EDITORIAL

Looking at the roots, a prerequisite for change

Rafael Grasa
ICIP President

Important international meetings are taking place this autumn, which will lead to important commitments for the future or at least momentous decisions for various aspects of peace (justice, welfare, inequality) and their instruments (coalitions and campaigns, various movements and actors, international bodies, and research programmes, among others), as referred to in the titles of the ICIP declarations on the International Day of Peace 2009 and 2010 (see www.icip.cat).

Some have clear specifications and objectives, while others are less specific, as they involve decisions that must be taken - or should be taken - in 2011, and require informal consultative procedures or meetings. The former category, those with a formal agenda and specifications, include the United Nations General Assembly summit that has already taken place on the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and the NATO meeting in November, which will adopt a new strategy for the coming decade, albeit once again without reforming the founding treaty.

Among the meetings and decisions with a non-specific agenda is the role of the United States and Europe in the negotiations between Israel and Palestine (on the verge of failure in the conventional format of recent years) and everything relating to the future of Iraq and the geopolitical complex known as Afpak, Afghanistan and Pakistan, and of course the financial and economic crisis.

In all cases, the outlook is not optimistic: the horizon contains plenty of grey clouds, and even a considerable amount of black ones. I would go so far as to emphasise one particular reason, linked to a failure to follow the golden rule of research for peace: always look at the roots, be radical, and make a distinction between ultimate structural causes, and accelerators and triggers. In other words, the problem with stopgap solutions is that they do not consider the roots of problems, and are not radical, at least in diagnostic terms; they only look at the triggers, or at best, at the accelerators. It is one thing to accept that in many cases, the realism created by possibilities means that lengthy treatment of structural causes, at the roots is necessary; failure to consider them is something different entirely.

A good example, which the ICIP has committed itself to focusing on particularly, (International Day of Peace, 2009), is the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). These were initially administered by the OECD Development Co-operation Directorate, solemnly adopted at the United Nations Millennium Summit in 2000, and reaffirmed after two partial progress reviews in 2005 and 2010.

As has always been said, although the MDG are just some of the international commitments made during decades of international organisations and specialised summits, they were especially significant. They could be seen as an agreement between neoliberal management models that are simply results-oriented, and social democratic approaches inspired by welfare and human development, enabling the establishment of coalitions - with private and public actors - and providing a range of specific means for monitoring and measurement that were unprecedented (goals, targets and sub-targets for each, clearly specified indicators of achievement and precise timeframe commitments) and for the first time, providing a unifying narrative and a framework of reference (in the way Lakoff uses the word), with powerful rituals and symbols that were easy to understand and even appealing for the media. However, after the Report, it appears that although it is not yet mathematically certain, the MDG will not be met in overall terms, and therefore the problems, beginning with poverty, will not be eradicated.

The reasons for this are misunderstanding of the causes, on one hand, and inconsistencies in the policies and instruments, on the other. The MDG paid a great deal of attention to things like poverty and the lack of capabilities, and emphasised that the solutions to them are relatively easy. However, by failing to consider the roots of the problems (inequality and exclusion, based on the international system as well as on national conditions and policies) it failed to address the issue of why a problem that can be solved persists. Even a recent report by the UNRISD dared to say it: too much attention was paid to measuring the things people are lacking, and there was

not enough understanding of the reasons why. Furthermore, neither recipients nor donors believe in the MDG or in their practical effects. The governments of the countries of the South only concern themselves with what really affects their budgets, with ODA; they mention them and quote them rhetorically, but they do not internalise them. Even before the crisis, they amounted to a small proportion of the volume and composition of donors' ODA (to give an example, in the four priority sectors mentioned in objective eight, the combined volume of ODA only increased from 10.4% of aid to 10.9% between 2001-2003 and 2006-2008). That is without including the additional 40,000 to 60,000 million dollars that the World Bank calculated would be necessary to attain the MDG in 2000.

Meanwhile, the global drainage of funds from South to North has been ongoing since the 1980s: the mean net transfer of financial resources to regions with low income in the period 2000-2008 was -534,000 million dollars, with negative figures for all the regions!

