

‘NONVIOLENCE IS A CROP THAT CAN FEED THE WHOLE WORLD’

A People’s Encyclical on Nonviolence

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I. INTRODUCTORY MATERIAL

A. Opening reflection

Towards the end of our almost year-long process a group-member described what we had been doing as “little Pentecosts”, babel, the miracle of different languages (in speaking and technology) ... in some way a model of how church can work to create pathways of nonviolence and just-peace. A beautiful image that so well describes our coming together, our sharing of stories, our search and our celebration of the power of nonviolence.

Our goals were:

- a. to convene leading nonviolence practitioners for conversation on how to bring the Catholic Church closer to nonviolent methodology and practice to effectively counter the types of violent conflict that the majority of people encounter today;
- b. to produce a document with themes and case studies on the power of nonviolence to present to Pope Francis that respond to his [invitation to the Catholic Nonviolence Initiative](#) to revitalise “the tools of nonviolence, and active nonviolence in particular.”

Our invitation to one another was to 1) learn from past and present experiences of active nonviolence and its impact on challenging violence; 2) integrate contemporary research that has demonstrated the effectiveness of active nonviolence; 3) envision the long-term process of developing a culture of active nonviolence marked by justice, peace and care of creation; 4) frame concrete ways humanity can develop new tools and infrastructure to spread and activate the power of nonviolence; 5) profile ways these tools and infrastructure can be developed and applied worldwide.

Two key insights from our team framed our approach:

- a. “Nonviolence is a crop that can feed the whole world, but the farmer must know her own soil.”—**Elizabeth Kanini Kimau**
- b. “Nonviolence is happening at the frontlines. The faithful must get themselves to the frontlines.”—**Sarah Thompson**

1. Who we are

The members of Roundtable 5 are predominately Catholics working in pre-conflict, conflict, or post-conflict situations and who approach our grassroots work with knowledge and training in nonviolence. Our roundtable included leading academic social scientists who are researching strategic nonviolence at various levels.

Sara Ianovitz (Italy-Lebanon-Albania); Merwyn DeMello (India-Kenya-Bangladesh-Afghanistan); Mel Duncan (USA-International); Cory Lockhart (USA-Palestine); Natalia Chan (UK-South Sudan); Ana Raffai (Croatia); Myla Leguro (Phillippines); Eric Stoner (USA-Afghanistan); Pietro Ameglio (Uruguay-Mexico); Jean Baptise Talla (Cameroon-Central African Republic); Gill Burrows (Australia); Erica Chenoweth (USA-international); Patrick Cunningham (Ireland-South Korea); Mac Bartkowski (USA-international); Jamila Raqib (Afghanistan-USA-international); Rania Murra (Palestine); Aseervatham Florington (Sri Lanka-South Sudan); Valerie Flessati (UK); Martha Ines Romero (Colombia); Peter Mubunga (Uganda); Elizabeth Kanini Kimau (Kenya); Sarah Thompson (US-Colombia-international). The

co-convenors were Rose Berger (USA) and Pat Gaffney (UK). Anna Franklin (USA) assisted with technology, facilitation, and note-taking. See [fuller biographies](#) of the Roundtable 5 members.

2. Our approach

It was important to us to strengthen personal relationships and share knowledge among the members for ongoing mutual aid beyond the limited life of the Roundtable project. We have done this by a series of monthly 90-minute SKYPE calls from May 2017 to June 2018, setting tasks that became the focus for shared conversations and learning. We have tried to make the road by walking it. We decided from the outset that it was important to create a community of people who would be confident and comfortable working together and our process of working has reflected the relational dimension of nonviolence.

3. Our task

- a. Hone key themes, questions, and opportunities facing nonviolent methods and practices in 21st century in service toward an encyclical
- b. Assemble voices, experiences, resources needed to address each key question
- c. Expand on voices, schools of thought, case studies, and resources that support our themes/opportunities and move toward answering the question; identifies what missing pieces would contribute toward answering the question and areas that need further investigation; discusses in some depth the current best knowledge available on the question

B. Setting the scene

Movements in the streets around the world are moving the needle on nonviolence. Personal experiences alongside grassroots nonviolence practitioners will expose the Vatican and disciples in Catholic institutions to the inspirational moments and intense realities of changemaking happening now!

To guide our thinking, we were reminded that:

We are talking about violence, not only war. We work out of experiences of structural, economic, cultural, gender, ecological, militarised violence.

We are holding together experiences that are both grassroots and global. Choosing to live with and be with communities to better understand how people and communities change (CPT, Palestine, Colombia, USA, UK) We know that there is value in transnational solidarity - same struggle, different place, and that changes come about through this awareness (e.g. USA/Palestine/Colombia/UK) People are using democratic power, political power, and social power to say clearly, 'not in my name.' This grows movements.

We are holding together perspectives that are both pastoral and theoretical. We recognise the important role of celebration, with other faiths and cultures; that song, music, drama, humour are central; community-based acts of reconciliation become acts of resistance; sharing faith stories and traditions on nonviolence all acknowledges the power of love and courage. Those who experience violence often give their life to the struggle. We know that trauma must be addressed or it becomes a source of more violence and we develop strategic partnerships and

learn from NGOs, government, processes, constructive and obstructive approaches, and models of civil resistance.

We are reflecting on a way of living, a way of organising, a way of being in relationship in the world: A commitment to a path of nonviolence helps to see beyond rhetoric and to be open to one another as human beings. Insights and respect can come through our spiritual connection, knowing ourselves and those we work with. We need to nurture inner strength, “sumud” at personal and community levels.

We want to be effective: We learned that our actions/approaches create new trends where violence is not tolerated.

We discovered that we are already on the right course in putting the skills, tools, techniques, spirituality of nonviolence into action and that we don’t need to wait. There are individuals, communities, movements around the world who are engaged in this - some within church-based structure, others beyond them. The Church too is moving in the right direction and it is good to recognise and affirm this and encourage it to do and be more. For example, the Church should be encouraged, among other things, to:

1. Communicate and proclaim that nonviolence is active, positive, normal. “We can do this by always speaking about active nonviolence, creative nonviolence” ([Valerie Flessati](#)). “Too few people understand the power of nonviolence, have little knowledge of it. A first step is to educate people and to understand the specific needs of communities, regions” (Elizabeth Kanini Kimau). “An important nonviolent tool is the moral reserve of a society, putting their bodies in front of the adversary, in the street ... denouncing. All churches can be a part of this ‘moral reserve’” (Pietro Ameglio). “Be more public as Church: make public speeches against bad actions, have a Mass to pray for nonviolence, fast, use symbolic objects, drama, music” (Peter Mubunga Basaliza).

2. Affirm the ministry of nonviolence and just peace practitioners. “The church could give explicit mandate to Catholic lay peace operators in the field ([Sara Ivanovitz](#)). ”Offer support to those already practicing nonviolence ([Cory Lockhart](#)). “Better than criticising what is happening on the frontlines - pointing fingers and determining what all activists should or should not do - the faithful must get to the frontlines themselves. That is where our convictions are tested and come alive” (Sarah Thompson).

3. Train, nurture, support champions of nonviolence and just peace. “We have a critical mass of actors within the Vatican institutions, and outside who could mobilise, effect change” ([Erica Chenoweth](#)). “The Vatican and church can support Christian organisations to work together on joint nonviolence projects, especially with women in conflict areas, through storytelling, music” (Rania Murra). “Centering nonviolent methodology and practice in the Vatican and through the Catholic church and its organisations is vital to face the enormous challenges the earth is facing” (Gill Burrows).

4. Offer spiritual guidance, encouragement, and clarity of teaching on Catholic nonviolence ([Pat Cunningham](#)). “Live the ethics and norms of nonviolence and offer nonviolent

responses to violent actions. This demands compassion and love, and we can draw on the norms, traditions, methods of other faiths in trying to live nonviolently (Merwyn DeMello). "Understand that nonviolent action is a modern way of witnessing to faith, a modern way of evangelising in a secular, pluralistic society" ([Ana Raffai](#)). "Understanding of a deeper transformation...this is personal and collective, internal and external to ourselves and the institutions or systems we inhabit" (Natalia Chan).

We will revisit and expand upon these possibilities further in our document where we look at the how the institutional Church can re-center nonviolent methods and approaches.

II. Violence at the grassroots and nonviolent responses and practices

A. The frontlines of violence and how they are experienced by Catholics today around the world

The Catholic Church proclaims that human life is sacred and that the dignity of the human person is the foundation of a moral vision for society. This belief is the foundation of all the principles of Catholic social teaching. Pope Francis reminds us that "human life is grounded in three fundamental and closely intertwined relationships: with God, with our neighbor and with the earth itself." In our times and for the foreseeable future, the dignity of the Creation Community, with the human person commanded to serve and protect God's creation, experiences conflict and violence.

1. What is conflict?

Conflict is "an inevitable aspect of human interaction, conflict is present when two or more individuals or groups pursue mutually incompatible goals. Conflicts can be waged violently, as in a war, or nonviolently, as in an election or an adversarial legal process. When channeled constructively into processes of resolution, conflict can be beneficial" (USIP glossary).

Pope Francis says, "Conflict cannot be ignored or concealed. They can only be resolved through a culture of encounter, which enables people to understand the opposition rather than conquering or ignoring them. This applies both within and outside the church." (Evangelii Gaudium by Pope Francis, 2013, paragraph 226; see also Pope Francis' [principles for social transformation](#))

Current Catholic response to conflict seeks to establish a dynamic and responsive just peace using constructive nonviolent methods and practices: peacebuilding, diplomacy/encounter, education.

"Just peace is a Christian school of thought and set of practices for building peace at all stages of acute conflict—before, during, and after. It draws on three key approaches—principles and moral criteria, practical norms, and virtue ethics—for building a positive peace and constructing a more "widely known paradigm with agreed practices that make peace and prevent war." Just peace principles and moral criteria guide actions that can assist institutional change and provide a framework for judging ethical responsibility. Just peace practical norms provide guidance on constructive actions for peace, can be tested for effectiveness, and point toward a comprehensive just peace pedagogy and skills-based training. Just peace virtue ethics teaches how to change our hearts. It asks what type of people we are becoming through the virtues we cultivate and shows

us how to become people of peace. These three aspects form a “head, body, heart” approach. Just peace is not merely the absence of violence but the presence of social, economic, and political conditions that sustain peace and human flourishing and prevent conflicts from turning violent or returning to violence. Just peace can help Christians move beyond war.” ([No Longer Legitimizing War: Christians and Just Peace](#) by Rose Marie Berger, 2016)

2. What is violence?

Violence is a spiritual, psychological, or physical force exerted “for the purpose of threatening, injuring, damaging, abusing” or depriving of life the Creation Community of human persons, God, and the earth itself. Or patterns of behavior intended to establish and maintain coercive domination over an individual, intimate partners, family, household members, colleagues, social groups, states, or the earth itself. Violence and abuse are used to establish and maintain power and control over another person or group, and often reflect an imbalance of power between the victim and the abuser. Violence is a choice, and it is preventable.

There are many types of violence: Physical Violence (occurs when someone uses a part of their body or an object to control a person’s actions); sexual violence (occurs when a person is forced to unwillingly take part in sexual activity); psychological violence (occurs when someone uses threats and causes fear in an individual to gain control); emotional violence (occurs when someone says or does something to humiliate or degrade another, to make a person feel stupid or worthless); spiritual or religious violence (occurs when someone uses an individual’s spiritual beliefs to manipulate, dominate, or control that person. Not allowing the person to follow her or his preferred spiritual or religious tradition; forcing a spiritual or religious path or practice on another person; belittling or making fun of a person’s spiritual or religious tradition, beliefs or practices; and, using one’s spiritual or religious position, rituals or practices to manipulate, dominate or control a person); cultural violence (occurs when an individual is harmed as a result of practices that are part of her or his culture, religion, or tradition); verbal abuse (occurs when someone uses language, whether spoken or written, to cause harm to an individual); financial abuse (occurs when someone controls an individual’s financial resources without the person’s consent or misuses those resources); deprivation and neglect (occurs when someone has the responsibility to provide care or assistance for an individual but does not). Sources: [World report on violence and health](#) (2000) by World Health Organisation (Geneva); [Global Conflict Tracker](#) by the Center for Preventive Action (New York)

There are many social locations of violence: self-directed violence (direct or indirect suicide, self-harming, abortion); interpersonal violence (family/intimate partner taking place between family members, usually in the home); communal violence (violence between individuals who are unrelated, and who may or may not know each other, generally taking place outside the home); collective violence (state-sanctioned violence, eg capital punishment, torture, forced conscription, extreme incarceration); social or political or economic violence is the instrumental use of violence by people who identify themselves as members of a group against another group or set of individuals, in order to achieve political, economic or social objectives (Eg. armed conflicts within or between states; genocide, repression and other human rights abuses; terrorism; and organised violent crime); collective violent conflict typically refers to a clash of political interests between organised groups characterised by a sustained and large-scale use of

force; structural violence refers to inequalities built into the social system, for example, inequalities in income distribution, which lead to deprivation or neglect.

War is a form of collective violence. War is sustained fighting between conventional military forces, paramilitary forces, or guerrillas. Types of war include: low-intensity but continuing conflict; civil anarchy; “hot war” with active use of weapons. Conventional war uses the arsenal of official armed forces (for example, small arms, bombs, missiles) but excludes the use of weapons of mass destruction. Limited war is war for objectives declared by those conducting it to be narrow and limited. Civil war involves a large-scale armed conflict within a country fought either for control of all or part of the state, for a greater share of political or economic power, or for the right to secede. Collective violence that “feels like war” can include: organised criminal violence (eg Mexico); interstate violence: (eg North Korea; India/Pakistan); political instability (eg Lebanon, Congo, Burundi); sectarian violence (eg CAR, Myanmar, China); territorial dispute (eg Ukraine, Israel/Palestine, Kurds); transnational terrorism: (Islamist militancy in Egypt, Pakistan; Mali; Russia; Somalia). Unconventional types of war include: terrorism (the use of violence, typically against civilians, for the purpose of attracting attention to a political cause, encouraging others to join in, or intimidating opponents into concessions); state terrorism (generally refers to acts committed by governments either domestically or abroad); and state-sponsored terrorism (refers to state support for nonstate actors that commit terrorist acts).

3. What types of violent conflict are described by Roundtable 5 members?

Roundtable 5 members are living in places of conflict, but experience different types of violence. How can Catholic nonviolence respond when Catholics “are dealing with different types of violence,” asked Elizabeth Kanini Kimau (Kenya)? “I hope we can also focus how different nonviolence [practices] can be used in these situations.” Roundtable 5 members identified three categories of violence they encounter in their work and lives: non-militarised structural violence, the violence of militarised commerce, and militarised organised violence.

a. Nonmilitarised structural violence refers to a form of violence wherein some social structure or social institution harms people or creation by preventing them from meeting their basic needs. This violence is generally carried out through inequalities built into the social system, for example, inequalities in income distribution, which lead to deprivation or neglect. Structural violence may include cultural violence, non-organised criminal violence, domestic/intimate violence, communal violence, ecological violence, gender-based violence, religious/spiritual violence, political, social, national, and colonial/imperial violence. It does not usually require armed or militarised force to produce violent results. (See “Violence, Peace, and Peace Research” by Johan Galtung, 1969.)

b. Militarised commerce violence. [Militarised Commerce](#), a term coined by Canadian human rights lawyer Craig Forcese, is the acquisition by companies/corporations of military services from military or paramilitary forces as security for firm operations and includes assistance granted these troops in return for protection. In practice, these forces are drawn from two different sources: national militaries or police of the country in which the firm operates; or, incorporated mercenary armies or “private military companies.” A growing number of companies are retaining, or relying on, the services of local militaries to provide protection for their overseas operations. Alternatively, firms have developed relationships with what amount to

private, incorporated armies. “Militarised commerce” includes one or more of the following: 1) the acquisition by companies operating in regions with grave human security and human rights concerns of security services from military or paramilitary forces, groups often implicated in serious human rights abuses; 2) the provision by companies of financial, logistical, material or infrastructural assistance to human-rights abusing troops, or their governments, usually in return for protection or access to resources; 3) the use of force by human rights abusing-regimes or militaries to supply resources to a company by, for example, clearing people off oil-rich lands; 4) the generation of revenues which are used by human rights abusing regimes or militaries to wage war against civilian populations. Violent militarised commerce results when mercenary armies or security forces impose by force or intimidation the will of the commercial interest on the Creation Community. Human rights abuses—particularly targeted at women—often accompany these private militaries with little accountability.

c. Militarised organised violence is the wide-spread, organised use of military weapons, strategy, and tactics. Militaries and police in many countries have carved out new spheres of power and influence, even as military dictatorships have declined. According to Anthony W. Pereira and Diane E. Davis (Pereira, Anthony W., and Diane E. Davis. “[New Patterns of Militarised Violence and Coercion in the Americas.](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2634188)” *Latin American Perspectives*, vol. 27, no. 2, 2000, pp. 3–17., www.jstor.org/stable/2634188), these “new roles often usurp the power of civilian agencies and sometimes violate the constitution. The enduring power of the militaries and the police has been reinforced by the dismantling of other parts of the state apparatus by policies of market-oriented reform. Indeed, as economic safety nets for the relatively disadvantaged have all but disappeared, poverty and income inequality have been on the rise, and crime has started to soar in many countries. As disorder in civil society increases, political challengers with control over the means of violence have strengthened their position, with groups as diverse as veterans, guerillas, paramilitary forces, drug traffickers and police acting with increasing impunity. The result is a confusing panorama of apparently contradictory processes and forces: the shrinkage and decentralisation of the state accompanied by the strengthening of its repressive core; the burgeoning of associational life and civil society, along with sharp increases in poverty, the atomisation of social relations, and violence; the development of new arenas of public contestation and debate in the midst of the spatial segregation of populations and the construction of “fortress communities” by the rich; and novel justifications for the continuation of old forms of repression and control and the invention of new and more insidious ones.

The institutions engaged in this new coercion and violence are sometimes public, sometimes private, and often not clearly one or the other, making it difficult if not impossible for the public to control them.”

“As police forces have become mired in inefficiency, corruption, and crime, the lines between citizens and the state have become more permeable. Militaries have taken on new internal security missions prompted in part by the U.S. military’s search for new enemies in the post-cold war era. These new missions are sometimes conducted directly for organisations in the private sector, and drug trafficking and gang-related and other kinds of crime have increased, often with the direct participation of off-duty (or even on-duty) police.”

4. What is nonviolence?

a. Nonviolence: “Nonviolence is seen as an effort to influence, and a typology of influence techniques is developed, based on a simple model of how human actions are decided upon. This typology has as its main axis a distinction between positive and negative techniques of influence, i.e. the distinction between techniques that facilitate the execution of positive actions and techniques that impede the execution of negative actions. Nonviolence is then defined in a negative and a positive sense: negative nonviolence would include all possible techniques of influence short of ‘deprivation of biological health’ (called violence in the narrow sense) and positive nonviolence would exclude all negative techniques of influence (called violence in the broad sense).” ([On the Meaning of Nonviolence](#) by Johan Galtung, Journal of Peace Research, 1965)

b. Nonviolent civic action or nonviolent civil resistance: Action, usually undertaken by a group of people, to persuade someone else to change their behavior. Examples include strikes, boycotts, marches, and demonstrations. Nonviolent civic action can be categorised into three main classes: protest and persuasion, noncooperation, and intervention. It operates on the precept that all political relationships require varying degrees of cooperation or acquiescence, which can be withdrawn. Nonviolent civic action is also known as strategic nonviolence, nonviolent resistance, direct action, and civil resistance. Gandhi used the term Satyagraha, roughly translated as “firmness in truth,” to describe his concept of nonviolent action. ([USIP Glossary](#)) Generally undertaken to change the status quo of the existing power structure.

c. Nonviolent civil defense or nonviolent civilian-based defense: “Instead of military weaponry, civilian-based defense applies the power of society itself to deter and defend against internal usurpations and foreign invaders. The weapons are psychological, social, economic, and political. They are wielded by the general population and the institutions of the society. Civilian-based defense policies against internal takeovers and foreign aggression can be developed and dictatorships and oppression can be prevented and disintegrated by the capacity to wage nonviolent civilian-based defense. Massive noncooperation and defiance aims to prevent attackers from establishing effective control over the defending society, to deny the attackers their objectives, and to subvert the reliability of the attackers, administrators, and military forces.” ([Civilian-Based Defense: A Post-Military Weapons System](#) by Gene Sharp, 1990, page vii) Generally undertaken to defend the status quo of the existing power structure from external threat or internal overthrow.

d. Nonviolent civilian protection or unarmed civilian peacekeeping: “Unarmed Civilian Protection (UCP) is the practice of civilians protecting civilians in situations of violent conflict, imminent violence, and post-crisis situations. It involves expatriate civilians protecting national civilians, national civilians protecting each other, and even national civilians protecting expatriate civilians. The practice of UCP is nonviolent and nonpartisan. Protection is provided on invitation from local actors. It supports local actors as they work to address the roots and consequences of violent conflict. This practice is grounded in international law, in the principle of civilian immunity in war, and in the protection afforded by international conventions. UCP employs four main methods: Proactive engagement, violence monitoring and response,

relationship building, and capacity development for self-protection, and protective accompaniment and intervention. These methods are used to prevent violence and reduce the impact of violence; to increase the safety and security of civilians threatened by violence; and to strengthen local peace infrastructures.” ([United Nations Institute for Training and Research course on Unarmed Civilian Protection](#)) UCP is a methodology for the direct protection of civilians for localised violence reduction and for supporting local peace infrastructures. UCP provides unarmed, specially trained civilians who live and work with local civil society in areas of violent conflict. UCP is currently practiced by at least 41 non-governmental organisations, many of them faith-based organisations. (See [Nonviolent Peaceforce video](#), July 2018)

e. Peacebuilding, Peacemaking, and Peacekeeping: Boutros Boutros-Ghali popularised these three phrases in 1992 in his book *Agenda for Peace*. However, the terms were used at least 20 years prior by Johan Galtung (1976) who called them “approaches to peace.” These three strategies formulate a general theory of achieving or maintaining peace. With reference to the “conflict triangle” (a concept developed by [Johan Galtung](#) that structural, direct, and cultural violence have particular reinforcing dynamics), it can be suggested that peacemaking aims to change the attitudes of the main protagonists, peacekeeping lowers the level of destructive behavior, and peacebuilding tries to overcome the contradictions which lie at the root of the conflict. ([Civilian Peacekeeping](#) by Christine Schweitzer, 2010, page 8)

f. Gandhian paradigm for obstructive and constructive nonviolence programs and practices

1. An **Obstructive Program** of a nonviolent movement for justice directly confronts systems of power with strategic mass civil resistance (strikes, boycotts, street protests) to force opponents to the negotiating table [Michael Nagler]. Gandhi identified obstructive nonviolent methods such as persuasion, non-cooperation, and direct action.

