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**61st Regular Session of the Human Rights Council, 23 February – 31 March 2026**  
**Panel discussion on human rights and a culture of peace**

Oral statement delivered by: Pax Christi International

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Mr President,

Pax Christi International and co-signing NGOs are deeply concerned about ongoing conflicts worldwide, which continue to cause widespread human suffering and undermine the rights and dignity of countless individuals. Too often, initiatives described as “peace efforts” address only the symptoms of conflict rather than its underlying causes. The voices of the Global South, too often marginalised, must shape the decisions that affect their lives. Political legitimacy rests on inclusion and accountability.

We are particularly concerned about ongoing conflicts in regions such as the Occupied Palestinian Territories, DRC, Sudan, Haiti, and Myanmar, where structural injustice, exclusion, and the denial of human rights continue to fuel suffering. These situations remind us that peace cannot be reduced to a unilateral, transactional, technocratic exercise such as establishing the so-called “board of peace,” or special operations, which raises serious questions about international law, political legitimacy, and the right of peoples to self-determination. Genuine multilateralism, embodied by the United Nations, remains essential to address shared global challenges. It must rest on faith in fundamental human rights and in a commitment to living together in peace as good neighbours. Our responsibility extends beyond the present moment by investing in dialogue and solidarity, social progress and care for our common home for present and future generations.

This is why the ongoing threat of rearmament, in particular of nuclear weapons, is an urgent moral challenge. These weapons are not only catastrophic in their effects but fundamentally incompatible with respect for human dignity. We call for integral human disarmament, addressing not only arsenals, but also the fears and structures that normalise violence. This requires sustained investment in peace education and active nonviolence, cultivating a culture of trust and shared responsibility. Women as peacebuilders and young people as agents of change are indispensable in this work, strengthening the foundations for a just peace.

Peace grows from respect for human dignity and the rights of all. We are called to act with courage and moral clarity, bearing witness to justice and solidarity for the sake of humanity and future generations.