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Dealing with the past, building the future together

ICIP

SUMARI

INTRODUCTION

How should we deal with post-conflict situations?

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The end of violence does not mean the achievement of peace. After armed conflicts, societies enter into periods during which the reconstruction of social relations is key to establishing a harmonious coexistence and overcoming past divisions. The warring parties are faced with the challenge of reconciling themselves and relearning to live together with respect and tolerance. Thus, long and comprehensive processes are initiated, in the sense that they imply a multiplicity of factors: reconciliation requires looking at the past, confronting it and trying to rewrite a memory shared by all. But it also requires the need to establish positive relationships with each other, leave fear and mistrust behind, and share common visions of the future in order to build a fair and equitable society.

This new monograph for *Peace in Progress* explores processes of reconciliation through a theoretical framework, lucidly provided by University of Ulster professor Brandon Hamber, and through the analysis of specific cases, such as those of South Africa, Bosnia, Sri Lanka and Colombia.

In the case of South Africa, in a society that is still divided today and with high levels of inequality, we focus on what South Africans think about the reconciliation process they have experienced and on the results of the Truth Commission. We do this based on data extracted from the barometer of South African reconciliation, in an article by Jan Hofmeyr and Elnari Potgieter, researchers at South Africa's Institute for Justice and Reconciliation.

" We explore processes of reconciliation through a theoretical framework and through the analysis of the cases of South Africa, Sri Lanka, Bosnia and Colombia "

We analyze the case of Sri Lanka, where the violent conflict lasted more than thirty years, in an article by Asanga Abeyagoonasekera, of the Institute of National Security Studies of Sri Lanka. The article sets forth the will of the current government to strengthen social cohesion strategies, but also the limitations on the path to reconciliation: the lack of a global vision and the isolation of the country, which makes it more difficult to face this challenge.

We also wanted to look at the emblematic case of Bosnia and Herzegovina, where 26 years after the signing of the Dayton Accords, reconciliation today still seems impossible, as Daniel Eror, president of Youth for Peace, maintains in his article.

Finally, we wanted to include two cases from Latin America. The first case is addressed in an article that focuses on indigenous peoples, who have been the victims of serious human rights violations in countries such as Guatemala and Colombia. To what extent does transitional justice adapt to the worldviews, norms and practices of indigenous peoples? A Colombian lawyer, Belkis Izquierdo, and a Belgian researcher, Lieselotte Viaene, provide insight into indigenous peoples' views of reparation, justice and reconciliation and raise intriguing doubts about an excessively westernized form of justice.

" The analysis of post-conflict societies is one of ICIP's priority strands of work "

And secondly, the Interview section focuses on the Colombian conflict, specifically on the successful experience of coexistence and reconciliation in the small municipality of San Carlos, in the department of Antioquia. We speak with Pastora Mira, victim of the conflict and coordinator of the Center for Rapprochement, Reconciliation and Reparation, which has promoted coexistence between victims and victimizers.

This monograph has been produced coinciding with the international seminar "Experiences of reconciliation," which ICIP organized in May in collaboration with the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung Foundation, and is part of the new action program "Peacebuilding and the construction of coexistence after violence," with which ICIP aims to promote work in post-conflict contexts.

Photography : Graffiti on the Apartheid Wall, Bethlehem

The reconciliation paradox

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Political conflict damages relationships between individuals and communities, as well as trust in public institutions and the state. Building peace therefore requires attention to relationships. In its simplest form, reconciliation is the process of addressing conflictual and fractured relationships after political conflict. The term reconciliation can, however, be confusing when applied to societies emerging from violent conflict, as it requires not only the reconciling of broken relationships (as the term semantically implies), but also the process of building previously non-existent relationships between individuals, groups and institutions. This can include a range of activities at multiple levels from inter-personal and inter-group initiatives that could include positive encounter, dialogue, education and mutual understanding, to political level trust-building processes, including public acknowledgement and apologies of wrongdoing, institutional reform, truth recovery and reparations.

The process of rebuilding relationships is also a multi-directional process. To help understand this complexity, we have proposed a "working definition" of reconciliation that, we argue, involves five interwoven and related strands[1]:

1. Developing a shared vision of an interdependent and fair society. This requires the involvement of the whole society, at all levels. Although individuals may have different opinions or political beliefs, the articulation of a common vision of an interdependent, just, equitable, open, and diverse society is a critical part of any reconciliation process.

2. Acknowledging and dealing with the past. The truth of the past, with all its pain, suffering, and losses, must be acknowledged, and mechanisms implemented providing for justice, healing, restitution or reparations, and restoration (including apologies, if needed, and steps aimed at redress). To build reconciliation, individuals and

institutions need to acknowledge their own role in the conflicts of the past, accepting and learning from it in a constructive way to ensure non-repetition.

3. Building positive relationships. Following violent conflict, relationships need to be built or renewed, addressing issues of trust, prejudice, and intolerance in the process. This results in accepting both commonalities and differences, and embracing and engaging with those who are different from us.

4. Significant cultural and attitudinal change. The culture of suspicion, fear, mistrust, and violence is broken down, and opportunities and space open up in which people can hear and be heard. A culture of respect for human rights and human differences is developed, creating a context for each citizen to become an active participant in society and feel a sense of belonging.

5. Substantial social, economic, and political change. The social, economic, and political structures that gave rise to conflict and estrangement are identified, reconstructed or addressed, and transformed. This strand can also be thought of as being about equality and/or attaining equity between groups.

Three additional points are important in understanding this definition.

First, paradoxes, tensions, and even contradictions are always present in reconciliation processes. For example, the articulation of a long-term, interdependent future (Strand 1) is often in tension with the requirements for justice (Strand 2)[2]. Fostering economic change (Strand 5) may also require a change in resource allocation or ownership (for example in post-Apartheid South Africa), yet may negatively affect the potential to build positive relations between those who gain and lose in this process of redistribution (Strand 3).

" Reconciliation involves developing a shared vision of the future, dealing with the past, and building positive relationships with cultural and

attitudinal change ”

Second, reconciliation is a morally loaded concept and an ideological term. Relationships are fundamental to human interaction and, as a result, reconciliation is often linked to our basic beliefs about the world[3]. Someone from a theological background might stress the importance to building empathy within the reconciliation process, while a human rights advocate might wish to promote the rule of law as an effective means of regulating how people engage with one another and to wider institutions.

Third, reconciliation is not just about individual outcomes in isolation (say, addressing social inequalities between groups, Strand 5) but rather the process of addressing the detail of the five strands holistically. This is challenging because the social, interpersonal, and political contexts are in constant flux. Reconciliation should, therefore, be understood as dynamic and progressive, but also conflictual and prone to setback. As such, reconciliation should be measured as the ability of a society to manage the complex paradoxes and tensions inherent within, and between, the five strands, as outlined above.

We cannot simply apply our working definition to any context without reflection and analysis. Each context is unique, and even the language used (including the term reconciliation itself), can be fraught with controversy and sensitivity. In some societies reconciliation is seen as a 'soft' term that favours compromise over formal justice (this is often heard in Latin American countries), and has been rejected by some victims and human rights advocates. In others societies, such as Northern Ireland, the connotations are different. In our research in this region, we found apprehension to using the term reconciliation among some peace-focused practitioners, not because it is seen as 'soft' but rather because it is understood as a process that fundamentally transforms societal and political relations[4]. They have indicated to us that they have experienced resistance from some when initiatives explicitly use the term reconciliation as it implies a 'hard' process that requires meaningful, but potentially uncomfortable personal, cultural or community change.

" Paradoxes, tensions, and even contradictions are always present in reconciliation processes "

At the political level in Northern Ireland a more minimalist view of reconciliation has been adopted, which accepts that different communities (with different political aspirations) exist, but only limited efforts have been made to break down the social, residential and educational segregation which exists between the two main communities. With significant improvement in the security context since the 1998 Agreement, and trust between estranged groups generally better than in the past, attitudes towards 'the other' have gradually improved[5], but the underlying divisions remain unresolved. Trust between political parties has deteriorated significantly in recent years and at the time of writing this article the devolved legislative Assembly (at the core of the 1998 Agreement) has been suspended for over a year.

Our research shows that this political impasse has also been exacerbated by the lack of a common vision of the future of the region (Strand 1). The 1998 Agreement provided for the establishment of a devolved local government structure within the United Kingdom: a compromise for unionists who wish to remain within the UK at large, and, for nationalists and republicans, a stage in a longer-term process towards a constitutionally united (Northern Ireland joining the Republic of Ireland) island of Ireland. This has resulted in different political understanding of what a 'reconciled' society might ultimately look like. At the risk of generalising, for republicans the desired future is of equal and respectful relationships between communities in a united Ireland (they use the term reconciliation to capture this). For unionists, it is a limited form of 'sharing' power with nationalists within a devolved and political body, still dominated by British institutions and culture (they generally avoid the term reconciliation).

As a short-term goal following prolonged violent conflict, a minimalist approach that promotes tolerance of 'the other' might be a useful first step. However, without creating conducive or supportive conditions for inter-community interventions to thrive and sustainable relationships to develop, the danger of getting stuck at this stage or

backsliding is ever-present.

" Reconciliation should be measured as the ability of a society to manage the complex paradoxes and tensions inherent within "

Our research has found that there is a b public desire for the political classes to jointly design – and publicly commit – to a process of horizontal and vertical relationship building. While community-focused relationship-building work has been financially well supported (for example, the EU alone has contributed nearly €2 billion for community-based work) and well-received with the general population, without significant policy-making to systemically address inter-communal division, its impact is somewhat limited.

Reconciliation is a challenging and even paradoxical concept that is highly contextual. In any setting, a genuine interrogation of how a society understands the core elements of reconciliation is vital. This may uncover differences between those who view reconciliation as a transformative process (were underlying differences are addressed, new relationships and cultures of connection emerge and all concerned change in the process) and those who view it as a more limited, functional process (basic levels of respect and tolerance but with little social interaction or addressing root causes of the conflict). In doing so, we might more readily address these inconsistencies from the outset of a peace process, ensure greater clarity and tailor approaches to both assuage genuine fears but also reward those willing to take greater risks for sustainable peace.

We have found our "working definition" to be a useful tool to "diagnose" the development of reconciliation processes over time and where new impetus might be required. In Northern Ireland, we would argue that greater efforts to find a common vision for the future, while also seizing the opportunity to address the hurts of the past, is now urgently required. In other societies, this emphasis might look quite different. What is important is that we remain attuned to the potential outcomes of choosing

transformative or minimalist approaches to addressing a legacy of political conflict and monitor the outcomes these approaches deliver.