2. A **Constructive Program** of a nonviolent movement for justice is a way of carrying out a struggle through community and self-improvement by building structures, systems, processes, and resources that are alternatives to oppression and promote self-sufficiency and unity in the resisting community. A Constructive Program challenges systemic and structural violence by finding and applying solutions. It is not the same as social charity or direct service. It creates effective alternatives to an unjust structure and develops local leadership and skills (eg alternative banks, worker-owned cooperatives, “Freedom schools,” etc) [Mohandas Gandhi]. A constructive nonviolence program may overlap a little or a lot with models and practices associated with “sustainable peace,” “durable peace,” “peacebuilding,” or “just peace,” including peacebuilding, diplomacy, and education on nonviolence.

The division between Obstructive and Constructive may be clear at times and fuzzy at times because obstructive and constructive practices often overlap in an actual situation. In general, obstructive practices are what you do to dismantle an injustice and constructive practices are what you do to build a good society. (Some researchers also add “symbolic” nonviolent programs as a distinct, third component.)

5. Transformation away from violent conflict toward constructive conflict

a. **Conflict transformation:** Conflict transformation is a concept that emphasises addressing the structural roots of conflict by changing existing patterns of behavior and creating a culture of nonviolent approaches. It proposes an integrated approach to peacebuilding that aims to bring about long-term changes in personal, relational, structural, and cultural dimensions. Recognising that societies in conflict have existing systems that still function, conflict transformation focuses on building up local institutions as well as reducing drivers of conflict (USIP glossary). Relationships are at the heart of conflict transformation (Lederach).

b. **Goals in Conflict Transformation:** Transformation understands social conflict as evolving from, and producing changes in, the personal, relational, structural and cultural dimensions of human experience. It seeks to promote constructive processes within each of these dimensions (Lederach): **Personal:** Minimize destructive effects of social conflict and maximize the potential for personal growth at physical, emotional and spiritual levels; **Relational:** Minimize poorly functioning communication and maximize understanding; **Structural:** Understand and address root causes of violent conflict; promote nonviolent mechanisms; minimize violence; foster structures that meet basic human needs and maximize public participation; and **Cultural:** Identify and understand the cultural patterns that contribute to the rise of violent expressions of conflict; identify cultural resources for constructively handling conflict.

B. Stories of nonviolent resistance and peacebuilding toward transformation in contemporary violent conflicts

1. Non-militarised structural violence

a. Characteristics of the violence related to non-militarised structural violence.

Our RT participants characterised this violence as community based, powerfully present especially in the lives of young people. This may be aggravated by local histories, stories, traditions passed from one generation/group to another. It is often gender based and the violence described as domestic and intimate. For some there is also a power/status dimension, where groups impose themselves on others, this can be in Church and political structures - expressed through nationalism, prejudice, anti-women, xenophobic actions. For others there is an historical, colonial dimension, sometimes between staff of NGOs and the local community, power used over those with whom they seek to work.

b. Examples of Non-Militarised Structural Violence in Northern Kenya, Croatia, United Kingdom, Afghanistan, and the United States

Northern Kenya

Ms. Elizabeth Kanini Kimau, armed conflict in pastoralist communities, northern Kenya

Elizabeth Kanini Kimau from Kenya, working on context of armed conflicts among pastoralist communities describes the communal and cultural violence in this way. “In 2009, I began my peace mission in South Sudan (Sudan by then) and Northern Kenya which is characterised by armed conflicts among pastoralist communities which inhabit that region. In Northern Kenya I went to live at the grass root (Leyai IDP-camp) with the people who were badly affected by the Rendille-Borana conflict. In South Sudan I teach in the



RECONCILE Peace Institute which trains key persons, mobilised from all corners of South Sudan on peace and trauma healing. For the last five years I have met participants who were born, lived, married and are now ageing in war. Most of them have been in and out of refugee camps... I observed that the Rendille and Borana communities were deeply divided and never interacted. Each community used its own source of water, means of transport and never traded with each other. They perceived each other as an enemy and whoever killed an enemy was praised and termed as a hero. I witnessed situations where people were killed and cattle were raided. The pain of loss, bitterness, anger, was temporarily ‘relieved’ after revenge. As I interacted with the children I learned that the enmity and hatred had been passed down from generation to generation leaving the conflict in a vicious cycle. Whenever I asked the children to draw, they all drew guns, people killing each other and cattle being raided. I asked different questions at different times. What will you do when you grow up? “I will go kill Borana and take back our cattle” Who created your parents “God” Who created parents of Borana children, “the Devil” When I bring Borana children what will you do with them? “We will kill them”. My interaction with the pupils informed me of an urgent need of cutting the chain of enmity and hatred. The hatred and enmity between Rendille and Borana communities was a big obstacle to any dialogue attempt or solving dispute constructively. I heard from the local communities that many peace meetings ended up violently. In addition I observed that any act of violence was reacted to with excessive violence. If cattle were raided and a person killed, revenge was immediately and it was doubled in many cases. Many victims of revenge were innocent people especially from Songa and Jaldesa locations who live at the border of the two communities. The revenge mission escalated the violence to a very high magnitude, leaving the area very insecure.

Zagreb, Croatia

Ms. Ana Raffai, nationalism, xenophobia, anti-women movements, Zagreb, Croatia

Ana Raffai from Croatia, addressing nationalism, xenophobia, anti-women political and religious contexts in post-war Croatia describes structural and social violence in this way. “Nationalism is often linked to religious identity. At the conference I dealt with the problem of nationalism as structural and cultural violence which unfortunately has its support in some representatives of church structures (in Croatia it is Catholic and in Serbia the Orthodox Church). The problem is that it connects Christianity and nationalism, so that original and fundamental values such as reconciliation, forgiveness, love for the enemy are concealed for national interest, and values of patriotism are represented as Christian values (love for homeland, identification love for Croatia with love for every person). As a result, we have parallels in which the homeland is idolised. Nationalism and populism are a major threat...”



London, United Kingdom

Ms. Valerie Flessati, knife violence among youth, United Kingdom.

Valerie Flessati from London addressing knife violence among young people describes it in this way: “For about ten years I have been working with my parish—St Mellitus Catholic church in north London—to prevent knife crime. This began after a 14-year-old boy was stabbed and killed in an unprovoked attack by a gang of boys. His family are in the parish, and Martin had just made his confirmation. Two years ago another parishioner lost her son in a stabbing. Tragically, the problem is growing. Across London in 2017 knife crime killed 35 young men under the age of 25 and many more have been injured. Our parish Justice and Peace group is committed to doing what we can to oppose this fashion for knife crime. We have tried various approaches. The biggest challenge for our society



as a whole is to give all young people a positive sense of identity and belonging, enjoyable leisure-time activities and hope about their own future—so that they are not drawn into the destructive belonging that gangs represent ... and then even bigger problem: the close link between gangs, crime and the sale and use of drugs.”

Afghanistan

Mr. Merwyn DeMello, religious and cultural conflict, Afghanistan

Merwyn DeMello from his working experience in Afghanistan describes it in this way: “I was working with a Christian faith-based organisation in a majority Muslim country. The Organisation served as an umbrella for skilled international ‘Christian’ volunteers predominantly from Global North countries to serve as humanitarian/development workers. When I was in Afghanistan, the approximately 25 international volunteers worked alongside more than 100 Afghan nationals. The fundamental principle applied by upper management (decision making body) of the Organisation was that Afghans were not Christian, therefore did not have the underlying values (honesty, integrity, accountability) necessary to serve in managerial, and thus decision-making positions. This attitude filtered into generally how the international staff related to the Afghan staff. I felt that the attitude (colonial-empire Christian mentality) that permeated through the 50-year history of the organisation’s presence in Afghanistan, devalued Islam, disempowered experienced Afghan nationals, and perpetuated and systematised dependence. The organisational environment mirrored the problem endemic to Afghanistan – decades of violent interference of international and regional actors to the detriment of Afghan dignity, independent thinking and decision making.”



United States

Mr. Eric Stoner, citizen peace delegation in Afghanistan and nonviolence media in U.S.

Eric Stoner from his working experience in Afghanistan and his work with the online journal **Waging Nonviolence**: “In 2010 I traveled to Afghanistan with an international delegation of peace activists that was organised by a group called Voices for Creative Nonviolence. Violence obviously took many forms, from structural violence, like the lack of health care, education, and clean water or air, to all the direct forms of violence associated with war. No Afghan we met with was untouched by the violence. The



key actors included the US (and NATO) military forces, the Afghan government, the Taliban and warlords, NGOs, and activist groups, like the Afghan Youth Peace Volunteers, who we spent much of our time with. I started off on the other side of the political spectrum, working in the world of private intelligence. Then I took a course with an incredible teacher and journalist, named Colman McCarthy, who exposed me to powerful stories of nonviolent movements and peacemakers. They shattered my worldview and showed me another way to confront injustice and to live and be in the world... I had a kind of conversion experience that set my life on a very different track. It also showed me the power of good storytelling. We founded the online journal [Waging Nonviolence](#), a source for original news and analysis about struggles for justice and peace around the globe. Ordinary people build power using nonviolent strategies and tactics every day, even under the most difficult of circumstances, yet these stories often go unnoticed or misunderstood by a media industry fixated on violence and celebrity. Since 2009, WNV has been reporting on these people-powered struggles and helping their participants learn from one another, because we know that they can and do change the world. We view nonviolence as neither a fixed ideology nor merely a collection of strategies. It is not passivity or the avoidance of conflict. Rather, “waging nonviolence” is the active pursuit of a better, less violent society by means worthy of the goal and those best suited to achieving it. WNV welcomes a diversity of voices and viewpoints that seek alternatives to violence through people power. Nearly all content on *Waging Nonviolence* is available to be shared and reused as widely as possible. Unless otherwise noted, everything we publish falls under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0](#) license, which permits reuse and adaptation with attribution to WNV and the author. Over the years, Waging Nonviolence has published more than 3,500 stories from about 450 writers and activists, in 25-30 countries each year, often from war zones or places where people are struggling against repressive authoritarian regimes.”

c. Examples of nonviolent OBSTRUCTIVE programs in situations of non-militarised structural violence

Our participants identified a number of nonviolent obstructive programs and practices used in settings of non-militarised structural violence, including: shift the cultural/social perceptions that frame or support violence (social media, public speaking, preaching, music and arts, religious leaders together); letter-writing, petitions, policy advocacy; “Encounter” through creating and protecting spaces for dialogue, education, healing that are safe for all (if church is not politically compromised, then church property can be an asset); building trust and breaking fear; educate and instruct against propaganda or culture of violence (provide unbiased information); train church leaders may serve as mediators between opponents on behalf of a non-partisan common good; make public statements; use media to disseminate nonviolent practices (radio plays, music, etc); Media visibility: regular columnists, guest speakers on radio and television broadcasts; mass demonstrations, processions, public marches, caravans, public assembly; peace walks and public memorials for victims of violence linked with peace tradition; outdoor “Stations of the Cross” that link local situations of violence/injustice (local memory/local response/local positive action) to religious tradition and memory; remove weapons from circulation/put beyond use (secure bins for knives; gun returns; “gun melts”); deconstruct frames of “religious conflict” or “ethnic violence”; deconstruct colonial or supremacist frames, replace with practices of solidarity amid difference.

Northern Kenya

Elizabeth Kanini Kamau: We trained in nonviolent communication, between Borana and Rendille communities. We took community elders away from the violence zone to a peaceful area, (more than 600km). They became leaders whom the people could follow and trust. We focused on the warriors (young men) within both communities who are the biggest threats to the ongoing peace and helped them develop friendships.

Zagreb, Croatia

Ana Raffai: "Encounter - Getting to know each other and creating own image as a resistance to the media image/propaganda that is created.

Breaking the fear and building trust; Education- about ourselves - where participants have arguments why their religion is incompatible with nationalism - about getting to know the other in a non-nationalistic way; public actions - visibility on the streets, seeking citizen response in Hrvatska/Croatia, Bosnia-Hertzegovina, and Macedonia; use of the media, there were more media broadcast in Sarajevo than in Zagreb, until recently a regular column, and guest on radio and television broadcasts; and writing texts: in the discourse of nonviolent communication and as a teaching instrument."

United Kingdom

Valerie Flessati: "We placed a large banner in front of church with message "Choose Life. Drop the Knife" to communicate about the issue to community. Getting weapons out of circulation - parish/community members involved in knife/gun collecting scheme. Created times of prayer and reflection in places of violence and built gardens of peace created in local community."

Afghanistan

Merwyn DeMello: "Active resistance by speaking truth to power in meetings for international staff; creating structures to challenge leadership models and breaking rigid stereotypes; introducing models of restorative justice; challenging colonial/empire form of Christianity, which were violent."

United States

Eric Stoner: "Reporting on these stories is not only important just for the historical record, but can be critical to whether any given nonviolent campaign or action succeeds or fails, given the media's role in influencing public opinion. In this sense, producing media on nonviolent struggle should be seen as a key part of the struggle itself and is something that organisers should seriously plan and prepare for. Documenting these stories can also provide strategic and tactical lessons that other movements can draw from to increase their effectiveness, and at a deeper level, they can give us some sense of connection across borders and genuine hope."

d. Examples of nonviolent CONSTRUCTIVE programs in situations of non-militarised structural violence.

Our participants identified a number of nonviolent constructive programs and practices used in settings of non-militarised structural violence, including: non-captured media reporting on nonviolent actions (Waging Nonviolence, Romero's radio broadcasts); journalists/media trained in ongoing coverage of social movements and how ordinary people are experimenting with nonviolent strategies and tactics every day; expand public imagination of what is possible; using

music/drama/theatre/art to create cultural alternatives to violence; establishing international alliances and solidarity; work with established civil society or local government networks with similar goals; Christian pastors/community chaplains work to build trust and accountability with local police through ride-along program; create nonviolent disciplines for children at home; link local violence to national and international roots; elevate voices of victims of violence; elevate role models of nonviolent servant leadership; communications training for working with media or on social media; for taking photos and video for documentation.

Northern Kenya

Elizabeth Kanini Kimau: “Reform of the justice system meant criminals were now punished with no regard to which group they are from creating a deeper sense of justice. The elite youth took responsibility of promoting interaction between Rendille and Boran youth through sports and parties, which has promoted good relationships among the young people. Bringing young people together from both communities to eat and play and learn together. Elders became instruments of peace. They walked with me from village to village encouraging that each begin their own peacebuilding.”

United Kingdom

Valerie Flessati: “Involving mother of a young person killed by violence - a powerful advocate in schools, at events for young people. Linking with local community, Justice & Peace Group, local police, London Citizens network, other faith places of worship in schemes to provide ‘Safe Havens’ in shops and public amenities such as libraries for young people afraid of knife/gun violence. We also organised peace walks for the whole community with politicians who represented the district on the local Council and conducted community-led weapons searches by residents to collect hidden weapons, which also led to reclaiming local parks used by gangs.”

Afghanistan

Merwyn DeMello: “Training and use of nonviolent communication with the team and developing consultative decision on-making processes. Use of Gandhi’s model of bringing everyone on board through action and communication. Exploring servant leadership as modeled by Christ, Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan. Building strategic relationships between people of faith, staff, and local leaders.”

United States

Eric Stoner in Waging Nonviolence: “Task of documenting nonviolent struggle and of getting these critical stories to a wider audience, so that we can shift the culture. Sometimes we were only media to report on impressive organising taking place outside the U.S. borders. So if we weren’t to publish those stories, they might not be told or remembered, which would be a tragic loss.”

e. What changed? Transformational aspects of nonviolence in situations of non-militarised structural violence

Northern Kenya

Elizabeth Kanini Kimau: “The elders who are key decision makers started holding dialogues and resolving disputes before they escalate to violence. Incidents of killing raids have reduced.

People have gone back to their farms and resumed agricultural activities. They contributed 5,000 kgs of maize to areas affected by drought in Marsabit County. There was enhanced communication where each community started alerting each other in case they sensed any danger. Elders started tracing raided cattle and return them to owners. The Rendille and Borana have now lived in a peaceful environment for the last three years after many years of bloody conflict.”

Zagreb, Croatia

Ana Raffai: “More and more votes against nationalism in the name of the faithful. More and more cooperation between believers and unbelievers on the theme of resistance to nationalism. ‘Good Faith’ and ‘Not in my name initiative’ launched... value of Catholic/Orthodox/Muslim religious leaders modeling reconciliation and peace... able to identify our differences but we are able to live our differences when each one has space to describe their own beliefs and can explain themselves.”

United Kingdom

Valerie Flessati: “The zone of safe havens raised the level of trust that the area round the station is safer now. We have been told that parents feel more confident about letting their children go there. Working together on a common problem has also helped build good relationships between people of faith. This was borne out by the expressions of solidarity a few months ago when a mosque in Finsbury Park was the target of a terrorist attack. The banner on the church is attracting positive comments and two journalists have already in touch asking for more information.”

Afghanistan

Merwyn DeMello: “I have since left Afghanistan but in communication with my Afghan colleagues I have heard that further structures and processes to promote Afghan leadership and decision making have been created. I continue to reflect on the importance of working strategically and consistently, of the need for nonviolent communication and for creating strategic partnerships in pursuit of peace.”

2. The Violence of Militarised Commerce

a. Characteristics of the violence related to [militarised commerce](#)

Most violence associated with “militarised commerce” occurs with energy resource transnational corporations or water and land resources control by governments or transnational corporations. Kristina Sehlin MacNeil uses the term “extractive violence” to define the violence associated with extractive industry that is not directly the result of private security forces, but the extractive commercial project itself. She defines “extractive violence” as a form of direct violence against people and/or animals and nature caused by extractivism, which predominantly impacts peoples closely connected to land. The concepts of structural and cultural violence are understood as unjust societal structures and racist and discriminating attitudes respectively. ([Extractive Violence on Indigenous Country: Sami and Aboriginal Views on Conflicts and Power Relations with Extractive Industries](#), by Kristina Sehlin McNeil, 2017)

Our participants identified a wide range of types of violence present in situations of militarised commerce, including: encounters with private security and extractive industry, violent conflict

over basic resources such as water, traditional lands, arable lands, indigenous communities with traditional land rights, other small landholders, state military expansion and private contractors, land and habitat desecration, human rights abuses (including human trafficking, forced prostitution, forced labor, forced conscription, terrorising local population to suppress dissent or opposition). This type of violence is increasing with the rapid expansion of extractive industry worldwide and the increasing pressures brought on by rapid climate destabilisation and collapse.

b. Examples of Violence Related to Militarised Commerce in Colombia, South Korea, Philippines, and Australia

Las Pavas, Magdalena de Medio, Colombia

Ms. Sarah Thompson, corporate land theft in Las Pavas, Colombia

Sarah Thompson told us about land theft by a foreign palm oil corporation in Las Pavas, Magdalena de Medio, Colombia. As a result of U.S.-backed war, Afro-Colombian and indigenous communities were disproportionately impacted. Colombia has the largest internally displaced population of any country in the world, except Syria. Part of the process was that if people cultivated land for seven years, then they could take possession of the land. But in Las Pavas, when they completed the seven years, the land was sold out from under them to Aportes San Isidro, a Colombian-based oil palm producer. The indigenous community at Las Pavas came to their fields and found bulldozers guarded by armed private security (“demobilised paramilitary forces”), their fields destroyed and planted with oil palm monoculture. The state did nothing to intervene. Instead it prioritised strengthening large business interests over vulnerable populations that struggle to remain on the land and develop their life projects in that region.



Daabon corporation was the foreign owner of Aportes San Isidro. The Body Shop, a British cosmetics company with a brand that promotes ethical supply chains, was one of Daabon’s largest purchasers of palm oil. While the indigenous community of Las Pavas had the rights to the land they had been cultivating for seven years, their rights were not respected by companies that exported palm oil. Since 2001, Christian Peacemaker Teams has accompanied, as an international actor, Colombian communities affected by the armed conflict, safeguarding life, supporting the restitution of rights (including return to communities) and working on transformation of structures of domination in the Magdalena Medio region. The communities where CPT is present recognise their role in the processes of resistance and peace building.

Sarah Thompson: “As the state becomes one of the many purveyors of violence (and not just

the only one) we need a Christian pacifism that articulates our stance vis-à-vis corporations. All corporations, but especially those that are hiring security guards/hitmen/thugs/harassers to reduce and/or pacify the populace. Those guards are protecting Earth's capital and the profit for a few—and not Earth's people and ecosystems.”

Bojaya, Choco, Colombia

Ms. Martha Ines Romero, land theft by armed actors in Bojaya, Choco, Colombia.

Martha Ines Romero told us about land property rights challenged by armed actors in the Northwest of Colombia, Chocó Department, benefiting large landowners and corporate business interests, supported by right-wing AUC paramilitaries. After decades of conflict, more than 6 million were forced to abandon their homes in Colombia. The most vulnerable people—indigenous and Afro-descendants—live in regions with rich natural resources—minerals, forests, and land to grow foreign products for export, such as African palm, using pesticides. Drug trafficking and illegal arms trade are other challenging issues.



All these factors are changing the fragile eco-system of the tropical environment. The lack of a strong state in Chocó and other regions and the evident links between the army and paramilitaries both facilitated the illegal concentration of land in the hands of a few and the increase of human suffering. One of the regions most affected by armed conflict, Choco is Colombia's poorest department and is mainly populated by two minorities: the Afro-Colombians and the Embera indigenous community. In parts of rural Chocó, the local population still has to cope with the presence of paramilitaries, criminal gangs, and guerrillas (including the ELN).

On April 21, 2002, around 250 paramilitary combatants arrived in Bojayá, a small village crossed by Atrato River. They decided to settle there, despite local leaders' protests. The UN High Commission on Human Rights and Colombia's Ombudsman sent official documents to the Colombian central government denouncing the paramilitary presence and warning about a tragedy unfolding. There was no response from the government. On May 1, intense combat began between a demobilised FARC guerrilla front and the 250 paramilitaries. Villagers ran looking for protection. But since all of the houses were made of wood there was no place to hide from the bullets. The only strong building was the Augustinian Missionary church and residence. Around 500 villagers were looking for shelter over the course of the night.

According to the official UN investigation report, on the morning of May 2, 2002, the AUC paramilitaries had established positions around the church, using the buildings and the cement wall around the church yard for protection. The FARC launched gas bombs toward the AUC

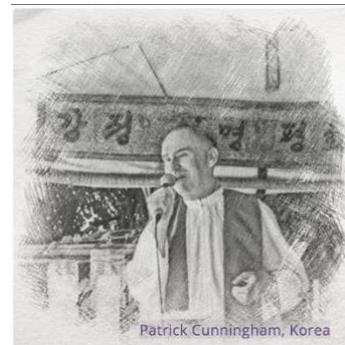
positions. One bomb landed in the church. There was a clear violation of several principles of international humanitarian law by FARC, including an indiscriminate attack causing unnecessary civilian casualties, failure to distinguish between civilian and combatant, and failure to protect civilians, among others. The village community was forcibly displaced as a consequence of the attack on the church.

Martha Ines Romero: “The FARC took up positions to the north (in Barrio Pueblo Nuevo), and began launching gas cylinder bombs (pipetas) toward the paramilitary positions, with two landing nearby but the third going through the roof of the church and exploding on the altar. The explosion caused approximately 119 dead and 98 wounded, though the UN was not able to verify exact numbers. Almost half of the dead and wounded were children.”