To put it bluntly: scientific analysis leaves no room for doubt; North-South relations remain predatory, and predatory relationship can be partially offset with donations and charity, but cannot be resolved or transformed.

We need good analyses, which are radical in determining the causes, to create useful instruments, for the MDG, for the Palestine-Israel conflict, for the future of NATO and to have some hope of success in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan. Whether they are applied or not will depend on political will. It is time to be radical and look at the causes, ask for the possible and make it probable!.

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IN DEPTH

INTRODUCCTION

Civil society and conflicts: Many worlds and many nuances

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This issue of the magazine Per la Pau - Peace in Progress looks at the different roles that civil society plays (or should play) in various phases of conflicts. We define this civil society on a plural basis, in terms of both geography and the organisations themselves, i.e. it consists of much more than the NGOs in the countries of the North. Civil society is made up of organisations, associations, but also the media, trade unions, the academic world and non-organised citizens. The influence or role of all these actors in a specific conflict may emerge in all its phases, from its preparation and the evolution of the armed phase, to reconstruction, peace processes and the consolidation of peace, among others.

From this perspective, the articles we have selected aim to represent the various visions of the potential of this plural civil society, as well as the limits of cooperation and activism in these contexts. They are therefore critical perspectives, which as Rafael Grasa says in the editorial, aim to focus on roots, and attempt to diagnose the structural causes in order to learn the lessons that enable us to work better and more effectively on the ground and at home.

One of the recurring themes in the various perspectives presented here is the need for social reconciliation, which is often the major issue pending resolution. It is necessary to demand an active role for citizens in all phases of the conflict, because without social mobilisation there will be no opportunities for positive transformation of conflicts. The cases of Peru, Georgia and Basque Country are good examples of this.

And when we think of the Basque conflict, we often forget an important factor. As Paul Rios says, the majority of public opinion in recent decades has constantly been against violence and in favour of dialogue, and this is visible in organisations like Elkarri o Gesto por la Paz. However, this potential reaches its limits when the political parties appropriate the discourse advocated by organisations in civil society, when civil society has to adopt a secondary role in some situations (such as direct negotiation between the parties involved) or when it is necessary to overcome apathy after a period when the hopes placed in a peace process have been dashed.

The case of Chiapas is also useful for understanding these limits, as Anaïs Franquesa explains to us. Unfortunately, the presence of individuals acting as human rights observers continues to be useful and necessary in Mexico, as it acts as a deterrent and prevents aggression. However, it is necessary to foresee attitudes that may endanger local communities. Anaïs gives us some ideas, ranging from improving the training of aid workers and raising awareness of the consequences of their actions, while bearing in mind that their stay will be a short one, and that the members of the community will remain after they have gone.

Another idea involves acknowledging the importance of the struggle of indigenous peoples. If local communities are not organised, building autonomy and fighting for their rights, the work of aid workers makes no sense. Francesc Mateu stresses this point during his interview. As a result, sometimes we start to build structures without taking into account the people who have to live in them, when what we should do is work through the citizens, who must have the right to define their future as they wish. The aim is therefore to reinforce local civil society, even in a situation like the present, in which despite the economic crisis, the world has not stopped being global - quite the opposite. Specific initiatives for reducing inequalities must therefore be designed as part of this global world in which we live.

A global world therefore requires solidarity that is also global. On this topic, Manuel Tapial warns us of the dangers that may be involved in the relationship between NGOs and the so-called peace missions carried out by armies. He also reminds us of the need for innovation in the range of civil society's activities, highlighting as an example the opportunities for action by the Gaza aid fleet to raise awareness among international public opinion of the serious breaches of human rights in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Some of these issues are taken up and expanded upon by José Luis Gómez del Prado in terms of mercenaries, or in other words, the use of private military and security companies in Iraq and Afghanistan. The risks involved in the work done by these military and security companies in terms of human rights can be seen at the United Nations Human Rights Council. In one of the opinion pieces in this issue, José Luís warns us of the need for civil society to play an active role in confron-

ting the interests of the security sector, which often run in parallel with the votes of the western states (including Spain, a member of the Human Rights Council).

