Nonviolence and Just Peace Conference

Session 1: Experiences of Nonviolence - panel discussion

Mairead Maguire: We're faced today with so much violence and often the response from governments is even more violence and war. And I was very moved by the bishop's approach to speaking to the rebels and dialogue, thoughtful and [inaudible] l dialogue. Which was our experience in Norther Ireland, we [inaudible] talked to those who had different ideas from us [inaudible]. I would like to ask you Bishop, do develop a little bit with regards to this idea of speaking to the rebels and challenging the idea that somehow the solution of violence on the ground is solved with militarism, drone warfare, etc. If you could just develop a little bit on the practicality of speaking to the rebels in your community as a model for other areas.

Bishop Taban: Well, talking to the rebels about nonviolence. As, it's a question of having trust. You cannot speak to somebody to whom you don't have trust. And when the group under David Yau Yau, because most of the youth who joined this rebel were interacting with me in the Peace Village, in the village where after some of them joined us. And many people actually from the grass roots don't like war. And they ask the rebel leader that you call Bishop Taban to negotiate you and the government, and when I went to the president, because the president also I knew much earlier, he had trust in me and in two other bishops. Then, through this trust we went to the grass roots, not talking to the rebel leaders, but talking to the people from the grass roots, to the chiefs, to the women, to the children who are suffering. The president, he didn't come from the rebels, not from the government, but from the people, from the grassroots. So it is based on trust. And if people don't have trust in you, it's very difficult to approach them. I think that's all these rebel groups, because there have been some trust. And where there is no trust it is very difficult. And also is somebody they know that has nothing to benefit from them, because I have no benefit, I have nothing having any money from the government or from the rebels or from anybody. I sacrificed my life. And so, it is the trust that made it able to reconcile. Even now, if this negotiation is done politically and between the politician and excluding the people from the grass root. But if somebody goes from the grass roots, then it's easy. And also you cannot reconcile people without cease-fire. First, work on cease fire. No violence, then no cease-fire, then no reconciliation. So that is the same thing now happening with [inaudible]. They're speaking of government, but they never insist on cease fire. Disarmament of the people whom you want to rule a government. You leave them with the guns in their hands and you are negotiating for a government. So the best is a cease-fire. And a cease-fire and then you have the life of the people on the ground secured before you speak of a government. So that what I can say on myself. Even now, after having committed a lot of crime, those leaders are afraid because they are afraid. How can they rule the people when they have lost a lot of their children. So, they need also protection. Everybody is looking these arms are protecting themselves because of fear, they are afraid. So the best thing to take this fear out of them. As I said, the only area in South Sudan you can drive 300 km without a gun, no soldiers, is the Peace Village. And there even six of us from Europe came and spent one night, no security,

no army, no police. The people on the ground is the police. So that is where there is nonviolence.

Pat Gaffney: Thank you. Katarina, or...

Pietro Ameglio: We have the experience in South Mexico, in Chiapas, of cease-fire and it's a very hard job of peace to keep a cease-fire, it's an art, nonviolence. Because the parts provoke continuously the violence spiral. So, for us, for example, in the southwest of the country, the first name of peace has been cease-fire, and to keep it, it's 20 years and it's a very hard thing to do because there is continuously the push to violence, to vengeance, to different provocations. But I wanted to ask you because you said the word militarism. Militarization of society and it's a very hard situation, believe me, in many of our countries and in Mexico, and it's a deep culture of violence because people normalize, think that it's the only way of keeping – because we have a big cultural mistake to over-put the word "security" over peace. People think that peace is security, but security is a military concept, it's not a peaceful concept. It comes from the army. And everybody wants security but they don't think of peace in the sense of justice. So, it's very difficult because it's not only a [inaudible] of speaking, it's a reality every day in the streets, the grass roots. So can you, how can you make understand people that militarization, even if it seems to be more secure really is the provocation of war, continuous war. I don't know how you challenge that, I don't know if in Croatia also there is a militarization increasing situation, a public security, in Mexico it's very hard. You spoke about that.

Mairead Maguire: I think because we live in cultures of violence, and we're not born violent, we're born peaceful. But, to have a culture of violence requires that the institutions continue with the myth that the only way to solve problems is through military and war. Now for us to literally have a new consciousness, for us to have a new awareness in our mind that we are, that violence is wrong, that we can live in peace, that peace works, that peace is possible, indeed peace is the only way for the human family to live and to survive. So, we're talking about changing, which is a huge transformation, it's a quantum leap from a way of militarism to a way of non-killing, nonviolence and solving our problems without killing each other in the process. So if we've got to leap to a new consciousness. We need to involve everyone from all the sciences, all the religions, right across the world. And we need to declare very clearly our vision of stopping militarism and war and building institutions and structures that reflect the diversity of the human family. And that share resources and live [inaudible]. That's not impossible [inaudible]. But it has, in a sense, to be articulated at many levels. I think that churches have a tremendous opportunity at this point in history, to turn around our history and to declare our vision of demilitarized, peaceful world. Which is what we long for, [inaudible]. And if churches give that kind of visionary, prophetic leadership, the people are ready for it. All over the world, people are ready for it. We've had enough of war, of killing each other, destroying. People are ready for the vision, and if we can articulate that from the heart of Rome, through the church, an encyclical on nonviolence and peace, and our program will start working on that. It's going to be a long, long work, transforming a cultural mindset. But we can