Gangjeong, Jeju Island, South Korea

Fr. Patrick Cunningham, SSC, military expansion in Gangjeong, Jeju Island, South Korea

Pat Cunningham told us that in 2012 he attended the 20th annual Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space conference in Gangjeong, Jeju Island. This is the location for the construction of a controversial naval base. There are approximately 83 US bases in South Korea and we were informed that the building of the base in this once peaceful village of Gangjeong was part of a wider geopolitical strategy on the part of the US government of encircling China and Russia with Aegis destroyers carrying missile ‘defense’ systems. In 2012, when Fr. Pat became involved, the primary focus of resistance was to prevent Jeju Island and Gangjeong village from becoming the focal point of any future military confrontation that would have disastrous consequences for the entire region. Gangjeong is just one among many chess pieces in the US “Asia Pivot Plan,” which in the early 2010s shifted American military focus to the Asia-Pacific region. And with the first installment of the aggressively resisted Terminal High Altitude Area Defense, or “THADD,” missile defense system to the [Korean Peninsula in late April 2017](#), and the US talking openly of possibly executing a “first strike” on North Korea, Gangjeong became a major, high-stakes location on the Korean peninsula. Divisions in the community coupled with the ongoing daily tensions that the villagers have been subjected to by police as well as military and construction security are tearing away at the fabric of this once close knit community meaning that the people have been unable to conduct their ceremonial rites for five years now. The base has been operational since January 2016.



A [National Assembly inspection](#) in 2012 exposed that at least 22 high-ranking police officers had been reemployed as high staff members of the employment-limited corporations, such as Samsung C&T, the main contracted company of the Jeju naval base project. These police were re-assigned to private security companies such as “Realy Tec,” the security service company that brutally assaulted Fr. Mun Jeong-Hyun and other activists while they were peacefully protesting against the construction of the Naval base in Gangjeong Village, Jeju Island. “Realy Tec” had its license revoked by the police after its employees brutally assaulted civilians at a civil petition

site at a church in Seoul. However, just ten days after having its license revoked, the security service company acquired a new license under a new name: Real SNG. The company took advantage of a loophole in current law which allows security service companies to acquire a new license simply by appointing a new CEO and renaming the company. A South Korean congressman who was part of the investigation said, “This clearly reveals the poor performance of the police at inspecting and supervising these companies. Security service companies recruit a large number of retired police officers. Thus, it is inevitable to suspect corruption between the police and the security service companies. It is critical that the laws governing the security service industry be revised to root out any potential corruption between the two.”

Pat Cunningham: “The rock of Gureombi has sacred significance for the villagers as it was a ‘living rock’ and therefore intimately tied up with their identity as a village people – a place where people from the 400-year-old village used to celebrate their ceremonial rites. ‘Gangjeong is Gureombi’ we were told more than once! This sacred site was dynamited to begin construction of the naval base.”

Central Mindanao, Philippines

Ms. Myla Leguro, land ownership conflicts in Central Mindanao, Philippines

Myla Leguro told us about her work in Central Mindanao through Catholic Relief Services, where she has worked for 30 years. Most of her work has involved supporting and accompanying efforts of local communities to address, resolve, or transform political, economic, land-related, identity-based conflicts—these conflicts have at times become violent. These local conflicts involve communal issues but are also oftentimes connected with the broader conflict in the context of Mindanao. The broader issues include indigenous communities asserting their rights to traditionally govern and manage their ancestral region; for the Bangsamoro

communities, ethnic Moro with Muslim identity, their struggle is for recognition of their right to self determination that encompasses their call to address historical injustice, legitimate grievances, human rights violations, and land dispossession.



Land conflicts are among the primary causes of violence in Mindanao, both at the community level and at a larger level that draws in the involvement of armed groups. Questions of ancestral domain and tenure are important not only for individual claimants, but for the success of the peace process between the government and Muslim Moro rebels fighting for an autonomous state on the island. Land conflicts often represent a collision between modern property laws and customary/traditional/indigenous laws on land ownership and tenure. Much of the violence in

central Mindanao comes from competing claims over land, not militarised organised violence. However, with any kind of violence comes internal displacement.

A study funded under the World Bank's Global Program on Forced Displacement in central Mindanao, underlined forced internal displacement is "a means to control strategic territory (land and natural resources) by influencing the movement and loyalties of the local population. The IDPs or local population are pulled and pushed in multiple directions as the primary means of asserting territorial control and political influence." (Source: N. Colletta "[The Search for Durable Solutions: Armed conflict and forced displacement in Mindanao, Philippines](#)," 2011) The extraction of mineral resources also involves questions of land tenure and access. As with logging, the exploitation of mineral wealth has had major impacts on many Indigenous communities and forestry areas. Most mining permit applications in the Philippines are for sites in Mindanao and often involve the encroachment of operations in ancestral lands.

Resolving land conflicts in a judicial setting, where one side may win and another lose, may worsen tensions among conflicting groups and erode tenuous social cohesion. During past decades of violence, distrust and tension have arisen both between and within religious and ethnic groups in Mindanao. Stakeholders include local traditional religious leaders (TRL) from Muslim, Christian, and Indigenous communities; conflicting parties in a land dispute; local government officials and government agencies responsible for land tenure management; local civil society and faith-based NGO partner organisations; and local power holders.

Before the introduction of the initiative they did not understand the roles and different mandates of the various government agencies that dealt with land issues. In fact there were gaps and lack of communication as well as competition among them, which undermined their efficiency, effective resolution of the conflicts at the governmental level. The gap between agencies contribute to repetition, inefficiency and wasteful use of resources in implementing land tenure management processes e.g. each agency conduct their own surveys instead of conducting joint surveys.

Myla Leguro: "I was born here, I studied here, this is home. My work as a peacebuilder began with an awareness that I needed to participate fully in changing the situation."

Leard State Forest, New South Wales, Australia

Ms. Gill Burrows, expanded coal extraction in Leard State Forest, NSW, Australia

Gill Burrows told us about the expansion of coal extraction in Leard State Forest in New South Wales, Australia. Australia is a major exporter of coal and gas. The government fails to take climate change seriously or recognise the urgent need to stop mining and burning coal and other fossil fuels. The government has no plans for transition to renewable energy. The conflict involved the proposed expansion by Whitehaven Coal of the Maule's Creek Mine, a new ugly, dirty open-cut coal mine that



would require the destruction of 2,000 hectares of Leard State Forest and dump thousands of tonnes of coal dust on surrounding communities. The extraction corporation proposed to mine on one of the last remaining areas of White box forest in beautiful northern NSW with effect of desecrating many Aboriginal sacred places and wastage of huge quantities of water needed for agriculture. The campaign to stop logging and extraction is both local and global, with local farmers and Traditional Owners leading the resistance. Stakeholders wanting the mine to go ahead were: the coal mining company; NSW government who issued approvals for this mine and who provide police to protect it; locals who want well paid jobs offered by coal industry; local business and community organisations who benefit from donations given by the coal company; local council. Stakeholders wanting to stop the mine were: Australian Religious Response to Climate Change, Aboriginal Gomeroi people, local farmers, Greenpeace, 350.org, Nature Conservation Council, The Wilderness Society, Frontline Action on Coal, Northern Inland Council for the Environment, and the Quit Coal collective at Friends of the Earth.

Gill Burrows: “I’m mainly involved in Climate justice actions at present, especially after reading the Pope’s powerful encyclical *Laudato Si*. There is an urgent need to transition from burning fossil fuels producing CO2 to clean renewable energy if we are to avoid the catastrophic global effects of more than 2 degrees of warming.”

c. Examples of nonviolent OBSTRUCTIVE programs in situations of militarised commerce

Roundtable 5 members identified a number of nonviolent OBSTRUCTIVE programs and practices: a responsibility to non-comply, noncooperation with unjust authority, nonviolent intervention (psychological, physical, social, economic, political), economic non-cooperation (consumer boycotts, shareholder activism/impact investing, divestment campaigns, strikes); social noncooperation (public ostracism, withdrawal from certain social systems or customs), direct unarmed intervention to disrupt violent dynamics (peace zones, blocking pipelines or military base construction, liturgical direct action), agency of women in disrupting male violent conflict, prayer and worship/religious acts that express moral condemnation or political protest (Gene Sharp-Method #20), victories in obstructive nonviolent campaigns can be used to recruit and draw more of civil society into the obstructive or constructive campaign, and international solidarity and internationals being present in a situation can allow for first-hand education campaigns, letter-writing campaigns, advocacy efforts, petitions, speaking to legislators about what was witnessed, urging governments to speak out against or change policies that fuel violence. (Also see John Paul Lederach’s conflict transformation paradigm.)

Gangjeong, Jeju Island, South Korea

Pat Cunningham told us: “Practically all the items under Obstructive Nonviolent Methods apply to the Jeju Naval Base situation including the ongoing daily liturgy and human chain expressing moral condemnation of the desecration of the coastline for military purposes. The struggle of course has been directed at Samsung C&T with protests targeting their head offices in Seoul back going back a number of years ago now. Our goal was to engage in acts of civil disobedience in an effort to voice our opposition to the destruction of the coastline and resulting toxic pollution despite efforts to contain it will undoubtedly cause untold damage to the soft coral reef and marine life off the coastline. It could possibly render to extinction the already rare species of red feet crab and destroy the habitat and playground of the ‘pink nosed’ dolphin. The celebration of Mass on the rock had been a regular feature of the resistance prior to the

blasting. It was celebrated as normal that Sunday afternoon although with a difference. This time a major feature was the presence of many members of the Global Network and other international activists among the many local villagers who made the 25 min trip by kayak. Entrance from land had been cut off despite the best efforts of the designated land group. Two international activists, Angie Zelter (Britain) and Benjamin Monnet (France), had already breached the razor wire fence and were ‘waiting’ inside closely monitored by numerous police officers. The Mass on the Gurombi rock led by Fr. Moon on the afternoon sought to bring hope and determination to the spirit of peaceful resistance among all those in attendance.”

Las Pavas, Magdalena de Medio, Colombia

[Sarah Thompson](#) told us: Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) was there as a partner/ally to the community of Las Pavas. CPT trains in spiritual practices as well as models, tools, and strategies to train for peace as hard as soldiers train for war. CPT members are trained to absorb some of the harm that is happening. The Las Pavas community also called in the lawyer, land rights advocates, and related Colombian government bodies (INCODER, etc). CPT assisted in leading a campaign of nonviolent direct action against The Body Shop, an international corporation that was a major purchaser of the palm oil from Daabon. The goal of the campaign was to ask the Body Shop to cut the contract with Daabon because what Daabon was doing was illegal and immoral and unjust. The campaign included tracking the economic trail from frontline to Global North consumers, direct conversations with all the stakeholders, a letter-writing campaign, documenting the abuses in the Las Pavas community and taking them to the Body Shop main store in London including civil disobedience at the store where some protesters were arrested and went to jail, (“People do not like it when you mess up their shopping experience.”), an economic boycott of The Body Shop stores. CPT was intentional about keeping the community of Las Pavas front and center in the campaign. The Body Shop finally ended its subcontract with Daabon. The indigenous farmers of Las Pavas finally were able to return to their land.

Leard State Forest, New South Wales, Australia

[Gill Burrows](#) told us: “Having previously written letters, signed petitions, participated in rallies, phoned politicians, the next stage was onsite action at the forest. We travelled the 5-600 km by train to the protectors camp near the proposed mine site. Our first action was to organise a joint liturgy/ritual with the local Aboriginal people to show our support and solidarity, recognising the sacred nature of the land. Several Christian ministers participated and an ordained Buddhist. Later we blockaded the gate to stop the company work on pipeline to take water from the river. We were arrested and removed by police vehicle to the local police station half an hour drive away.”

The [protectors camp](#) became a gathering point for climate change and forest campaigners across the Australia. However, coal corporations and the New South Wales police pressured for the protectors camp to be closed and the NSW Forestry Corporation and Rural Fire Service closed the whole forest area citing “fire danger” as a concern (the forest has not seen a significant fire in over a century) and the camp was shifted to private land. There is a repeated pattern of conflict that involves competing claims to Indigenous land, forest service or public land, and corporate expansion, especially of extractive industry, and the use of local armed police or increasingly militarised forest service to confront or remove demonstrators engaged in nonviolent direct

action to disrupt contested demolition, clear cutting, or construction. (In [Virginia/West Virginia, USA](#), Forest Service officers and private security contractors are paid by oil pipeline owners to increase security and arrest protestors at the sites.)

As **Jamila Raqib** observed, here we see “methods of protest and persuasion were used and exhausted. These are methods that extend beyond verbal communications but fall short of noncooperation. Civil disobedience, specifically the use of blockades, was seen as an escalation of the means employed.”

d. Examples of nonviolent CONSTRUCTIVE programs in situations of militarised commerce

Roundtable 5 members identified a number of nonviolent constructive programs and practices in the context of militarised commerce: Trust building (through sharing food, having fun!); breaking traditional enmity; shared knowledge of peace potential in various faith traditions; restorative justice process; conflict transformation models (see John Paul Lederach); focus on “warring” young; nonviolent education and skills training; using the trust/confidence/space of the Church; engage women as unique change agents; creation of alternative land courts; creation of alternative dispute resolution processes; raise popular and international awareness of violent conflict and nonviolent responses; strengthen personal relationships between traditional religious leaders who can act as community connectors (create vertical solidarity as well as horizontal); develop “dream”/vision/idea of what peace/wholeness/healthy culture will look like; build confidence through successful actions (requires strategic planning rather than reaction); bring in psychiatrist/trauma specialist to work with violated community; workshops on context analysis, conflict analysis and conflict transformation from a nonviolent approach; use Comprehensive Peacebuilding Framework (see John Paul Lederach); fact-finding education tours; alternative news or communication service (don’t rely on captive media); produce educational materials; create liturgies and ritual to address communal needs; and build relationships with all stakeholders in a community (govt, business, church/religious, civil society, youth, traditional elders/keepers of moral reserve).

Bojaya, Choco, Colombia

[Martha Ines Romero](#) told us that after the massacre in Bojaya, the church workers were the primary ones who accompanied the community of Bojaya, but these accompaniers had not received any assistance themselves, then programs were established based on the leadership of the community and new leadership was cultivated as new opportunities opened up. “First, we assisted with the accompaniment of a Spanish psychiatrist to work with all Church missionaries, priests and nuns—including the Bishop, to heal from the trauma using a participatory psychosocial methodology. The international community and the central government responded to the massacre with many programs for villagers, but nobody was aware that the ‘accompaniers’ didn’t receive any of that assistance and needed it. Second, there were workshops on Context Analysis, Conflict Analysis, and Conflict Transformation from a nonviolent approach using [The Comprehensive Peacebuilding Framework](#) (John Paul Lederach’s at Notre Dame University-Kroc Institute of Peace Studies). Then there was advocacy on behalf of and alongside the villagers—using public visibility of the issues, organising fact-finding tours of international community to Chocó, inviting Chocó leaders and congregations to visit the U.S. and Europe to speak up on behalf of the community; producing educational material to disseminate among the

communities; and alongside the National Social Pastoral Program, we organised public campaign to raise awareness.” She also used the [Caritas Internationalis Peacebuilding Manual](#).

Central Mindanao, Philippines

[Myla Leguro](#) told us: “Land policy is handled at the municipal level and various countries have different land acts. We learned that many areas had overlapping claims — ancestral domain concerns, lack of deeds, etc., and that the legal process often disadvantages minority communities. So an alternative, community-level, dispute resolution, using sanctioned conflict-resolution structures mandated by the government, offered viable solutions for resolving the intertwined land, social, and conflict-related issues. We decided on a “land plot by land plot” solution. In this initiative, we used conflict transformation paradigm espoused by Mennonite peace scholar John Paul Lederach. With my colleagues we also developed a three-step approach for land conflict resolution, known as the 3Bs: Binding, Bonding, and Bridging. “Binding” activities gave individuals the space for self-transformation and sometimes involving trauma healing. Activities included understanding the self-workshops, peace and dialogue sessions and meetings to prepare individuals involved in land conflicts to go into dialogue and conflict resolution. “Bonding activities” helped to strengthen relations within the respective identity groups. The individual healing and improvements in intra-group relations provided a foundation for dialogue and collaboration with other identity groups as part of the third step (training Traditional Religious Leaders/TRLs, group conflict analysis, group celebrations). TRLs conducted peace and conflict mapping sessions, land conflict analysis, and conflict resolution planning as part of their bonding efforts. “Bridging” developed trust between identity groups and aided the resolution of land conflicts (inter-group activities). Activities included interfaith celebrations, implementing community-based reconciliation projects, joint legal literacy trainings, and dialogues between conflicting parties. Inter-group dialogue was aimed at shifting focus to land as a concrete issue, undertaken through joint problem analysis using participatory conflict analysis techniques. Dialogue aimed at working towards negotiated resolution of the land conflict. The outcome was envisioned to be a list of workable and mutually agreed upon options endorsed among conflicting groups, and supported by government stakeholders at the municipal level.”

This is a particularly clear example of how “traditional, religious leaders (TRLs) were mobilised as community peace facilitators and connectors.” They were crucial in helping resolve land conflicts in the 20 villages where Myla Leguro’s team worked. “Because TRLs are embedded in the local context, there were also situations where they had connections to conflicting groups and also had their own interests in land issues. Because of the community-based structure that was established for collective reflection, the TRLs worked together to address these concerns (e.g. voluntarily inhibiting themselves as facilitators if they are related with one of the conflicting parties). This was a very integrated process of peacebuilding, culture of peace, nonviolence training on one side and then land law, land policy, and land tenure education. We worked with the land tenure agencies and local governments. We set up, at the municipal level, an inter-agency working group as well as workshops to connect local efforts with work on policy level — collaborating and critical engaging local government around land tenure and to bring together voices of local people directly affected by conflict and land issues with government officials responsible for sorting through the policy. In cases where the government wanted to possess the land and displace the people local religious leaders acted as dialogue facilitators, mediators, and

diplomats (land conflict analysis, series of dialogues, resolution) with the participation and engagement with other government agencies.”

This constructive nonviolent peacebuilding work also fits into the Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro (FAB–“the Bangsamoro peace process”) signed between the Philippine government (GPH) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), which provides for a transitional justice mechanism that would “address the legitimate grievances of the Bangsamoro people, correct historical injustices, and address human rights violations” between the Bangsamoro and the Moro, indigenous peoples and settlers living in a new political entity. The Bangsamoro peace process to cease violence and transform regional conflict in the context of the Philippines armed resistance and military. (See “[Moving Beyond: Towards Transitional Justice in the Bangsamoro Peace Process](#),” 2014)

Myla Leguro: “The Bangsamoro peace process includes land ownership issues. There was land dispossession from armed conflict, but also because of government policies that give Moro land to Christian settlers in an effort to displace Moro community. There was a set of recommendations on how to address land dispossession as a justice issue within the peace process. A Transnational Justice Commission was recommended as part of the Bangsamoro peace process, but not actually set up. This local model demonstrates how a creative process can be done to address very complex land issues. Now the Transnational Justice Commission is looking at this model that we developed for possible use.”

Jamila Raqib noted: “Church/faitth communities are embedded in the local community and bring local connections and knowledge. They are also themselves stakeholders, and therefore motivated from personal interest in a just resolution. Also, they have the benefit of bringing outside knowledge and community-based structure for reflection with self-awareness an accountability to voluntarily withdraw as facilitators if they were parties to the conflict.”

Las Pavas, Manizales, Caldas, Colombia

[Sarah Thompson](#) told us: “Music brought people together in Las Pavas. It helped pass the time. And helped [record the history](#) of what the community was doing. The CPT efforts with the community of Las Pavas was to create international solidarity by the people on the ground in the community holding steady, relaying information, writing songs, documenting their ordeal, and cultivating the land regardless of the threats, plus international groups putting pressure on the supply chain. We study social movement history and strategy to guide us – including religious traditions which often contain long histories of social movements. Civil disobedience dramatized the experience of Las Pavas. We were able to put pressure on Body Shop because their stated values were not consistent with their actions.” Christian Peacemaker Teams used a variety of tools of nonviolence including, use of photographs and video, community voice and song to keep the story alive, letter writing, economic boycott, communication practices, discipline with nonviolent direct action, especially communication training.

Gangjeong, Jeju Island, South Korea

[Pat Cunningham](#) told us that a main component of his work as the Justice Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) coordinator in Korea for the Missionary Society of St. Columban is to help

promote and build international solidarity in opposition to the base and the militarisation of Jeju Island.

e. The transformational aspects of nonviolence in situations of militarised commerce

Las Pavas, Magdalena de Medio, Colombia

[Sarah Thompson](#) told us that the international campaign by the Las Pavas community was successful. The Las Pavas community was given the [National Colombia Peace Prize](#) so have become trainers and teachers for other communities. The Body Shop admitted in a public statement that the international pressure led them to cut their contract with Daabon, therefore Daabon had to pull out of the Las Pavas region and the farmers got the land back. She said one major personal transformation was learning about the power of local and international collaboration to sustain and enhance an effort for nonviolent social change. Their case sets legal and social precedent and they are back on their land today.

[Sarah Thompson](#): “It was amazing how we could call in lots of reinforcement in the Global North, making a frontline with the store; and also keep in touch regularly with the frontline facing the bulldozers filled with small palm oil trees to monocrop.”

[Erica Chenoweth](#) said: “Sarah Thompson’s work in Colombia speaks to the importance of transnational advocacy networks, which can often leverage change through multilateral organisations (e.g. East Timorese independence, brokered through the UN and IMF).”

Bojaya, Choco, Colombia

[Martha Ines Romero](#) describes structural and cultural transformation: “A new style of leadership in confronting violence was developed by the community in Bojaya that they employed later at the regional level of the Colombia peace process. One of the men is an Afro-Colombian who is now part of the regional peace accord leadership team. Leadership was reflected in approaches that began earlier in responding to the humanitarian efforts when the village needed to be rebuilt somewhere else nearby. The physical church remains as a memorial. The consistent value that was taught was not to use violence as a form of revenge. A collective way to nonviolently confront perpetrators and Colombian Government to protect civilians and to investigate links between the army and paramilitaries was developed. Civil resistance against taking up arms and being involved in the violent conflict became the rule for those people from Bojayà. Incredibly, victims from Bojayá went to Havana in 2014 to meet with the [FARC guerillas who took responsibility for the massacre](#) and wanted to ask for their forgiveness. The Bojaya community expressed their call for the need to reconstruct the social fabric, to hope, to rediscover trust, to look forward the future, to look ahead with the goal of building a society that is able with its relationships to keep Colombians healing from atrocities of the past. Although the community has lost lives in the massacre and later, with leaders killed or disappeared, the Bojaya community kept their struggle going. In 2005, when paramilitaries were demobilised and began to tell the truth to tribunals, it was acknowledged that everything that the Bojaya community said was true about the links between the army and paramilitaries. The process of working with the Bojaya community built a place that allowed many displaced people returned to their homes. Now, in 2018, they are organised as victims of the conflict, waiting for reparations and justice as part of the transitional justice tribunal for the Colombian Peace Accords with FARC. When Pope

Francis came to Colombia in October 2017, victims of Bojaya were able to speak about these sad events, in a special and profound meeting when he met with various victims in Colombia.”