Two human rights activists in Georgia take us into moral territory that has been given little consideration from the classical perspectives of civil society. As Ucha Nanuashvili and Tea Topuria remind us, asking for forgiveness is not easy, and neither is accepting apologies. Trust and recognition of one's own responsibilities are needed in these processes, even when it is clear (as the authors of the piece acknowledge) that the results will not be apparent until the medium or even the long term.

We said at the beginning of this introduction that the role of civil society in conflicts is a world in itself. Or to put it another way, it is many worlds with many nuances. This idea is highlighted in the article by Sonia Paredes on political violence in Peru. Despite the fact that it mainly takes place in the rural areas of the country, the difficulties experienced by the victims' organisations are enhanced by the fact that the majority of the leaders are from an urban backgrounds.

The Sáharacciones collective also reminds us of a very specific context - the difficult situation in the Western Sahara. This issue is one that affects us directly, due to the decolonisation of the Spanish colonies, which in the opinion of the authors should receive a larger proportion of our solidarity.

Finally, the contribution by David Llistar in the second opinion piece in this issue considers the aspects that pacifist and antimilitarist movements have in common with environmentalist movements. Perhaps we should include the rules of the culture for peace in environmentalism and environmentalist rules in pacifism, such as accepting the arguments of biophysical contraction as a necessary prerequisite for a positive peace.

We hope that the thoughts expressed on these pages will inspire you to work better and more effectively on conflict transformation and achieving peace; a peace that is constantly progressing and in which civil society, in all its facets, must play an active role.

CENTRAL ARTICLES

Limits and challenges of public mobilisation for peace in the Basque Country

Paul Rios
Coordinator of Lokarri

The Basque Country is living through a particularly important and consequential time. On 5 September, ETA announced its decision to cease "armed offensive action." Meanwhile, the nationalist left-wing political groupings, represented by Batasuna, a political party outlawed in Spain that allegedly operates under the orders of ETA, has made a commitment to the exclusive use of peaceful, political and democratic methods. Basque society is at the gateway to a change that could lead to the final end to violence.

Now, among other questions and problems, an ideological debate has begun on the factors that have contributed to creating this opportunity for peace. Each ideological sector is attempting to highlight its strategy as being the one that has led to the conditions for the end of violence. To give a few examples, the Government considers that police action against ETA and outlawing of the parties close to it weakened their capacity for action, and left them with no alternative but to renounce violence. However, the left-wing nationalist movement represented by Batasuna says that its struggle has created the conditions for achieving independence by means of popular mobilisation.

If we look at the recent history of the Basque Country, or at least the last thirty years, the conclusion is very different. One constant feature throughout the period has been the opinion of the majority of citizens against violence and in favour of dialogue. This has been a determining factor in achieving the current opportunities.

A social movement rejecting violence was born in the 1980s, in a context of intense violence. The organisation Gesto por la Paz was responsible for constant street demonstrations condemning attacks and demanding respect for human rights. Until that point, the desire for peace among the majority of Basque society had no public expression, and the work of Gesto por la Paz made these demands visible, by organising silent demonstrations in the towns and neighbourhoods of the Basque Country after every death related to the violent conflict.

The Elkarri movement emerged in the 1990s. As well as rejecting violence, it fostered dialogue as a means of achieving a political agreement that would enable the creation of democratic coexistence based on integration. This defence of dialogue,

a word which had been taboo up until that point, led to the commitment to define the future of Basque society based on minimum foundations for consensus. The three peace conferences organised by this social movement, the most recent of which was supported by 120,000 people, were experiences of dialogue and agreement that brought together political parties, social organisations and citizens.

Both examples clearly reflect the importance of the grassroots movement in the Basque Country. First, they contributed to citizens taking the initiative and compensating for the shortcomings apparent in political strategies. Second, their broad-based and plural nature, which enabled them to include people with highly varied ideologies, reinforced social cohesion and thereby prevented the conflict from spilling over among the citizens.

The citizens' movement for peace and dialogue soon came up against one of its major limitations, which was at the same time a victory. The vast majority of political parties adopted the approach advocated by the two social organisations. Institutions such as town councils and governments began to organise their own demonstrations against the attacks by ETA. At the same time, almost all the political parties advocated dialogue as a means to improve the framework of coexistence.