do it. And I think at the heart of Rome that [inaudible] clear message comes [inaudible]. We're turning history. This is historic, we're turning history. And it's doable.

Katarina Kruhonja: I don't have an answer to your question, but I would say how I see the question, the struggle in Croatia also in the so-called peace time. So, I would say that this question of security, so if even there [is] this kind of logic that there are no security and no peace for us until "they" are with us, they are our "threats." Always. So, we should eliminate them, or we should dominate our rights and our right for security and peace, or we should dominate them or integrate them. So we have the same kind of question which is, I think, the key question for which kind of security we are going to build in the future. Is that militarization, oppression, domination, exclusion of others? Or it is accepting others on the same level as us, you know. Different but a part of our lives. And that is what I think we should struggle with in the future, and, yeah, something.

Pat Gaffney: We're now going to open up our circle a little. Katarina could I ask you to take those things? So we that have our two spaces that can be filled. Initially we're going to invite people from the first row, and I'm going to invite, first of all, Maria Stephan to come and take the empty seat here. And I see we already have someone ready here, obviously he's been waiting. I'm going to invite Maria, first, to be the first in the open part of the forum. Thank you.

It would be helpful if new contributors simply say their name and where they are from, that would help us. Thank you.

Maria Stephan: Thank you very much. It's really an honor for me with this group of nonviolent activists, peacebuilders, and theologians. My name is Maria Stephan, and I'm with the United States Institute of Peace. Actually formally with the United States State Department. But I think the contribution that I can hopefully make to the conversation today – building on the amazing and prophetic voices that we heard this morning about the need for a new paradigm, a just peace paradigm, which I think is incredibly important and necessary at this time – is that not only are there alternatives to violence and to war, but there are in fact very effective alternatives to violence and war.

So, a few years ago I partnered with a political scientist. I'm a political scientist as well. Her name was Erica Chenowith. And she and I were often asked the question about the effectiveness of nonviolent action and nonviolent resistance against the most formidable, brutal, tyrannical opponents. And people would say, "Yeah, nonviolence can work in this situation or can work against a benign or friendly opponent or in a democracy, but against authoritarian regimes, against dictatorship, against foreign military occupation, does it really have a chance? Can it really be effective?" And no one had ever tested that before. No one had every tested, empirically with data, which was more effective: violent or nonviolent resistance. And by nonviolent resistance I'm talking about of course a method of struggle involving tactics that we're all familiar with in this room: boycotts, strikes, civil disobedience, vigils, marches,

satire, humor, graffiti, the list goes on and on. The tactics, the possibilities are endless, in the field of nonviolent resistance.

So Erica Chenowith and I conducted a study of 323 violent and nonviolent campaigns from 1900 to 2006, and we asked that question, "Which has been more effective?" These were campaigns against authoritarian regimes and against foreign military occupations. And the findings of the research, which culminated in a book called *Why Civil Resistance Works*, was that the nonviolent movements were twice as effective, historically, as the violent ones. Twice as effective. So, they succeeded 57 percent of the time, compared to 26 percent of the time for the violent movements. Not only that, we discovered that how people decide to wage their struggle, violently or nonviolently, affects the types of societies that follow. So, we found that there was a very strong link between nonviolent movements and democracy, and between nonviolent movements and civil peace. So transitions that were driven by nonviolent, bottom-up grass-roots movements were much less likely to fall back into civil war compared to transitions that were driven through violence. So my only main contribution, I think, to this conversation is that as we think about the content of a new paradigm or a new encyclical on just peace that we can actually say as a community that not only is nonviolence morally, ethically, theologically superior, but it's actually more effective than violence.

Thank you.

Fr. James Oyet Latansio: Thank you. I am Fr. James, Fr. James Oyet Latansio. I come from the Republic of South Sudan. I serve the Lord in the South Sudan Council of Churches. I am a Catholic priest, from the Catholic Diocese of Yei. My situation, the issue of nonviolence and just peace. I need to point the finger to me. When I am born in war, I grew in war, I went to school in war, I was ordained a priest during war, when the bishop was hesitant, when he was imposing the hand on me because there were artillery bombs flying over the cathedral. So, my life has been always violent. I lived in a violent situation. I live by violence. I think violence. I look at things violently. If you ask me to draw something here, I will draw violent image. This applies to me and most of my South Sudanese brothers and sisters. [inaudible] Before I came here a small girl about nine years asked me, "Father, where is your Jesus? Where is your Jesus? We are born in a violent situation, why are we not getting peace? You preach at the pulpit about peace, [inaudible] the peace of Jesus, I say, where is it?" For me, in my situation, in my trauma situation, I had to have an answer because I'm also in in a crisis. I had to have an answer.