And also personal transformation: “The most important hopefulness comes from the most affected people by violence, because they resist and build trust with us in a humble and persistent way. I was accompanying this process, as a Catholic Relief Services-Colombia representative, supporting the Diocesan Life, Justice, and Peace Commission with training in nonviolence and promoting advocacy, commenting on the role of Catholic Church in the issue of accompaniment, peacebuilding, nonviolence, and protection. After six months, the Bishop decided to restore the mutilated crucifix from the bombed church in Bojaya to restore the dignity of the people and to express that the Church continues in its pastoral work with victims of this massacre. The crucifix symbolises the suffering of the people and reflects the sorrow of Colombian society. I was there in that special moment, marching with villagers, lead by Bishop Cadavid, praying and reflecting on what happened.”

Leard State Forest, New South Wales, Australia

[Gill Burrows](#) told us that key transformations involved developing human relations, communication, and solidarity. She said: “This was my first arrest and I felt strongly and passionately that I was doing the right thing, ‘standing in my truth’ and calm as I waited for the police to come. Coal mining has to stop and this was what I could do right then and there. As visitors it was wonderful to meet and spend time with the amazing longterm protectors and locals in this area of great natural beauty. We developed a huge respect for their skills and dedication to this ongoing work. Our participation broke down some stereotypes on both sides and we developed ongoing friendships. They were grateful to us for coming to support their work to protect the forest against the mine. We went up there a second time and blockaded a main entry to the mine site on a day when – fortuitously – major mining equipment was being delivered. Again arrests followed, and court cases. Unfortunately the mine finally went ahead though we did manage to slow it down and lessons were learned. I continue to spend a lot of my time on climate issues and was arrested again the following year stopping coal trains on their way to the port. I joined the Knitting Nannas against coal and coal-seam gas (CSG) and we vigil every Friday in one of the main pedestrian malls in the centre of Sydney ‘consciousness raising’ giving out leaflets and getting signatures on petitions in support of many communities suffering the effects of open cut coal mines and CSG drilling.”

[Jamila Raqib](#) noted on Gill Burrow’s testimony: “Acting together developed experience and trust that can be called upon for future action. Ultimately mine was built, though these actions slowed it down. The cost for the mining company was increased. The success of the action was that the action cut into profits, made the mine less profitable, can the profitability be decreased to the point where it is not seen as feasible or worth doing? And Gill’s sentence, ‘I felt strongly and passionately that I was doing the right thing, ‘standing in my truth’ and calm as I waited for the police to come. Coal mining has to stop and this was what I could do right then and there’ is very important as the fundamental issue at stake on which action is necessary. It’s important to identify this.”

[Jamila Raqib](#) said: "One theme is what happens when nonviolent obstructive campaigns increase the cost of specific policies and other consequences of collective action. In the Australia case of

Gil Burrows, ultimately the mine was built, though the group's actions slowed it down. The cost for the mining company was increased. The success of the action was that the action cut into profits, made the mine less profitable. A key question therefore becomes - Can the application of deliberately planned actions cut into profits to the point that violations are not seen as feasible or worth doing? (See: [Civil resistance as deterrent to fracking](#) by Philippe Duhamel, 2013)

Gangjeong, Jeju Island, South Korea

[Pat Cunningham](#) told us: "Personal involvement on the front lines is the point of transformation for me. The incredible energy coupled with the spirit of peaceful resistance that the international visitors brought reassured the villagers that their struggle to reclaim Gangjeong from the war machine was not just their own separate, isolated struggle but was the struggle of all concerned global citizens. The extraordinary spirit of the villagers has left an indelible impression. The hospitality and warm welcome afforded was extraordinary-each night there was a candlelight vigil interspersed with song, dance and words of hope and encouragement from the international guests assuring the villagers that they were not alone in their struggle. I also realised my own limitations and that practicing a nonviolent life means also self-care and compassion toward myself. It gave me deeper insight into the incarnation and what solidarity looks like in the body of Christ. I learned that hope is needed even more than food. Being with others who are also committed to this path is so empowering."

Jamila Raqib noted: As a global institution with a deep and diverse network, the Church can connect local struggles with global movements. Similar to role of other transnational institutions, like trade unions, etc.

Central Mindanao, Philippines

[Myla Leguro](#) told us that the practical outcome was actual resolution of the prioritised land disputes and the process of conflict resolution that was led by local traditional religious leaders. The process also increased the confidence and leadership capacities, especially among Indigenous Peoples (IPs) and Muslims. They have revealed their power to assert their rights and to bring issues (land and other) to the village leaders and to the municipal government. Since there are now more active IP leaders, the village and municipal government units have expanded their representation in various local governance mechanisms such as the local conflict resolution structure, peace and order committee, and the village council.

The 3B activities also helped in improving relationships between community and government agencies. Prior to this initiative, the relationship between the community and the government agencies was characterised by distance and mistrust. Through the 3B process, community leaders report that improved relationship with local government has increased their confidence in entering the public sphere to access public services and goods. On the supply side, the capital Barangay and municipal governments are more responsive and proactive through improved budget allocation and reshaping of policies and services to address IP needs. Bridging activities also helped improve relations between different government agencies. Through the municipal inter-agency working groups, government agencies were able to establish open communication, worked together to arrive at solutions to land issues and have encouraged sharing of technical and financial resources.

Jamila Raqib noted: “Here we see the important consequences of constructive nonviolent action—the development of capacity, confidence, networks, and skills that can serve particular objectives as well as address future problems. This is related to Gene Sharp’s work and Chenoweth and Stephan’s research that one consequence of conducting a nonviolent struggle is the empowerment of communities that activate power potential and create lasting change. Here nonviolent action has allowed empowerment and eventual entry of participants into government positions.”

Myla Leguro told us, “Personally, the whole experience deepened my commitment and passion as a peacebuilder. It nurtured my resolve to seek creative ways to address violence and conflict and affirmed my appreciation and respect for the power of collective action, local leadership, the power of dialogue, and restorative justice. Equally deepened was my awareness of the challenges of interreligious dialogue/ interreligious peacebuilding, especially on how to expand participation of women in interreligious efforts (working beyond the hierarchy) and how to engage the youth in interreligious dialogue efforts (beyond the elders). I was inspired with the stories of transformation of community leaders that we worked with. I continue to sustain and develop these personal transformations through continued engagement with interreligious peacebuilding, carving out time for reflection/sharing with my colleagues, making sure that I stay connected with the work on the ground, nurturing my faith-based grounding, and maintaining curiosity in the work that I do to nurture the fire and passion for service.”

Jamila Raqib noted how important it is to note the impact of the experience on the community and the individual. Confidence is built in the process because it was successful. Also that it’s important to ask how women and young people can be at the center of nonviolent processes when working in traditional, hierarchical, and male-preferenced societies (whether Muslim, traditional, or Catholic).

Jamila Raqib said: “The church/faith community members are embedded in the local community and bring local connections and knowledge. They are also themselves stakeholders, and therefore motivated from personal interest in a just resolution. Also, had the benefit of bringing outside knowledge and community-based structure for reflection – voluntarily withdrawing as facilitators if they were parties to the conflict. This struck me as a very thoughtful approach. The question that comes to mind is the degree to which people of faith impose their own beliefs on others and how this impacts movements. Implicit in this is the assumption that effective nonviolent struggle requires that people of different beliefs work together without any one group presenting their beliefs as a prerequisite to participation in peace building.

“In the case of the Philippines/land conflict, acting together developed experience and trust that can be called upon for future action. This highlights some important consequence of nonviolent action: the development of capacity, confidence, networks, and skills that can serve particular objectives as well as address future problems. I find this from Myla Leguro particularly insightful: There is already a great deal of institutional support at the local diocesan level where it is understood. It reminds me of a quote from Margret Rasfield, a German educator who has helped innovate German public school education: “In education, you can only create change from the bottom – if the orders come from the top, schools will resist. Ministries are like giant oil

tankers: it takes a long time to turn them around. What we need is lots of little speedboats to show you can do things differently.”

3. Organised Militarised Violence

a. Characteristics

Roundtable 5 members identified examples of organised militarised violence, including: armed state repression (state military, domestic police, national guard); civil unrest (armed civilian patrols, militias, gangs, paramilitaries, “private security,” other armed non-state actors); civil war (armed organised separatist groups with political goal); rape as weapon of war; internal population displacement and refugees as a weapon of war. RT 5 members also identified “organised crime” (defined as armed, multilevel, organised, criminal violence with economic motivation) as one aspect of organised militarised violence (eg vendetta culture in Sicily, [blood feuds in Albania](#), cartels in Mexico). Organised crime includes a vertical hierarchy with gangs, public authorities, political parties, police and militaries, businesses, and parts of civil society as their “gang.”

b. Examples of organised militarised violence in Uganda, Lebanon/Syria, Central African Republic, Palestine, South Sudan, and Mexico

Kasese, Uganda

Fr. Peter Mubunga, government military attack on indigenous sub-kingdom in Kasese, Uganda

[Peter Mubunga](#), a diocesan priest based in Kasese diocese in Uganda, told us about [2016](#) Uganda state military and police attack on royal palace of indigenous sub-kingdom. On 26-27 November 2016, the Ugandan army (UPDF) and the Uganda national police attacked the Rwenzururu king, Charles Wesley Mumbere’s palace in the independent region of the Obusinga bwa Rwenzururu (OBR). More than 100 civilians were killed during the assault on the palace in Kasese District. (Investigations underway by the [International Criminal Court](#).) The



Government attacked the Cultural Palace to take over the state. This was followed by the violent arrest of King Charles Wesley Mumbere and his 300 Royal Guards. There was also a mass grave discovered in Rukoki, Kasese, related to these attacks. In December 2016, a group of MPs from the Rwenzori sub-region, petitioned the ICC to investigate the Kasese killings. The petition was against President Museveni in his capacity as commander-in-chief of the armed forces, Maj Gen Peter Elwelu who commanded the attack on the palace and Assistant Inspector General of Police Asuman Mugenyi. The petition stated that people who died in the attack included royal guards, women, children, domestic workers at the palace and visitors. In March 2017, there were 191

individuals still in jail who were arrested together with Rwenzururu King Charles Wesley Mumbere following the attack on his palace by a combined force of the army and police in November 2016.

There were a number of displaced widows and orphans. There was lack of structural justice in the region. For example, from the OBR, there was no bottom-up involvement. Rather, it was all top-down directed by the King alone, while the clan leaders did not know what was happening. There was a lack of coordination, communication, and cooperation in the kingdom's governance. The same thing applied to the Uganda government structure. The central government did not involve other government stakeholders, for example the local government leadership where the violence took place. Religious leaders and the civil society organisations were not involved in that area. The approach of the attack was also not ethical and professional, for example why didn't army arrest the people, instead of killing without mercy. The army and police attacked the palace without giving enough time for the King and the Central Government to align their issues related to the royal guards. The Government, through the Ugandan police, had trained and certified the Royal Guards as a way of legally normalising the King's authority. One wonders why the Royal Guards were trained and later denied work. The creation of the Yira state (over the independent kingdom of Obusinga bwa Rwenzururu), was pushed out to the populace by Central Government operatives with the intention to setting up an attack on the palace, whereas these Royal Guards were trained and certified by Central Government, through the Inspector General of Police. There was continuous spot arrest and harassment of the OBR associates, without any proof. Expedite the trial of the King, Prime Minister, and the detained subjects of the OBR.

Tel Abbas Temporary Refugee Camp, Lebanon

Ms. Sara Ianovitz, Tel Abbas temporary refugee camp in northern Lebanon

Sara Ianovitz told us about the humanitarian assistance work that Community of Sant'Egidio and [Operazione Colomba](#), an initiative supported by the John XXIII community, are doing with Syrian refugees in temporary camps in Lebanon, particularly in [Tel Abbas in northern Lebanon](#). The civil war in Syria began in 2011, which then became a "religious war," with the "losers" being expelled from their country of origin, Syria. Syrians are the largest refugee population in the world. Many of them fled to Lebanon

(whose population is 4.5 million); more than 1.2 million are officially registered by UNHCR, but currently the real number is estimated in more than 1.5 million. The violence took the form of a conventional war fought internally and with international alliances. The Syrian war includes:



refugees' expulsion, citizens' torture, death, armed attacks. People fleeing the militarised violence primarily need hope for their future.

Operazione Colomba (OC) has been [operating in Lebanon](#) since September 2013. In April 2014 the volunteers settled in a refugee camp in the village of Tel Abbas. It is located 5 km far from the Syrian border. The refugees explicitly requested the presence of OC in the camp after suffering threats, physical assaults, evictions and tents burnt. OC is an effective deterrent for violence. The volunteers live in a wood and plastic tent, sharing the hard daily life with Syrians. Moreover they try to build bridges of dialogue between the local scared and sometimes hostile Lebanese population and the Syrians themselves.

“Our starting and core point is the nonviolence as rooted in life sharing. As Gandhi did, to start from an upper class and safe condition to go down until the last ones.”—[Sara Ianovitz](#)

Central African Republic

Mr. Jean Baptiste Talla, rebuilding social cohesion/anti-genocide measures in Central African Republic

[Jean Baptiste Talla](#) told us about his work with Catholic Relief Services since 2013 rebuilding social cohesion and implementing anti-genocide measures in Central African Republic (CAR) amid several years of civil war. The CAR has gone through violent conflict between Seleka (an armed group including mostly Muslims) and anti-balaka (a traditional armed militia including many Christians). This violent conflict continues in some regions of the CAR.



From Catholic Relief Services' assessment of Central African Republic, we learned that since 1960, the Central African Republic has been politically unstable, with eight different presidents, and characterised by exclusion and corruption punctuated by coups, counter-coups and rebellions. It is one of the poorest countries in the world, in spite of ample natural resources including diamonds, gold, land, water, and forests. In 2012, the political situation worsened, with a surge in violence, resulting in approximately 20 percent of the population of 4.8 million (especially Muslims) being displaced from their homes and over half requiring humanitarian aid. This violence has often been labeled religious and ethnic violence, but the analysis explains the political and resource issues that are at the root of the conflict (see MINUSCA 2015 <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/mission/minusca>). Thousands have died, more than 400,000 are displaced, and more than 400,000 have fled to neighboring Cameroon, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Republic of Congo (see UNSC-2016 report of the Secretary General on the situation in the Central African Republic. United Nations [S/2016/305: 1 April 2016](#)).

Following this humanitarian crisis, the situation in CAR has gradually begun to improve, with a vibrant interreligious platform, the Plateforme des Confessions Religieuses en Centrafrique (PCRC), and a Ministry of Reconciliation promoting dialogue and reconciliation. While the international community (UN, donors, and NGOs) has been focused on the mainstream peace process and peace negotiations, security sector reform, and elections, several organisations have incorporated social cohesion into programming across other sectors such as shelter, food security, etc.

A conflict analysis was commissioned by Catholic Relief Services in CAR based on USAID's Conflict Assessment Framework (CAF 2.0). The analysis was conducted from March 5 to April 4, 2016, by teams recruited from among CRS' partners, along with a consultant and CRS staff. The objectives were threefold: 1) Analyse conflict dynamics at national and regional/sub-national levels; 2) Identify key factors to inform more effective implementation of social cohesion programming; and 3) Identify opportunities for strategic interventions in the promotion and integration of justice and peacebuilding, and social cohesion.

In 2012, CRS began implementing the USAID-funded Secure, Empowered, Connected Communities (SECC) project, which operates in the southeast and northwest of CAR and aims to “enable cohesive, self-directed, and connected communities to avoid or reduce their exposure to threats associated with the presence of armed groups and ongoing conflict in areas most vulnerable to attack. The project also addresses ongoing interreligious/inter-communal tensions in CAR.”

“Initially conceived as a counter-LRA and community-based protection program in southeastern CAR, SECC responded to the current crisis by adding an objective in February 2014 to support communities' ability to maintain and promote social cohesion and address inter-religious and intra-community conflicts. The program expanded to cover western parts of the country, including Bangui, where intercommunal violence had become widespread.... Working in close collaboration with the PCRC, CRS/SECC has trained more than 1,300 religious and community leaders as ambassadors of social cohesion. In Bangui, more than 600 religious, civil society, and government leaders have been trained in social cohesion principles, many of whom have proceeded to lead neighborhood-level mobilisation activities...” (See <https://www.crs.org/our-work-overseas/program-areas/justice-and-peacebuilding/secure-empowered-connected-communities>).

Throughout the crisis CRS has provided assistance to the IRP through the SECC program and private funds. In January 2016, CRS, in an interfaith partnership with the IRP, World Vision, Aegis Trust, and Islamic Relief, began a new project entitled the Central African Republic Interfaith Peacebuilding Partnership (CIPP). This USAID-funded program is designed to build the capacity of the IRP to support Central African institutions to promote social cohesion, increase scale and scope of ongoing trauma-healing programming, and support early economic recovery efforts.

The methodology of this conflict analysis was based on the CAF 2.0 and its application process document, as well as elements of the CRS Peacebuilding, Governance, and Gender Assessments:

A Basic Guide for Busy Practitioners, which also incorporates elements of the “3-Ps” methodology. (See USAID (2012) Conflict Analysis Framework (CAF) Version 2.0. June 2012. Washington D.C.: USAID, and USAID (2012). Conflict Assessment Framework Application Guide. June 2012. Washington D.C.: USAID. Available at: <https://www.usaid.gov/what-we-do/working-crisesand-conflict/technical-publications> Also see CRS (2015) Peacebuilding, Governance and Gender Assessments: A Basic Guide for Busy Practitioners. CRS: March 2015.) The “3-P’s” referenced here stand for: **Problem, People, and Process**.

CRS chose the USAID conflict assessment framework because it provides a “rigorous framework for collecting and analysing data in an objective manner that can be applied uniformly across conflict settings” in order to evaluate the risks of violent conflict and simultaneously assist development and humanitarian actors to support local efforts to manage conflict and build peace.

Prior to undertaking the fieldwork, an extensive literature review was completed (the desk study) which was used to assist the team in identifying key issues to explore (though additional issues could be added or subtracted based on the fieldwork. The CAF 2.0 structure starts with the context, and then an analysis of conflict dynamics (grievance, identities, institutional performance, social patterns, resilience, and key actors) and finally examines the trajectories involved (trends and triggers). Based on these conflict dynamics, response options were developed. Key actors were identified who mobilised people and resources to engage in violence, based on grievances. Institutions may perform in legitimate and effective ways that identity groups perceive as positive social patterns that serve to mitigate conflict, or, they may perform in illegitimate, ineffective ways that drive conflict. Resilience refers to the ability of the institutions or other factors to respond to potential conflict in non-violent ways.

The CRS conflict analysis identified the following key conflict dynamics: fragmented security and conflict between armed groups; state services failure; competition over resources; agro-pastoral conflict; and refugee and IDP return.

Bethlehem, Palestine

Ms. [Rania Murra](#), Israel’s separation wall in Bethlehem, Palestine

[Rania Murra](#), director of the [Arab Educational Institute](#) in Bethlehem told us about the Israeli separation wall in Bethlehem, Palestine. She said, “The violence of the Wall, which annexes land, separates communities, and separates people from their land, affects the Palestinian sense of home (which becomes a prison), and which makes traveling extremely difficult.” In Area C, where Rania lives and works, the key stakeholders relating to the violence of the wall are “the people living close to it (including residents, shopkeepers, local NGOs), but actually



whole communities and the Palestinians in general, especially women. The international community, women organisations, peace activists, tourists and pilgrims, and media persons are also stakeholders or target groups. Obviously, the Israeli army is a key actor in this area C which they control.”

According to the UN, more than 60 percent of the West Bank is considered Area C, where Israel retains near exclusive control, including over law enforcement, planning and construction. Most of Area C has been allocated for the benefit of Israeli settlements or the Israeli military, at the expense of Palestinian communities. This impedes the development of adequate housing, infrastructure and livelihoods in Palestinian communities, and has significant consequences for the entire West Bank population. Structures built without permits are regularly served with demolition orders, creating chronic uncertainty and threat, and encouraging people to leave. Where the orders are implemented, they have resulted in displacement and disruption of livelihoods, the entrenchment of poverty and increased aid dependency. The humanitarian community has faced a range of difficulties in providing aid in Area C, including the demolition and confiscation of assistance by the Israeli authorities.

Israeli settler violence against Palestinians has been on the rise since the beginning of 2017. Between January and April 2018, OCHA documented 84 incidents attributed to Israeli settlers resulting in Palestinian casualties (27 incidents) or in damage to Palestinian property (57 incidents). On a monthly average, this is the highest level of incidents recorded since the end of 2014 and represents a 50 and 162 per cent increase compared with 2017 and 2016, respectively (see chart). Israeli security officials have expressed concern over this trend and reportedly increased their presence in ‘friction areas’, particularly near the settlement of Yitzhar, in the northern West Bank.

Western and Central Equatoria, South Sudan

Mr. Aseervatham Florington, Nonviolent Peaceforce’s unarmed civilian accompaniment, South Sudan

Aseervatham “Flori” Florington has been Head of Mission for Nonviolent Peaceforce in South Sudan since September 2015. Flori joined NP in Sri Lanka in 2008 and served for two years as the Deputy Country Director in South Sudan. Florington’s education and training specialised in Child Psychology, Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) and Peace and Conflict Studies. Aseervatham Florington told us about civilian unarmed accompaniment with Nonviolent Peaceforce addressing sectarian violence



with armed militias in rural South Sudan, specifically to protect women and children in Western and Central Equatoria.

Devastated by a 21 year-long civil war between the north and the south of the country which ended in 2005, Sudan again entered a period of tension prior to 2011. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), which ended the war, provided for a referendum on independence for the south to be held in January 2011. Citizens remain polarised along political and tribal lines and arms are easily available in the build up to this critical time. There is a risk of small-scale local conflict, as well as larger destabilisation in the area in the build up to the referendum. The success or failure of peacebuilding in this critical region has implications not only for the viability of Sudan's entire peace process, but for stability across the volatile Great Lakes region.

In 2010, two Sudanese organisations, the Institute for the Promotion of Civil Society (IPCS) and the Sudanese Organisation for Nonviolence and Development (SONAD), invited Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) to provide operational expertise in the prevention of violence in the context of the 2011 elections and referendum.

The years of civil war have left South Sudan with a fragile infrastructure, which it is unable to extend comprehensively into all areas of the country. The government is also often unable, due to insufficient resources and capacity, to provide its citizens with the protection from violence that they require. There is currently a large UN peacekeeping force stationed in South Sudan, but its numbers are insufficient to ensure the safety of civilians in all areas of the country. Moreover, armed peacekeeping is extremely costly, and, in many circumstances, unnecessary.

NP's focus in Western Equatoria continues to be the protective accompaniment and safe reintegration support for children rescued from the Lord's Resistance Army (see [LRA Crisis Tracker](#) for impact on civilians).

Hebron, Palestine

Ms. Cory Lockhart, Christian Peacemaker Teams' unarmed civilian accompaniment, Hebron, Palestine

[Cory Lockhart](#) told us about civilian unarmed accompaniment with Christian Peacemaker Teams addressing Israeli military and armed non-state actors in Hebron, Palestine. Cory has spent a total of about 6 months (over 3 stints) working with Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) in Hebron, Palestine. She's also led a short-term delegation there. CPT has year-round teams in Colombia, Iraqi Kurdistan, and Canada (indigenous



solidarity work). CPT has a team for half the year on the island of Lesbos in Greece working with migrants coming to Europe.

