

Pax Christi International Newsletter No. 148 ~ 1 May 2006~

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AFRICA

ICC Manual Advances Justice and Reconciliation in Africa

A training manual was recently released in early April by the Centre for Justice and Reconciliation, entitled *African Faith-based Communities: Advancing Justice & Reconciliation in Relation to the ICC (International Criminal Court)*. This new resource is intended to support local religious leaders in Africa and their initiatives on education and advocacy for the International Criminal Court. Pax Christi International supports the Court as an important step to promote global justice and to end impunity for war-related crimes. A round of meetings in Brussels, New York, and Kampala took place in April 2006 to launch the manual. To read more on these events, see the article at Ref. [HR.8.E.06](#).

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Liberian Parliament Faces Many Challenges to National Reconciliation

On 18 April 2006 in Brussels, Mark Barwick of Pax Christi's international secretariat participated in a dialogue with visiting members of the newly elected Liberian Parliament and Senate. The topic was the Parliament's role in the country's current efforts toward national reconciliation after many years of bitter war and difficult transition to democracy. Over the past year, Pax Christi International has taken steps toward the development of a member network in West Africa. To read this article on the 18 April Liberian delegation, see Ref. [AF.26.E.06](#).

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AMERICAS & CARIBBEAN

Monitoring Human Rights in Guatemala

Grupo de Apoyo Mutuo (GAM), a member organisation with Pax Christi International in Guatemala, has published several press releases concerning violations of human rights and the monitoring activities of the organisation. The releases are all in Spanish. Here is a summary:

1. On 24 March 2006, GAM remembered the 15,000 human rights violations that occurred in 1982, during the 16 months of Efraín Ríos Montt's government. Most of these cases have not been tried and no punishment has been given for those who are responsible for these violations. GAM made a call to the Public Ministry to initiate immediately a criminal investigation into these crimes committed 24 years ago. Read in [AM.24.S.06](#).
2. On 28 March 2006, GAM presented a report about human rights violations and violence against the people of Guatemala in 2005. The report puts emphasis on violations against the right to life, violations against integrity, violations with sexual and gender characteristics and social rights. Read in [AM.26.S.06](#).
3. In a statement released on 30 March 2006, GAM questioned a speech made by the Guatemalan government about its transparency policies, asking whether the government really acts against impunity and corruption. Read in [AM.27.S.06](#).
4. During the week of 5 April 2006, GAM monitored members of the Army and the Civil National Police on the streets. These forces were carrying out tasks of internal security. The goal of this monitoring done by the GAM is to evaluate the benefits of these street patrols and to prevent abuses against the civil population. Read the statement in [AM.28.S.06](#).
5. On 6 April 2006, GAM released an analysis about the causes and effects of the violence in Guatemala during the last few years, requesting urgently for the authorities to initiate public security policies that would more effectively protect the population of Guatemala. Read the statement [AM.29.S.06](#).
6. On 8 April 2006, GAM denounced acts of corruption inside the Ministry of the National Defense of Guatemala. According to an audit made by the General Inspector of the Army, it

appears that the Minister of Defense carried out the collection of salaries of absent soldiers. Read the statement in [AM.31.S.06](#).

7. On 21 April, GAM denounced abuses committed by members of the Army and the Civil National Police against demonstrators during the peasant protests against the structural problems that have been present for centuries in Guatemala but have been ignored by the government. Some of these demonstrators had been arrested, including some of GAM's members. Read the statement in [AM.33.S.06](#).

8. On 22 April, GAM released a statement detailing the important achievements reached at the conclusion of the protests carried out by peasant demonstrators throughout Guatemala on April 20. The government reached consensus with the community on social interest issues and looked for support in Congress to make the necessary social reforms. Read the statement in [AM.34.S.06](#).

9. On 24 April, GAM called for support of a campaign to boycott American products on May 1 to protest the new immigration laws that are being discussed in the US Congress. Read the statement in [AM.35.S.06](#).