In the South Sudan Council of Churches, which is an ecumenical body formed of all churches, Catholics, Protestants and all types of churches. And within us also we've got friends who confess in Allah through his Prophet Mohammed, we're all there. We are trying to come out of this cycle of violence. I believe my faith has helped me, my brothers in Pax have helped me to understand what is it, what is peace. How to live peace. And if [inaudible] scriptural teaching, my formators have helped me to understand how to live in peace, how to talk peace, how to breathe peace. But it comes now to the facts on the ground. If I trod on your feet, if I crush your

feet, you'll feel the pain, of course, Kathy is feeling the pain, she needs to stop. That [inaudible] pressing my feet. Or as the pope in his [inaudible] has said, hold the hand of the ISIS. How to hold the hand of the ISIS, like this, I have to use a force. [Inaudible] is used to violent, it's already violent, [inaudible][inaudible], and you too, box her or him.

We are trying to construct this mindset in South Sudan. It's a challenge because the mindset is always violence and revenge. He went through it, he's now going to be 80 years. He went through it, this guy. I'm talking about the bishop. He went through it. They urinated on him, you know? He's hiding some things because it's [inaudible]. They made [inaudible]. President and Defense Minister in Juba. Box him, he boxed him, the bishop, he was boxed by the Defense Minister. But being a man of, who has lived in this situation, so he is teaching us, we who are young, that at times, you need to learn from me.

So, learning from him, and I'm trying [inaudible] to rebuild the house called South Sudan, this house called South Sudan. In South Sudan we were renting in the North, in Sudan, some of us were renting in Uganda, some of us were renting in the United States, in Canada, in Australia, all over the world, even in Europe. [Inaudible]. But when we completed building our house in 2011 we stayed in our house only for two years, about. In this house called South Sudan, there are about 64 tribes in it. We have all types of religions in it, Christian, Muslims, animists, everybody, so we are trying to build. And we have injured, we have injured. Our base is our faith, of this house called South Sudan, it's our faith, whether we are Muslim or animist, we have faith basis to be in this house of South Sudan. The walls of this house called South Sudan are cracked because I have killed, I have wrecked, I have used my tongue violently, saying, "You are mad!" I have offended you with my tongue violently, so we have to repair these injuries. And then we come to ask forgiveness, we come to ask forgiveness and so on. But what matters, we construct this house, this house called South Sudan is challenging. with support, with a journey of faith we can change it, we can change this violent situation in South Sudan to a peaceful and just situation. It's a challenge, but it's worth following it. This my brothers and sisters who are activists, they are teaching us how to get out.

Thank you.

Pat Gaffney: We need someone to create a space, so if one of you who feels you'd like to create a space for someone else to join in the circle. Please come and join us, yes.

Bishop Taiji Katsuya: I'm Bishop Katsuya. I'm a bishop from Sapporo Diocese, Japan. And also I am Catholic Council for Justice and Peace, the head of it.

Sr. Filo Hirota, translating: My name is Bishop Katsuya.

Bishop Taiji Katsuya: I said it in in English. [Laughter] Well, now, I'll speak in Japanese. [Continues in Japanese 25:45-26:11]

Sr. Filo Hirota, translating: Listening to your stories I'm very much impressed and it really pains my heart and my existence. In Japan our situation is no different. We have waged a terrible war, but now that it's been a very long time and we are sort of forgetting our past.

Bishop Taiji Katsuya: [Japanese26:33–26:48]

Sr. Filo Hirota, translating: But we have our constitution, which is a peace constitution and Article 9 is "Constitutional Nonviolence." Our constitution says that our way of being as a country or nation state is not to have a military set up at all. This is what our constitution says.

Bishop Taiji Katsuya: [Japanese 27:09-27:17]

Sr. Filo Hirota, translating: But our government is trying to change it, to revise this constitution because they say it's not [inaudible] at all.

Bishop Taiji Katsuya: [Japanese 27:33-28:06]

Sr. Filo Hirota, translating: I'll try to be brief, but our Constitution says that Japan has self-defense, the right to self-defense and although we're not supposed to have any military set-up we have this what we call "Self-Defense Troop" which is really a military set up. But there's a big change now, that now the government changed the interpretation of these laws and now the government says that Japan has the collective right of self-defense which means that if our allies, especially the United States, is attacked, the government is ready to send troops abroad.