1. See among many other publications Hamber, B., & Kelly, G. (2009). Too Deep, too Threatening: Understandings of reconciliation in Northern Ireland. In H. van der Merwe, V. Baxter, & A. Chapman (Eds.), Assessing the Impact of Transitional Justice: Challenges for Empirical Research (pp. 265-293). Washington: United States Institute for Peace.

2. See Lederach, J. P. (1997). Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies. Washington D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press.

3. See van der Merwe, H. (2000). National and Community Reconciliation: Competing Agendas in the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In N. Biggar (Ed.), Burying the Past: Making Peace and Doing Justice after Civil Conflict. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press.

4. Hamber, B. and Kelly, G. (2017). Challenging the Conventional: Can Post-Violence Reconciliation Succeed? A Northern Ireland Case Study. Kofi Annan Foundation & Interpeace: New York.

5. Morrow, D., Robinson, G., & Dowds, L. (2013). The Long View of Community Relations in Northern Ireland: 1989-2012. ARK: Belf

Photography : Hands Across the Divide. Monument in Derry (Londonderry)

Decolonizing transitional justice from indigenous territories

Belkis Izquierdo / Lieselotte Viaene
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This text, the result of an intercultural and interdisciplinary dialogue between a Colombian Arhuaco lawyer, Belkis Izquierdo, and a European anthropologist, Lieselotte Viaene, states that indigenous norms and practices concerning justice, reparation and reconciliation deeply question the dominant paradigm of transitional justice and human rights that is embedded in anthropocentric acceptations. We argue that this encounter not only raises epistemological questions, but, above all, invites us to analyze this as an "ontological conflict"[1] that creates great legal disconformity among human rights defenders.

In countries such as Guatemala and Colombia, the indigenous population has been victim of gross human rights violations during the internal armed conflicts that have affected several Latin American countries for decades. In 1996 peace was signed between the Guatemalan government and the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG) after 36 years of violence that left 200,000 victims of which, according to the Historical Clarification Commission, 83.3% belonged to the indigenous Mayan population. The Commission attributed 93% of the human rights violations to the State and concluded that that there had been acts of genocide. The Ladino sociopolitical and economic elite that governs the country has never sought, in these 20 years, either justice, reparation, truth nor reconciliation. Colombia, where peace was signed between the Government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People's Army (FARC-EP) in 2016, has the opportunity to do things differently.

Belkis was born in Nabusímake, the political and spiritual capital of the Arhuaco people, located in the Sierra Nevada of Santa Marta. In 2014 she became the first indigenous Auxiliary Judge of the High Council of the Judiciary in Colombia, where she was responsible for the coordination and cooperation between indigenous justice systems and the ordinary justice system. Since January 2018 she has been a Judge in the Chamber for the Recognition of Truth, Responsibility and the Determination of Facts and Conduct of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP), created within the framework of the Peace Agreements. While Lieselotte was born in the region of Flanders, Belgium, and since 2002 she has been collaborating with several Maya Q'eqchi' indigenous communities that survived the Guatemalan genocide, as part of her academic and policy research. The Q'eqchi' elders, spiritual guides, victims and former members of the civilian self-defense patrols, taught her to feel and understand beyond dominant acceptations within natural and social sciences.

Mountains, rivers, stones and sacred corn: living beings who are also victims

The international human rights regime, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, the African Court of Human Rights and the Colombian Constitutional Court have gradually recognized and interpreted the scope of collective rights of indigenous peoples, such as the right to self-determination and to land, territory and natural resources. It is legally accepted that indigenous peoples have a "special relationship" – collective and multidimensional – with their land.

Despite this important progress, the hegemonic view of human rights has not yet dealt with the pressing challenges that provoke indigenous views because they question dominant modern ontology culture/nature, mind/body, human/non-human, belief/reality divides. For indigenous peoples the world is non-dual: everything is one, interrelated and interdependent. There is no separation between the material, the cultural and the spiritual. In addition, everything lives and is sacred: not just human beings, but also hills, caves, water, houses, plants and animals have agency.

" The hegemonic view of human rights has not yet faced the indigenous views that question the divisions of the dominant modern ontology between culture/nature, mind/body, human/non-human, belief/reality "

For the Q'eqchi' Maya living in Guatemala and Belize, who identify themselves as *aj r'alch'och* or "sons and daugthers of Mother Earth" [2], everything human and non-human (*yo'yo*) lives and has a spirit, essence or energy (*mu*) that manifests itself in the heart (*ch'ool*). A common greeting in Q'eqchi' is *ma sa sa' la ch'ool*, which literally means "How is your heart?" In other words, the center of thought and feeling is not the mind located in the brain – a key acceptance in the dominant modern ontology – but in the heart of the bodies of humans and non-humans. For example, corn, a sacred food for the Maya (*loqlaj ixim*), generates knowledge, ideas and wisdom (*na'leb*), and positive and negative feelings from its *ch'ool*.

The Sierra Nevada of Santa Marta in Colombia, which is the highest coastal mountain range in the world and a unique ecosystem, is considered by the four indigenous peoples that inhabit it – the Arhuaco, Wiwa, Kogi and Kankuamo – the "heart of the world" or *U'munukunu* This expression is not a romantic metaphor; it means that the Sierra Nevada is both a living physical entity (*guchu*) – the snowy peaks represent the head; the rivers, the veins; the vegetation, the hair – as well as sensory, immaterial or spiritual (*ãnugwe*). According to the Mamos, their spiritual leaders, the relationship between humans and the Sierra Nevada is reciprocal and interdependent, both positively and negatively. In other words, when humans harm non-humans or nature, an energy imbalance is created which implies changes in physical life. Global warming, water scarcity, disease and land infertility will appear. .

This view is also reflected in the ways in which indigenous survivors perceive and act, or do not act, when dealing with the aftermath of serious human rights violations of an

armed conflict. As part of their scorched-earth policy, the Guatemalan army burned the indigenous communities' corn fields (*milpas*). This large-scale act of violence involved not only the destruction of their main food sustenance but also the violation and desecration (*muxuk*) of the sacred corn. "The corn is crying"[3], as indigenous elders say, which is why the crops are no longer as productive as they were before the conflict.

According to the Mamos, the use of chemicals and the fumigation of crops with glyphosate in the Sierra Nevada, in the context of the armed conflict, not only caused environmental damage[4]. There was also a reduction in the vital energies (*ãnugwe*) of the mountains, lagoons, stones and animals that is reflected in an increase in diseases among humans.

Indigenous peoples and reconciliation: towards harmonization and personal and territorial balance

In Guatemala, the epicenter of the design of the various state and non-state transitional justice initiatives has been located mainly in the capital and these are, in addition, predominately guided by Western views of human rights despite the fact that the vast majority of victims are indigenous people living in rural areas[5]. It was not surprising that the National Reparations Program, created in 2007, encountered linguistic difficulties to find an adequate concept in Maya Q'eqchi' to translate "reparation" (*resarcimiento*) during the initial stage[6].

On the basis of the experience gained in Guatemala, Colombia has great potential to become a laboratory where indigenous peoples, together with those responsible for public policies of transitional justice, transcend the limits imposed by the conceptual comfort zone and the practices of this dominant paradigm. At the legal level, Colombia demonstrated its willingness to decolonize transitional justice by incorporating views that were historically silenced and marginalized. First, it created a legal novelty when Decree-Law 4633 of 2011[7], known as the Law of Victims for Indigenous Communities, incorporated the notion of territory as victim. This legislation, a political victory for the indigenous peoples' organizations, establishes that indigenous peoples have "special and collective ties" with "Mother Earth" (Article 3) and have the right to "harmonious coexistence in the territories" (Article 29). In addition, it recognizes that the territory is

"a living whole and sustenance of identity and harmony" and that it "suffers damage when it is violated or desecrated by the internal armed conflict" (Article 45). "Spiritual healing" is part of the integral reparation of the territory (Article 8). In other words, this recognition implies "more rights *of* the territory than rights *over* the territory"[8].

Secondly, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP), a central component of the Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition created as part of the Peace Agreement, promotes restorative justice and would take into account "principles, logics and rationalities of the ethnic peoples' justice systems with the aim of seeking truth through consciousness, reconciliation, healing and harmonization between victims and accused that allows for the strengthening of the community fabric, as well as the harmonization of the territory." (Article 44 § 3, General Regulation 2018). In fact, the entire Peace Agreement has criteria that include a focus on gender as well as on human rights and ethnic diversity.

" Colombia has great potential to become a laboratory where indigenous peoples transcend the limits the practices of the dominant paradigm of transitional justice "

However, the great challenge the Colombian transitional justice process faces is how to approach and put into practice these multiple views of harm, justice, reparation and reconciliation, embedded in indigenous ontologies. In other words, how can concepts of damage to mountains, hills and rivers be included into the legal arena? Can the territory speak when human beings go to the Special Jurisdiction of Peace?[9] According to the indigenous peoples, of course the territory speaks and expresses its feelings. A mountain gets angry, it gets sad, and it expresses this through signs in the dreams of the elders, fire ceremonies or because accidents occur with people. But the harmonization with these spiritual forces and ancestors is not real and does not exist within the human rights and transitional justice fields. So, to what extent will judges be able to listen to and accept this indigenous knowledge in their analysis?

In addition, "controlled equivocation" can be created[10]: misunderstandings that arise when two interlocutors, indigenous communities and the promoters of transitional justice initiatives, are not talking about the same issue but do not know it. The idea that the territory has a heart can become a mask to put an indigenous face on a transitional justice process that continues to deny the existence of another reality. Ancestral practices and norms might become another tool of the transitional justice toolbox, which however promotes simplistic, romantic and disconnected notions of indigenous practices that would deny reparation or reconciliation of spiritual ties with non-humans.

Peace in indigenous territories after the Peace Agreements?