Cory says: “In Hebron, where CPT works, because of Israeli settlements in Hebron, there are Israeli checkpoints, which limit Palestinian access to education, worship, medical care, work, etc., since Palestinians can be denied entry through them or detained/arrested at them. This is true of other checkpoints throughout Palestine. Flying checkpoints (temporary checkpoints that can be set up anywhere, anytime, for any length of time) can also greatly limit Palestinian ability to move freely/easily throughout Palestine. Sometimes Palestinian roads are blockaded (many roads are Israeli only or Palestinian only; there is a marked difference in quality between them). Other issues include Palestinian land seizures; home raids; home demolitions; settler violence; access to water and electricity; random arrests, even of children who by Israeli military law are too young to be arrested; use of disproportionate force (mostly teargas and sound grenades-often not used according to standards for “acceptable use”, also sometimes rubber-coated steel bullets, skunk water, live ammunition) against peaceful protesters or children or people throwing stones; Israeli abuse of detained and arrested Palestinian children and adults; holding Palestinians in jail without charge; Israeli soldiers injuring or killing Palestinians with impunity, etc.

“In my home context of the U.S., the issues are the massive aid given to Israel by the US (over 3 billion/year) and challenging the narrative of Israelis as victims of Palestinian aggression that leave out the base context of Israel’s aggressive and violent military occupation.”

Juba, South Sudan

Ms. Natalia Chan on the South Sudan Council of Churches in Juba, South Sudan

Natalia Chan told us about multi-level ongoing civil war in newly formed state of South Sudan and the nonviolent and just peace response of ecumenical churches through the [South Sudan Council of Churches](#). Natalia said, “Four years ago (on 15th December 2013) South Sudan erupted in violent conflict which escalated into another civil war. The nature of violence in South Sudan is far from simple, the conflict is complex and multi-layered, overlapping and intertwining across many different levels.



“In the context of the current civil war, some of the most extreme bounds of violence have been reached, with profound and long-term implications. But the roots are deep, and South Sudan experiences recurrent violence, often due to a failure to deal with the consequences of previous conflict. The prognosis for peace was poor even around the time of South Sudan’s independence;

beyond the jubilation of independence day celebrations lay many challenges – as well as building a state where institutions, infrastructure and local governance are very weak, tackling some of the worst development indicators in the world, and outstanding issues from the Comprehensive Peace Agreement with Sudan; these challenges also included grievances left unresolved after internal divisions and splits in the movement during the civil war, the creation of a national identity, healing and reconciling after decades of violent conflict.”

Mexico

Mr. Pietro Ameglio, killings and disappearances by organised crime syndicates with government approval, Mexico

Pietro Ameglio told us about building the Movement for Peace and Justice with Dignity (MPJD), a mass civil resistance movement in Mexico in response to killings and disappearances in the “war on drugs.” This violence involves responses to killings by organised crime (multilevel organised criminal violence including state) in drug war in Mexico. MPJD is thousands of relatives of the murdered and disappeared who were killed from 2006 to today.



Pietro says, “It is the greatest drama in Mexican society today with no less than 35,000 missing and 150,000 dead according to figures from the UN and family organisations. MPJD was a massive, national movement, today followed by dozens of victims’ organisations across the country. It allowed for the first time in many years to speak explicitly on nonviolence (NV) in public.”

“The violence faced was very broad, hard, with several actors intermingled. The main one was the complicity, direct action of police, military, rulers of all levels of the State. They were allied with very violent organised crime gangs, entrepreneurs for money laundering, and part of civil society working on violence, as in the Attorney General. They disappeared and killed people to collect ransom, so that they do not report robberies, because they leave the ‘business’ ... they charge an extortion fee to any business, company, professional ... at an unimaginable level. They do a lot of trafficking in young women, children, etc.

“The relatives of victims were losing the terror of acting and denouncing in public, they became social subjects of nonviolent struggle and in the main actions of the “just peace” continuing to today. They have a huge faith, most religious, in their struggle, in love to their children or relatives or friends, in truth, in the strength of being united “to give life” for their struggle.”

Pietro wrote: “Starting with the construction of a good “reality principle” is the best instrument—in any sense—to initiate any quest or reflection. Therefore, we wish to describe the present Mexican social order from the beginning, by conceptualising “the war”, which has been extensively covered up by the government and the media by means of a frequently simplistic

image of “violent acts”. We believe it is fundamental to start this reflection with the reality principle, in order to better understand the social landscape and the level in which nonviolent struggles are inserted in Mexico, in part by survivors and families of victims and like-minded civilian society between 2011 and 2013. We particularly examine the Movement for Peace with Justice and Dignity (MPJD) as one of the greatest experiences and mass mobilisations that have taken place in Latin America in recent years.

“For any analysis it is important to remember that Mexico is a territory riddled by “actions of war” everywhere, although not with the same intensity and forms in different regions. To provide a very brief description, we could say that this war, in its most violent aspects, exhibits at least three different traits: it is a civil war (its armed events impinge transversally on all sectors of population, economically and socially); it is a “mass extermination” war, or a “selective extermination” war. According to figures provided by non-governmental organisations, these forms of extermination have caused, 102,000 deaths since 2007, 32,000 thousand missing persons as stated by victims’ organisations, and hundreds of thousands of displaced persons. These figures have been compared—by Amnesty International, among others—with those resulting from the wars in Bosnia, Iraq, Rwanda, and the South American dictatorships of the seventies.

“Today we also know—thanks to the many associations of relatives of the victims of this war, in what has also been a considerable achievement of the MPJD—that the huge majority of victims hadn’t the slightest link to organised crime, and were honest members of society whose lives were impaled by a social and territorial event of huge inhumanity. The brave and heroic personal mobilisations and investigations by the associations of victims and the MPJD, apart from massive public denunciations, manage to express the dignity of the relatives and exhibit the deceptiveness of the official image of a “war against drugs”, when in reality it is a transnational inter-capitalist war for the monopoly of a new illegal commodity, plus another 23 felonies, and also for the control of the bodies, and material and natural resources in several territories of the country. In this war, as in all others, there are sides, and each side contains representatives of organised crime, the state power structure in all its levels, armed forces, legal or not, businessmen, and sectors of civilian society directly or indirectly involved.

“Finally, as part of the description of this war process which has seized us, “selective extermination”, which has always been present throughout Mexican history, has increased lately in a big way, in an environment of total impunity. In the state of Guerrero, for example, in the last three months of 2013, nearly 20 social leaders were murdered without retribution of any kind. Furthermore, as part of this same process, in the same state, on 26-27 September 2014, in what can only be termed a “genocidal action”, 43 students from a rural normal school (a school which trains teachers) in Ayotzinapa, Iguala, were violently “disappeared” (until the present day) by police forces and criminals, with the complicity and indifference of authorities in all levels of power. Thus, the question emerges: could “selective extermination”, of which normal school students have always been victims due to their radical left wing search for justice, become “mass extermination” if certain types of genocidal decisions were activated?”

c. Examples of nonviolent OBSTRUCTIVE programs in organised militarised violence

An **Obstructive Program** of a nonviolent movement for justice in the context of organised militarised violence is very difficult and requires very careful strategy. Gandhi identified obstructive nonviolent methods such as persuasion, non-cooperation, and direct action. **Pietro Ameglio** told us that in Mexico, “We struggle with building a ‘nonviolent’ population because people are not just afraid, they are terrified. And they are terrified because they are being terrorised. It is hard to work in a terrorised society.” In this context, the practices of “nonviolent noncooperation” are explored more and teaching about the “moral duty to non-comply.”

Roundtable 5 members also identified these examples of an obstructive nonviolent program amid organised militarised violence: refusing military service/conscientious objection; unarmed civilian protection UCP) practices; communitarian civil resistance groups; land defense groups; accompaniment/protective presence during or after violent incident; de-escalation/intervention when possible; documentation of violent incidents; data collection for international research (eg for UN); accompany farmers to their land, women to get water, children to school; civilian peace presence at borders and checkpoints; “no weapon” zones/peace zones; “underground” safety networks; truces for religious observance; visitation to victims of violence (widows, soldiers/police families, children, etc); creative nonviolent action: cultural events at Israeli wall (eg concerts, music crossing the wall); creative symbolic actions (people forming a star, key, circle; people jumping over hurdles symbolising the wall); public religious or meditative ceremonies; wall posters with women’s daily life stories, oral histories, explanations of occupation and sumud; “alternative souvenirs” (eg a checkpoint game); silent Advent vigils at Israeli wall; meet “Living Stones” of real Palestinians vs dead stones of Wall; “guerilla plantings”: plant seeds/sunflowers along Israeli wall or roses over border wall in Belfast; large public caravans throughout country with public testimonies, rallies, prayer events (Movement for Justice and Peace in Mexico); organisations of families searching for disappeared relatives in clandestine graves (example of autonomous noncooperation because it is done without waiting for state action); public fasting and hunger strikes in front of places of power; proactive presence and protective accompaniment teams for vulnerable civilians made up of local leadership with international advisors; strengthening communities’ confidence and capacity to reduce and prevent violence; build cooperation and coordination with traditional and community leaders (especially women, youth, traditional elders); return, reintegration, and rehabilitation of children affected by armed conflict and former child combatants; develop comprehensive exit-strategy after unarmed civilian peacekeepers are no longer operating in the region; women’s march, rally, fasting, public weeping begging for peace to state armed actors, civilian authorities and public

Kasese, Uganda

Peter Mubunga told us that the Kasese diocesan Justice and Peace program used a variety of nonviolent models and tools to respond to the violence, including dialogue meetings among affected stakeholders, identification and visitation and follow up with the victims and families of the violence on all sides (widows, orphans, royal guard, police); interreligious and ecumenical prayer services; radio talk shows; interreligious and ecumenical joint annual message; joint cultural galas and events, including peace walks.

Peter Mubunga said, “In promoting nonviolence we could have public speeches against the bad action committed, have letters of opposition, sign public statements and have Mass to pray for

nonviolence and also have fasting. On another level banners, posters, leaflets, posters, newspapers, Radio and Television would be used. In addition there could be Group lobbying, wearing of symbols, display of flags and symbolism, having symbolic objects, drama, plays and music are very good in moving the needle for non violence. Processions in form of marches, parades would be held. I also promote withdraws like walk-outs and silence. Boycotts of a positive form, and strikes at all levels can also move the needle. Sometimes withdrawing, refusal to attend public meetings can also help nonviolence and noncooperation. We need to know that all these have to be done out of love and following the love of Jesus and loving of the neighbour as self and also love for the enemies. When all the above ways are done with the love of Jesus and with humility as Jesus was then little by little we shall move the needle to nonviolence.”

Tel Abbas Temporary Refugee Camp, Lebanon

[Sara Ianovitz](#) told us that Operazione Colomba - Community Pope John XXIII used a variety of obstructive nonviolent methods working with Syrian war refugees in temporary camps in Lebanon—particularly focused on building a model of popular democratic diplomacy. [Sara Ianovitz](#) said, “Firstly we listened to others, then we told what we were doing elsewhere, finally we started to live together and to open Humanitarian Corridors (a route for refugees through Europe that served as a safety zone of linked aid and civil society organisations). Now they told us that they want to go back home. We need schemes of listening which are outside the frame we already know. Mediation is made by dialogue, starting from the ground to the top, to governments. Operazione Colomba is just the microphone: We go to the Italian Government, which possibly talks to the Lebanese or German Government or institutions. It’s a popular democratic diplomacy.” In this specific case, Operazione Colomba - Community Pope John XXIII worked with a community of Syrians in Tel Abbas refugee camp to produce the a international peace proposal drafted by Syrian refugees titled [We The Syrians](#).

[Sara Ianovitz](#) said, “Our Syrian friends have decided to think big and they have written an Appeal for Peace in Syria. Together, we listened to the desire of the many Syrian refugees who want to return to Syria, and we are proposing the creation of Safe Zones in Syria, into which no army or armed group would be allowed entry and asking for a peace where responsibilities are clear, which creates a new Syria for those who don’t want violence. The basis of the idea is simple: “Why are the representatives of the forces destroying our country the only ones sat at the negotiating table? Why do we only have the possibility to escape and we are not allowed to put our lives, our ideas, our strength and our hopes for the creation of a peace proposal?” In November (2016), we took our first official step, in presenting the peace proposal to the Vice President of the European Union, Frans Timmermans, who in turn said he would like to include it in the EU’s official proposal for peace in Syria. In March 2017, we presented our Peace Proposal to Federica Mogherini, the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. In June 2017, we presented the Peace Proposal to the Chamber of Deputies in Rome.”

In the refugee camp of Tel Abbas, Operazione Colomba volunteers have been continuing sharing the daily life of people and accompanying them for medical or legal causes. Thanks to their advocacy mediation with the Lebanese Centre For Human Rights and the United Nations, some families were able to safely travel towards Europe, hopefully to start a new life in peace and dignity. Accompaniment at various hospital have continued throughout northern Lebanon,

paying particular attention to women, elderly and children. The pressure of volunteers on competent institutions was useful on many occasions to ensure that people were taken in charge to be treated. Also, volunteers organised a meeting space, in videoconference, between the Syrian refugees who wrote the Appeal for Peace in Syria and a member of the Peace Community of San José in Colombia. Thanks to the translation of two volunteers, participants were able to discuss about humanitarian areas: how the Peace Community in Colombia was born, what the differences with the Syrian situation and what the similarities. This meeting was a further small step forward, possible thanks to Operazione Colomba volunteers, which helps to bring the voices of the victims of the conflict to be listen at the tables of peace talks and to urgently ask for the creation in Syria of Humanitarian Areas under civil administration with international protection.

Central African Republic

[Jean Baptiste Talla](#) told us about rebuilding social cohesion/anti-genocide measures in Central African Republic using the 3Bs/4Ds program. This is a program based on work by John Paul Lederach and refined through use in the Philippines and Central African Republic. It combines both obstructive programs of intervening in conflict or post-conflict situations on the part of the trainers and laying the groundwork for community buy-in with a nonviolent constructive program familiar from peacebuilding models.

[Jean Baptiste Talla](#) told us: “I provide technical support to communities and to an Interreligious platform for Peace led by Cardinal Dieudonné Nzapalainga (archbishop of Bangui), Imam Kobine (President of Muslim Association of CAR and Reverend Nicolas (president of Evangelical churches in CAR). These religious leaders have become symbols and great advocate for non-violence in CAR going beyond their religious identity to call for Love, Reconciliation, Justice, and Peaceful cohabitation. Under their leadership we have trained more than 3,000 peoples on social cohesion based on a new social cohesion approach we named the 3B/4D.

The Bs stand for “Binding, Bonding, and Bridging. Binding (the first B): Conflicts profoundly affect people involved individually and collectively. Therefore, in peacebuilding process, efforts must be made to find ways of addressing the negative impact of conflict on the key actors of conflict situation. This is the reason why it might be beneficial to include in the peacebuilding process, trauma awareness and resilience, prejudice reduction and clarifying wrong perceptions and other forms of biases; and starting to build a more embracing vision of the future. Bonding (the second B): Often, in conflict situations, it is important to bring one party, a single identity, in a process that assists its key members to reflect on how to forge a common understanding of the conflict situation and develop a consolidated group vision of the future. The process also helps the group to clarify and articulate their collective goals and common interests; and design how they see achieving these while cultivating and maintaining harmony and collaborative relationships with their perceived enemy. Bridging (the third B): “It takes two to tango”. Those who made conflict, often, also have the capacity to make peace. After working with each single identity separately, and once they express the desire for it, they are brought together in a process that helps them to share their perspectives and forge their common understanding of the conflict. They also identify a mutually acceptable vision of a desired future and collectively develop projects of common interest, – that respond to their needs while gradually rebuilding and cementing trust among them—that contribute to achieving their common vision.”

Jean Baptiste Talla said, “4Ds stands for Discover-Dream- Design-Deliver. At each of the 3Bs, parties must use the 4Ds to guide their reflection and resolutions. Discover (the first D): At each B, participants are facilitated to discover, at personal and collective levels, what assets are available to them. Very often, parties in conflict tend to neglect or overlook their own existing strengths. This is an opportunity to use the Integral Human Development framework to unearth internal assets necessary to respond to conflict in a sustainable way. These local capacities are essential in addressing the issues of conflict and building resilience of the communities involved. Dream (the second D): It is important, even essential, to develop a dream, a vision of what the parties in conflict, individually and collectively, would like to see in the future. This is where, they will draw the energies from to withstand shocks and setbacks in their relationships.

Resilience is also built by an energising vision. Design (the third D): To materialise the design of the vision, conflict parties involved, must, individually and collectively, develop plans to achieve the dream they have defined. These are clear plans that concretely respond to existing grievances, but also would reinforce trust and harmony among community members in the present and future generations. The plans are primarily based on their internal strengths and opportunities available to them. Deliver (the fourth D): Actions designed must be implemented, monitored and evaluated to the parties’ satisfaction. Members of the concerned society would commit themselves to initiate mutually beneficial concrete project activities. These connector projects will contribute to building communities’ resilience by cementing trust and sustaining social cohesion.”

Jamila Raqib observed: “Binding - address negative impact through counseling, educational work on clarifying harmful perceptions, etc. prepare people to develop a vision of tomorrow that includes a more inclusive future. Bonding- Actually articulate that inclusive “vision of tomorrow.” Bridging – Opposing sides are brought to the negotiating table where the hope is that they will together identify a mutually acceptable vision of tomorrow and projects of common interest that they can work on to implement that vision. 4Ds – Discover – A self-assessment of existing resources and assets, strengths that can be brought in to build resilience and respond to the conflict. Dream- Vision of tomorrow, long-term objectives to guide their activities and keep people on track. Design – Designing a plan to achieve objectives while reinforcing trust and harmony. Deliver – Implementation of the plan.”

Jamila Raqib asked: What if maintaining harmony with perceived enemies is undesirable or impossible? What happens if grievances cannot be addressed while maintaining trust and harmony? If trust and harmony are prioritised over other objectives, can this lead to unsustainable agreements? Are there mechanisms to hold parties accountable?

Bethlehem, Palestine

Rania Murra told us about the work of the Arab Educational Institute-Open Windows project operating in the occupied territories since 1986 just prior to the First Intifada. AEI’s work also combines creative nonviolent obstructive programs with nonviolent constructive programs. Obstructive programs include “cultural events in front of the wall, choir singing and concerts, music crossing the wall, symbolic actions (people forming a star, key, circle; people jumping over hurdles symbolising the wall), neighborhood festival, religious or meditative ceremonies, wall posters with women’s daily life stories, oral histories, explanations of occupation and

sumud; alternative souvenirs like a checkpoint game. These actions show common humanity versus the violence/massiveness of the wall, here 8-9 meters high.”

Rania told us: “Peace and justice are main guiding values. There is not a quick victory foreseen, so steadfastness and commitment in a nonviolent struggle are of the essence. Sumud is a Palestinian value with universal and spiritual meanings.”

Since 2000, AEI–Open Windows developed itself as a Palestine-and Bethlehem-based NGO dedicated to empowering youth, women and educators living in Palestine, especially the West Bank. AEI works through community education and advocacy, the facilitation of local and international bridge building and exchange, and the celebration of Palestinian culture and narrative. In our educational approach to empowerment, AEI fosters opportunities for Palestinian voices to be heard beyond the separation Wall and promotes the development of *sumud* or perseverance.

AEI’s work is rooted in the values of peace, justice, nonviolence, and inter-cultural and inter-religious respect, especially Muslim-Christian living together. AEI’s present-day expertise is in the field of training project groups in a great variety of subjects. In almost all cases communicative skills play a significant role, such as listening and conversation skills in the organisation and performance of cultural events and intercultural exchanges and in the learning of language skills. AEI is experienced in organising small- and large-scale events for visitors and the community, including choir and music performances, storytelling, a festival, and symbolic non-violent actions.

Rania said: “We are trying to help ourselves and other women, who can then help their children and communities in nonviolence while violence is there. We try to live the value of sumud or ”shared - steadfastness.“ The tools used with women: cultural experiences through singing; play music in front of Wall, pray as Christians and Muslims in front of the Wall, silent Advent vigils in front of the Wall, planting seeds of steadfastness to resist the Wall. Other examples are our Wall museum in which people put their stories on the Wall with prayers. Visitors may not have a chance to meet with the “living stones” i.e. the Palestinians but they can read their stories on the Wall. We train women to be guides and ambassadors for Palestine. We provide workshops to educate about boycotts, which often comes with “blacklisting” retaliation. We use the model of RRCA: Read, Reflect, Communicate, and Act. We meet with women on weekly basis and meet with whole families on monthly basis. (We focus on the women for a variety of reasons but one is that the men are working and don’t have time to participate.) Our workshops are generating new art based on traditional song and dance. Also there is the practice of painting on stones “in order to make the stones alive” by keeping sumud and hope and inviting people from different places to be in solidarity with us.”

Erica Chenoweth observed: “It’s incredibly powerful when movements recognise that quick victories are not likely, and then they proceed with the struggle anyway. AEI’s workshop/lab model is reminiscent of Gandhi’s ‘experiments with truth.’”

Western and Central Equatoria, South Sudan

Aseervatham Florington told us about Nonviolent Peaceforce addressing sectarian violence by armed militias in rural South Sudan. NP is a global leader in the practice of unarmed civilian peacekeeping, with a solid track record of success in conflict zones such as Guatemala, Philippines, and Sri Lanka. The effectiveness of civilian third-party interventions in reducing and preventing violence has been well documented, but the capacity of local actors in conflict-affected environments to apply this approach is often limited. These teams act as adjuncts to traditional dispute settlement and peacebuilding activities in districts where the risk of violence is especially high. All NP deployments prioritise the protection of civilians from violence.

Flori told us: “Whilst NP works with whole communities under threat, we recognise that there are specific groups within communities who require specialist, focused protection. In South Sudan, NP focuses particularly on the protection of women and of children, who rarely engage in conflict, but are often disproportionately affected by it. In order to address the specific needs of these marginalised groups, NP is in the process of forming an all-female team of peacekeepers who are specially trained in identifying and addressing incidences of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). In order to address the ongoing problem of child combatants in South Sudan, NP is in the process of establishing a team dedicated to monitoring and preventing Resolution 1612 violations. The team will focus specifically on the return, reintegration, and rehabilitation of children affected by armed conflict and former child combatants, in recognition of the fact that both former child combatants and the communities to which they return require sustained, specialist support if they are to overcome the trauma that they have suffered and rebuild their lives. In order for protection strategies to be effective in the long term, communities must be able to continue them after NP has withdrawn. As a result NP places great emphasis on building the capacity of the local community to protect itself, and the community is involved throughout the term of NP’s deployment. By hiring local staff to work in partnership with the international peacekeepers, NP demonstrates both its commitment to building local capacity, and the value it places upon the knowledge and skills already inherent in the target community. Using workshops and training events NP disseminates its methodology to communities in need on an ongoing basis, and continues to offer support to communities’ peacekeepers as part of its comprehensive exit-strategy after peacekeepers are no longer on the ground.”