Bishop Taiji Katsuya: [Japanese 28:50-29:09]

Sr. Filo Hirota, translating: And many scholars and the judges also and the people, and also especially the scholars of the Constitution have been saying this is totally anti-Constitutional but they are preparing the coming election in July and if they get the majority, then the time will come that this Constitution will definitely be changed.

Bishop Taiji Katsuya: [Japanese 29:35-29:45]

Sr. Filo Hirota, translating: Our bishops' conference came up with a very, very clear statement about this change, but what is happening is that our Catholic population is not very, they don't have any sense of crisis at this moment.

Bishop Taiji Katsuya: [Japanese 30:04-30:42]

Sr. Filo Hirota, translating: So this is an appeal from the bishop, that we can't expect anything from our government, but we could [inaudible] from the people. And if this conference could come up with something about Article 9 as Constitution of nonviolence and it should be really promoted, then many Japanese people would, especially the Catholic church, it's a tiny church, would get a very meaningful encouragement.

Bishop Taiji Katsuya: [Japanese 31:15-31:18]

Sr. Filo Hirota, translating: So I expect your support, thank you very much.

Pat Gaffney: If you see a space and you want to come into the circle, please come and fill the space.

Fr. Ashok Stephen: I'll stand and speak because otherwise I might fall asleep. I'm Fr. Ashok Stephen, I'm from Sri Lanka. I'm a priest for the congregation of Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. Well, I still didn't place my symbol and I'm a bit reluctant also because it is not a symbol of nonviolence, it is a symbol of violence that I have still with me in my room. That's a red hot bullet of an AK-47 gun that had fallen right under my feel during the war time. So maybe I will take some time and put it there. I have the institution called Center for Society and Religion, it was started by the late Fr. Tissa Balasuriya. So among the many works that we do, we are much engaged in peace and reconciliation in the country. Because you know Sri Lanka had been in war for the last 30 years, and the war ended in 2009 but still the remnants of war is here and there. We can't say there is absolute peace that is prevailing in the country because still people are suffering.

One thing people are asking, especially from the north, is what happened to the people who got surrendered to the government when the war was done, or when the war was ended in 2009. There were 15 buses of people, 15 buses of people surrendered to the army, the armed forces, and up to date the government is not telling us what had happened to them. My question is, talking about nonviolence, how do you measure the length and breadth of the four corners of nonviolence, where can the communication be, violent or nonviolent. How can? Because I feel, the people, of course I belong to the majority Singhalese people, and there is also the minority Tamil people who got really disturbed and still suffering because of this war. And it is those people who are claiming for their husbands, their brothers, their sons, and asking as to what had happened to them. You know, in English there is a term called "worms turn," when you hit a worm, keep on hitting worm, I guess even though the worm can't hit he turns as if he's going to hit you. I guess the people from 2009 asking about the disappeared people, now even though they don't show signs of physical violence. But they're talking now and their language is violent and asking "What have you done to our people? Our sons? Have you killed them? If you killed them, let us know! If you have tortured them, flicked them out, let us know!" Because recently, before I came here, about two weeks ago we had a meeting of the parents, of the wives, and the mothers of these disappeared people and some government officials were invited for that. And I saw a kind of that worm's turn in them because now they say, "Even [if] you kill us now, we have to force you to tell us what are you hiding from us."

When others fought in 2015, this past year, in Center for Society and Religion, my institution, there was a meeting organized for the mothers and the wives of disappeared people. For whish the meeting there were six diplomats from my country represent[ed] also and at that time is was the former regime, not the present regime, former and violent kind of regime. Of course before that meeting the intelligence has come to know that I with the other people am going to organize kind of a meeting there to record evidence of these mothers and wives of disappeared

people to be sent to Geneva. I was getting very nice telephone calls asking, "Father, what are you going to do, you are a nice man, you are a lawyer our country, you are an asset to our country, why are you going and mingling with these kind of Tamil people, you are a Singhalese, you should not get entangled with this." Some very nice kind of calls I was getting asking me to stop this meeting, which I didn't do. And suddenly, on the day of the meeting a huge gang of policemans barged into my office, barged into my compound, held me from here. "We are going to kill you if you don't stop this. People have been killed, war is over, now forget everything. Now let's move forward and do whatever meeting is necessary. Why are you going to help these people, people aren't nonviolent at all." Everybody [was] very patient. And we answered them in peace. And that was the end. But still, my question and my challenge is that, now they are asking what are we yet to do to ask these people to tell us what have they done to our children, our husband. If the communication, like, if the, if it is not kind of physical actions involved in the communication, well, it is nonviolent. But then, my gut feeling is they are trying to be violent, even verbally. And forcing not only the government, but even to the church. The Sri Lankan church is not very supportive in this cause because there is some political affiliation with the church and the government. We thought after the fall of the regime it might stop but it had not done so. Still that affiliation is there. So it's not much support that people are getting from the church, from the official church I would say, not from the government. They are asking, what had been done to them. Even if you have killed them, let us know. Don't [inaudible] of disappearance, you know, that you saw, we need to know what happened. that's my little experience. My challenge is that how am I to balance this, how am I to reconcile this today? People are asking, [inaudible] and the daughters on the other hand, on the extremes, I'm supposed to be a peaceful, peace-loving man who had [inaudible] with nonviolence. How to reconcile these two and if [inaudible] is for me I guess in the weeks and months in the time to come.