The imposition of natural resource extraction projects in indigenous territories in countries that have suffered violence during armed conflicts such as Guatemala, Colombia and Peru puts the indigenous people in a situation of continuous violations of their human rights. In Guatemala, more than 200 Q'eqchi' Maya communities in the department of Alta Verapaz are being threatened by the Xalalá hydroelectric project[11] ,which would be the second largest dam in the country. More than 80% of this population still does not possess land tenure of the territories where they have historically lived. For the Q'eqchi' Maya, this hydroelectric power plant implies another *nimla rahilal* – great suffering and physical, energetic and spiritual suffering – because , as one elder of the community said, "just as in the 1980s, we human beings, the sacred hills and valleys and Mother Earth are going to suffer a lot." In other words, the transitional justice interventions did not sufficiently address the historical causes of the armed conflict: institutional and societal racism and discrimination against the Mayan peoples, and the concentration of land in the hands of a non-indigenous minority elite. In addition, Latin America is facing a dramatic increase in murders and threats against indigenous leaders and human rights defenders who promote peace and defend territories against extractivist projects.

" The challenge is how to put into practice the multiple views of harm, justice, reparation and reconciliation, embedded in indigenous ontologies. According to the indigenous peoples, of course the territory can speak and express its feelings "

In the light of this extractivism, indigenous survivors have at their disposal a new legal argument in the defense of their territories. New Zealand is a world pioneer in granting legal personality to elements of nature. As a result of more than 140 years of legal negotiations between the Maori people and the state, in 2017 Whanganui River[12] and Mount Taranaki[13] received legal rights because of their spiritual and ancestral relationship with the local Maori. Meanwhile, the Colombian High Courts have recently recognized in historical rulings the Atrato River[14] and Amazonia[15] as rights subjects with the aim of providing reparation for environmental damages and to protect nature. In other words, we argue that this emerging legal concept can be invoked from indigenous ontologies: the life of mountains, rivers, stones and sacred corn must be protected with the right to life enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The task of the Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition of Colombia is not easy. In order that its mechanisms will be meaningful for indigenous survivors, public policies of transitional justice must be organized in such a way they recognizes historically silenced realities and, at the same time, strengthen survivors and indigenous communities from their own territories. This requires not only a decolonization of the legal and social knowledge that informs the field of transitional justice, but, above all, the will to promote deep discussions about "the pluriverse of worlds"[16] with an open mind and a receptive heart.

*Disclaimer: The opinions expressed belong to the authors and do not necessarily reflect the position of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (Colombia)

1. M. Blaser, 2013 'Ontological Conflicts and the Stories of Peoples in Spite of Europe. Toward a Conversation on Political Ontology', *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 54, No. 5, pp. 547-568 y M., De la Cadena 2015, *Earth Beings. Ecologies of Practice across Andean Worlds,* Durham, Duke University Press.

2. See L. Viaene (2015), *La Hidroeléctrica Xalalá en territorios maya q'eqchi' de Guatemala ¿Qué pasará con nuestra tierra y agua sagradas?*

3. See L. Viaene (2010), *The internal logic of the cosmos as 'justice' and 'reconciliation': Micro-level perceptions in post-conflict Guatemala.*

4. Confederación Indígena Tayrona (CIT), *Caracterización de Afectaciones Territoriales de la Zona Oriental y de Ampliación del Resguardo Arhuaco,* document prepared for the Land Restitution Unit, p. 110-111.

5. L. Viaene, 2018, *Nimla Rahilal. Pueblos indígenas y justicia transicional: reflexiones antropológicas*, Bilbao, Universidad de Deusto, in press.

6. This concept does not exist in the Q'eqchi' language. After consultations, the Office translated "reparation" as *xiitinkil li rahilal*, which literally means "to mend the suffering, the pain". But the verb *xiitink*, in its everyday use refers to mending any broken fabric and does not reflect what the survivors feel because what they suffered during the conflict was not something minor that can be patched up. See: L., Viaene, 2010,'Life is Priceless: Mayan Q'eqchi' Voices on Guatemalan National Reparations Program', *International Journal of Transitional Justice*, Vol 4, No. 1, pp 4-25. This problem of the translatability of hegemonic legal concepts expressed in Spanish to the indigenous Q?eqchi? language have their origin in the legal tradition of imposing unidirectional translation processes from legal language to non-hegemonic languages, such as indigenous languages.

7. Decree-Law 4633 of 2011

8. D. Ruiz Serna, 2017, 'Territorio como víctima. Ontología política y las leyes de víctimas para comunidades indígenas y negras en Colombia', *Revista Colombiana de Antropología*, Vol. 53, No 2, pp. 85-113.

9. Cfr. G. Spivak, 1988, 'Can the subaltern speak?', in Nelson, C. and Grossberg, L. (eds), *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, Basingstoke, Macmillan Education, pp. 271-313.

10. E. Viveiros de Castro, 2004, 'Perspectival Anthropology and the Method of Controlled Equivocation', *Tipity Journal of the Society for the Anthropology of Lowland South America*, Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 3-22.

11. Veure L. Viaene (2015), *La Hidroeléctrica Xalalá en territorios maya q'eqchi' de Guatemala ¿Qué pasará con nuestra tierra y agua sagradas?*

12. *Te Awa Tupua Bill* (Whanganui River Claims Settlement) 2017.

13. *Te Anga P?takerongo*, a Record of Understanding for Mount Taranaki, Pouakai and the Kaitake Ranges, signed between the Crown and Ngā Iwi o Taranaki on 20 December 2017.

14. Constitutional Court ruling T-622/16, published in April 2017.

15. Supreme Court ruling STC4360-2018.

16. A.Escobar, 2012, 'Más allá del desarrollo: postdesarrollo y transicionales hacia el pluriverso', *Revista de la Antropología Social*, Vol. 21, pp. 23-63.

Photography : National Victim Day, Guatemala. Author. Lieselotte Viaene

Public perception on reconciliation in South Africa

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It is almost unimaginable to make sense of present-day South Africa, without considering the formative role that the concept of 'reconciliation' has played in its shaping. Sometimes explicitly invoked and at others implicitly assumed, its presence continues to loom large in both public- and private debates about the how its society has evolved in the 24 years that followed its political transition in 1994.

In what remains a divided society, opinion in these debates continues to diverge. Yet, few would dispute that the country faces significant challenges. Some may even go as far as characterising the present juncture as a tipping point. Post-apartheid South Africa may display the outward traits of a vibrant political democracy, but its institutions are increasingly being weighed down by the pressures of unfulfilled expectations. Poverty continues to afflict the black majority disproportionately; its inequality levels – both in terms of income and access to critical services – count amongst the highest in the world; its education system is floundering; and high unemployment figures take on particularly devastating dimensions for young black people. For them and their parents, political freedom has not translated into economic liberation, and increasingly, the foundational tenets that underpinned the transition of the 1990's are being questioned. Counting amongst these is the notion of 'reconciliation' – or at least the way in which it has been conceived of during the transition years into the 2000s.

How did the reconciliation concept come to occupy such a central position in the country's political discourse? The short answer can be formulated as: pragmatism in the absence of clear winners – while they no longer controlled the political playing field,

white South Africans remained dominant in the economy. The somewhat longer version may also include reference to the difficulty that an unreconciled, divided society would have posed for finding consensus on strategies to undo the legacies of colonialism and apartheid. As a result, the country political elite – comprised of a new order, embodied primarily by the newly-elected African National Congress (ANC) government, and an old order, represented by the former National Party (NP) that governed apartheid South Africa since 1948 – had to reach agreement in the mid-nineties on how it would address the country's past, without compromising the stability of its future, against the backdrop of what at the time still had been a fragile peace.

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The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) became a pivotal institution during this transitional period. Tasked with the investigation of gross human rights violations that were committed with a political mandate between 1962 and 1994, the TRC prioritised reconciliation, but departed from an assumption that reconciliation could only materialise once families and friends of victims were provided with the truth about the fates of their loved ones. To overcome the obstacle that the destruction of evidence during the last days of apartheid might have had for obtaining such truth, the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act of 1995 provided for the possibility of amnesty to perpetrators (whom in the opinion of TRC commissioners) provided full disclosure of their acts. The Commission commenced with its hearings in 1996, and by the time it concluded its work in 2002 with the release of its final report,, the TRC's processes and findings were challenged by several political parties, including the ANC and the NP in the course of if existence. Evidently, the TRC did not seek favour with a particular political force at the time.

Apart from a thinly staffed unit in the National Department of Justice, the work of the commission was terminated after the submission of the final report, without any significant measures put into place to follow up and act on the full scope of the Commission's recommendations pertaining to issues, such as the promotion of reconciliation, justice, and memorialisation. In 2000 after the commission completed its public hearings, a number of former TRC staffers set up the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR) as a non-profit think tank to pursue these objectives outside of a government context. To ensure that it keeps a finger on the pulse of the South African nation, to understand how South Africans conceived of reconciliation outside of the TRC process, and to capture how this concept was evolving in its wake, the IJR launched the South African Reconciliation Barometer (SARB).

The SARB, is a national public opinion survey that measures citizen attitudes towards reconciliation, transformation and national unity among nationally representative sample of adult South Africans. As the first of its kind, and one of only a handful of social surveys dedicated to reconciliation globally, the Barometer has become an important catalyst for public debate, a knowledge and policy resource for decision-makers, and a database for academics concerned with the extent to which South Africans have managed to engage with the country's brutal past. It remains the gold standard for such measurement in South Africa, and has inspired and given rise to similar measurement instruments elsewhere in the world.

" To understand how South Africans conceived of reconciliation outside of the Truth Commission process, and to capture how this concept was evolving, an opinion survey has been launched "

The survey is conducted bi-annually (previously annually) through face-to-face interviews with adult South Africans in the language of the respondent's choice, and employs a multi-stage stratified random sample design based on a sampling frame obtained from Statistics South Africa (StatsSA). The final sample is weighted, using the

most recent population estimates from StatsSA in order to ensure that data is representative of the South African adult population. The survey makes use of a questionnaire comprising close-ended responses and measurement scales. The majority of questions are posed in the form of a five-point Likert scale. A few questions allow for "Other" as a response category, for which respondents can provide an alternative response to that provided.

Given the conceptual density of the concept "reconciliation", the project is fully aware of the difficulty and limitations involved in such a project. It does therefore not claim that this survey is able to capture the full nuanced meanings of the concept, but it does try to measure those aspects that are quantifiable. To avoid reductionism, the survey does not make use a single definition of reconciliation. It instead recognises the difference in emphasis that various scholars and observers employ in describing this phenomenon. It furthermore also accepts that such emphasis may vary depending on the unique contexts within which reconciliation takes place.