Flori told us: “In Western Equatoria NP’s focus continues to be the protective accompaniment and safe reintegration support for children rescued from the LRA. Nonviolent Peaceforce front-line team members in Mundri team provided protective accompaniment and presence to the group of women who were fasting, praying, marching, rallying, patrolling, crying, and begging for peace at SPLA barracks. They were passing through Mundri town past the barracks and government offices to the main religious places in Mundri. More than 30 men joined the women in their march, rally, and prayer for peace. Several onlookers including men stood by the roadside showing respect and solidarity to the women in black clothes, barefoot, marching and rallying for peace. There was military presence all over the place. Nonviolent Peaceforce unarmed civilian protectors provided protective presence.

The tools used were: NP shared the plight and plea of women on Facebook (with their consent) – social media; the march, rally, singing, fasting, and crying of the women increased awareness of the civilian members begging for peace to the state armed actor, civilian authorities of the state;

and people in the market who empathised with the women; women in Amadi State were united in their efforts and voice pleading for peace; unarmed strategies were used to engage the perceived perpetrators of violence; school children watched and listened to the plight, songs, and requests of their mothers mourning for peace in the State; NP civilian protectors and these women walked, patrolled, and marched more than 3 kilometers raising awareness of the need for peace. As a result, the tension in the town reduced and all armed actors agreed to stop the killings of civilians and ensure sustainable civilian movements in the town."

Hebron, Palestine

[Cory Lockhart](#) told us about civilian unarmed accompaniment with Christian Peacemaker Teams in Hebron, Palestine. [Cory](#) said: "CPT does month-long trainings for anyone joining CPT. These trainings include: undoing oppression, faith traditions and nonviolence, role plays involving all sides/actors. Each one writes a statement of conviction and commitment to nonviolence that they adhere to. Local members are the inviters and are part of the team and offer leadership to help shape the cultural sensitivity.

CPT has been in Hebron since 1995 and is well known there. Sometimes CPT can move freely and other times when it is restricted. CPT's work in Hebron includes accompaniment during and after incidents of violence; de-escalation and intervention when possible; documentation when de-escalation and intervention are not possible; and accompaniment/support/involvement/documentation of Palestinian and Israeli nonviolent actions. In the case of CPT-Palestine, unarmed civilian accompaniment may take the form of accompanying Palestinians to their agricultural land, particularly during harvest, to deter Israeli settlers and soldiers from interfering/attacking; walking Palestinian children to school; protective presence in Palestinian homes under threat of settler attack; protective presence during "settler tours" through the Old City of Hebron; protective presence in Palestinian neighborhoods that settlers walk through for prayers Friday night; protective presence at checkpoints at and near the main mosque for Friday noon prayers. We recognise that Israeli soldiers are doing their required service. They do have the option of Conscientious Objector status but it really depends on the particular brigade and soldiers. The data and documentation that CPT collects, particularly on children's access to education, is used in United Nations' data on the issue. When CPTers or delegates return to home countries, we give presentations to educate others, may be involved in letter-writing campaigns, petitions, speaking to legislators about what we've witnessed and urging our governments to speak out against/not financially support settlements and the various other facets of Israel's military occupation."

In a politically charged environment, how does CPT's strategic nonviolent action stay untarnished by the politics of the region? **Sarah Thompson** told us: "CPT is not a neutral actor politically because it is dedicated to identifying where the oppression is from and engaging in the conversation with all involved. We have funding criteria that screens funds that might corrupt our analysis. We have learned the power of standing shoulder to shoulder with the most vulnerable. We realise the power one has or one derives from and not being co-opted."

Juba, South Sudan

Due to the civil war which prevailed in Sudan for 21 years, the Sudan Council of Churches (SCC) that was founded in 1965 was unable to reach many in Southern and marginalised areas of

Sudan. Thus, its member churches present in these areas formed the New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC) in 1989. Despite operating as separate entities - one body with two faces - in northern and southern Sudan, the two councils worked together with their international partners and through the Sudan Ecumenical Forum for peace and justice in Sudan. The New Sudan Council of Churches and Sudan Council of Churches merged into the Sudan Council of Churches in May 2007. As South Sudan became an independent country in 2011, the decision to establish two separate ecumenical organisations for the two countries was reached through a lengthy process undertaken at the SCC's 20th General Assembly from 3 to 7 July 2013 in Nairobi, Kenya ([Read more: WCC press release of 30 July 2013](#)).

[Natalia Chan](#) told us that the "churches in South Sudan have long been at the frontline of conflict in South Sudan. over decades of the previous civil wars when South Sudan was part of Sudan they played a critical role in resolving conflict, reconciling parties, creating space for dialogue, and building trust and confidence between communities. They raised their voices within 48 hours of the conflict erupting on 15th December 2013 in demand for peace and reconciliation, whilst sheltering terrified people in their compounds and as members of their own churches became victims of the violence. During a spiritual retreat in Kigali, Rwanda in June 2015, church leaders developed a vision and a call to clearly contribute to solving the conflict in South Sudan.

The [Kigali Statement of Intent](#) provides the framework of engagement for the church for resolving the conflict, building peace, and reconciling for the people of South Sudan. The Action Plan for Peace came from this vision, and is a home-grown and church-led strategy for peace and reconciliation, comprehensively addressing the root causes and long-term effects of conflict. Importantly, this vision is ecumenical, and led by the ecumenical body known as the South Sudan Council of Churches.

Mexico

[Pietro Ameglio](#) told us about responses to killings by organised crime (multilevel organised criminal violence including state) in Mexico. Pietro specifically spoke about the mass civilian resistance movement, Movement for Peace and Justice with Dignity (MPJD), affiliated with poet Javier Sicilia.

In a book chapter titled [The Movement for Peace with Justice and Dignity: How to Build and Reflect Upon Peace Amid War in Mexico](#), Pietro Ameglio wrote: "Since 2011, Mexico has lived through four Massive Cries of Indignation, whose echos still resound in many processes of social struggle, deeply connected to the cry of the Zapatista Maya indians on January 1, 1994, the "Enough!" which is really the beginning of this new phase of Mexican civilian resistance, with worldwide echoes."

In March 2011, with [poet Javier Sicilia](#) began organising after his son Francisco was brutally murdered along with six other people in Cuernavaca, Morelos. It was followed immediately by a large number of individual victims from all over Mexico and civilian society organisations, who later came together in a great national victims' movement which, in May 2011, founded the MPJD. Pietro demonstrates the dynamics of mass civil resistance in describing a "series of great social mobilisations on a national scale we were able to exhibit the horror and the magnitude of the war in this country; we also dignified the victims in their social identity and individual

histories, organised and consoled them, converted them into social subjects with the human rights to “peace, truth and justice”; we also broke the normalisation of all that which is inhuman, and the terror of this ‘armed peace’ model, exhibiting it as an aggravating factor of the violence, a great business deal, in which organised crime and sectors of government at all levels play a direct part, as well as businessmen and sectors of civilian society; we also questioned the neoliberal capitalist economic model which is forced upon us as a great multiplier of poverty and vulnerability in all social sectors, especially children and young people.” The Caravan of Solace that traveled both to the north and south of the country and then into the United States functioned in ways similar to Gandhi’s salt march. It organised, galvanised commitment, and produced effective results at the local level along the way, thus building a large mobilisation.

In May 2012, Mexican youth launched the [#YoSoy132](#) (“I Am 132”) movement [using social media](#) aimed at fair elections, fair media, and transparent electoral process. It activated youth in opposition to electoral manipulation and was a nonviolent form of facing down state power.

Next we see an example of civilian-based defense that eventually and reluctantly decided to arm itself. In February 2013 the Michoacan Community Self-Defense forces were formed and were supported by community victims—especially middle class and impoverished—of this war. This response grew out of a sector of rural-urban society that had learned through its own painful experiences that the tactics of nonviolently and symbolically pressuring authorities for justice was not working. They decided to take on directly, autonomous from the government or police their own armed community self-defense. Their goal was to install a parallel power in order to guarantee their security in their own territory, “without asking permission”. Pietro said, “The community self-defenses understood that Mexico was not a “failed state”, or a state that was “at war against drugs” as the government proclaimed, but a “criminal state” deeply involved in the wars between gangs to control an illegal commodity, territories and bodies.” The decision to take on armed self-defense to “stay the murderous hand” that operated with complete impunity can be seen, said Pietro, as a decision to exercise “moral power”, as well as one made in desperation and with dignity. However, it opens up many questions about the ability of nonviolent struggle to respond in situations that involve a high number of direct armed attacks in the midst of total impunity, and social terror.

In September 2014, in response to the genocidal action of the government and organised crime against that disappeared 43 rural normal school students, mass civil resistance again filled the streets under the slogan “It was the government” (in response to who attacked, disappeared, and killed the students). This time the mass movement raised the ante to match the level of nonviolent weapons to the proportional level of the violent act by engaging in direct actions of non-cooperation (strikes, parallel municipal authorities, etc.) and civil disobedience.

d. Examples of nonviolent CONSTRUCTIVE programs in organised militarised violence

A **Constructive Program** of a nonviolent movement for justice is a way of carrying out a struggle through community- and self-improvement by building structures, systems, processes, and resources that are alternatives to oppression and promote self-sufficiency and unity in the resisting community. Roundtable 5 members also identified: rebuilding social cohesion after violent rupture; 3B/4D process (Binding, Bonding, Bridging and Discover, Dream, Design, Deliver); evidence-based, trauma-informed communal healing programs; restorative justice

processes; conflict transformation process (JP Lederach); workshops on the difference between fear and terror; promote and lead workshops on how to build a culture of “disobedience to inhumane orders”; push/encourage church hierarchies to take part in nonviolent actions in their role as the moral reserve of the society; ecumenical prayer services; building interfaith communities; dialogue with affected stakeholder; promoting dialogue, forgiveness, mercy, and, reconciliation among the affected parties; shared land/water healing practices (restorative justice process that includes violated Creation as well as human community); cultural galas and peace walks; reconciliation (Action Plan for Peace); strengthening organisational structures and capacities (SSCC’s Action Plan for Peace); neighborhood festivals; ongoing workshop/lab of artistic expressions and theater challenging Israeli wall (experiments in truth); train women as guides to conflict for international visitors/journalists; listening project in refugee camps (Syria-Lebanon); shared living situation in refugee camps to build trust and strengthen leadership capacities and open humanitarian channels; create channels for refugee voices that are not captured by international aid agencies; bring voices of those most impacted (victims) to the international mediation/peace talks (popular diplomacy); work with boys trying to leave gangs; examine “vendetta cultures” with Mexican cartels and Italian mafia.

In situations of organised militarised violence, most groups do not have time, energy, or resources to build systems and structures. However, most of the nonviolent obstructive programs identified here include a nonviolent constructive practice - even if it is as basic building positive relationships and trust, practicing leadership skills, or establishing communication systems - or can build toward a nonviolent constructive program when circumstances improve.

Bethlehem, Palestine

[Rania Murra](#) told us about the ongoing nonviolent constructive programs that the Arab Educational Institute offers. “AEI–Open Windows (see [AEI’s Strategic Plan 2016-2019](#)) is a Palestinian organisation that furthers education, peace building and dialogue in the Palestinian cities of Bethlehem, Ramallah and Hebron. After the Institute’s creation in 1986 its locality in central Bethlehem was used for providing classes to Palestinian youth on a broad variety of subjects, including computer programs, business administration and languages. While being forced to intermittently close and open during the first Intifada, the AEI provided complementary and remedial coaching programs for youth while schools were closed. In 1997, the AEI opened channels of communication and cooperation with the Dutch Euro-Arab Dialogue From Below/Interchurch Peace Movement – (EAD/IKV) initiative and in 2000 became an affiliated branch of Pax Christi International (a Catholic peace movement formerly headed by His Beatitude Mgr. Patriarch Michel Sabbah). AEI’s main local outreach is a network of some 30 schools in the Bethlehem, Hebron and Ramallah areas. AEI appeals to international volunteers to share in its peace work. Its supervising board is composed of distinguished community members, including teachers and headmasters from a range of schools and departments of Bethlehem University. AEI also works closely together with Palestinian NGOs at both a local and national level, especially in the fields of education and non-violent activities.”

Western and Central Equatoria, South Sudan

[Aseervatham Florington](#) told us that Nonviolent Peaceforce understands that unarmed civilian teams providing accompaniment/protective presence or intervention are only one part of the NP program.

NP's constructive nonviolent program was described by [Flori](#): "In South Sudan since 2011, NP partners collaborate to build Sudanese-led conflict prevention teams consisting of 6-9 Sudanese nationals supported by 2-3 international advisors. In addition to providing a proactive presence and protective accompaniment for vulnerable civilians, trained civilian peacekeepers work with local groups to foster dialogue among parties in conflict. NP and its Sudanese partners equip civil society leaders with tested tools to strengthen their communities' confidence and capacity to reduce and prevent violence. They seek cooperation and coordination with traditional and community leaders, as well as with elected officials, civil servants, and military personnel. Working especially with women, youth, and traditional leaders, the project employs a blend of well-tested methods and novel nonviolent practices. Using its model of unarmed civilian peacekeeping, NP provides much needed support to communities threatened by violence in contexts where armed intervention would be counterproductive, unsuitable or an overreaction. In such situations, the presence of external actors provides enough of a deterrent to forestall the outbreak of violence. NP's peacekeepers work to create a safe space in which civilians can be protected, and also work to protect the space necessary for meaningful dialogue to take place. Because NP's teams of trained peacekeepers live and work in the communities they protect, they are able to react flexibly to developing situations, drawing upon their knowledge of the area and their ongoing risk analyses to provide context-appropriate responses."

In addition, as a transnational organisation NP also integrates its work of advocacy, education, and training at the level of multilateral organisations (United Nations, European Union) and states.

Hebron, Palestine

Christian Peacemaker Teams offers leadership trainings as part of their constructive program in Hebron, Palestine. But one big nonviolent constructive program is supporting the local communities during olive harvest season.

[CPT member Rachelle Friesen](#) wrote more about supporting and protecting traditional community practices: "Every October after the first fall rain, Palestinian families gather together and go to their land to harvest olives. The ancient trees have become a meeting place for families to take a break from their busy lives, and pick the olives that will be used for food and oil. Often, the young men climb the trees and shake the olives down onto the tarps below, while the grandmothers sit on the ground sorting the olives from the branches and leaves. The other family members take part in picking olives from the lower branches, while the air is filled with laughter and parents' scolding as mischievous children get into olive tossing fights. The olive harvest is not only about sustainable food production but an integral part of the Palestinian cultural identity.

Yet every year the olive harvest is interrupted by both the Israeli Military and Israeli settlers. Every year settlers harass and attack Palestinian families, trying to stop the harvest. When the Israeli Military arrives, it is often there to protect the settlers. Trying to push Palestinians from their land, the settlers jeopardise Palestinians' economic sustainability; in addition they are attacking Palestinian cultural sustainability. As a Canadian living in Bethlehem, I was often invited to join the olive harvest to provide an avenue of international witness to the predictable

Israeli harassment. My presence, along with other international and Israeli activists, was to support the harvest by documenting any violence and doing advocacy on how the Palestinian olive harvest was under attack.

I was reminded of these experiences as Christian Peacemaker Teams was asked to be a presence at the deer harvest of the indigenous Haudenosaunee in Short Hills Provincial Park, in southwestern Ontario, Canada. Through the treaties and their inherent Indigenous rights, the Haudenosaunee have the legal right to harvest deer every year. This practice is deeply cultural as well as important for food sustainability of the community. Yet every year, the Haudenosaunee are met with settlers protesting their right to hunt. Blocking the road into the park, yelling obscenities, holding placards that say 'SHAME' or 'Stop the Killing', taking pictures of the hunters, and even following their supporters home as an intimidation tactic, the settlers attempt to stop the hunt and stop a very important cultural Indigenous practice."

Juba, South Sudan

The South Sudan Council of Churches process described to us is primarily a nonviolent constructive program that includes building mediation, negotiation, and building sustainable systems for establishing and maintaining cease-fires, brokering peace agreements, and monitoring and strengthening humanitarian practices. [Natalia Chan](#) told us that "the South Sudan Heads of Churches recognised the powerful symbolism of their unity, both in enshrining the legacy of the ecumenical peace work from the previous civil wars, and in demonstrating that unity as a nation, across ethnic and political divides, is still possible.

The SSCC's [Action Plan for Peace](#) is ambitious in its nature, using a range of integrated approaches. It consists of four pillars:

Advocacy provides a means to influence opinions and policies towards peacefully resolving conflict, changing the narrative from one of conflict to one of peace. Advocacy aims to influence the policies of governments and institutions, including nationally, regionally and internationally. It is also about getting messages and voices of the South Sudanese population into the dialogue for the peaceful and harmonious co-existence among the people in South Sudan, including ensuring a gendered and inclusive process that recognises the role of women and youth as peacemakers and victims of war. In country, this includes addressing hate speech and the culture of violence to change the narrative and build peaceful and harmonious co-existence among the people of South Sudan.

Neutral Forums provide a safe space for South Sudanese stakeholders to discuss root causes of conflict and envision a peaceful future. These safe spaces will informally support peace processes by building trust between parties-to-the conflict and helping them to find ways to overcome obstacles and disagreements through dialogue. A process of 'personal transformation' will contribute to a more positive environment for Track 1 negotiations, as well as support initiatives at the local level, to assist the South Sudanese people to achieve an indigenous, inclusive and locally-owned resolution

Reconciliation will restore and heal relationships within the nation; only through forgiveness and reconciliation can we live as one nation. Following the model begun by the Committee for

National Healing, Peace and Reconciliation, this process will begin with grassroots conversations leading to reconciliation initiatives at all levels. This approach will be accompanied by orientation and training of committed individuals (inclusive of gender, age, disability, ethnicity, religion) as part of building a culture and network for peace in order to target all levels of society, incorporating existing mechanisms. The Church will spearhead reconciliation and forgiveness amongst the people of South Sudan through transformation of individuals and communities.

SSCC Structures and Capacity: A committed approach to peace also relies on strong organisational capacity and structures to manage large-scale and long-lasting processes with professionalism and accountability. This fourth pillar enables the mapping and enhancing of national capacity, strengths and opportunities within the SSCC, with a concerted focus on building a strong SSCC.

In July 2018, the SSCC responded in a statement titled [Peace Now!](#) to political steps taken by affected countries toward de-escalation of violence and pointed out that there has been insufficient attention paid to building up trust between the people on the ground, which is necessary for any political peace agreement to succeed.

Mexico

Pietro identified three areas of a constructive nonviolence program: a legislative process to put in place a National Victims law, an attempt to build a civil society organisation with national reach, and the flourishing of local victims' organisations. In a book chapter titled [The Movement for Peace with Justice and Dignity: How to Build and Reflect Upon Peace Amid War in Mexico](#), Pietro Ameglio wrote: "In 2012 a new phase of the MPJD was set in motion. One of its objectives—apart from pushing for further progress in the campaign to stop the war and accomplish the presentation of missing persons—was to evolve from mobilisations to become a better organised movement, with national and binational features, articulated with local regional like-minded groups, and with indigenous peoples, where relatives of victims could come together, all voices could be heard, and strategic and organisational decisions could be arrived at horizontally and collectively."

In 2012, MPJD held an important national meeting in Cuernavaca in which they attempted to internationalise the MPJD movement by aligning with the Global Peace Network. There was also a national meeting of victims' relatives. There was a hope for building a national organisation with international support, however divisions within the coalitions prevented this.

Additionally, symbolic cultural and art actions took place. Pietro said, "These actions included a media campaign launched by a group of like-minded actors—artists are part of that moral reserve which is so necessary in the struggle—called "In the shoes of the other", which aimed to promote awareness among the population of the need to become involved with the pain of so many human beings, similar in their social identity, unfairly and brutally violated in their own country, and also to be aware that the same could happen to anybody. At the same time, the construction of a national network of "Weavers for peace" was encouraged, which allowed people to reflect collectively, and "weave" together histories of victims, to make them visible and denounce the government. In this way, a considerable part of Mexican moral reserve was

activated (at least) symbolically, and persisted in confronting the inhumanity imposed upon us, apart from getting organised and shattering social terror."

In January 2013, one of the major objectives of the MPJD was achieved: the General Law of Victims was passed, after many months of nonviolent political acts of pressure; this law, according to specialists on the matter, is one of the most advanced in the world. It considers a system and a National Register of Victims, an Aid Fund, assistance and reparation for victims, and many other positive items. However, the implementation of the law, registry and fund have been negatively compromised by deceptive political decisions.

Pietro said: "Starting with the fragmentation of the leaderships of the relatives of victims in the MPJD, and the growth of the struggle of these relatives, and the war in all the country, we witnessed a very important increase in the number of victims' relatives organisations in all the states of the country, and equally in their experience accumulated during their initial years in search of the better ways of pressuring political power in order to obtain truth, justice, reparation and memory."

e. Transformational aspects of nonviolence in Organised Militarised Violence

As mentioned earlier, [Lederach](#)'s transformation understands social conflict as evolving from, and producing changes in, the personal, relational, structural and cultural dimensions of human experience. In situations of organised militarised violence where there is a high degree of social terror, the focus on nonviolence is often on the first two transformation aspects: Personal: Minimize destructive effects of social conflict and maximize the potential for personal growth at physical, emotional and spiritual levels and Relational: Minimize poorly functioning communication and maximize understanding.

Kasese, Uganda

[Peter Mubunga](#) told us, "Spiritual practices guided our way through Ecumenical prayers and formation of inter-faith communities in the region. Here the church played a neutral role in mitigating violence/conflict and promote dialogue, forgiveness, mercy, and reconciliation among the affected parties.

We've seen a return to general relative peace. There are mediation teams to engage the government in handling the issues of the suspects in jail. There has formed a Prime Ministerial Commission to oversee that the Obusinga bwa Rwenzururu (Rwenzururu Kingdom) Operation is conducted peacefully. The government declared that the OBR as a cultural institution is not in any question with government but rather the government has issue with certain people. There is regulating of the government security operatives' "Spot arrests" of OBR associates. There is ongoing identification and visitation of the victims of violence and, where possible, assistance to the victims of violence. There is continuous ecumenical engagements from the Church-based organisations."

Peter also noted that it has been very difficult to sustain the transformations. [He](#) told us, "There is a lack of economic support that makes it difficult to support the victims. The primary victims (widows, widowers, orphans and the entire families) are not given sustainable Economic Empowerment, to enable them get the basic services like education health, food, clothing etc.

The central Government is engaging different small groups instead of having one team that can speak with one voice and have a lasting solution to the violence. There is a lack of capacity building, in the form of trainings and workshops, for the affected communities. The weak judicial system in Uganda is not expediting the trials for the prisoners/suspects. Due to lack of economic support, we cannot sustain Media sites for mass mobilisation of the entire community. There has not been consistent communication, coordination, and cooperation among the stakeholders, more especially the Central Government, the King OBR, and other Cultural institutions in the region.