Thank you.

[applause]

Hind Khoury: I'm going to follow the example and stand up. Well, I am Palestinian, I live in East Jerusalem and in Bethlehem with the wall in between. The wall that Israel built to separate Palestinians. And I am from Kairos Palestine. So I represent both the problem, or the pain and the suffering and I represent also the solution. Because Palestinian Christians have figured already six years ago, a roadmap to peace. And it was a roadmap that was defined based on suffering, a century of suffering, with no hope on the horizon. And they managed to find the answer, and the answer is no different from what you have concluded and the wonderful experiences I heard this morning from many of you. Actually I think in working for peace we have figured the answers. We know that theology is a problem and needs to be more clear. We need to be confident in what we preach and no speak ambiguous language, as often is the case, and we need to concentrate on the human being. And I think very often Christians are far from the teaching of Christ and having heard Luke this morning on loving the enemy, which is a very

hard thing to do. We hear a lot of preaching, but still I find most people don't understand. And I developed my understanding because of the suffering that we live through. And a suffering without hope, which is a bit different. And I find that what Jesus was trying to tell us is that the human being is at the heart of bringing about a new world, a world of peace. And it's the human being that has to be empowered, not by the material, that's why he's asking us to give the [inaudible], which is often very difficult in the material world. He's asking us to love the enemy, but really to free ourselves from burdens, to free our spirits and our hearts so that we are courageous and we are prophetic. And that's what we are supposed to do and you said it this morning, many of the wonderful people I heard this morning that this is the way to go.

Now, the Kairos-Palestine document says all this, actually, it is a roadmap and I suggest you read it. But it also brings something new, it's that, I think our Japanese friends wrote it as a matter of fact, we live in crisis. I mean, we live in a world, that I say we're not only behind monotheism, we're behind [inaudible], we're in a situation where law doesn't matter and where power has figured very strong tools, very strong tools, that if we don't overcome, they are winning. They don't want to share world resources. They don't care about human beings, I mean what's happening to Palestinians, you know the whole expulsion of the country and now the Syrian immigrants are just examples like many others have said, human beings just do not matter. And this is the battle we need to win. That to win that humanity that we were elevated to by the life of Jesus and by his crucifixion. And unfortunately I think the Kairos [inaudible] is not only to save Palestinians from injustice or to save both, we say oppressed and oppressor, because that's the message of love. We need to save the oppressor and the oppressed from injustice. We also need to save the world, we need to save all of us, from that injustice so that we save our faith. And as the [inaudible] to be honest with you, as much as I feel I am a Palestinian I feel our faith is jeopardized. And our faith is being abused by power and that's why theology is ambiguous. And these are the issues that we need to overcome, so we face I think tremendous challenges together, not only us as Palestinians. And the challenge is mainly in theology because if we don't empower ourselves what Jesus is telling us to do, and how we are strong and confident and courageous and prophetic, we won't be able to make a difference.

And the crisis is important because the violence is increasing and will continue to increase. Whoever thought that the 21st century we will see the violence of the ISIS right in the heart of the cradle of civilization, the birth of monotheism, the birth of the rule of law and this is what we go through today, but I hear violence everywhere else. So the challenge in front of us is basically theological, and I am not a theologian, but I've learned this is the way to go. We need to know what Jesus is telling us. But also we need to create the tools, we need to do investment [inaudible]. It calls for the work for justice and not only to love, we need to love justice, do justice and love mercy. And very often we do it the other way around I find. So the challenge is in doing. And the doing come in empowering ourselves and also finding the tools of power which are tremendous. They control the language, they control the theology, they control the resources, they control the making of public opinion and it's all for the sake of interest of control of resources, and in economic and political interest.

So we have to, and that what's at the heart of Kairos, the Kairos Palestine document, is we need to go back to context. This context that is controlled by power, where the rule of law is jeopardized and theology is jeopardized, is what we need to work on. And context today calls us to immediate action, to immediate solution of crisis, so that we can create, and again I [inaudible] to the Kairos document, the new human being who will be at the heart of peace-making. So I suggest you read the Kairos document, look up our website, I don't have copies here brought to you, the physical copies, but this is the roadmap to peace, not only in the Middle East. The roadmap to peace is for reconciliation among the three monotheistic religions. This is going to be today at the heart of peace-building, so let's together decide on an action plan, a roadmap, whereby we bring that peace of Jerusalem which will be at the heart of the peace we are all seeking and that Jesus wanted us to work for.