Since its inception the survey went through two iterations. From 2003-2013, it focussed on the measurement of six key variables (human security, political culture, cross-cutting political relations, race relations, historical confrontation and dialogue), and for each of these a series of indicators were developed. These variables represented a synthesis of the insights that the IJR obtained from a series of national focus group exercises in 2001, aimed at gauging the expectations that ordinary South Africans had of the concept 'reconciliation'. Conscious of the effect that time can have on the reliability of our survey, this process was repeated in 2011. Following this exercise, it became clear that a reformulation of some of the anchoring variables were required to give greater prominence to issues, such as socio-economic justice, as well as the more psychological and relational aspects of reconciliation. This process was concluded in 2015 with a reformulated set of variables pertaining to power relations, democratic political culture, apartheid legacy, racial reconciliation, progress in reconciliation, and perceptions of social change.

One does not have to look further South Africa's traditional- and social media outlets to realise that the country remains a divided society. Hardly any key issue in the country escapes from being interpreted through the lens of race, often giving rise to insult and

anger. Was this to be the only gauge by which to measure the state of social relations in South Africa, there would have clear grounds for despondence. Through its findings, the SARB's results confirm much of the distrust and tension witnessed by the casual observer. And yet, it also provides a picture that is far more nuanced, pointing to particular policy areas that can be leveraged for change and, importantly, a continued desire for national unity that supersedes the existing schisms that pervade society.

> **" One does not have to look further South Africa's traditional and social media outlets to realise that South Africa remains a divided society. Hardly any key issue in the country escapes from being interpreted through the lens of race "**

This is where the great utility of instruments like the SARB lies. It is an independent, empirically sound, measurement instrument that looks beyond the headlines and ask a representative sample of South Africans direct and pertinent questions about the prospects for a more inclusive society, as well as the obstacles that stand in its way. It seeks to understand the attitudes that underpin the day-to-day expressions of intolerance and to highlight the potential levers for change. What makes it particularly useful is its longitudinal nature, which allowes policymakers and academics alike to track change over time and triangulate findings with particular events or periods that might have had an impact on how people view their own place in South African society, as well as their relations with others.

This has allowed us to discern a number of recurring themes, including:

1. Inequality as the primary source of social division: Amongst other things, the SARB requests respondents to indicate what they consider the most important social divisions in the country. In successive surveys since 2005, the most frequently cited primary source of social division mentioned is economic inequality, while race typically featured lower down the list. While this does not mean that class has 'replaced' race as

the primary obstacle to national reconciliation – the two still largely overlap – it nevertheless remains interesting to note, given the rapidly expanding nature of income inequality not only between groups, but also within groups.

2. Intergroup contact and socialisation: Given the remnants of South Africa's apartheid era geography and town planning, South Africans still primarily interact and socialise with people from their own historically-defined racial categories. Levels of contact are highest amongst those find themselves in the so-called formal economy and take place in 'legislated spaces', such as the work place, where measures such as affirmative action obliges employers to cultivate a more diverse and racially representative workforce and in retail spaces, which have been actively integrated since 1994.

3. Questions of Trust: In a deeply divided society, public institutions can potentially play an important role in unifying a society, through the competent and equitable execution of their respective mandates. South Africa has witnessed a precipitous decline in public confidence in key institutions, since the mid-2000s. Much of this may be explained by impediments to government service delivery, resulting from the global economic crisis, and hence declining tax revenues, during the latter half of the previous decade. Yet, equal blame should be apportioned to reckless squandering of resources, as seen with the proliferation of corruption under the administration of former President Jacob Zuma.

Findings such as the above highlight and serve as a unique tool to inform and shape public debate on societal issues, and helps to identify key areas for dialogue, discussion, lobbying, advocacy and change. The value of the SARB project to date, and in future, thus lies in the ability to empirically track change and nuance in the discourse around reconciliation and social cohesion. While societies are complex and their development is almost never linear, instruments such as the SARB allow the IJR to distil the development of trends, but also the actors and events that could cause disruption in the system. The presentation and responses to its findings, in turn, allows the IJR to contribute in the shaping of a more equitable and inclusive society.

Photography : UN Photo/Milton Grant

Sri Lanka's onwards march towards reconciliation

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Absence of a war does not guarantee that another war will not emerge in the future. In this context, it is essential for Sri Lanka to invest in genuine reconciliation. The polity in post war Sri Lanka is further divided on ethnic and religious lines due to non-intervention of the state to take action against groups spreading extremist sentiments. While the youth of the nation is seen as a hope, the youth is polarized due to absence of a holistic approach, although a holistic approach was clearly identified and spelled out in the National Reconciliation Conferences conducted during 2011-2014[1].

The Military was seen as the last resort to end the conflict due to the failure of many past attempts to negotiate for a political settlement. However, the military cannot and should not be seen as the solution for every social issue in Sri Lanka. The war against the Liberation of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) ended in 2009 after nearly thirty years of violent conflict. The defeat of the Tamil Tigers on May 18th, a day remembered as the "Victory day" was later renamed as the "Remembrance day" by the present Government under President Maithripala Sirisena[2]. Among certain military and civil society groups, a different counter narrative still exist against the reconciliation process exercised by the Government. A strong sentiment from certain groups of society was to move back and rename it as the "Victory day". While some groups in the society see the conclusion of the war as a victory against ruthless terrorists, some sees this as a loss of their beloved freedom fighters. This was evident in the Northern Province when the Tamil Tiger leader Prabakaran was remembered as a freedom fighter[3].

The renewed interest by the current Government in peace building strategies and achieving social cohesion is seen as important by the society and the international

arena. Yet there are many limitations and challenges. It is imperative to formulate and adopt a holistic approach in order for people to reconcile with the past and focus on the future. A transformation is necessary in all sectors of society including the military, from a fierce fighting force to a post war military, to many direct and indirect victims who require a healing process, and the general public to understand the importance of investment towards reconciliation.

" It is imperative to formulate and adopt a holistic approach in order for people to reconcile with the past and focus on the future "

The transformation has not taken place due to many limitations and myriad of challenges from Government and civil society. Although there are a few positive actions such as President Sirisena pardoning his own killer, a suicide bomber Sivaraja Jenivan who attempted to assassinate him in 2005.According to Jenivan, "if there were a leader such as President Sirisena 50 years ago, the national issue in the country and destruction caused to the country would have never taken place. You are the only leader in the country accepted by all communities and love all communities in an equal manner. I pray to God that you become the real Father of the Nation by resolving the national issue and the issues of political prisoners.". Thus, Sri Lanka is a very good example to the entire world to study the reflect especially on the subject of reconciliation as we have experienced the radicalization of LTTE youth as well as the radicalization of political extremist youth partial to the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) political party during the late 1980's.

Sri Lanka cannot implement the reconciliation process alone or without the assistance of international community and the Sri Lankan diaspora. This was emphasized by the Canadian Prime minister recently in his statement on the ninth anniversary of the end of the war in Sri Lanka in which he stated that "(…) Canada offers its full support to the Government of Sri Lanka and those working to ensure that efforts towards reconciliation (…)"[4] due to the large Sri Lankan diaspora in Canada.

The holistic approach could be implemented by stakeholders of the six sectors identified in the National Reconciliation Reports[5] Education sector, Youth, Business Community, Religious leaders, Women, and Policy makers. In October 2013, a seminar with participation of six renowned speakers from South Africa shared their experiences with the Sri Lankan participants[6]. The topics of discussion were centered on the Meaning of Reconciliation, History, Role and Purpose of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and Politics of Amnesty. Several Sri Lankan speakers explained the country's situation and challenges ahead in transitioning from a prolonged conflict to sustainable peace. The discussion with eminent Sri Lankan scholars was to understand if Sri Lanka could implement its own TRC. For a holistic approach Sri Lanka's own TRC process is required and necessary.

The process of implementing such mechanisms should be monitored by independent actors such as Interpeace[7] from outside the nation to bring more legitimacy to the process. Unfortunately the recommendations were not sufficiently implemented for the last nine years and the process has been slow.

" Sri Lanka cannot implement the reconciliation process alone or without the assistance of international community and the Sri Lankan diaspora "

Role of Education in Reconciliation

The role of education is a pivotal area which will support the transformation process. The country's most eminent jurists and visionary for peace, Justice CG Weeramantry was instrumental in introducing peace education to the world. Although he was a recipient of the UNESCO Prize for Peace Education, he failed to introduce peace education system to his own country. As Justice Weeramantry rightly identifies, "if humanity was to see an end to violence, peace education was needed to break down the barriers between peoples". Sri Lanka has still not managed to introduce peace

education, global dignity[8] and meaning of reconciliation to the schools, universities and other education institutes. Hoverer, under the present government, Office for National Unity and Reconciliation has launched a pilot programme titled "National Unity and Reconciliation through Higher Education" which aims to introduce a new subject on Conflict Transformation and Reconciliation effective 2018 for the University Students. A society which was engulfed in an ethnic conflict for a long period should bring education to the top of their priority list when implementing the reconciliation process.

According to the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness report[9], Sri Lanka is one of the only nations in South Asia to move from a factor driven economy to efficiency driven economy. By consolidating as a lower-middle income country, the primary socio-economic issue will be to maintain a steady economic growth and capitalize on peace building and transforming the conflict-ridden society to a society with peaceful coexistence to establish the Sri Lankan identity among all ethnic groups. Without social stability, the nation will have to face indirect consequences to its economy such as the recent communal violence in Kandy[10]. Investment in genuine reconciliation is essential and for this continuation of the policy introduced by one Government has to be followed by future Governments. To continue consistent policy, a mandate should be given to an independent institution impartial to politics. While political blessing is required to implement policy recommendations, a strong steel frame bureaucratic institute could be established to avoid unnecessary political interference and policy changes.

" Sri Lanka has still not managed to introduce peace education, global dignity and meaning of reconciliation to the schools, universities and other education institutes "

At present, the task of reconciliation has been divided between one Ministry and high officials. The Reconciliation mechanism in the government has been mainly carried out by the President,[11] Prime-Minister[12] and the former President of Sri Lanka[13]. Therefore,

there are different narratives put forth by successive governments which were made evident as one supports the Hybrid court system with local and International judges while another opposes the process. Building consensus among the policy makers is essential to work towards a holistic approach.

Sri Lankan identity

Creating a Sri Lankan identity is essential in the post war context. On a national level attitude survey on social cohesion carried out by the National Education Research and Evaluation Centre of the University of Colombo in 2007 (table 01), the researchers attempt to find the predominant identity (Citizenship or Ethnicity) that the respondents prefer to identify themselves as. According to the survey, out of the two options, Sinhalese tend to identify themselves by their citizenship (22.1%); Tamils and Muslims tend to identify themselves by their ethnicity (20.7 and 36.6%respectively). However, there are several differences among groups such as students, teachers, lecturers and trainees.