The second limit of this grassroots movement became apparent during the peace process of 2006. Both the talks between ETA and the government and the political dialogue were undertaken very discreetly, almost secretly, which prevented society from monitoring and assessing their progress. Furthermore, after society had played a key role in the creation of the conditions that made peace possible, when the moment of truth came, it was demoted to a secondary or even non-existent role. It is also true that the impressions given by the political leaders created the illusion of an unstoppable peace process that reassured the public, despite leading to a decline in mobilisation.

The third limit became apparent after the failure of the peace process. Basque society had been very optimistic about that opportunity, and was frustrated at the end of the process in 2007. Extensive sectors of society that until that point had participated extensively came to the conclusion that after doing everything possible to achieve peace, they were not responsible for the failure of the political leaders and ETA to ultimately achieve it. The result was that much of society ended its involvement.

Now there is an opportunity to embark on a new peace process, it is important to acknowledge these limits and learn from the experience of the past. First, the challenges are not limited to the defence of peace and dialogue. Even if the violence is ended, social reconciliation will be a major issue that needs to be resolved, and the social movements can contribute their experience in creating networks for coexistence.

Second, it is necessary to demand an active role for the public in any future peace process, both in monitoring and assessment of its progress and in creating spaces for social participation and decision-making. Finally, there is no other possibility apart from insistence. This opportunity would not have arisen without social mobilisation and without social mobilisation it will be more difficult for it finally to be successful this time.

Use and contradictions of human rights observers in Chiapas

Anaïs Franquesa
Observer in Chiapas, 2009. Member of the DESC Observatory for Social Rights and a collaborator of the Human Rights Institute of Catalonia (IDHC)

In Chiapas, a state in Southern Mexico, mostly indigenous - as well as non-indigenous - communities - suffer from violence every day inflicted by the State and federal police, the army and various paramilitary groups, which in most cases are linked to business interests as well as local, state and federal political representatives. These attacks include forced displacement of the population, murders, arbitrary detentions, other violent attacks, and on a more subtle basis, access to basic services such as education and health care are made conditional on the division and subsequent privatisation of communal land (PROCEDE and other similar programmes).

There are various reasons for the violence, but they are part of quite a common pattern: these lands are very rich in natural resources - water, petrol, a high level of biodiversity, potential for tourism, etc and are located at a strategic point (the corridor that links Central America with Mexico and the United States) and are mostly inhabited by indigenous communities that make their living from agriculture. The economic interests involved are enormous, and the Mexican government and private businesses are already implementing large-scale plans related to tourism and mining, among other areas, to obtain the maximum economic benefit from it. The desires of the individuals and peoples who inhabit the area are not taken into account in the planning and implementation of these projects. They are neither consulted nor listened to, and when a community resists having to leave its land, and tries to continue its way of life and demands respect for its rights and dignity, it is repressed and threatened in various ways.

Sadly, individuals acting as international and national human rights observers are useful in this context. Their job is to observe, record and document the violations of human rights that take place in these communities. On many occasions, while they are

on duty, the mere presence of observers has a deterrent effect and many attacks that would undoubtedly have occurred do not take place. Having said that, and taking this as a starting point, it is necessary to undertake a critical analysis of the role of the observer, highlighting the contradictions involved and its limitations.

First, it is worrying that the presence of people from outside the community (and outside the country in many cases) is needed in order to prevent the community from being attacked, or if it is attacked, for the events that take place to have any impact and some type of criminal or political consequences. This question raises various issues: do the legal and political consequences of certain actions depend on the geographic origin and economic background of the victim or witness? Is the life of a European or North American (from the USA) worth more than that of a person living on their own land? What is the level of impunity and corruption in the Mexican local, state and federal institutions which create this situation, in cases where they are not directly responsible for it?

Notwithstanding the above, the presence of human rights observers in communities also has negative effects and may be counter-productive. If the observer does not clearly understand his/her role, he/she may hinder or interrupt the community's everyday life and destabilise it. Some attitudes endanger not only the life of the observer, but also the community itself (for example, simply deciding to go for a walk without giving prior warning or not respecting private spaces). Likewise, direct involvement in violent conflicts has dreadful consequences and is not part of the observer's work. In these situations, observers must be visible, record everything that happens but not become directly involved in the events or place themselves in danger. Finally, paternalist attitudes - such as bringing gifts or money and distributing them randomly - create and perpetuate dynamics of dependence that do little to dignify individuals and peoples.