Thank you very much.

[applause]

Pat Gaffney: If anyone else wants to come into a seat.

Bishop Kevin Dowling: Thank you very much. I'm Kevin Dowling, Bishop in Rustenberg, co-president of Pax Christi. Following on what the previous speakers just said, as I was listening to the witness this morning, the thought came to me that an option for non-violence always comes with cost. Very great personal and community cost, what you have just been sharing. To make an option for non-violence is never short-term. In situations of nonviolence it's a long journey. And therefore for the person, for the communities affected by violence to maintain that journey and to keep making concrete options to respond to crises nonviolently can only be done if there is an inner resource, what faith people would call "spirituality," what nonbelievers would call "my inner power," whatever it is, that has to be at the heart of it to maintain the value base on which you make your options in continuing crisis.

I'm a South African, I'm a white South African, I therefore was privileged in the apartheid, appalling apartheid justice system. I went through a personal conversion as a white South African as a very young priest, 26 years old, when for the first time in my life I was living and ministering in an oppressed community. That issue of conversion is critical if there's to be a transformation in the powers towards just peace. But the cost is what I'm focusing on here. And I've been privileged to be with activists that are here and hundreds and thousands of so-called ordinary people in the world who have made that option in extremely violent situations. And what Maria was sharing about changes that happen which are the result of violent transformation, the effects of that continue. And that's what we are seeing, sadly, in my country, South Africa, today. Yes there were many communities in South Africa who engaged in nonviolent means, making whole townships ungovernable simply by refusing to cooperate with the authorities in every possible way. They couldn't govern. But there was also the core of the struggle, armed resistance, the Umkhonto we Sizwe group who opted for violence in response to what they believed was a totally untenable situation. "We cannot overcome this oppressive

regime which is based in every way on violence.” Your description of the system in Palestine is exactly a copy of what apartheid was. So the option was made to only overcome this by violence. What’s the result? We were totally violent society in the apartheid times and we are increasingly a violent society in South Africa. The highest rate statistics in the world. What has happened? The whole psyche and spirit of our people, which was brutalized by apartheid, continues. We have not healed. And therefore, to make an option for nonviolence would always come at a cost, even today.

When I as a bishop, with two pastors, not Catholic pastors, Protestants, started a pastors’ movement for human rights and justice in the oppressive regime in which I was suffering with my people in the diocese where I am, one day as we dialogued with our people, the Queen Mother of the Bafokeng people, among whom I live, was being exiled by an oppressive regime. We came together and we decided we would lead a protest march, the pastors to deliver a memorandum to protest this and say goodbye to her. So I led this march peacefully. And I turned around and there in the first line was a woman with a piece of cardboard, "Security forces, please don’t shoot. We are unarmed." We delivered the memorandum, we were refused to go to see the Queen Mother so the pastors went in behind the people back to the mission on which I live and then they decided, "We are going, we are going to walk in peace to say goodbye." And when we arrived, there were these armored vehicles with heavily armed police and the command went out, "Shoot the pastors". And they opened fire on us with lethal tear gas grenades, I have one still, steel-tipped tear gas grenades. I was ducking and weaving, avoiding this, but a young student took a live bullet in the heart and died. Others were brutally hammered into submission.

I testified to the truth and reconciliation commission on behalf of that family who had lost their young 21-year-old student. And I was challenged by the Truth Commission judges, "You were not impartial. You were not impartial, explain why." And I had to explain that option for justice for just peace, for nonviolence, but, always on behalf of the poor and the oppressed. But, that option cost me dearly. But it cost my people even more dearly. When I gave my mission every single weekend as a refuge for all the liberation movements, the unions, the civic organizations who were banned from meeting. They came there and as they walked into the mission they were tear gassed by the security forces, as they left they were tear gassed again. Every time it was a cost. But, they made that option because they wanted to express their human dignity and claim their right to meet and claim their right to free speech. I was called as a leader by the security police to explain that option. I was threatened, the church on the mission was blown up by a powerful bomb when I refused to cancel such a mass meeting.