Table 01: Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslims indicating how they identify themselves: Citizenship and Ethnicity.

Source: (Wijetunge, 2007, pp. 51-54)

Although the data provided here is not sufficient to make an outright judgment on the attitudes with regard to the dominant identity, the need for better integration is highlighted[14]. Investment by all stakeholders in society to create a Sri Lankan identity is of paramount in the present context.

A holistic approach would be necessary in order to progress towards genuine reconciliation. The limitations of achieving reconciliation should be quickly addressed and it is important to build a genuine reconciliation process to deliver tangible results to the society in post war Sri Lanka.

1. National Reconciliation Reports (2011-2014) Published by Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute of International Relations and Strategic Studies.

2. Sri Lanka shift on civil war anniversary (2015).

3. Indian Express (2017), Tamil leaders in Sri Lanka celebrate LTTE chief Prabhakaran's 63rd birthday anniversary.

4. Statement by Justin Trudeau, the Prime Minister of Canada, on the ninth anniversary of the end of the war in Sri Lanka (2018).

5. National Reconciliation Reports (2011-2014), published by Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute of International Relations and Strategic Studies.

6. The Discussion was held at the Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute, Sri Lanka.

7. Interpeace organization.

8. Global Dignity organization

9. World Economic Forum GCI Report (2017).

10. Abeyagoonasekera (2018), *IPCS, Racism, Riots, and the Sri Lankan State*,

11. The Ministry of National Integration and Reconciliation is the main Ministry that comes under President Sirisena.

12. Secretariat for Coordinating Reconciliation Mechanisms, which comes under by Prime Minister's office, Ranil Wickremesinghe.

13. Former President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga is the chairperson of the office for National Unity and Reconciliation (ONUR).

14. Weerasinghe (2018), Education: Towards Sustainable Peace and Shared economic Prosperity. Education empowerment and transformation.

Fotografia : Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement.

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IN DEPTH

The impossibility of reconciliation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Daniel Eror
President of Youth for Peace

Reconciliation is truly something out of ordinary. Peace is out of ordinary, as well. Understanding reconciliation as a term only, etymologically defined, would lead us to its acceptance as something ordinary, typical. Reconciliation is much above; it means more than *bringing back together*, it should be seen as a complex process that brings society from *the end of the war* to *the peace*. *The end of the war* is a point where all violent conflicts are terminated, while the peace is quite opposite reality and it means absence of any kinds of violence. Ending the violent conflict by ceasefire, peace treaty or by overpowering the opponent provides peace, but only negative one. Reconciliation is a process that could transform negative peace to real one. Although reconciliation can be analysed on a level of bringing two individuals back together, this article will pay attention to reconciliation as social phenomenon.

In order to see what reconciliation is, it's important to see what it is not. It can't be perceived as tolerance, because of passivity of tolerance: "I tolerate you, I don't want to remove you but I don't mind if something else removes you". Spending time together with those from the *other side* is positive, it can contribute in peace-building but it is not still reconciliation, especially if we are returned back in our bubbles of comfort, afterwards, without any change. To reconcile doesn't mean to unite, it doesn't mean to become same as the other one and it doesn't even mean not to be in conflict anymore. It's legitimate to be opposed, to have different perception of the reality. Reconcile doesn't mean to forget, neither. Finally, reconciliation is not part of legal system, of trials, verdicts or punishments, although it can be related.

Understanding reconciliation as a process toward peace is fine, but understanding it as a process to the peace is much more challenging, it defines reconciliation as impossibility, but in the same time it opens door of genuine motivation to pursue the real peace. Reconciliation should not be a process that goes next to us, it has to be part of us, everyone should take part in it, proactively, engaging himself or herself into it, trying to live within it and to live it. Only that way we can understand reconciliation as impossibility, and we can work on accomplishing the impossible. To bring it to very personal level, if we firmly and honestly decide we want peace for us with others and we want peace for the others, as well as if we are proactive in achieving this, only then we are doing reconciliation. If we perceive it as ordinary, we condemn ourselves and our community to the vicious circle of negative peace and hidden violence. Reconciliation is not acceptance, reconciliation is undertaking, it means to be brave, to take a risk, to be ready to go through the change, to accept you will be changed.

Usually, reconciliation comes between two or more sides. In the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) there are even three sides. Three ethnic groups identify themselves as Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats. Very important factor for these identities are religious affiliations, three of them. Majority of Bosniaks declare as Muslims, Serbs as Orthodox Christians and Croats as Roman Catholics. Since Dayton agreement from the year 1995 those groups live in Bosnia and Herzegovina, people suffer in negative peace, although being out of armed conflict, they lack real, positive peace.

" To reconcile doesn't mean to unite, it doesn't mean to become same as the other one and it doesn't even mean not to be in conflict anymore "

It is obvious whom to reconcile, but we should try to understand what was wrong, as well. The answer is hidden in, at least six centuries of history. It's very difficult to discuss past and even harder to look for the truth, so I will focus on present projection of the past only. The fact is that each of three groups is seen as a victim of another one, at least once in history. Correspondingly, each group is recognized as perpetrator at

least once, each group seems to be guilty at least once. Furthermore, these ethnic and religious groups' borders in the perception nowadays are very fluent, so different empires, kingdoms, states, nations or nationalities and their everlasting sins are resurrected in Bosniaks, Serbs or Croats. In the last six centuries the periods of wars and 'non-wars' exchanged, but there was never the period of real peace. While periods of wars were used to trot out all hatred and animosity, the periods of 'non-wars' were excellent to breed, grow and revamp negativities from before. Each time, it was darker, scarier, bloodier and more beastly.

Is it right time to finish it? – it has to be! The civilization has reached stage where it has to be done. Peace studies are growing since World War II, interdisciplinary approach to the problem analysis creates more opportunities for reconciliation and the world possesses weapons to destroy whole planet several times. Enough arguments to abolish any kind of war. If we understand reconciliation as a process to the peace and reconciliation as undertaking actions, it puts responsibility on us to be proactive and make reconciliation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Reaching peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina means constant battle with windmills. Or not? If we have to fight windmills, it means they are rotating. They are rotating because there is a wind. So, looking at Chinese proverb "When the wind of change blows, some people build walls, others build windmills", we see that instead fighting windmills we can build our windmills and use the same wind for a change.

" In Bosnia and Herzegovina making sides equal would mean to give up of presenting your group as biggest victim and the other as guilty "

Each side enjoys considering itself as a victim of the other one rather to see everyone as victims of the war. Making sides equal would mean to give up of presenting your group as biggest victim and give up of presenting the other as guilty. Trying to accept your group's responsibility is strongly opposed by menacing words "don't try to equal their

atrocities with ours". Bosnia and Herzegovina had hundreds small wars in nineties, on different locations, with different sides engaged and with different goals set. Each location tells different story and depending on location and period of war, each side had been fighting other two. Killing, torturing, raping, exile, deterrence – it is part of memory of everyone in BiH, if not directly, then through others' stories. Violence burden past creates present loaded with fear and distrust, generally toward the other group. The reality is locked in sentences as *forgive, but not forget* and *don't let it happen ever again to us*. The others are seen as potential threat, if not right now, then will be soon.

Ethnical cleansing created many mono-ethnic communities, separated from each other, an excellent ground for nationalistic narratives to flourish. Narratives representing the others as villains, aliens with genetic mutations, either obvious tyrant or cunning mole who lurk an opportunity to attack. Obvious segregation works in line with narratives, thus dehumanizing the others.

Mental health is also an issue. Beside trauma from the war, people go through soft trauma living negative peace. Apathy, together with learned helplessness, kills any motivation to make change. Tripartite political system works only as catalyst for segregation and violence, thus not helping individuals to do a change, to turn negative peace to real one.

These problems and reconciliation setbacks are present in other parts of the world; proper nouns are different but the story behind them is quite similar. Looking at those facts, it brings us to the point where reconciliation becomes impossible. In the same time, if situation is not changed, the future will bring more conflicts and more wars. It creates responsibility to act, to create better society for our children.

" Reconciliation won't come itself, it requires deed and effort. Understanding and acceptance of impossibility for reconciliation will force us to create different paths, to be creative "

Youth are considered as the most powerful protagonists of reconciliation. They are brave enough to make a step out, to try something different. They are fine even if they fail, and still have motivation for another try. Hope inside them win over fear, still. Although they have heard stories of their parents, they have no direct violent trauma. Finally, if they see their authorities as faulty, authority in family, ethnic or religious group, some of them won't hesitate to disobey it, or even confront it. They are creative enough to design their windmills to create world better place to live in.

Although reconciliation should be done on various levels and with different groups of people, reconciliation and youth in Bosnia and Herzegovina works well. If youth are encouraged to try something out of ordinary, they will do it, they are still curious, willing to make a move which is strongly not recommended in their community. When they do it, they discover banality of that prohibition, behind the curtain of distrust they find individuals very similar to themselves, sharing same problems, wishes, fears, sharing reality of young person. Such encounter, although seen as trivial, makes a change. They know how to ask question *why*, either because they want to have critical thinking, they are just curious or even just want to defy others. By trying to answer that question they enter in a vortex that creates possibility to come out stronger and wiser. Either they manage to do it by themselves, or they get help, they can discover a lot.

Reconciliation processes with youth, either are indirect, spending time together, or direct, through activities of dealing with the past, sharing painful memories, pursuing the truth, result with mutual understanding while identifying personal experiences in others' stories. In steps toward reconciliation, it is vital to find a victim of vicious circle of hatred and distrust on the other side, not a monster from a childhood stories. If young person can hear and understand the other side, a link is created. That link recreates trust which means a huge step toward coexistence and reconciliation.

Living in absence of real peace means suffering. The peace should be everyone's goal. Having peace as a goal only, is not enough. In order to ensure better situation for next generation, everyone has to be proactive, to work on reconciliation. Reconciliation won't come itself, it requires deed and effort. Understanding and acceptance of impossibility for reconciliation will force us to create different paths, to use imagination, be creative, to build new windmills. When we fight for peace, peace that is something out of

ordinary, we have to be brave, to be ready to step out, to make a change, to be changed, to succeed, to fail and to try again. We have to believe in it, to live it, only then, we are ready to experience real reconciliation. It's difficult, true, but it's worth.