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ASIA & PACIFIC

South Korean Struggle Against Expansion of U.S. Military Bases Intensifies

The ongoing struggle against the U.S. military base expansion in Pyongtaek, South Korea took a turn for the worse during the peaceful demonstration on 15 March 2006 when two human rights activists - Park Raegoon of Sarangbang Group for Human Rights and Cho Baeki of Catholic Human Rights Committee - were arrested. In addition to the arrests of the activists, the residents of Daechuri village in the northwest of South Korea, who are mostly farmers in their 60s and 70s, were injured while resisting the latest eviction attempts on 6 March and 15 March 2006. Since 2002, when Pyongtaek was selected as the new relocation site by the Land Partnership Plan (LPP) - in which additional land space from Pyongtaek, Euijeongbu, Ichon and Pohang is granted to U.S. Forces in Korea - the residents have been struggling to protect their land from US Forces. For more details, read [AP.31.E.06](#).

Pax Christi International, through its Member Organisation Solidarity for Peace and Reunification of Korea (SPARK), is in touch with the Catholic Human Rights Committee Korea. On 28th March 2006, Pax Christi International wrote a letter of protest to the South Korean President requesting the release of the jailed activists and to stop the military base expansion in Pyongtaek. Read [AP.34.E.06](#) for the full letter. The activists were released on 29 March 2006.

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Petition on West New Guinea

At the request of Pax Christi Australia, Pax Christi International became a joint signatory with the Australia West Papua Association to the letter/petition for the Decolonisation of West New Guinea on 27th March 2006. As signatories of this letter/petition, Pax Christi is working to convince the International Court of Justice to answer questions on West New Guinea's right to 'self-determination' and 'self-government', to show the United Nations Special Committee on Decolonisation and others that the questions are legally important and of direct interest to various groups around the world. A copy of the letter/petition will be made available on the website once it is dispatched.

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Pax Christi International writes Appeal Letter to President of Pakistan

On 29th March 2006, Pax Christi International sent a letter to President Pervaiz Musharaf of Pakistan appealing for an end to the violation of the rights of religious minorities (i.e.

Christians and Hindus) in Pakistan. The letter highlighted a series of incidents including those "[...] from May 2005 to February 2006, [during which time] at least 7 Churches, 7 houses belonging to the religious minorities, 3 Pastors' houses, 1 Convent, 1 girl's hostel and a dispensary run by nuns, 7 Church-run schools, a college of the Christian community, a place of worship of Ahmadis, a Temple of Hindus and 3 hospitals of the Christian community were destroyed in various provinces and cities; a Hindu couple, accused of blasphemy, lost their property; 10 persons belonging to religious minorities were killed, 27 individuals were booked under blasphemy laws; and hundreds were harassed and injured by the fanatics in different incidents. Religious communities are profoundly shocked and hurt by these heinous acts of destruction on their sacred places of worship."

In the letter, appeals were made to: 1. Ensure the protection of places of worship and properties of religious minorities; 2. Take strict action against those who preach and wage violence against minority religions; and 3. Protect the vulnerable religious minorities through repealing the discriminatory laws and practices that promote disharmony, persecution and intolerance towards them." For text of the entire letter see [AP.35.E.06](#)

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Pakistan NGO Support Group meets in Geneva

On 4th April 2006, the members of the Pakistan NGO Support Group met in Geneva to discuss the question of raising specific human rights issues concerning Pakistan at the Human Rights Council and other UN organisations. Trevor Griffiths and Fr. Paul Lansu represented Pax Christi International. In addition, a delegation from Pax Christi's Member Organisation, the National Commission for Justice and Peace (NCJP) Pakistan, was present. Peter Jacob, the Chairperson and Executive Secretary of the NCJP, made an analysis of the present situation in the country. It was decided at the meeting to concentrate on the following human rights issues for Pakistan: Women's Rights; the Right to Education; Religious Intolerance in relation to Freedom of Expression; and Counter- Terrorism and Human Rights. The issue of Right to Education in Pakistan will be taken up at the first session of the Human Rights Council later this year.

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NCJP Pakistan Condemns Killings in Karachi

The NCJP Pakistan, representing the Catholic Church in Pakistan, has strongly condemned the terrorist bomb attack in Karachi on the solemn day of Eid-e-Milad-ul-Nabi that claimed more than 55 lives and left more than 100 people injured on 11th April, 2006. NCJP has called for the government's attention to the repeated incidences of violence and terror in the name of religion in Pakistan. Archbishop Lawrence John Saldanha and Peter Jacob issued a press statement, which condoled with the families of the victims and urged the government to ensure the fundamental right of Pakistani citizens to live in peace and security. For details see [AP.39.E.06](#)

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Peace Forum Caritas Internationalis

Jef Felix, Board Member and Treasurer of Pax Christi International will be attending the Caritas Internationalis Peace Forum taking place in Colombo, Sri Lanka, 26-28 June 2006. An exposure programme is being organised by Caritas Sri Lanka, 23 – 25 June 2006. The theme of the Forum is "Peace-making: Promoting Social Harmony." The Forum aims at promoting networking for peace-building and reconciliation.