But it comes down then to the little daily experiences which are awful for everybody in current South Africa. One evening, I had been out in the diocese all day and Sister rang me and said you haven’t eaten a thing on the mission, she’s in the community next door to me, when you get home I will bring you a plate of food. As I got home she came to the door. As I opened my door, three guys with guns came in, threw us both to the floor, demanded money and valuables. And

we've all been taught in our violent in South Africa, if this happens to you, just keep quiet. Do exactly what they ask. Don't resist. Which is what I did, and what she did. But they threw us in a room and then my tremendous fear came up when they tied her up. The first thought that came to me was, "She is going to be raped. What are you going to do?" I realized I would have to do something, I would have to intervene. Nonviolently I hoped, but it would mean possibly being killed. I diverted their attention by saying I've got money from wages, I've got my laptop, please come into my office I'll give you all this. I gave them everything I could and fortunately that meant they ran away. There's a cost when you make a nonviolent option and just wanted to pay tribute to the thousands of, hundreds of thousands of so-called ordinary people who make that cost daily. I was privileged to share in a small way with these wonderful people that we are gathered here to think about and promote. Just peace, nonviolence.

Thank you.

[applause]

Pat Gaffney: We have about 10 minutes left, I know some have been joining from the outer circle. We have three, we'll see how the time goes with the three participants we have. We'll begin here with John.

John Ashworth: My name is John Ashworth, I work with the churches in South Sudan. I arrived in South Sudan 33 years ago, one month before the civil war started. I've now seen the end of that civil war and the beginning of a new civil war. So again, that ties in with what Maria said, that violent conflict doesn't solve the problem. Violent conflict leads to more conflict.

I want to pick up very briefly on two points which I've heard this morning. One is about the ordinary people. In our experience in South Sudan, the ordinary people do not want war, and that's been said about other countries too. Of course there are people who want war, there are vested interests. There are young men for whom fighting is a very exciting way of life. As our brother from Japan said, there are people who perhaps haven't been directly affected, who haven't realized there's a crisis, and so they're not anti-war. But the ordinary people don't want war, the ones who are affected. And that why much of the work of the church in South Sudan has been at the grass roots. It's a question of empowering the ordinary people to find a way of stopping their leaders from making war. And also, they're often being manipulated by their leaders, so it's a way of empowering them to resist the manipulation of their leaders to take them to war.

We, I think, are probably the ones who coined the phrase "people to people." We did a lot of what we call "people to people dialogue." People to people, peace and reconciliation at the grass roots. And we learned about [inaudible], we started all this before we'd ever heard of peace-building, these technical terms and all these wonderful academics you know who've actually written about it. But we learned later about [inaudible] and about this pyramid model, where you've got the grass roots, the middle and high level. And although we don't neglect the high level, as the bishop said. Our leaders talk to the president and the head of the rebels and

others. But our main concentration is at the grassroots level to empower those people to put pressure on the next level and the next level.

The other things I've picked up on is trauma. I don't know whether the word has been mentioned, but it's certainly been implied in some of what's been said. After what is effectively six decades of conflict in South Sudan, from the 1950s to the early 70s, then from the 80s through to 2005, and now again since 2013, trauma features broadly in everybody's life experience. I'm not a trauma expert so, there may be different types of trauma – long-term trauma, short-term trauma, immediate exposure, secondary exposure, all these things, experts will tell you. But the reality is, if a country has been in conflict for 60 years, then everybody in that country has been born into trauma, has been traumatized by their parents who were born into trauma. The culture of the country is one of violence, so even if you aren't actually exposed to physical violence, you're in this violent, traumatized culture. And so it's, in fact, to be honest, even some of the people who've spoken today, you can detect trauma, and probably in the way I'm speaking as well.

If we want to bring peace, and in a nonviolent way, then we also have to face trauma. Again Bishop Taban gave us an example, our leaders are afraid, they are traumatized also. And they're afraid of what's going to happen them if they make peace. And what do we do, probably we'll threaten them with the International Criminal Court. Is that a nonviolent solution? How is that going to affect a traumatized person to say, hey if you make peace we're going to punish you? The young men who are doing the killing, what are we going to do about them? Child soldiers in many places, what are we going to do about them? We have a traumatized community.

Thank you.

[applause]

Barthelemy Ntakarutimana [in French; English translation here:] *Excuse me, I'll be different than the others who spoke in English. I'll be speaking in French. I feel better speaking in French. My English isn't quite there yet.*

My name is Barthelemy, I'm from Burundi and I'll be speaking in French. I speak from experience, the experience I've had with my organization in Burundi that deals with active non-violence. Burundi, maybe many people know this already, is a little country in central Africa that has seen violence for decades. It comes up every ten years and it still hasn't stopped. A violent conflict that's fundamentally political … (unintelligible) fight for power. But it still has a very strong ethnic character. The question we always ask is: How do we help people from different ethnicities go beyond that to be able to meet with each other and work towards active non-violence together. This connotation on ethnicity has developed over many years into a kind of fundamentalism. This ethnicity wants to qualify the other as evil (unintelligible) to the point that they just want them dead. And that they can do that. So, we decided to find people … well first the question is, if he wants to take the initiative, which ethnicity is he? And from the moment someone takes the initiative, they start … even before listening to what you say… is to figure out

which ethnicity you are. They must know the ethnicity. He (unintelligible) for his ethnicity. That's to say that … This message of love that always comes from Jesus, it's a message that has been received, it's true, but with some reservation. Because ethnicity… a lot more… and so much so that… today the great challenge we have is how to transcend one's ghetto to be able to build a nonviolent society.