Photography: Photo of the exhibition "Living on the Edge", by Marco Ansaloni and Angelo Attanasio, produced by ICIP. Author: Marco Ansaloni

RECOMANEM

Materials and resources recommended by the ICIP

Books
Bibliography on reconciliation

The ICIP Library offers a wide variety of titles dealing with the issue of reconciliation and the promotion of coexistence in post-conflict periods.

By clicking on this link you will find a selection of books on reconciliation, available on loan.

The library, located at Carrer Tapineria 10, 1st floor, in Barcelona, is a center specializing in issues of peace culture, security and conflicts. The library's collection covers the following thematic areas: peace and nonviolence, armed conflict, conflict transformation and resolution, international law and legislation, political science, international relations, security, disarmament, terrorism, development cooperation, social movements and environmental policies.

Videos
International seminar "Experiences of reconciliation"

Last May 9th the ICIP and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung foundation organized the international seminar "Experiences of reconciliation" with the aim of studying various reconciliation processes which have taken place following episodes of violent conflict. Reconciliation understood as a long comprehensive process in which many issues such as the clarification of truth and justice or reparation are brought into play, and in which not only victims and perpetrators intervene, but society as a whole.

The seminar counted with the participation of Aitziber Blanco (facilitator of dialogue processes in the Basque Country), Laryssa Chomiak (Centre d'Études Maghrébines à Tunis), Daniel Eror (Youth for Peace, Bosnia and Herzegovina), Brandon Hamber (Ulster University), Yves Kamuronsi (AEGIS, Rwanda), Ulrich Mählert (Federal Foundation for the Study of the Communist Dictatorship in Eastern Germany), Nishchal N. Pandey (Centre for South Asian Studies, Nepal), Queralt Solé (University of Barcelona) and Raquel Zelaya (Asociación de Investigación y Estudios Sociales, Guatemala).

Videos of all the seminar are now available in YouTube.

Exhibition
Living on the Edge

Living on the Edge is a photojournalism project created by Marco Ansaloni and Angelo Attanasio about conflict and reconciliation in divided cities in Europe. The project consists of a photographic exhibition and an audiovisual presentation of a journalism project carried out in four divided cities in Europe: Belfast (Northern Ireland), Mitrovica (Kosovo), Mostar (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and Nicosia (Cyprus).

The conflicts that these four cities have gone through have left a deep scar on their residents, and the population has been divided into two almost separate parts. Despite the weight of history and the division which still marks everyday life in these cities, people on both sides are working to overcome the past and define a common future beyond their differences.

Living on the Edge shows how stories of conflict and reconciliation are intertwined and reflected in the fragmented mirror of the urban fabric where they occur.

The exhibition, consisting of 26 two-sided panels, is designed to be installed both indoors and outdoors. The audiovisual pieces that complement the exhibition can be seen on ICIP's YouTube channel.

Website
ONUR

The Office for National Unity and Reconciliation (ONUR) is a public agency that was set up under the initiative of the Government of Sri Lanka in 2015. This office is responsible for formulating and coordinating the implementation of policies and programs to build national unity and reconciliation in that country. Accordingly, this agency is key to peacebuilding and the creation of bridges between the peoples of Sri Lanka.

ONUR articulates its actions through eight programs: Art and culture for reconciliation; Celebrating religious and cultural diversity; Comprehensive development plans; Conflict transformation programs; Education sector initiatives; Grievance handling unit; Language initiatives; and Livelihood development.

This website features various multimedia resources that document the initiatives and advocacy actions developed by ONUR. Thus, through photos, videos or podcasts, ONUR allows the user to approach the conceptual elements that guide the entity, as well as the activities that are promoted in relation to the programs. Finally, it is worth noting that ONUR has also launched the quarterly newsletter "Samagiya," ("Unity") as a space for reflection and debate, and also as a source of information on the activities of the Office.

Documentary
Forgive – Don't Forget

The documentary *Forgive – Don't Forget* deals with the connection between two very different cultures and the importance of memory. At the end of World War II, when Japan surrendered to the US, numerous swords were confiscated and taken to the United States. These swords, considered then a symbol of war and aggression in one of the international conflicts with the most victims in history, also have a deep historical, social and spiritual significance in Japanese culture. In order to better understand the events that took place in this context, explore the perspectives of the participants and build a bridge between cultures in the present, an American filmmaker attempts to return one of these surrendered swords to its original owner.

Campaign
Letters for reconciliation

The campaign Letters for Reconciliation was launched at the World Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates held in Bogotá, Colombia, in February 2017, after Leonardo Párraga of the BogotArt Foundation, and Cristian Palacios, of the Jóvenes para Jóvenes (Youth for Youth) Foundation, talked to Kailash Satyarthi, the 2014 Nobel Peace Laureate. In their brief exchange, the honoree mentioned that we write many love letters to those we love on Valentine's Day, while forgetting the people most in need, such as refugees. Satyarthi then added that he wanted to share love with those who needed encouragement the most.

Leonardo and Cristian adapted the campaign to the context of Colombia and came up with the idea to send letters of hope and support to ex-combatants of the FARC, thus creating a new channel of communication with civil society and reducing past tensions. In this regard, Párraga comments: "In a country with so much polarization, with such a divided society, it is important to look for symbols that can unite us, that can help us find common ground where we can all collaborate and where our actions have a positive meaning; where, instead of separating ourselves we can find spaces to combine forces from our own personal effort."

The initiative was developed in various Colombian cities, including Cali, Manizales, Medellín, Barranquilla and Bogotá. The campaign aimed to collect and deliver 6,900 letters, one for each ex-combatant.

Conference
Recognition, Reparation and Reconciliation

The conference "Recognition, Reparation and Reconciliation," organized by the University of Stellenbosch (South Africa) and the Australian Human Rights Centre at the University of New South Wales, will take place at the University of Stellenbosch on 5-8 December 2018. The main objective is to generate a debate on the understanding of traumatic pasts from a multidisciplinary perspective, taking into account the intergenerational repercussions of this phenomenon. It also intends to contribute to the generation of new knowledge in this area of research with reference to the comparative perspective and the creation of an archive that includes memory and transnational and intercultural traumatic pasts.

The starting points of the discussion will mainly involve the convulsive political scene and the intergenerational struggles occurring in South Africa, as well as the debates that are taking place in Australia on the difficulties of the Constitution to guarantee the effective exercise of aboriginal rights. However, the conference will have a transnational character and the discussions will not be limited to South Africa and Australia. On the contrary, some of the latest research in this area will be presented and an artistic perspective of the representation of historical trauma through artistic expressions such as cinema, photography, theater and the visual arts will also be included.

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TRIBUNA

1968: A global event

Jaime Pastor
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On the fiftieth anniversary of the watershed year 1968, interpretations of all kinds are resurfacing once again. There are those who try to limit its significance only to what happened in France, a country that was undoubtedly the epicenter of that year, since it was there where the mobilization reached its zenith with the most massive general strike in its history. However, the global dimension of that year is often forgotten, especially if we extend it to previous and subsequent years in what a growing trend in historiography has defined as "the '68s." There are also those who claim that it was merely a youth and student rebellion, forgetting that, although a new student generation led many of the revolts in different parts of the world, broad sectors of the working class and of other generations also took part, not only in France but also in Italy and elsewhere around the world. Others limit its scope to an undeniable cultural revolt, thereby seeking to deny its deeply political dimension, which led to challenges to the then-existing regimes in France as well as in Czechoslovakia, Mexico, Italy and elsewhere.

Beyond the debate about the (re)interpretations of 1968, it seems difficult to deny the place that those "'68s" have in history as a "revolution in and of the world-system," as Immanuel Wallerstein maintains. Because, although it is true that these revolts did not end – not even in France – in victorious revolutions, they were experienced as a historical breaking point with the prevailing consensus of that time between and within the two great blocs (the Western and Soviet Blocs) and in the midst of the challenge posed by the anti-imperialist movements, with Vietnam as the main reference point, against the freezing of the global status quo by the then two superpowers. In the words of Maurice Blanchot and Herbert Marcuse, it was, in short, a "Great Rejection" of the

global order that had been established since the end of the Second World War, putting the possibility of "changing the world" and "transforming life" back at the center of the debate.

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It is also worth noting that criticism of the major parties on the left, both the Social Democrats and, more unequally, the Western Communist parties, had an important impact on that global revolt. They were considered to be an integral part of the system that acted as "parties of order" vis-à-vis these movements. It was this rejection that led to the search for another policy and, with it, the proliferation of new organizations with Maoist, Trotskyist, councilist or libertarian ideologies that opted for revolutionary projects that they believed to be possible – and that many of their enemies feared. However, very soon they came up against a counteroffensive from above that had its beginnings in Pinochet's coup d'état in September 1973 and, later, in the defeat of the Portuguese revolution in November 1975, to then give way to the long neoliberal period which we are still in after the end of the cycle of postwar economic expansion.

It is therefore necessary to remember the global commotion that the watershed year of 1968 brought about and the centrality of the May-June revolt in France within it. However, we must not underestimate the relevance of the Prague Spring (which fought for a socialist democracy), the Mexican September (which confronted the PRI's "perfect dictatorship"), Italy's "long May" (opposed to the State's "strategy of tension") or the convergence of the civil rights movement with the student protest and anti-Vietnam war movement in the US. In all these places, and in many others, there were some common features: the "liberation of the word" (Michel de Certeau), the use of assemblies, the occupation of streets (and, in many cases, work and study centers), experimentation with alternative community experiences, enormous creativity in very

different areas, etc. – the conformation, in short, of a shared rebellious and anti-authoritarian subjectivity.

" The breach and the substratum opened by 1968 created the right framework for the irruption of what are conventionally referred to as "new social movements" "

Focusing more on the case of France, it was in that country where all those features were present in a more extensive and massive way, although they were never strong enough to lead at least to the fall of the Gaullist regime. Nevertheless, two dimensions were developed during the key months of May and part of June that Boltanski and Chiapello defined as the "social critique" and the "artistic critique" of capitalism. The former was aimed at denouncing it as a source of misery and inequality, but also of selfishness; the latter focused on rejecting it as a source of disenchantment and oppression in the different areas of society and everyday life. In short, they pointed to criticism of exploitation and alienation, wanting to go beyond the then-hegemonic Fordist-Keynesian commitment and "liberation" through consumption to defend autonomy around an "us" (that was still sexist then) as opposed to systemic heteronomy.