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Japanese Colleagues at Pax Christi USA's National Conference 2006

The Japan Catholic Council for Justice and Peace (JCCJP), a member organisation of Pax Christi International, will be attending the Annual National Conference of Pax Christi USA. This conference will be held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania from the 28th to the 30th of July 2006. Bishop Goro Matsuura, Mr. Masataka Nagasawa, and Sr. Filo Hirota are to attend. A major discussion at the Conference will centre around Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution, which JCCJP believes is a wonderful initiative. Article 9 includes the following:

"Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as a means of settling international disputes. In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized."

For more discussion of Article 9, please see the report from the JCCJP-organized fact finding mission of November 2005: [AP.66.E.05](#)

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MIDDLE EAST

Blessed Peacemakers

Norman Kember and his pacifist colleagues recently released in Iraq were working to communicate the Christian message of the rejection of violence – a message that is, tragically, easily drowned out and misrepresented. Pat Gaffney, Secretary General of Pax Christi UK, wrote an article about this question published in The Tablet, 1 April 2006. Read in [ME.35.E.06](#).

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AEI's Recent Activities

The Bethlehem-based Arab Educational Institute (AEI), affiliated to Pax Christi International, recently released the March issue of their e-newsletter. Some of the highlights from the previous months included the participation of 13 youth and 4 adults in the network of Christian Organizations in Bethlehem at the 9th Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Porto Alegre, Brazil, held 14-23 February 2006. The delegation participated, amongst others, in sessions on "Youth Overcoming Violence", "Youth dealing with violence" and "The Christian Identity in the Middle East".

Between 25 February and 5 March 2006, representatives of the AEI participated in an intercultural exchange project in Paris together with participants from France, Greece, Israel and Palestine. The main aim of the seminar was to develop a new Euro-Mediterranean Youth Project as well as a European Voluntary Service project. Read the newsletter at [ME.34.E.06](#).

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International Church Action for Peace in Palestine and Israel

The International Church Action for Peace in Palestine and Israel, in which Pax Christi International and some Member Organisations participated, concluded 19 March 2006. As 50 people from eight countries paid a solidarity visit to Jerusalem and the Occupied Palestinian Territories during the week-long initiative, activities were simultaneously taking place across five continents.

Launching the week at a worship service in Jerusalem, Patriarch Michel Sabbah stated that freedom for the Palestinians and security for Israelis are not contradictory notions: "We

address our appeal to both peoples: Israelis, in search of your security and permanent peace, we love you all. Palestinians, in search of your freedom and dignity, we love you all. Both of you are capable of loving each other. The language of violence has replaced so far, for too long a time, this language of love."

For more on the International Church Action for Peace, please go to:

<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/home.html>

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Iran's Nuclear Programme

The Inter Church Peace Council (IKV) and Pax Christi Netherlands published a background paper on Iran's Nuclear programme, entitled "Facts, Dilemmas and the Political Debate". The report was written by Karel Koster and Barbara Brubacher and was published in March 2006. A presentation of the report and a debate on the issue took place on 24 April 2006 in Den Hague, at which Prof. Tom Sauer of the Catholic University of Leuven (Belgium), Jan Grueters, Director of Pax Christi Netherlands, and Fr. Paul Lansu of the International Secretariat participated. The paper has 50 pages and is available in English. [DIS.23.E.06](#).

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EUROPE

Pax Christ Flanders Organises Events on Russia

On 11 March 2006, Pax Christi Flanders organised an open evening with Ella Poljakova, of the Soldiers' Mothers of St Petersburg. Ms Poljakova spoke about the situation of Russian civil society following the introduction of a new law on NGOs. This law provides the government with far-reaching power to control the work of civil society organisations.

On 25 March, Pax Christi Flanders organised a movie evening in Antwerp focusing on the situation in Chechnya. The movie "Three Comrades" by Masja Novikova tells the story of three young men on the eve of the first Chechen war. Years later in 2006, two of them are dead and the third one lives in the Netherlands. Through the eyes of their relatives who still live in Russia and Chechnya, the film looks back at the events that dramatically altered their lives.