In order to minimise risks, good training for observers must be provided by the organisations that support them, and prior planning is necessary by the communities receiving them, and the rules in each community must be made very clear, all of which happens in most cases. However, it is essential that people acting as human rights observers are aware of the consequences of their actions, and remember why they are there at all times, as their stay will be a short one, but the members of the community will remain.

Finally, but perhaps most importantly, the importance of the struggle of the indigenous peoples in Chiapas must be emphasised. For years - indeed, for centuries - they have been fighting for their land, their culture, their languages, education, autonomy... and against exploitation, poverty, pillaging of their resources, and attempts to make them assimilate. Without communities with organised resistance, which build their autonomy and fight for their rights, the observer's role is meaningless. The task becomes futile.

Returning to the spirit of "real" solidarity"

Manuel Tapial
Activist

In recent years, we have become accustomed to hearing about large-scale international co-operation agencies, attached to state and regional governments, which help the civil population every time we see a catastrophe on the television. These interventions are always or nearly always undertaken by people who graduate from a master's degree course in international cooperation or something similar; they are the so-called third sector professionals. These agencies, like the concept of NGOs as we know it today, are relatively new. They were established in the 1990s and have a legal status that covers this type of organisation, which in my opinion aim to neutralise the international solidarity movements that emerged as part of the revolutionary processes in Latin America and which were firmly based on militancy.

Those of us who are selflessly involved in the solidarity field, with small projects based on good intentions, cannot ignore this type of cooperation, which we view from a critical perspective. We have recently seen how the aid workers and agencies mentioned above accompany our soldiers on military missions to Afghanistan and Lebanon. These companies undoubtedly lead to many of us asking about the real objectives of the projects that they aim to implement in these places, and whether they meet the native population's objective needs.

Many campaigns that have emerged from the indigenous populations require our attention, but very few of them receive it in our own countries.

It is not unusual, for example, to travel to Palestine and find growing suspicion among the population, which has repeatedly asked the countries sending aid to work to change their governments' policies towards the occupying country, Israel. A good example of this is the initiative by dozens of Palestinian NGOs in 2005, which called on organisations all over the world to join the Boycott, Divestment and Sanction campaign against Israel, which nonetheless is not part of the humanitarian arena, and has been joined actively by very few NGOs. However, the campaign has been joined by universities, renowned artists and trade unions, among other institutions, and has even led to Israel considering a law that punishes all NGOs working with the campaign with the dissolution of the organisations and imprisonment of its members, as a reprisal against a tide that is rising all around the world every day.

Another example is the demands by the population of Gaza for an end to the blockade by all means possible, which has led to various fleets setting out from Europe to that end. None of the major NGOs has joined the initiative, but some individuals have done so on their own behalf or representing small organisations.

These initiatives, which emerged from the population that receives our cooperation, are proposals that generally make our governments uncomfortable, and it appears they have the same effect on major humanitarian NGOs. These proposals are generally supported by the most politically committed sectors that understand the dimensions of the crisis, and which aim to attack the roots of the conflicts; which in the Palestinian case is the occupation.

It is necessary to take a look at our more recent history in order to understand that these initiatives are not new and neither is the solidarity that they inspire among us.

By way of an example, in the 1980s there were hundreds of groups offering solidarity with the revolutions in Latin America, which organised solidarity brigades every year. The brigades generally consisted of doctors who were very politically and socially committed, who took the decision to travel to the front line to treat injured comrades. Likewise, the teachers who participated in these brigades also played a leading role in bringing literacy to rural settlements. These brigades answered the call from revolutionary groups that were involved in a dogged battle against neoliberal ideas from the USA, which would subsequently triumph after the social collapse that accompanied the counterrevolution. At that time, it was impossible to make a distinction between an "aid worker" and an "activist." The two categories came together as part of a political commitment that sought social justice, and above all in the spirit of comradeship with those receiving the solidarity that enabled them to share under equal conditions, without the paternalist aspect that appears to dominate the aid industry today.