So what we did is find mixed circles - as far as ethnicity is concerned. Mixed circles, circles of reflection and action. And this mix - in terms of ethnicity - is a circle that wants to go beyond feelings of vengeance, of hate … the idea of getting revenge each time … putting evil and the devil on the other ethnicity … but it's more about putting the onus on oneself to understand where the evil comes from and how to eradicate it from my heart. And then, how do we strengthen our communities, strengthen communities, to find people capable of transcending these [ ]. So our work focuses especially on communities, we educate and it's a job that wants to see concrete actions on the ground. So we try to get people to understand that these things should be advanced … how to get people to go stop being compliant, silent in the face of violence. So how do we get people to not only be complaint but to act ... even if they're not for violence, they must act against violence. Within communities, we're trying to find people like that, that in any case (unintelligible) escape these violent groups. That want and can say "no, we won't take part in these violent actions, these violent conflicts." So we try to work with these people who (unintelligible). So, because we want to strengthen these communities, how do we get resources to people so that they don't give up easily, giving into manipulation. How can people stop giving in so easily to violence. So we started all this in what's called the encounter in the humanity of Jesus. It reinforces us as well. To say that we must accept sacrifices just like Jesus accepted even death. How, in all cases, to avoid death, avoid killing, avoid participating in violence, even if it means becoming (unintelligible). That's what we're trying to do. To accept the other even if he is doing evil, all in not collaborating with this evil. To be compliant with his evil. So that's what we wanted to share. It's a long road and we ask that you pray for us so that we may arrive.

[applause]

Peter Prove: Thank you very much. I just want to very briefly take this opportunity to greet you on behalf of the World Council of Churches, the general secretary of the staff, the member churches. My name is Peter Prove, I am director for International Affairs at the World Council of Churches in Geneva and it is a great privilege for us to join with you, peacemakers and nonviolent activists from the Roman Catholic world for this discussion. It is a very critical matter of current and long-term concern for the World Council of Churches. From our beginnings we have had with our membership churches from the peace churches tradition but also churches from the, if I can use this term, from the war church, or just war church tradition. So this had been an internal dynamic from our beginnings.

You may be aware, and some of you are aware of the most recent expression the World Council of Churches has brought to this matter, in particular from its Assembly, its most recent Assembly in South Korea in late 2013. From that, or at that Assembly, the member churches of the World Council of Churches described themselves as being engaged in a pilgrimage of justice and peace. Working together, moving together in that spirit and toward those objectives. And there was a statement issued on the way of just peace which describes four different elements to that objective of just peace. Let me just quickly point to them. First of all, just peace in the community, so that all may live free from fear. Secondly, just peace with the earth, so that life is sustained. Thirdly, just peace in the marketplace, so that all may live with dignity. And fourthly, just peace among the nations, so that human lives are protected. So a very holistic vision of what is entailed in this way of just peace. But I just want to remark that we are in a very interesting moment politically and socially right now, where on the one hand we have even peace church traditions questioning their own commitment to pacifism in the face of new challenges like ISIS, how to exercise that peace church, that pacifist, that nonviolent tradition in the face of such acts. And yet on the other hand, we face the inexorable challenge that we've all been describing here about the effects of violence, the perpetuation of the cycle of violence. So this is really a critical discussion and I'm very much looking forward to engaging with you in it over these days.

[applause]

Chris Cole: Thank you very much. My name is Chris Cole, I'm from Pax Christi in the UK and I just wanted to very briefly vocalize, I'm sitting there listening to the presentations this morning, and I just wanted to verbalize I think something that we all know, that it is very inspiring for those of us who live in the I suppose northwest, whatever you want to call it, to hear about the situation in South Sudan and Palestine and South Africa and all the very moving contributions that we've had [inaudible] about humility and audacity of the people is very inspiriting. But it would be a mistake, I think, if we focused our work on the visible signs of the violence in the world. There are these kind of major structures, invisible structures, global structures of violence that we also need to focus on, particularly those of us in the West, I think. We are not living in the situations, we are not living [inaudible], but we are in those structures of violence that are casting many to their deaths around the globe and we need to challenge those structures as well. And Pope Francis mentioned, I heard the phrase in his statement yesterday about the war of indifference and we need to get involved in the nonviolence and challenge to indifference, to these structures of violence.

[applause]

Pat Gaffney: Thank you, it's been a marathon session and I think special thanks to everyone who's been listening so attentively and if you didn't get a chance to contribute, I'm sorry. But at 11:30 the group work will allow us to develop this session in a more intimate setting.