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PICUM Works to Ensure Basic Protection for Undocumented Workers

The Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM) sponsored international events in March 2006 to focus attention on its report, "Ten Ways to Protect Undocumented Workers." Over 200 representatives of non-governmental organisations, trade unions, governments, research institutions and others participated in these informational dialogues. PICUM's General Assembly followed, where members adopted an Action Plan for 2006. Mark Barwick of Pax Christi's international secretariat attended the General Assembly. To read the article on these events, see Ref. [HR.9.E.06](#).

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SECURITY & DISARMAMENT

Biological and Toxi Weapons Convention

Pax Christi International has been present at several meetings of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) since the start of its Fifth Review Conference in 2001. The

Sixth Review Conference of the BTWC is due to take place later this year. The Preparatory Committee met in Geneva, 26 – 28 April 2006. Pax Christi International submitted a written proposal outlining recommended steps towards a biosecure world, which was presented at a lunch meeting on Thursday 27 April and distributed among the diplomats. Read in [DIS.19.E.06](#). A position paper has also been made available and can be used for public awareness-raising. Read in English at [DIS.21.E.06](#) or in Spanish at [DIS.21.S.06](#).

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10th Anniversary of ICJ's Advisory Opinion on Nuclear Weapons

The International Peace Bureau, of which Pax Christi International is a member, is planning a conference to mark the 10th anniversary of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) advisory opinion on the threat or use of nuclear weapons. This will take place on 6-7 July 2006 and the venue will be the European Parliament in Brussels. The two-day conference will invite academic lawyers, representatives from NATO, parliamentarians, mayors linked with *Mayors for Peace*, and peace activists as participants. The intention is to identify relevant aspects of International Humanitarian Law and Treaty Obligations clarified by the Opinion and to make these available to activists in their litigation in dialogue with politicians and officials.

The first day will concentrate on the legal implications of the Advisory Opinion with special emphasis on developments since 1996. After a review of how the Opinion was obtained and a reminder of how nuclear weapons affect people, the majority of the day will comprise four legal topics: (1) The International Humanitarian Law aspects of the Opinion, (2) Jus ad bellum (the legality of initiating military action) and the Advisory Opinion, (3) Nuclear Policy Concepts, and (4) Negotiating in good faith towards disarmament.

The second day will examine the various options for another request to the ICJ for a fresh ruling about the legal status of nuclear weapons in light of developments over the last ten years. The afternoon session will present civil society initiatives linked with a return to the ICJ. Main contact person: George Farebrother: geowcpuk@gn.apc.org

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Banning Cluster Munitions

A debate on the banning of cluster munitions was held in the Austrian parliament and a resolution discussed on 6 April 2006. The Cluster Munitions Coalition, in which Pax Christi International, Pax Christi Netherlands, Pax Christi Ireland and Pax Christi UK are members, has been active in lobbying Austrian parliamentarians to vote for a ban on the use, production, stockpile and trade in cluster munitions. On 29 March 2006 for instance, Pax Christi Netherlands sent letters to the Austrian parliamentarians, referring to the publication "Cluster Weapons: Necessity or Convenience." The publication can be read at [DIS.59.E.05](#). Pax Christi Austria has also become involved in similar lobbying activities. More at: <http://www.stopclustermunitions.org/>

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HUMAN RIGHTS

Statement to the Final Session of the UNHR Commission

On 27 March, the NGO community, including Pax Christi International, presented a joint oral and written statement for the occasion of the final session of the United Nations Human Rights (UNHR) Commission in Geneva. A Human Rights Council is to replace the UNHR Commission and will be created by the General Assembly of the United Nations, with membership elections taking place on 9 May and the first session of the Council planned for 19 June. The statement was delivered on behalf of 265 NGOs, the largest joint statement in

the 60 years of the Commission – and the last. The statement is available in English ([HR.10.E.06](#)), French ([HR.10.F.06](#)) and Spanish ([HR.10.S.06](#)).