Today, the powers that be have made sure of the distinction between the two categories - between good and bad - in a very basic way. They have deliberately created a difference in order to silence social and political dissent and its democratic right to demonstrate against what it considers to be the injustices in which our governments are complicit.

Recent events in the waters pf the Mediterranean, the attack by Israel on the Gaza Freedom Flotilla, are all part of a resurgence of the social and political commitment that predates the professionalisation of solidarity by a very long time.

The opportunity presented by the new technologies, the understanding of other ways of life and respect for them, and above all, effective coordination of a basic level of action between various organisations in Europe has enabled people from all over the world to take part in projects that are backed by international law which highlight the Palestinian conflict and the real nature of it. It is no exaggeration to say that the globalisation of solidarity has shown that thanks to something as old as good intentions and ideological determination, it is possible to change the political conditions in the world's most turbulent regions, in order to combat injustice and the dominant ideologies that sustain it.

Civil society and victims as the subjects of rights in the Peruvian transition process

Sonia Paredes
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Political violence in Peru has mainly taken place in the country's Andean and Amazon regions, and mainly in rural communities, dwellings and settlements. For 20 years, thousands of Peruvians have lived in a state of constant fear and suspicion, due to the intensity of violence and the lack of protection from the State against the massive violations of their basic rights by two groups in conflict, subversive groups and the agents of the State. The victims were basically poor peasants, whose mother tongue was Quechua or other indigenous languages, and who were the most socially excluded group in the entire country.

In view of the impassiveness of the State, which subsequently became a counter-subversive offensive against their rights, the victims' families began to meet and organise, and make civil claims for cases of extrajudicial murders and assassinations, and to demand information on the whereabouts of their loved ones. As a result, the first organisations of relatives were formed, which consisted mainly of women seeking their husbands, sons or fathers, who had been arrested or had disappeared. The most important and the oldest is ANFASEP (the (National Association of Relatives of the Family Kidnapped, Detained and Disappeared of Peru).

ANFASEP, like the other organisations, sought to be a channel for representing the particular claims of its members, and was supported by non-governmental human rights organisations, which above all provided legal support during the search for the disappeared. The alliance between the organisations of victims' relatives and the human rights NGOs became even stronger in subsequent years of conflict, especially during the political repression by the regime of Alberto Fujimori in the 1990s.

Although the idea that reparations must be made by the State is supported unanimously, as it is a right of the victims and an obligation of the government, campaigning initiatives and proposals from civil society have been vital in achieving breakthroughs in this area. As it is a measure that requires a great deal of political will for its design and implementation, the reparations process has always involved the active participation of civil society, of both victims' organisations and human rights NGOs, who have been insistent in their demands and proposals. The roles of the two groups have changed over time, but in the majority of cases the central role of the victims has continued, while the NGOs have provided advice and support. The NGOs direct campaigning role has been accompanied by initiatives for strengthening the position of the leaders of these organisations, so that they also have sufficient resources to direct the campaign and build proposals from the grassroots.

Despite the efforts of the two groups, the weakening of the victims' organisations, which in most cases is a result of frustration at a long struggle, as well as a change of generations in the leadership of the organisations, was almost foreseeable. This is in addition to the fact that many organisations lack legitimacy in the hardest-hit areas, such as peasant and indigenous communities. Many of the victims' leaders have an urban background, which has no strong links with the more distant rural areas, which were paradoxically the hardest hit. Meanwhile, in the peasant and indigenous communities affected by the conflict, violence broke down the organisational links and the social capital that characterises them, and which determines their way of life, and this had a negative effect on their organisations. The communities' agenda is dominated by agriculture and fishing issues, defence of their territory as indigenous groups in some cases, and management of their natural resources in the face of exploitative economic policies. Social and political exclusion in these cases has led to a loss of identity and a lack of a sense of belonging to the nation as a whole. Their relationship with the State is determined by destitution and poverty, and instead of citizens, they feel like beneficiaries of a social aid programme.