It was the breach and the substratum (Edgar Morin) opened by 1968, despite its political defeat (with the consequent frustrations, despair and cooptation of many of its protagonists by the system) that created the right framework for the irruption of what are conventionally referred to as "new social movements." Because, although we cannot say that 1968 was feminist, "without 1968, feminism would not have become a mass phenomenon," since it "forced a generation of women to settle their accounts with politics" (Lidia Cirillo), taking to the ultimate consequences the formula "the personal is political." The same could be said of environmentalism, based on criticism of capitalist urbanism and everyday life, of which Henri Lefebvre was a pioneer, as well as the denunciation of the society of entertainment and consumption, coming mainly

from the Situationist International. Especially in Germany and Great Britain, this environmentalism merged with radical pacifism, which became the protagonist of a powerful movement against the threat of nuclear war in the 1980s.

" The embers of May 68 continue to smolder in the waves of protests and continue to generate potentially anti-systemic movements that seek to escape from an alienating order "

All these processes were followed in the Spanish society of those years, especially by the new generation that was starting university and joining the workforce, though on a much smaller scale and with far less intensity. The particular and harsh conditions in which we were fighting the Franco dictatorship did not facilitate an outbreak of protest similar to that which occurred in countries such as France or Italy. However, beginning in 1965, a student movement had developed that was capable of defeating the regime's official trade union and setting up a democratic trade union movement that was supported by the majority of students. The year 1968 was precisely the culmination of the rise of a cycle of struggles, and Raimon's concert at Madrid's School of Political and Economic Sciences on 18 May is perhaps the event that has most strongly remained in our collective memory. An increase in repression would follow which would lead to the proclamation of a state of emergency in January 1969 after the murder a few days earlier of student and Popular Liberation Front activist Enrique Ruano by Franco's police. In his justification of these exceptional measures Franco's minister at the time, Manuel Fraga Iribarne, did not hide the fear of a contagion effect stating that "prevention is better than cure; we are not going to wait for a May day after which getting everything back in order will be more difficult and come at a higher price."

Today, fifty years later and regardless of the different career paths of those of us who belong to the "generation of '68," we have a legacy that is well defined in these words of Daniel Bensaïd: "What matters are not the ashes of May 1968, but its embers, the resurgence of those possibly defeated and rejected." Embers that continue to smolder

in the waves of protests that have been happening since then and that continue to generate potentially anti-systemic movements that seek, as proposed in a manifesto published on 9 May 1968 in France: "to escape by all means from an order that is alienating, yet so strongly structured and integrated that simple opposition always runs the risk of being co-opted."

Photography : May 31, 1968. Gaullist demonstration in the streets of Toulouse.

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TRIBUNA

Mexico: the imperative search

Carlos Manuel Juárez
Journalist

Eulalio Garza is digging with his hands. The damp earth gets underneath his fingernails. He digs, digs, digs. A piece of cloth appears. The sixty year old man tugs on the cloth and out comes a bundle. Slowly, he opens it, and a black sandal appears, followed by a red polo shirt with blue and white stripes, a light-coloured denim shirt –burnt on one side– and a coloured blouse with white strings.

Eulalio –sitting next to the one-meter deep hole– checks the footwear. The dirt, stuck to the plastic, doesn't allow him.

"What does it say?" he asks Graciela Pérez while reaching her the sandal.

She takes the sandal while wearing medical protective gloves, cleans it and answers: "Titanio. Does it sound familiar?"

"No, jus' fo' gluing or something like that... so outta the blue...," says the man without making much sense.

"What did you find?" Vicente Hernández inquires over the walkie-talkie.

"Just clothes," the woman replies.

Eualio doesn't get up, but keeps inspecting the clothes, looking for some kind of sign or label or stain, investigating the hole thoroughly. Eulalio is looking for a clue to find his son or Graciela's daughter or Carmen's son or Antonia's husband or Daniela's firstborn or one of Tamaulipas' other six thousand missing persons.

Tamaulipas is a Mexican state, in the shape of an elephant, bordering the Gulf of Mexico and the United States of America; an elephant with a surface of 80,249 square kilometres, 420 kilometres of coast along the Gulf of Mexico, five international airports and 17 border crossings. This is where the second province of New Spain was founded, some 490 years ago.

Nine decades ago, it was also the birthplace of Juan N. Guerra, the leader of a group of smugglers who sold whisky to US bootleggers, Al Capone amongst them. During the second half of the seventies, the group became a criminal organisation, trafficking drugs with clear rules: only relativåes could be bosses, they needed to lead a discrete life, avoid public acts of violence and financially maintain the protection from national, state and municipal authorities. Society either loved or feared them. From the eighties onward, the succeeding capo Juan García Ábrego lifted the group to a higher level, bringing it just below the Guadalajara Cartel. To put it at the same level in appearances, Juan García named the group the Gulf Cartel. After his arrest, an ex-mechanic took over the reins of the group and, in order to become completely equivalent, started sending Christmas presents to poor children. The group extended its control all the way to Nuevo León, including its capital Monterrey. Society loved, respected and feared them. Being a member of the cartel represented social status.

The violence started in 2003. During that year, the Gulf Cartel and the Sinaloa Cartel started a battle of death and terror in Nuevo Laredo. The groups fought for the control over the city that hosted the most productive customs office for foreign trade in Latin America. This is where Los Zetas, the weaponed arm of the Gulf Cartel, appeared. This commando existed of deserted military personnel, who received further training in guerrilla tactics from Americans and Israelis. The battle lasted for more than thirty months. Los Zetas burned houses and business, butchered their presumed rivals, dismembered people, threw the population into terror, mainly through the disappearance of persons. In 2006, when Felipe Calderón Hinojosa took office as president of Mexico, he declared war on drug trafficking. Violence and terror progressively increased until 2010. The Gulf Cartel and Los Zetas did what they knew best: make war.

" In 2003, violence started in the Mexican state of Tamaulipas. The Gulf Cartel and the Sinaloa Cartel started a battle of death and terror "

This was where the war started, right where Eulalio Garza was digging, in the Ribereña region, less than one kilometre away from the border wall separating Mexico from the United States. For decades, its semi-arid surface had been the setting where Texans had fun on hunting ranches, both livestock and agriculture produced dividends and Petróleos Mexicanos (Pemex) extracted hydrocarbons. Another distinctive activity of the area was and is the trafficking of drugs and people.

In Ribereña, peace is just a memory, a longing. On February 22nd of 2010, Los Zetas challenged the Gulf Cartel. Dozens of men started waging war. When the Armed Forces stepped in, the gangsters had already murdered, kidnapped and disappeared female and male students, young professionals, mothers, fathers, grandparents. "Here, of those who have people missing, it's very rare to have only one person missing; we all have more missing persons, more relatives, let's say nephews or uncles or cousins, there are many, everyone has at least three or four," says a woman named Carmen.

Carmen has not received any news from her son for eight years, the same period Antonio has been looking for his wife or during which Olga Mayorga has been insisting on inspecting the mass graves to look for her son Diego Armando, her son-in-law Raúl and his friends Rubén and José Manuel.

Olga has been searching the central northern area of Tamaulipas for almost three thousand days. The last time she heard from her relatives was on the evening of February 24th of 2010. The men disappeared on the road, in the midst of the clashes. Olga's request for help was ignored by the military. She and her siblings searched the country roads and found open vans, full of blood, abandoned clothing, bullet shells, and discovered the vehicle their relatives had been using. The year 2010 crept forward. In the month of August, 72 migrants were murdered in San Fernando, Olga's place of residence. The massacres in Nuevo León and Tamaulipas multiplied. The government only showed up to collect the bodies. Olga accepted the fact that her son could be dead and did her first DNA test. The convoys of vans with armed men, the car bomb attacks against the media and the authorities, the kidnapping of women and the sacking of ranches had become common events.

Olga kept searching until the gangsters started intimidating her daughter. On the morning of February 28th of 2011, the women requested the Barack Obama administration for asylum on the Matamoros international bridge. This request was accepted, but Olga renounced to the protection, in order not to abandon her search. On her long journey along the border, she met Miriam Rodríguez Martínez.

Miriam was the leader of the collective in San Fernando, a group dealing with 600 cases of missing persons. The woman, who ran a business and worked in the town hall, was in charge of managing social and sanitary care. On May 10th of 2017, Miriam Rodríguez succeeded to raise the money for the transfer of the body of Jesús Emanuel to San Fernando. The young man had been murdered the Tuesday before, and the family did not have the means to pay the funeral services. Miriam informed the undertaker and left for lunch to celebrate Mother's Day. When she returned home that evening, she parked her van, got out and, while she was walking, a hitman fired twelve shots at her. The sixty-year old woman died before she reached the general hospital.

" The problem of the thousands of missing persons remained outside the public spotlight for years; in 2017, people started talking about it on the streets and in the news media "

Two weeks before the assassination, the Tamaulipan activist had a WhatsApp chat with a companion from the collective. Miriam wrote: "Despite all the pain, I keep believing in God and hoping. And I don't consider stopping. Not until I die. Bastards, I haven't even been able to bury my daughter wholly."

Karen Alejandra Salinas Rodríguez is the daughter that Miriam was referring to in the message. In January 2014, organised crime members kidnapped the minor. The family asked the bank for a loan, sold whatever they could and paid the ransom. The kidnappers never released her but instead sent a message, saying she was dead. The mother dedicated her life to finding the body and those guilty for her death.

Nine months were enough for Miriam to identify all the killers, one by one. One day, in the village of El Arenal –located in the rural area of San Fernando–, Miriam dug until she found dozens of bones, buried in clandestine graves. She called the District Attorney so they would dig up and safeguard the remains. The state government sent the bones to a lab in Washington. The experts received a puzzle of bodies; they were not able to fully reassemble a single one, there were pieces of six different bodies, with the genetic characteristics of a two-year old boy, pregnant women, young men and one underage girl: Karen Alejandra.

Miriam Rodríguez buried part of her daughter and continued her investigation for three more years. After the escape of 29 inmates from prison in Victoria, Tamaulipas, on March 22nd of 2017, Miriam Rodríguez started fearing for her life. The government gave her the phone number of a police officer. On Friday, April 14th she called thirty times –she held count–, but no one answered. The mother asked the vice-secretary of the Tamaulipas government, Gloria Garza Jiménez, for protection. After her death, the official denied everything. Nevertheless, the request had been recorded on video. The governments of the republic and the state organised a *post mortem* tribute to expiate the irresponsible actions.