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GOOD GOVERNANCE

Publish What You Pay Calls for Greater Accountability on European Extractive Industry Revenues

On 19 April 2006, Pax Christi International and other non-governmental organisations in the Publish What You Pay (PWYP) coalition addressed the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development concerning its draft Energy Operations Policy. While congratulating the Bank's efforts to improve extractive sector transparency standards, the letter also criticises the new policy for not providing clearer mechanisms for citizens to hold projects and their governments accountable for the use of these resources. "Transparency of revenue flows and contracts is a critical first step towards the responsible management of extractive industries and towards realizing the potential contribution of revenues to economic development goals," stated the communication. The misuse of these funds is also linked to many violent conflicts. To read the text of this letter, see Ref. [ECO.3.E.06](#).

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PEACE SPIRITUALITY

Good Friday Commemorations

Many members of the Pax Christi International network have been participating in vigils to commemorate the suffering and crucifixion of Jesus Christ on Good Friday. At the Catholic University of Leuven for instance, Pax Christi Flanders and the Centre for Liberation Theologies held a vigil, a Way of the Cross, on Good Friday. The theme was "Where Are People Being Crucified Today?" The Way of the Cross went through many streets in Leuven and ended in the Holy Spirit College.

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Easter Messages 2006

H.B. Michel Sabbah, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem and President of Pax Christi International issued his Easter Message 2006 on 11 April 2006. The message is available in English ([ME.36.E.06](#)), French ([ME.36.F.06](#)), Spanish ([ME.36.S.06](#)), Italian ([ME.36.I.06](#)), German ([ME.36.G.06](#)) and Arabic ([ME.36.A.06](#)). On Holy Thursday, 13 April 2006, the Patriarch issued his message addressed to all the priests in Jerusalem and the Holy Land (in French, [ME.39.F.06](#)). On 12 April, the Patriarchs and Heads of Churches of Jerusalem issued their Easter Message, which is available in English [ME.37.E.06](#) and Arabic [ME.37.A.06](#). The Arabic Educational Institute (AEI), a Member Organisation of Pax Christi International in Bethlehem, issued an Easter Message that is available in English [ME.38.E.06](#). The Easter Homily of H.B. Michel Sabbah, dated 16 April 2006, is available in Arabic [ME.41.A.06](#), English [ME.41.E.06](#), Spanish [ME.41.S.06](#), Italian [ME.41.I.06](#), French [ME.41.F.06](#) and German [ME.41.G.06](#).

On 14 April 2006, Msgr. Lawrence John Saldanha, Archbishop of Lahore and President of the Pakistan Catholic Bishops' Conference issued his Easter Message. The Archbishop is also President of the National Commission for Justice and Peace, a Member Organisation with Pax Christi International. Read in [AP.38.E.06](#).

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PEACE EDUCATION

International Salon for Peace Initiatives in Paris

The French Coalition for the Decade is organising the second edition of the International Salon for Peace Initiatives, which will be held in Paris, 2 – 4 June 2006. Pax Christi France and Pax Christi International are involved in the event. The poster, the flyer, the press release and the newsletters of the International Salon for Peace Initiatives are now available in different languages:

Poster in [English](#) / [French](#) / [Italian](#) / [German](#) / [Spanish](#) / [Portuguese](#) / [Dutch](#)

Leaflet in [English](#) / [French](#) / [Italian](#)

Press release in [French](#) / [English](#)

Newsletter #1 in [English](#) / [French](#)

Newsletter #2 in [English](#) / [French](#)

For further information, please contact Pax Christi France at:

communication@decennie.org

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Lindau Peace Museum

Since 2001, the Lindau Peace Museum of Pax Christi Augsburg (Germany) has presented itself not as a showcase for peace but rather as an interactive forum for museum visitors. Visitors can read about people and organisations who act in the service of peace and are encouraged to think about issues such as militarism and non-violence, with the help of current peace literature. The Museum presents the stories of forgotten women who worked for human rights and also offers also special programs for schools and parishes. The museum's extensive 2005 Program included a memorable lecture by the Israeli historian Reuven Moskowitz, who worked for more than fifty years on Jewish-Palestinian and German-Israeli reconciliation.

The Museum's address is: Villa Lindenhof, Lindenhofweg 25, D-88131 Lindau i.B., Germany.
Tel./fax 00-49-838.22.45.94. Email: friedensraeume@freenet.de - Website:

<http://www.friedens-raeume.de/>

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INTERNATIONAL CALENDAR

Click here to view the International Calendar of upcoming events:

<http://storage.paxchristi.net/calendar.pdf>.

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