Reconciliation is not yet a national project, as it has not succeeded in involving all sectors of society, as they are unaware of conflict and also have no intention of becoming aware of it. The participation of a sector of society calling for attention for the victims aims to build a bridge between these two worlds, but could also be a factor for detachment, as it could polarise opinions between those who have experienced the conflict and those who do not acknowledge its real dimension. However, there can be no transition without taking the demands of the victims into account, and not only as a subject for attention by the State for the damage caused, but also as legal subjects and players in the reconstruction process of a new relationship with the State that involves society as a whole. It is therefore a question of laying the foundations for a new social contract. There are many possible scenarios, and those involved are willing. It is an ambitious undertaking, but possible.

The Sorry campaign: 3 years later. Challenges and lessons for the future

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It is not easy to apologize, neither to accept an apology. The Georgian Human Rights Center (HRIDC) launched the *Sorry* campaign in March of 2007 with the aim of changing the dynamics and direction of the relationships established between Georgians and Abkhazians during the last fifteen years. This campaign was not in any way connected to politics; it was a movement against war, as we consider that there is no alternative to peaceful dialogue and mutual settlement of the conflict.

The Campaign envisaged the reestablishment of trust between the Georgian and the Abkhazian people and to break through the informational vacuum. We wanted to encourage people to think about the horrors of war and the mistakes we had made.

It was a two-way street and it was designed for both sides. The Georgians should realize that neither one side nor the other is totally responsible for what happened. The Abkhazians are not the guilty ones and the Abkhazians should also know that every Georgian does not think of taking out revenge over what happened.

Many people have asked us cynically "what did you gain from apologizing to Abkhaz people? Nothing!" The Sorry Campaign was initiated by the Georgian people to compel us to confess our mistakes and learn from these mistakes. It was right on the part of the Georgians to take the first step. We are greater in numbers and Abkhazia was part of Georgia and not vice versa. We had a bigger degree of responsibility and it will not do us any harm if we start living up to our mistakes. We wanted to say that we have more responsibility for what is happening in our country. And it made no sense whether somebody would apologize in reply now or never. It was an individual act. The point is that we have done our duty and will not keep those words in our heart and they can be free from the burden resulted from the war.

Radical steps are always painful for the society. We might be declared traitors, but the society gets the chance of reconciliation through these sincere, open and peaceful initiatives. Everybody looks back into the past, even those who resisted the Sorry Campaign.

During the campaign we received threats. Several people called us traitors and spies. President Saakashvili in his statement in November of 2007 said: "why should we apologize to them? Shall we apologize to them because they cut our heads off and evicted us from there? Shall we apologize because they destroyed Georgian churches? For our children who got frozen on the mountainous pass and thrown out from the plane? Shall we still apologize for that? Who are those people and which international organization funded them to write such nonsense?"

Our appeal was immediately spread on the internet. It became a topic for consideration on many forum sites, both by Georgian and Abkhaz people. Some of them did not like it; others became extremely irritated. Many people understood the campaign as if we were apologizing to criminals, military offenders or to Abkhazian de-facto authorities. That is not the case. We wanted to communicate with just ordinary people. Today, Georgians are considered only as enemies for Abkhaz people who will return to their homeland and kill every member in their families. Until Abkhaz people believe that there can be another way, they will do everything to keep the bridge over the Enguri River blocked for the Georgians. To tell the truth, their fear is to some extent real. Based on the reactions that followed the campaign, many Georgians still dream with the day of rushing into Abkhazia with guns. We are against this; we do not want to fall into the abyss of war. Such a hole we have already experienced and have not been able to escape its consequences for fifteen years. And counting.

Three years have passed since the campaign started. The society has started to discuss the topic and there are people who are not ashamed to say sorry. Ordinary citizens discuss the reasons why one nation should apologize to another one. Three years ago the word 'sorry' was tabooed. Speaking about this topic was neither popular nor safe. The campaign has succeeded because many people speak about it now. And now everybody thinks about it. In fact, it was a provocation in positive. This provocation worked. The word and concept of sorry exposed many things; it showed how the Georgian society has a real peaceful attitude towards Abkhaz people and how big is the military spirit in the country; how far the government and the society are from peace.