" "In Tamaulipas, we are only few people still searching because fear is big, and the feeling of helplessness is smouldering" "

The problem of the thousands of missing persons remained outside the public spotlight for years in Tamaulipas. In May 2017, people started talking about it on the streets, news media started publishing items, and there were demands for a solution in public places. Whatever people had achieved in the previous eight months was paralysed. The killing of Miriam held back the few relatives who were still searching, and terrified thousands.

The one who did not hold back was Graciela Pérez Rodríguez. This 49-year old woman was looking for her daughter Milynali, her nephews José Arturo, Alexis and Aldo de Jesús, and her brother Ignacio. They had been abducted by organised crime on August 14th of 2012. The family was travelling in a van from Texas to Tamuín, San Luis Potosí. When passing El Mante, a town located in the Southwest of Tamaulipas, they went missing. Since that day, their mother, aunt and sister never stopped looking for them.

Graciela Pérez is the strongest and clearest voice of all the collectives of missing persons in Tamaulipas. During her six years' search, she founded the organisation *Ciencia Forense Ciudadana* (CFC – Citizens' Forensic Science). That is where she prepared herself for the proposed field search, in order to register the discovery of human remains in camps of organised delinquency by means of blood and DNA samples, and created a civil genetic register and database. "In Tamaulipas, the ones who are still searching are just ourselves and the relatives of missing persons; we are only few because fear is big, and the feeling of helplessness is smouldering," says the activist who was granted the Human Rights Tulip, an annual prize, awarded by the government of the Netherlands.

Tamaulipas is the state with the highest number of disappearances in Mexico. 18 per cent of the country's persons whose location is unknown were last seen in Tamaulipan territory. Here –considering the numerical situation–the Ayotzinapas case took place 139 times[1]. The testimonies and the high percentage are still magnified when we take into account the intentional homicides: 7,327 over the last twelve years. Graciela, Eulalio, Carmen, Antonia, Olga and the prospectors admit not all cases can be found in the official registers. Eight years after the start of the "armed conflict"?, "low-intensity or nonconventional war"?, many women and men have still not declared the death or disappearance of their loved ones.

Precisely in the area where Eulalio had been digging with his bare hands, the first forensic pantheon *Unidos por el Recuerdo* (United through Memory) was opened on April 16th of 2018. The German Cooperation Agency and the Foundation of Forensic Anthropology of Guatemala participated in the exhumation and analysis of bodies or human remains. The relatives keep hoping they will find their sons, daughters, fathers, grandchildren in the graves; that is their wish. They do not have any hope for the State

punishing the perpetrators. They long for the peace they will be able to find once they have located their loved ones, the same peace they find today in their unfaltering search.

1. In September 2014, 43 students of the Escuela Normal Rural in Ayotzinapa (Iguala, Mexico) disappeared, nine were killed and over thirty more were injured after violent encounters with the Police. Four years later, the families of the students continue their struggle to find their bodies, so that the truth comes out and justice can be obtained.

Photography : Author: Carlos Manuel Juárez

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INTERVIEW

Interview with Pastora Mira, coordinator of the Reconciliation Center of San Carlos, Colombia

Eugènia Riera
International Catalan Institute for Peace

Pastora Mira, coordinator of the Reconciliation Center of San Carlos, Colombia

For years, the horror of war converged on the small Colombian town of San Carlos. Between 1998 and 2005, 18,000 of its 25,000 residents fled the town. There were 1,250 homicides, 33 massacres, 210 forced disappearances and 12 victims of sexual violence. Now, decades later, the people of San Carlos live together in harmony. Victims and victimizers share spaces and recover their quiet life. Their struggle for memory and reconciliation has been exemplary, thanks to the work of the Center for Rapprochement, Reconciliation and Reparation. In this interview, we talk with its coordinator, Pastora Mira, victim of the conflict and architect of coexistence.

How has it been possible in San Carlos to go from the horror of war to a harmonious coexistence?

Where before it was impossible to travel, where lives were lost for nothing, people are returning and coexistence is harmonious despite the day-to-day economic and other difficulties, but without the sociopolitical violence that destroys us. A lot of work has been done on both sides, and commitments have been made, to try as much as possible to help each other, to meet everyone's basic needs, to accompany the victims of the conflict.

Reconciliation implies addressing the past, developing a shared vision of the future, breaking with the culture of fear and distrust… Have these requirements been met

in San Carlos?

Absolutely. Reconciliation is a set of actions that allows those on either side to look each other in the eye and walk together. But in addition to listening to and looking at each other, reconciliation is also about thinking of and generating conditions for survival, creating productive strategies for the community, and participating in the reconstruction of the memory of what happened here, all together, without demonizing or feeding hatred or revenge, without morbidity – in fact, just the opposite – to avoid the repetition of the events. Memory must be addressed with total respect for the other, and this is what has been done in San Carlos. When we speak of harmonious coexistence in our town, it is because these actions have been accomplished.

Has it been possible to build a common narrative?

In such long conflicts memory is not built from one day to the next; we are working to achieve a memory that is consistent and respected by all, and that does not allow the events to be repeated in new generations.

In this endeavor, have you received the cooperation of the national authorities?

The National Center of Historical Memory has helped us document the events and the history of the armed conflict has been told in the book _San Carlos: Memory of the Wartime Exodus_. But it has basically been work done by the community, a citizen initiative. Even during the war years we mobilized to promote actions to end the conflict, and that is how the Center for Rapprochement, Reconciliation and Reparation (CARE, in its Spanish initials) was created, and which for us has been a meeting place.

" Reconciliation is a set of actions that allows those on either side to look each other in the eye and walk together, generating conditions for survival and for building memory "

You were one of the founders of CARE. Has the contribution of the victims of the conflict been essential for its success?

The victims have had to bear the brunt of the war and we want to overcome it and improve the conditions that caused it. That is why I decided to found CARE, a care and support center for the victims, so that no one feels excluded, and a center that is also for consultation and documentation.

The center is located in what was known during the war as the Little House of Terror. Why?

It is symbolic because not only must we transform the collective imaginations of human beings and dignify them, but also of places, in order to move forward, build trust and take steps towards reconciliation.

Do these steps towards reconciliation also include forgiveness?

The victims ourselves must create healing conditions that allow us to forgive, to be able to free ourselves and get on with our lives. In San Carlos we have made significant progress in generating the possibilities of returning, of living together, of participating… It is undoubtedly a successful experience

Can the experience of San Carlos be transferred to other towns?

I think so. Inasmuch as communities see that an experience is good, it can work. We sat at a table with demobilized FARC combatants and they came as humans, not as warriors. The first step is to understand that. We do not come here with the armor of warriors or as victims, but as human beings who sometimes make mistakes. And everyone must acknowledge their mistakes.

> **" War is a monster that, wherever it goes, does not look to see if it attacks children, men, women… The monster attacks indiscriminately "**

Colombia is experiencing a post-conflict situation where reconciliation and the construction of coexistence are pending challenges. Do you think that the country is sufficiently prepared to face these challenges?

I cannot talk about the country and its 44 million inhabitants; what I can say is that there are places that have made more progress, where we can offer support and show the routes that we have followed in order to enter another phase of the post-conflict era. In San Carlos a few residents decided that it was time for change; that we could no longer continue with an eye for an eye.

Do you feel proud of the work done?

We have been working for twelve years, the experience is very positive and, more than proud, I feel committed. But there are still pending issues. As victims we are waiting for the Search Unit for Missing Persons to begin its work. In San Carlos we need to recover all the missing persons. CARE has identified 210 forced disappearances, but the number may be higher because there are people who have not come to our center. Of these, 48 have been delivered with dignity, based on the justice and peace agreements. But all families have this right. War is a monster that, wherever it goes, does not look to see if it attacks children, men, women… The monster attacks indiscriminately. Now there is a lot of work to do to raise awareness of what we lived through to ensure that it does not happen again.

Photography: Photo from Center for Rapprochement, Reconciliation and Reparation in San Carlos, Colombia.

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SOBRE L'ICIP

News, activities and publications about the ICIP

ICIP
International Catalan Institute for Peace

Call for nominations for the ICIP Peace in Progress Award 2018

The ICIP has announced the call for nominations for the ICIP Peace in Progress Award 2018.This prize aims to publicly recognize individuals, entities or institutions that, in an outstanding and extensive manner, have worked and contributed to the promotion and building of peace.

The ICIP Peace in Progress Award consists of public recognition, a sculpture created by the Nobel Peace Prize winner, artist and activist, Adolfo Pérez Esquivel, called *Porta del sol,* and 4,000 euros.

The deadline for submitting nominations is Friday July 6th.Applications must be submitted in paper format following the standard nomitaion form at the ICIP office (Carrer Tapineria 10, 3a planta, 08002 Barcelona, Spain). Applications my also be handed in and registered at Spanish post offices or at official organs of the Spanish Public Administration with "registros administrativos".

Hip-Hop for Peace youth gathering

The Hip-Hop for Peace youth gathering, which will take place on Friday 29 June at the Ateneu L'Harmonia in Barcelona, aims to promote reflection and the exchange of experiences regarding the prevention of violence in different contexts. The gathering will open with the talk "Rap against violence" and will continue with a graffiti workshop by Llobregat Block Party, a showcase with Fetiche and Tribade, and an open mic session.

The young rappers La Straw MC (El Salvador), MC Koco (Honduras), Diana Avella (Colombia) and Leonard Rentería (Colombia) will be participating in the event.

The gathering is being organized by ICIP, the Catalan Agency for Development Cooperation and Versemblant with the collaboration of the Ateneu L'Harmonia, the Catalan Youth Agency and the Barcelona City Council.

Also in Barcelona, on Thursday 28 June, the same young rappers will participate in the roundtable "Hip-hop for the prevention of violence and the construction of peace".

Lastest publications

–*Demilitarising Education. An essential path towards a more peaceful world*. ICIP Policy Paper by Ainhoa Ruiz Benedicto.

– *ICIP Activity Report 2017*.

– *Los retos de gestión de las violencias directas no políticas y la construcción de la paz*. Report directed by Rafael Grasa and published in ICIP Research collection.

– *La defensa civil noviolenta,* by Gene Sharp. Publish in Catalan in "Eines de pau, seguretat i justícia" collection. Available in pdf and ePub.

– *El perdón y la reconciliación en la convivencia cívica,* by Xabier Exteberria. Publish in Spanish in "Eines de pau, seguretat i justícia" collection. Available in pdf and ePub.

– *El model basc de desarmament. Lliçons apreses d'un procés innovador*. Report by Foro Social Permanente (in Catalan).

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