Mexico, Guatemala, Colombia, Peru, Chile and Paraguay to resist and defend their land from the extractives industry.

<sup>28</sup> Bercovitch, Jacob and S. Ayse Kadayifci-Orellana, "Religion and Mediation: The Role of Faith-Based Actors in International Conflict Resolution", 14 Int'l Negotiation (2009), 197-199.

<sup>29</sup> In 2015, the Security Council adopted the historic Resolution 2250 on Peace, Youth and Security, which was the first time the Council directly addressed the central role of youth in global security concerns.

<sup>30</sup> A good initiative in this regard is the Young Political Leaders Programme of the European Parliament: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/young-political-leaders/en/home.html>.