What is needed now is physical and Joint identification of the victims and subsequent necessary financial assistance. The release/ trial of the King and the detained royal Guards/ subjects, including the Prime Minister of the OBR. A truth-telling reconciliation team or commission. Expediting the parliamentary report about the palace attack. Correct documentation and statistics of the personnel affected by the violence (like the dead, the arrested, the missing statistics is not available). There is a public outcry in the massive burial of the people with no DNA test taken to be given a dissent burial by the families (not in jail, not dead and not even at home). In conclusion, there is need to have a serious intervention on the side of economic support in order to have sustainable and developed peace, non violence, reconciliation, respect for humanity, stability, security, trauma healing and other related sustainable positive outcomes."

Tel Abbas Temporary Refugee Camp, Lebanon

[Sara Ianovitz](#) told us that the "Following the Christian announcement, God became man and came to live among us. We try to live in the conflict, following the choice to be inside, not far away. To face death, expulsion, refugees' camps it's needed a force which creates relationships, links, among faiths, human relationships. Unfortunately Christian Church in Syria supports the Syrian regime, because the regime has always been supporting minorities (Yazidis, Christians, Zoroastrians, Assirobabiloneses, Duodecimans, etc.) before the conflict.

Church/Faith community hosted refugees without any help by State; parishes, groups, Christian and protestant communities just opened their doors. This kind of sharing gives hope to people, and hope is the first thing, the first need, more than food. These are people who don't have any hope, so to offer hope is the first change."

"There is great personal transformation when we perceive that we have a fundamental role because you're directly and personally involved in making change. On the one hand, you feel a huge responsibility. On the other hand, you understand that it's your involvement which creates a new reality. If you do not do something, nobody will do it. At the same time, you have to leave some space to others. You can't do everything by yourself. Other people need this empty space to take actions. To transform these principles in a process, it depends on the years we spent on the field which give us credibility. It's a daily process. It's life sharing with the victims of violence. We need to replace the word "solidarity" with "sociality": living together is different, it's sharing life."

Central African Republic

[Jean Baptiste Tala](#) wrote in [THE TIES THAT BIND Building Social Cohesion in Divided Communities](#), the training manual he wrote on the 3B/4D process for Catholic Relief Services,

“By the end of 2015, more than 3,000 people in the Central African Republic had participated in CRS’ social cohesion workshops. Of those participants, 35 were selected and trained as trainers. During an assessment, we were struck by these individuals’ resourcefulness and ingenuity. For example, trainers had translated the guide’s accompanying tools into Sango and adapted the exercises to their local environments. In one instance, the trainer had asked villagers to gather sticks and branches to build a fire so that the community could clearly grasp the different stages and dynamics of a conflict – gathering fuel, initiating a spark, conflagration, coals, and dying out. Over the course of two and a half years, I was inspired to observe that the great majority of the people we trained were committed to actively rebuilding social cohesion in the Central African Republic. Such is the case of a former Anti-Balaka chief, who, in the 7th Arrondissement of Bangui, mobilised his militia to protect Muslims. In collaboration with the local imam, he initiated a connector project to rebuild the neighborhood mosque that his fighters had damaged, defaced and looted during the crisis. During critical moments in 2013–15, Catholic, Protestant and Muslim women, relying on the learning they had derived from social cohesion training sessions, jointly organised awareness-raising sessions to instill calm and order in their segregated communities. They did so at considerable risk to their lives. Several social cohesion committees and subcommittees became active in northwestern CAR solely because a few courageous participants put their training to use for the good of their country.”

Bethlehem, Palestine

[Rania Murra](#) told us "Peace and justice are main guiding values. There is not a quick victory foreseen, so steadfastness and commitment in a nonviolent struggle are of the essence. Sumud is a Palestinian value with universal and spiritual meanings.

The Wall is still far from falling, but many people living close to the wall have a greater awareness that creative nonviolent actions have an impact upon visitors and to some extent international opinion. Some Palestinian women set up income-generating projects, such as selling Palestinian food to visitors in the area, or providing home-stays and selling alternative souvenirs. Local NGOs have gained experience in guiding visitors along the Wall and other nearby areas, like a refugee camp. The area around Rachel’s Tomb has the potential to become a second visitor centre in Bethlehem, after of the main church in the center of Bethlehem. The space along the wall has been transformed.

The performances are sustained, both quantitatively (numbers of visitors) and qualitatively (graffiti initiatives and artistic performances such as of the AEI). As a result, there is a sense that the spaces along the Wall have been transformed into an ongoing public ‘workshop/lab’ of artistic expressions and a ‘theatre’ of performances challenging the wall, with a kind of awareness-raising and liberating effect, though limited, upon the people living there, as well as on visitors and international media."

Western and Central Equatoria, South Sudan

[Aseervatham Florington](#) told us “Nonviolent Peaceforce believes that it is far easier to address a conflict before it has broken out than to stop it once it has begun. As a result, a concerted effort is made to identify possible drivers of conflict and prevent them from escalating. This work is greatly facilitated by the fact that the teams of unarmed civilian peacekeepers live within the

communities they serve. As a result, they are extremely sensitive to the specific dynamics at play within a community, and can respond quickly and effectively to counter threats as they arise.

As a result of this belief, NP is committed to working with partners to develop a comprehensive early warning, early response programme. By virtue of NP's unique access to local communities, the peacekeepers on the ground often hear of a potential conflict long before it comes to the attention of other actors. Whilst NP is a strictly non-partisan organisation, it is committed to working with other relevant actors to address conflict in the areas in which it works. As a result it is open to sharing information deemed pertinent with interested parties who may have the capacity to influence or forestall any conflict which may arise.

It is important to recognise that, whilst large areas are underdeveloped and under-serviced, South Sudan is not a lawless state. State structures exist, and, in most places, operate to the best of their ability. State actors can offer valuable insights into the context of a given conflict, and sometimes have the capacity to intervene to prevent the escalation of violence. In recognition of the need to build capacity and encourage sustainable, Sudanese-led solutions to conflict, NP is committed to building and maintaining close working relationships with state representatives and institutions. Far from setting itself up as an alternative to state institutions, NP sees its role as to support existing structures and fill any gaps which may be revealed. As such, it is vitally important to engage local state actors on issues surrounding the prevention of conflict, in order to tap into their contextual knowledge and to build their capacity.

As with the protection component of NP's work, building the capacity of communities to prevent conflict is of paramount importance to the organisation. In order to do this, NP works with local communities, and in particular those hardest-hit by violence, such as women and children, to develop deterrent strategies. These are tailored to the environment and context, and are designed to provide long-term protection to communities and individuals who are under threat. By engaging with NP's peacekeepers, communities can learn to formulate and enact policies which will keep them safe long after NP has pulled out of the region.

NP firmly believes that solutions to conflict must originate from within communities, and that local solutions must be found to local problems if sustainable peace is to be achieved. Commitment to this belief means that NP does not intervene directly in peace talks or negotiations. Instead, through the protection and prevention aspects of its programming, NP works to protect the space in which meaningful and sustained dialogue can take place.

In areas with high levels of inter-community violence, NP works to establish Peace Committees comprised of key actors from opposing communities. With NP's support, communities are empowered to reach across lines of conflict and formulate sustainable, nonviolent methods of addressing disagreements. Whilst this work is extremely effective, it is not a quick-fix solution, and cannot be portrayed as such. In order to affect a lasting paradigm shift, communities must be supported in both the short and long term. NP recognises this, and commits fully to the communities in which it works, so that, by the conclusion of NP's programming, they can own and implement techniques of nonviolent conflict resolution.

NP also supports local civil society organisations and individuals to interact with whatever local

state structures may exist, in order to facilitate the transition from a post-conflict context to one where development can take place. Due to the relative weakness of state presence in remote areas, many people are unaware of the services provided by the state, and how to go about accessing them, where they exist. As part of NP's ongoing peacebuilding work we provide support to civil society organisations that wish to engage with the state to address issues of conflict and development. Interaction of this kind is essential if South Sudan is to move beyond its violent past and is to begin sustainable and widespread development."

Hebron, Palestine

[Cory Lockhart](#) told us "My faith is what compels me to go work there. Spiritual practice (prayer/spiritual reading) helps keep me grounded and holding onto hope before, during, and after stints. Spiritual practice also keeps me cognisant that the occupiers/beneficiaries of the occupation/violent actors are still people created in God's image; we are connected, and if I were born in a different body might be doing those same things myself. It is with this same mindset of humanising the various actors that I talk about/write about/teach about this issue.

The Occupation continues. Over the years I've been working with CPT, many of the checkpoints in Hebron have been made into permanent structures, rather than temporary/moveable. Things appear to have gotten worse, not better. However, long-standing relationships between CPT and Palestinians, Israelis, and internationals have been forged and continue to develop. What has changed, ever so slightly, is people's knowledge in the U.S. (and perhaps globally) about the Occupation and the resulting human rights violations. Slowly, more people are learning about the Occupation and are questioning U.S. (and other countries') support of it. As those voices are stronger, so is the backlash against it, with groups like CUFI (Citizens United for Israel) and anti-BDS (boycott/divestment/sanctions) laws proposed/sometimes passed.

Doing this work has deepened my understanding of and commitment to nonviolence. I am particularly drawn to working with "enemy" images and how to build, whether in our hearts and/or in concrete ways, connections with "enemies"; separating structures/problems from people; working on the violence that is within me- against myself and others; learning the importance of self-care, including spiritual practice and being involved in supportive community, in volatile (and all other) contexts.

So much work is still needed to transform the violence, i.e. to end the occupation and then do the work of re-building. That feels farther away rather than closer. My own transformation continues in small steps. My attention is now on both developing and offering materials for others to do the inner work that supports the outward-focused work of nonviolence. I recently took a 9-day intensive training on nonviolent communication for my own knowledge and to share through my teaching on nonviolence. I strive to offer perspectives on nonviolence from a personal to a global level. My teaching includes both information and development of self-reflection and interpersonal skills with grounding in nonviolence. There is an ebb and flow between my teaching/writing/speaking about nonviolence- to keep myself grounded in it and help others feel (more solidly) grounded- and my involvement in local & national nonviolent actions. I am ever aware of how much more transformation is possible."

Cory has also written a number of reflections on the "inner life of a peacemaker" that can be

found at walkingthewalk.co and at JustFaith Ministries' [Mosaic](#) page. Through JustFaith ministries, she also produced [Cultivating Nonviolence, Harvesting Peace](#), which includes of eight 2 ½-hour sessions. All sessions include prayer, dialogue, active listening, and relationship-building.

Juba, South Sudan

[Natalia Chan](#) told us “Faith has played a critical role as church leaders and those working with the churches have sought deep spiritual guidance at these extremely challenging times. The scale of the problems are so deep and so big – the hatred, division, trauma, nature and scale of the violence can lead one to the darkest depths of despair. Faith is critical to counter this, to give people hope, show that another way is possible, as a foundation for peace and reconciliation. Prayer and deep reflection are what led to this church-led vision for peace. The church leaders have acknowledged themselves that their churches have also been deeply affected at a personal level, and humility and spiritual guidance are at the heart of their response.

In many ways, the change and transformation that the Churches seek to achieve via the Action Plan for Peace is very much a long-term endeavor, beginning with personal and local level transformation and expanding out towards seeking to influence national peace. Through some of the work that has already been achieved, we have witnessed the great potential of this at the local level, through some of the dialogue sessions, the coming together of unity of purpose and voice, the gradual change in narrative as the Church seeks to bring together warring parties.

But we also understand that the complex and very challenging nature of conflict in South Sudan depends on a long-term commitment, and the Church is highly determined in that regard – the Action Plan for Peace is not a usual programme document but instead its intent spans many years or decades.”

Mexico

[Pietro Ameglio](#) told us “We believe that the ecclesial hierarchy as part of the national moral reserve should ‘put its body’ in public actions, in the street, much clearer to demand justice from the authorities and accompany the families of the victims. We have also proposed that parishes could be converted into ‘zones of peace’, where all parishioners would know of the cases of violence there and make networks, support actions at many levels: human, spiritual, economic, psychosocial, legal ... in each parish there are people with many talents who could put at the service of those affected.”

In a book chapter titled [The Movement for Peace with Justice and Dignity: How to Build and Reflect Upon Peace Amid War in Mexico](#), Pietro wrote: Considering the action methods of the MPJD, especially during its first two years, between 2011 and 2013, it certainly organised many mass mobilisations (caravans, marches) and it achieved a direct dialogue with the powers which, however, was mostly simulation and impunity on governmental part, rather than real accomplishments. The mobilised moral reserve (in terms of personalities, key organisational and community social actors, like Zapatismo, for example), the moral leadership of Javier Sicilia and the victims’ relatives with their courageous and direct testimonies against crime-government connivance, the fact of having “the truth” on their side, and the great support from national and international media were important “nonviolent weapons” which, in a certain sense,

compensated for the lack of greater intensity and radicalization—in the approach to “permanent firmness”, for example—in the nonviolent actions implemented in proportion with the level of violence and impunity we were up against. But, in the long run, this was not enough, because it was not possible to proceed to the next phase that the history of nonviolent civil resistance prescribes: non-cooperation and civil disobedience. When there is such a high level of violence, impunity, and state complicity, if other scales of greater moral and material radicalization are not activated, the pressure of mass mobilisations and public dialogue with authorities are not sufficient, because they allow the government margins for simulation, “gatopardism” and the creation of “virtual institutions”, like the Victims Law and Provictima, which do not operate in practice towards the objectives for which they were created. In the words of Dr. Marin: “the logical empiricism of power won the day, making us believe that discourse is reality”.

Political power succeeded in dragging social struggle –and the great challenge to its legitimacy and legal status that the MPJD had introduced in its first phase—towards the terrain it masters best: the institutional and legal field, political negotiation, cooption, “penetration”, threat and fear. It did so under many, very varied and (sometimes) subtle guises, and it managed to “de-process” the level of direct nonviolent and moral confrontation that the MPJD and other similar movements had laid down initially.

Thus, in the field of Mexican nonviolent civil resistance, the range of actions that covers denunciation-dialogue-forum-negotiation-mass mobilisation has proved incapable of pressuring the State to enable progress in the presentation of missing persons, justice for the dead, and changes in the current model of militarised security, war and economic plunder. The fact that an action is massive is not enough to lend it the necessary intensity in pressure that must be applied on authority. Although there have been some more radical actions, they have not been followed-up strategically by enough people, nor have they been accompanied by the Movement as a whole: two hunger strikes of victims’ relatives in front of the Secretaría de Gobernación (roughly equivalent to a department of the interior); the organisation of direct searches of missing persons by their relatives (in Baja California, Guerrero, Morelos, Chihuahua), an initiative which, fortunately, is already an established decision by many relatives’ associations, and which was much debated (unsuccessfully) within the MPJD and which points the way towards an essential autonomy regarding power and, in consequence, the empowerment of victims as direct actors in the search of truth and justice.

One of the major “epistemological obstacles” (core question or value that impacts the design of one’s approach) in nonviolent struggle is to determine in what degree is it possible to gamble on a “change in the adversary” and, in this confrontational relationship with “the other”, which are the “nonviolent values” and the degree of “humanisation of the adversary” which are being sought. This is a much reiterated and complex issue which I can not develop now. But I must mention that the MPJD was a determining factor in the different conceptions of and approaches to nonviolence that were debated, especially from the leadership of Javier Sicilia, who always put his faith in a positive change by the authorities, and pursued as cordial a relationship as was possible, without abandoning a very clear denunciation. I don’t believe it is correct to present someone’s social identity as an “individual whole”, but rather as a great “social weave” –as Norbert Elias would say—in such a way that his/her decisions do not depend on him/her alone, but rather –in greater measure—on the social relationships that “put him/her in that position”.

This matter is also significant in the construction of the social conflict with the adversary, in which several members of the MPJD, including some leaders, didn't have much experience in direct social struggle with power. Particularly, the majority of victims' relatives belonged to middle or poor social classes which "believed in their authorities" and "obeyed them blindly", so that their process of "epistemological (and later moral) fracture" took quite a long time, as it implied denying many determining values in their past human construction. This process of direct social struggle on the part of victims of the war and the MPJD caused a change in the social identity of many Mexicans: transitioning from apathy or indifference to solidarity, and from solidarity to struggle. These changes are very complex, slow and painful; they are not "mechanical" nor easy to accomplish.

On the other hand, strategically, it is also true that the MPJD was unable to establish an articulate relationship with indigenous peoples and with the EZLN (Zapatista National Liberation Army). The indigenous peoples and the EZLN were very generous in their offer to coordinate with the victims in their solidary mobilisations, but there were complications in understanding, and prejudices. We must infer that there were, at the very least, cultural difficulties and differences in experience, both political and in actual struggle, in styles of leadership, that hindered understanding of the dynamics of the indigenous peoples, thus squandering a great opportunity to create a really national movement of organised masses of victims and solidarity of civil society, with clear awareness as social subjects, and the indigenous peoples who, by far, have developed the best and most advanced forms of civil resistance and security. They know best how to enact the model of where to go in defense of territory and security, in the organisation of a solidary and self-sufficient, regionally integrated, autonomous economy, with education and health in the hands of the people.

A very important ethical and moral issue for the MPJD is raised by the direct murders and disappearances of social activists which we have suffered. All of them were absolutely exemplary human beings in Mexican history; they always gave everything they had and they encouraged all and everyone to keep pushing forward in the quest for justice. To this day, there has been no truth, no justice, no reparation and no memory for these cases. Therefore, in Mexico, before talking about peace and memory, we must demand truth and justice."

C. Wider Transformational impact of nonviolence based on all our case studies

The depth of change brought through nonviolent action, and the the place of faith and spirituality in work to challenge violence, are often neglected in traditional measures or analysis, yet are clearly powerful elements of Roundtable 5. They describe practices and change at personal to community to political levels, which bring about lasting, transforming change.

Reviewer **Erica Chenoweth** commented: "The stories about nonviolent action are often untold or subjugated to stories about violence. Second, nonviolent responses must also address different dimensions of structural violence. Third, people use an infinite number of creative and innovative nonviolent methods to pursue justice and change."

1. Alone and with others

For a good number of Roundtable 5 members, engagement in nonviolent change and action has been a life-choice. **Elizabeth Kanini Kimau** puts it this way: "My experience of using

nonviolence to myself and then with communities at was with each other, has motivated me to gain deeper understanding”. Kanini chose to live at grassroot level, among people who had been at war for five years. She said “The language of nonviolence helped me transform myself and empowered me to be able to live and work in hostile environments”. It is also about self-knowledge. **Merwyn DeMello**, writing of his experiences in Afghanistan, said: “I began to see beyond my own rhetoric of categorising people, and the importance of nonviolent communication... I recognised the art and skill of setting aside bias... some of my responses to people were from a bias of self-righteousness rather than a quest for righteous justice.” A feature of the style of working of Nonviolent Peaceforce was described by **Florington Aseervatham** of his work in South Sudan: “Teams of unarmed civilian peacekeepers live within the communities they serve. As a result, they are extremely sensitive to the specific dynamics at play within a community, and can respond quickly and effectively to counter threats as they arise”. Of his experiences in the city war-zones of Mexico **Pietro Ameglio** said: “All of us have changed our lives, our inner and outer reflection, the way we think about nonviolent action in the midst of situations of war as those experienced in Mexico”. Relationships formed with victims of violence both motivate and transform as **Martha Ines Romero** from Colombia relates: “The most important hopefulness comes from those most affected by violence because they resist, and build trust with us, in a humble and persistent way. ... They look ahead with the goal of building a society that is able, with its heal Colombians from the atrocities of the past. ” A reviewer **Mel Duncan** commented: “The real transformation lies in the individual... More of us are transcending the illusion of separation and embodying the unity required for our survival. There are more peacebuilding, mediators, conflict resolvers, trauma healers, unarmed civilian protectors and civil resisters on the planet today than any other time in history. Everything that is needed to build a culture of peace and nonviolence already exists in each of us.”

2. Faith as a guide and motivator to action

Faith is what compels many of our RT members, expressed in words such as seeing all as created in God’s image; re-affirming the precious nature of life and spiritual practices of prayer, fasting, taking time out have nurtured and grounded people in their work. For **Ana Raffai** building the connection between peace and faith was important; “We started slowly, seeking miraculous incentives from our faith... for more than ten years we have deepened our knowledge of the peace potential of faith and also increased our self-criticism with regard to the patriarchal activity of religious institutions.” Of her work with the Sudan Council of Churches, **Natalia Chan** said: “Faith is critical to counter this (despair), to give people hope... prayer and deep reflection are what led to this church-led vision of peace. The church leaders have acknowledged themselves that their churches have also been deeply affected as a personal level, and humility and spiritual guidance are at the heart of their response”. Faith leaders can sometimes take risks because of who they are.

Jamila Raqib commented: “What came through very clearly is that in each of the cases I looked at, the Church and spiritual communities acted as connectors and facilitators in environments where there was a weak civil society because it has been eroded due to conflict, or for other reasons. ... as a global institution with a deep and diverse network, the Church connected local struggles with global movements. ”

3. Empowering communities to act without violence

Many of our RT members emphasised the importance of building relationships of trust that supported communities in creating new relationships and resisting violence with nonviolence. **Martha Ines Romero** from Colombia wrote: “In our project we saw a new style facing leadership in confronting violence - a collective way to nonviolently confront perpetrators and Colombian Government to protect civilians ... The Bishop actually carried a hidden camera on his body that documented the army and paramilitary actions in the area. This was a big example to the people of a bishop willing to sacrifice and risk.”

III. Nonviolence and the Catholic Church

A. Observations on role of the Catholic Church in promoting nonviolence (based on reviewers own research and these frontline stories)

Ms. Erica Chenoweth, political scientist, Josef Korbel School of International Studies, USA

Erica Chenoweth: “One of the most poignant statements in these case studies was Sara Thompson’s observation that “The faithful must get to the frontlines themselves.” It certainly seems plausible – based on both historical cases (e.g. Bishop Romero in El Salvador) and contemporary cases (e.g. Rev. William Barber in North Carolina) – that active participation in grassroots contentious mobilisation by faith-based communities would have a profound effect on the political power of such movements. Communities of faith can provide inspiration, moral imagination, stamina, spiritual nourishment, spaces for collective grieving, celebration, discernment, preparation, training, hiding, and mobilisation, and various other essential capacities” (EC).



Mr. Mel Duncan, co-founder, Nonviolent Peaceforce

Mel Duncan: "Clearly, an encyclical on nonviolence by Pope Francis is required to set the direction for churches and to emphasise the scale of the violence that is engulfing the world. The case studies illustrated instances where the church played a positive role but others where the church was an impediment. Without strong papal leadership, churches will continue to play mixed and confused roles. Clergy will have to take militant, Romero-like stances, not only in conflict-affected countries but also in the seats of the empire following the example of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem.



Local churches are well placed to support localised approaches and provide bases for the ongoing reflections required to adapt strategies. Churches can also provide the venues for training. And they can play an important role in mobilising the resources for trauma treatment" (MD).

Ms. Jamila Raqib, executive director, Albert Einstein Institution

Jamila Raqib: "As a global institution with a deep and diverse network, the Church connected local struggles with global movements. Similar to role of other transnational institutions, like trade unions, etc.

From Philippines/land conflicts case: Church/faith community members are embedded in the local community and bring local connections and knowledge. They are also themselves stakeholders, and therefore motivated from personal interest in a just resolution.

Also, had the benefit of bringing outside knowledge and community-based structure for reflection – voluntarily withdrawing as facilitators if they were parties to the conflict. This struck me as a very thoughtful approach" (JR).



Mr. Maciej Bartkowski, senior director for education and research, International Center for Nonviolent Conflict

Maciej Bartkowski: I support a call for a civil resistance mindset to be integrated into development of civic programs by the local and national Catholic churches and the Vatican ... External actors, including the Catholic Church, must be able to identify a civil resistance movement when it happens. Some yardsticks to use: 1) is it genuinely grassroots? 2) is people's participation voluntary? 3) is it inclusive and representative of the community/society? 4) does it display a strong nonviolent discipline? 5) is it united around



goals and means? 6) does it practice nondiscrimination; non-exploitation; non-repression while resisting injustice? 7) is it able to advance communal solidarity through mutual aid? 8) does it use diverse nonviolent disruptive, constructive and symbolic resistance methods?

Once it is able to look for and identify important attributes of a civil resistance movement, the Catholic Church on the local, national, and transnational levels can develop different strategies to assist people in their struggles. Practically: 1) Offer safe meeting spaces for people to come together, begin organising, exchange ideas, conduct fundraising and come up with strategies for civil resistance actions, 2) assist campaigns and movements to develop strategies to maintain nonviolent discipline, enlarge voluntary participation in campaigns, and enhance movement's capacity for creative nonviolent resistance actions 3) make people aware of the advantages of civil resistance in situations when resignation/passivity, violence, or even methods of conflict resolution alone are unlikely to be effective or in fact can be counterproductive for the safety and long-term well being of a group 4) create an information hub on local activism where knowledge and information can be shared quickly throughout thousands of parishes about successful civic organising in different parts of the country and lessons learnt 5) help bridge sectoral campaigns and create inter-sectoral connections between seemingly different civil resistance campaigns in a country (e.g. between a pro-environment campaign and women rights campaign; between a pro-democracy campaign and an anti-corruption campaign; between a local campaign for autonomy vis-a-vis violent groups and a campaign for a comprehensive peace agreement on a national level) 6) stimulate conversations about how different nonviolent methods: peace-building, conflict resolution and civil resistance strategies could be merged together in different phases of violent conflict (in covert structural violence situations, in overt violent conflict, during the settlement and post-settlement phases of conflict) that will help an aggrieved group organise nonviolently, empower its members through different, including civil resistance, actions and lead to more just and peaceful environment" (MB).

B. Strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities on advancing Catholic nonviolence within the institutional church

Towards the end of our Roundtable 5 process we invited participants to reflect on: 1) What is the Church doing that it needs to continue doing in support of nonviolence? 2) What is the Church not doing to support nonviolence? 3) Where and how can the institutional Church support these nonviolent methods of action? ([Responses captured](#) in full.)

1. Strengths: What the church should continue to do

The research by Maria J. Stephan and Erica Chenoweth indicates that effective nonviolent strategies require certain key elements to be successful: 1) Discipline and self-sacrifice; 2) spiritual groundedness; 3) a common goal and a higher purpose; 4) creativity and strategic thinking; 5) access to all levels of the society; and 6) an ability to negotiate. The Catholic Church excels in all of these key elements.

Elizabeth Kanini Kimau: Individuals within the church have embraced nonviolence. Organising forums where this approach can be shared will be one way of enhancing spreading the seeds of Nonviolence within the church.

Martha Inés Romero: In Colombia, the Catholic Church has supported the Peace Agreement, expressed compassion for victims, and condemned every way of violently solving conflicts. In Latin America, the Church is publicly defending Common Good, due to being on the side of the people, defending the Motherland, following Laudato Si. Building trust with other faith leaders, showing publicly that it is possible respect and walk together in Peace issue.

Peter Mubunga: In Kasele Diocese (Uganda) there are community-based trainings in nonviolent conflict management through the church's existing structures. Two weekly ongoing radio talk shows cover relevant topics in alternative dispute resolution. They need to continue for entire community to understand and utilise other means that are nonviolent in conflict management. The church is engaging different stakeholders, including security agencies, state and federal government, cultural institutions, local governments, other church leaders and NGOs in dialogue, and offering meetings for peacebuilding. The church has taken responsibility to Identify victims and follow-up with them. The church is offering trainings for women and youth groups in peacebuilding methods, civic education in human and civil rights, and mediation between violence-impacted groups.

Pat Cunningham: In Jeju, South Korea, the church is supporting Constructive Nonviolent Methods. The Catholic diocese (Jeju) under the leadership of Bishop Peter Kang U Il and Fr. Mun Jeong-Hyun were able to build St Francis' Peace Center in Gangjeong for the very purpose of providing a facility for inter-faith peace conferences and workshops on nonviolence training.

Merwyn DeMello: In Bangladesh, with the support of organisations like Caritas, Catholic Relief Services, Jesuit Relief Service, Mennonite Central Committee, the church is implementing a peace curriculum that includes conflict transformation, peace education, diversity and community relationships, trauma healing and restorative justice. The emphasis is on integrating

peace into social and economic development work. Also local churches and knowledgeable individuals provide resources to develop and support nonviolent resolution of conflict and foster interreligious dialogue. The bishops' conferences make statements, standing on the side of victims of violence, calling on accountability for violence and urging nonviolent resolution to political conflict.

Rania Murra: In Palestine, the church sometimes preaches and teaches about values and principles of nonviolence and peace in homilies during masses or services. Statements are sometimes issued on nonviolence when conflicts arise or when military or terrorist actions happen. Sometimes, a few religious leaders support, encourage, and participate in conferences calling upon leaders to follow the path of nonviolence. Some local church leaders together with some lay people formulated a moment of truth in the [Kairos Document-Palestine](#), based on the three values of our gospel: faith, hope and love.

Jean Baptiste Talla: In work in Cameroon and the Democratic Republic of Congo, I see the necessity for embedding Church nonviolence action in the Gospel and the social doctrine of the Church. Our faith should always be the foundation of our commitment and we should be proud to affirm this especially in today's world characterised by a growing tendency to challenge Catholic values and principles. The Church is building bridges with other religions in promoting nonviolence, justice, peace and reconciliation. The church is acknowledging wrongdoing and continuing to call for forgiveness and nonviolence, even when the Church itself is profoundly hurt.

Gill Burrows: In Australia, the Australian Bishops Conference issues an annual Social Justice statement. The 2010 statement was on violence in Australia. The [Australian Catholic Social Justice Commission](#) (ACSJC) was set up by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference in 1987 as the national justice and peace agency of the Catholic Church in Australia. Its website is a good resource for education—for example, the peacebuilding tab has a study guide to Pope Francis 2017 World Day of Peace statement. ACSJC offers occasional issues papers (a recent one was on West Papua), but ACSJC is limited in funding and resources. Religious orders are more focused on nonviolence e.g. Columbians run Creating a Culture of Peace and nonviolence evenings in local council areas (secular), than institutional church. Pax Christi Australia networking with Asia Pacific contacts around the Catholic Nonviolence Initiative—recognising it's all about relationships. The church has showed support for humane refugee policies against the government's incarceration policy. The Sydney Archdiocese is cooperating with other groups towards legislation against human trafficking.

Erica Chenoweth: The church regularly teaches about and calls for peace. The church increasingly denounces many social ills, which could be considered structural violence. The church supports peace and reconciliation processes around the world.

Natalia Chan: The church in South Sudan provides strong support for ecumenical collaboration around a unity of purpose towards peace in South Sudan; an empathetic approach to advocacy and awareness-raising; speaks strongly and regularly in a way that is led by what the churches on the ground feel is important; offers spiritual guidance for ecumenical church leaders through extreme difficulty.

Valerie Flessati: Internationally, the Church publishes World Day of Peace and other documents which focus on nonviolence. Nationally in the UK, the church responded to terrorist attacks with a message that retaliation and revenge are unacceptable, and to pray for both victims and perpetrators.

Sara Ianovitz: The Church is supporting reconciliation processes and trauma-healing practice around the world and building bridges among different religions on the basis of common ground values.

Sarah Thompson: The Church regularly teaches about and calls for peace, especially in gun control. *Laudato Si* is a major help because it grounds a peace witness in care for creation. The church supports a number of peace and reconciliation processes around the world. Keep tweeting, Pope Francis! It's great!

2. Weaknesses: What the church has failed to do or should stop doing

What is missing from Catholic church leaders, teaching, and culture regarding nonviolence:

*Church leaders have failed to speak or witness to the centrality of the teaching and actions of Jesus, the Gospel on the Mount, Jesus as a nonviolent leader (**GB, RM**).

*The Church is all too often distinguished by its silence. "When it is visible, its public statements or actions are often not very balanced. When it does speak out about injustice or threats to society, the closeness of Church leaders to those with political and economic power seem to make its pronouncements seem soft and inconsequential". (**PA**)

*Church leaders have failed to effectively address the sexual violence by clergy. Sexual abuse is often an extreme form of violence that is a spiritual, psychological, or physical force exerted "for the purpose of threatening, injuring, damaging, abusing" or patterns of behavior intended to establish and maintain coercive domination over an individual, intimate partners, family, household members, colleagues, or congregants. Violence and abuse are used to establish and maintain power and control over another person or group, and often reflect an imbalance of power between the victim and the abuser. Maintaining control and power is one of the hallmarks of clericalism. The Vatican can ask all national bishops conferences to initiate a Truth, Justice, and Healing national commission, based on the Australia model. The Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors can use programs and practices of nonviolence to work with trauma survivor, perpetrators, and to root out internal corruption. The church should do more to "dismantle violence within its own institutional structures (particularly clericalism, gender violence from patriarchy, and sexual abuse). Within nonviolence and Catholic Social Teaching there lies the foundation for dismantling systems of power and for promoting accountability among church leaders and other decision makers". (**MdM**)

*Church structures often lack an intentional commitment to nonviolent processes internally, especially with employment. Conflict transformation processes should be normalised within church all institutions/organisations.

*Church leaders, teaching, and culture has failed to articulate clearly what nonviolence is, what it looks like, how it is being demonstrated within faith communities. The plea for peace without the tools of nonviolence is hollow. The church often calls for peace but not necessarily nonviolence. **(EC)** There is no formation for priests or deacons on Catholic nonviolence. If these young and potential leaders of the church value the power of nonviolence at this age they will in turn form their Christians, especially the young, on how to use nonviolence as means of resolving their differences. **NC,GB, EC, KK)**

*Church leaders, teaching and culture often appear ambiguous about violence e.g. state's abuse of institutional force; failure to denounce human rights abuse; failing to see violence within its own structures. Violence should always be defined as a failure and tragedy, accompanied by clear next steps for nonviolent action or a transparent recognition that they need help to discern next steps. **(MIR, MdM, RM)** "The Church sometimes is ambiguous in its public position about state's abuse of institutional force against citizens in opposition to extractives or denouncing human rights violations, showing sometimes complicity with armed forces violence." **(MIR)**

*Church leaders, teaching, and culture treat violence, poverty, exclusion, discrimination, climate change, and corruption as distinct, separate challenges, while people experience these challenges as all one expression of structural violence. **(EC)**

*Church leaders and teaching have failed to effectively mitigate the impact of teachings that legitimised a genocide committed against Indigenous peoples and to show its good faith by revoking three Papal Bulls of Discovery: Dum Diversas (1452), Romanus Pontifex (1455) and Inter Caetera (1493), which are still in force today. Violence related to militarised commerce often takes place within traditional indigenous communities, involving historical land issues and dealing with issues critical to the climate crisis. For Catholics, indigenous or not, work with indigenous communities would be greatly strengthened if these teachings were revoked (see [Dismantling the Doctrine of Discovery](#), January 2018). "Work on reparations, in terms of the amount of church land that was taken from native people. Some nuns are already doing this, in creative ways. Feature their work! This will be leading by example in terms of showing how arable land is the basis upon which we will be able to create communities of peace". **(ST)**

*Church leaders fail to talk with and join Catholics and others involved in frontline nonviolence/campaigns. In many places, church leaders are not sufficiently connected with masses at grassroots who suffer the most during violence or who go to war. **(VF, KK)**

*The Church fails to use its voice and influence to bring pressure on governments and law enforcement bodies when human rights are abused and to shape new responses to conflict and violence - such as supporting unarmed civilian peacekeeping programs and training UCP teams. Similarly, it fails to have a clear voice in speaking out about militarism or challenging spending priorities - especially huge budgets on military models of security. **(VF, PB, SI)**

*By its decision to not ordain women and gender non-conforming people, the Church decreases its capacity for understanding human dignity, expanding believer's image of God, and acknowledging spiritual leaders of all shapes, sizes and genders. **(ST)** There needs to be greater inclusivity in church structures, especially toward equity for women and minorities. **(GB)** By

failing to ordain women in sacramental roles and/or have women as key public spokespersons and in positions of power, the Church undermines its ability to truly model the peace of Christ and fails to perceive the alternate power models that women bring to situations of injustice created by systemic domination.

*Church teaching continues to centralise “just war” thinking, theology, principles, ethics, and practices. This language is outmoded and in some cases dangerous.

3. Opportunities: Key areas for promoting and witnessing Catholic nonviolence deep and wide

The size and scale of the Catholic Church is a factor in this effort to promote nonviolent practice. The Catholic Church is like a Christian aircraft carrier, the largest sea-going vessel in the world. It may take a lot to turn it, but once you do – watch out! For example, the Catholic Church is the largest nonprofit corporation in the world; it has 1.3 billion members; Catholics make up 18 percent of the world population; the church runs nearly 100,000 elementary schools, and 50,000 secondary schools; it runs 5,000 hospitals and 10,000 orphanages; the Vatican has a diplomatic presence in nearly every country in the world, as well as in major multilateral institutions such as the United Nations and the World Bank; the Catholic Church has its own private bank (which now thanks to recent popes is audited by independent European agencies for financial transparency); and it has an organised cohesive structure that allows information to flow independently from the margins to the center and back out again without passing through government censors or captive media agencies. So the good news about nonviolence is: 1) it is proven effective in reducing violence and advancing a sustaining peace; 2) it can be effectively implemented at the scale of social movements or at the level of the individual; 3) its trainable with most populations, especially populations predisposed to the key elements identified for success.

a. Areas of opportunity:

Model acknowledgement of harm caused, support for victims of violence, and restitution

The Church must provide more direct support to victims. That’s a very important thing because when you are in the middle of so much violence the Church should be a kind of “peace umbrella” for victims, offering security and protection, encouraging empowerment, and championing justice and human dignity (**PA**). Church can also use existing structures to easily identify victims of conflict—both primary, secondary and tertiary victims (**PM**). In the US, (and elsewhere), the church could openly support and endorse the newly-revived Sanctuary Movement (**EC**). Be willing to apologise and make restitution for the harm church institutions have done in perpetrating or colluding with violence (**MdM**). Apologise and make restitution for the harm church institutions have done in perpetrating or colluding with violence, address abuse at all levels (**ST**). The international church, Vatican and World Council of Churches, should translate wonderful statements, messages and calls to nonviolence into a practice and life **inside** the church, acknowledge misbehaviour, misconduct, corruption, sexual harassment, abuse of children by some bishops and priests, to give a good model. (**RM**).

Use Church structures, status, and institutions to forward nonviolent processes

The Church, as many other institutions, universities, intellectuals, artists, etc., has a very important place in “social power”. They are part of what we call the “moral reserve” of a society, and they, in our Mexican case, don’t use that “moral force”, that moral reserve in open nonviolent public actions, in the streets, in the sense of what we call: non-cooperation and civil disobedience. **(PA)** Publicly and actively advocating for nonviolent policies in the sphere of influence, sociopolitical spheres, for example in the UN, European Unión, OAS and other national, regional, continental and global levers. **(MIR, JBT)** Church offer their infrastructure and resources to existing nonviolent campaigns for social equity (examples are Sanctuary initiatives) **(ST, PA)** The Church could be more pro-active in capitalising and documenting nonviolent actions and opening space for nonviolence practitioners and institute ‘intervention groups’ founded by people with experience in contexts of violence, to intervene in armed conflict, support local Churches to engage in nonviolent action **(JBT, SI)** Publicise the use of nonviolence through practical specific country-wide examples at churches and educational institutions. **(Mdm)**

Bring physical presence and sacramental witness to nonviolent action

There is a lack of penetration in actions of non-cooperation and civil disobedience of church and in some ways of leadership ... that there must be a kind of proportionality between violent actions and nonviolent actions. The greater the violence, the more powerful the nonviolent response that is required. In consultation with a larger civil society strategy, discern when noncooperation and civil disobedience is called for, then lead by example.

In such a situations, it is not enough to do only cultural and symbolic actions, in press declarations, documents, some public round-tables, marches...Instead, we must say clearly to power: “Stop the violence”. What we call here in some way and develop about nonviolence is the idea of an: “obligatory disobedience to every inhuman order”, Bishops and priests themselves should participate in events, training and actions e.g. Ash Wednesday on the streets of London, showing support for small groups working on nonviolence, witness in Mexico, Colombia **(PA, VF)** Insist on the horizontal dimension of the Church so that all member of the unique family of God could equally recognise their role in engaging in nonviolence and promoting other key Gospel and catholic social teaching values and principles. Church action is not action taken only by Church leaders as bishops, but also by other church members at various level of our different society. **(JBT)** Offer public support and encouragement to groups and networks promoting active nonviolence e.g. [Love makes the way](#), [Operation Colomba](#), Sanctuary movement, Serpaj Mexico **(GB,SI,PA,ST)**

Choose always to revitalise cultural and interfaith expressions of nonviolence

Initiate a global conversation on nonviolence within the Church, with people of other faiths, and with the larger world to respond to the monumental crises of our time with the vision and strategies of nonviolence and Just Peace, specifically host through the Vatican a global network of unarmed civilian protection programs. Actively dismantle the use of violent language in all of its statements, teaching **(Mdm, ST)**. Join hands with non-Christian groups, engage further in strengthening collaboration study, research and work in ecumenical and interfaith approaches to nonviolence; Seek collaboration with others who subscribe to/support a spirituality of nonviolence **(RM, NC, Mdm, GB)** Revitalise Lay Christian Movement for nonviolence and encourage integrating nonviolence theology and approaches in other church movements and organisations. **(JBT)**

Education, Formation, Doctrine

Produce a major teaching document or encyclical on Catholic nonviolence and Just Peace possibly to work in conjunction with the United Nations' movement toward reclaiming unarmed civilian peacekeeping. The Church needs to embed a nonviolence narrative into teaching/curricula in seminaries, convents, educational institutions curricula and promoting a more social commitment for a culture of Nonviolence (**MIR, MdM, EC, VF, GB**) Be intentional about 'learning with' others rather than 'teaching others'. Nobody is perfectly nonviolent, experiential learning is important, so must collaborate with others. (**GB**) Promote just peace theology and ethical discernment and practices with an aim to maximize sustainable peace (move away from allowing "just war theory" to be associated with contemporary Catholic social teaching; continue advocating for the abolition of war and nuclear weapons. "The church could announce a revision or retraction of Just War Doctrine. The church could further prioritise nonviolence in all of its teachings and communications. The church could invest in a concerted campaign to inform and educate about structural violence and positive peace. The church could develop a fund dedicated to cutting-edge research and study on the theory and practice of active nonviolence. This could include non-residential fellowships for scholars and practitioners studying this topic around the world, as well as annual meetings and conferences among them." (**EC**)

Offer resources to nonviolence

The Church could develop a fund dedicated to cutting-edge research and study on the theory and practice of active nonviolence. This could include non-residential fellowships for scholars and practitioners studying this topic around the world, as well as annual meetings and conferences among them. (**EC**) Establish a Vatican research and training institute to prepare people for conflict prevention and intervention etc. (**VF**)

b. 10 specific opportunities:

1. Identify and scale up existing Catholic-affiliated unarmed civilian peacekeeping programs and give them special recognition and support. Answer the question: Where's the Catholic peace army?
2. Revitalise or institute a lay order dedicated to nonviolence that takes the vows of nonviolence. Consider integrating this with a more robust encouragement to conscientious objection to military service for Catholics. Consider a lay youth movement that takes a vow of nonviolence.
3. Institute a Nonviolence and Just Peace commission under the auspices of the Dicastery for Integral Human Development to scale up the work of nonviolence practitioners, researchers, theologians, non-governmental agencies, and grassroots leaders.
4. Institute an Archdiocese for Nonviolent Peacekeepers to provide the Catholic Church's full range of pastoral ministries and spiritual services to those representing the Catholic Church on the frontlines of violent conflict.
5. Advocate for funding, research, models and legislation for nonviolent civilian-based defense in national and international settings.
6. Significantly scale up nonviolent programs, strategies, and practices throughout the Church (e.g., nonviolent resistance, restorative justice, trauma healing, unarmed civilian protection, conflict transformation, and peacebuilding strategies).
7. Request that intercessory prayers always include victim and perpetrator and those in unarmed civilian accompaniment as well as in the armed services. Lift up nonviolent peacemakers as

heroes and saints of the church. Consider how Article V of the Catechism of the Catholic Church could re-center nonviolence and just peace as the normative frame for all Catholics.

8. Establish a nonviolence news service that reports on nonviolence, teaches about nonviolence, and develops radio spots on related topics. Establish a robust social media presence with this news service. (Additionally, encourage the establishment of a Union of Catholic African News to act as an independent Catholic news source in Africa.)

9. Review church-related investments at all levels to screen out revenue from military-related products and services or weapons manufacturing. Support positive shareholder action to address the underlying problems that lead to armed conflict and target investments to address conflict triggers and build positive peace.

10. Invite bishops conferences to fund and establish a national Catholic nonviolence and just peace commission (or adapt an existing social justice commission to centralise nonviolence and just peace)

C. Questions for further discernment and resources

1. Key questions:

*How do Catholics identify and transform the structural violence within the Catholic Church?

*What does nonviolence offer to counter or dismantle the culture of abuse within the Catholic Church?

*What is the citizens alternative to obedience with unjust authority? Military alternative? Gov't worker alternative?

*How do Catholics discern a "responsibility to non-comply" as well as a "responsibility to protect"?

*What is the strategic "breaking point" when unarmed civilian-based defense groups (as seen in Mexico, Colombia, Standing Rock/USA, etc) decide to arm themselves? How can this be maneuvered?

*Where does spiritual transformation fit in with conflict transformation as a nonviolent process? Spiritual transformation of individuals and communities, creation community?

*Where does "evangelisation" fit in spiritual transformation for those involved in a process of conflict transformation?

*One of the major "epistemic obstacles" in nonviolent struggle is to determine in what degree is it possible to gamble on a "change in the adversary" and, in this confrontational relationship with "the other", which are the "nonviolent values" and the degree of "humanisation of the adversary" which are being sought?

*How can reflective and evaluative processes be better incorporated into Catholic nonviolence and just peace programs and practices?

2. Tools, resources, and strategic partners:

During our process we gathered [titles/weblinks](#) to share with others categorised in the following way:

- Tools for community and group work/preparation
- Tools for unarmed intervention/accompaniment
- Resources on models and value of nonviolence/civil resistance
- Resources on training and education models and programmes
- Resources on sustenance and personal-community support
- Strategic partners/networks

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