One of the main problems is that the Georgian society still lacks the opportunity to speak with Abkhaz people directly and vice versa. The citizens receive extremely filtered (dis)information. Very often mass media of both sides releases false information and they create the image of the enemy of the opposite side. It continues endlessly.

There are not unsettled conflicts and there are always ways out of the complicated situation and alternatives. The question is how well does Georgian society realize it? Our society still relies on emotions and cannot see the way to resolve the conflict peacefully. It does not have a clear understanding of war reasons and results; they see everything through a narrow and unilateral position and cannot confess its mistakes and problems. We see the guilt in everybody but not in ourselves: the government blames Russia and the opposition, the opposition blames the government, people blame everybody: Russia, USA, Europe, Abkhaz and Ossetian peoples...

The most part of Georgian media still blocks not only the campaign but the word "Sorry". Only several small-edition newspapers, radio and online sources spread information about it. Everybody speaks about conflict resolution, but unfortunately people have forgotten a simple reality: nothing can be done without love and forgiveness. After physical violence and war end, conflicts still continue in the hearts and minds of people. Hate and anger control human lives for a long time. These emotions paralyze people and make them hostages of hate. When a person is busy with anger and hate, s/he cannot clearly evaluate the situation and look forward to the future. The "Sorry" Campaign might be a first step to break the negative circle. Exposing human sides of the opposite side can make people overcome obstacles.

We know that such a campaign can only have a result in 5, 10 or 20 years. The point is that everybody can do something and we focus on the responsibility of each person, on public responsibility. Honest relationships shall be built between the two nations, relying on truth, sincerity, love and forgiveness. It shall be done by people. The Georgian and Abkhazian peoples demand only peace and open dialogue between the sides. The Campaign learns lessons from our past mistakes. It assumes our responsibilities in the conflict. Both nations lost in the conflict. Having realized this, people might come together. This step is always taken by one side and it will definitely have a follow-up; it shall become a kind of catalyst for social changes. Sorry - this is the way towards each other's hearts.

Sáharacciones and the movement for solidarity with Western Sahara

Anselmo Fariña
Member of the Sáharacciones collective

Above all else, we are human beings, we are only Sahrawis or Canary Islanders due to circumstances
(Hmad Hammad to the Sáharacciones group, September 2010)

A necessary step, but one that is difficult to take

Demonstrating in the streets of occupied El Aaiún, assuming that we could be beaten or even spend some time detained by the Moroccan regime, was a decision that was consciously taken by the Sáharacciones collective, which includes those of us who travelled to occupied Western Sahara and the members of the logistic support and communication group who remained in Tenerife.

What we call the first *Saharaction* took place in the context of the lack of progress in the situation in Sahara after thirty-five years of occupation and exile, nineteen years of ceasefire, and five years of Intifada. Over this period, the Kingdom of Morocco has assumed that the passing of time, support from France and the inaction of the Spanish government will consolidate the de facto situation, thereby finally making the international community legally recognise a change in frontiers that came about as a result of an act of force.

The immediate cause of our action was the need to try to end with the media's silence on the conflict in the Sahara, and especially on the situation of the Sahrawi population in the territories occupied by Morocco, who are subjected to a daily and systematic violation of their rights, with a brutality to which the media and the so-called international community remain insensitive. The EU's concession of the Advanced Statute of Association to the Kingdom of Morocco was particularly significant.

Government cynicism, people solidarity

The Spanish Government tries to justify its inaction and its failure to meet its obligations as the administrative power of Western Sahara which has to implement decolonisation of the territory based on the self-determination of the Sahrawi population. They refer, to the complex international relations that it says make the situation of the Sahrawi people acceptable as the necessary price to be paid for the role of the Moroccan regime which by controlling illegal immigration, drugs trafficking and radical Islamism has become a disgraceful but necessary guarantor of our peace and prosperity.

Of course, another perspective is possible, which focuses on the long-standing relationships between certain Spanish economic groups and the Moroccan monarchy, in a situation similar to neo-colonialism, which includes the power base of the successive Moroccan kings as the structural basis for the maintenance of an expansionist policy which sometimes comes into conflict with interests that are nominally defended by Spain. This expansionist policy directly affects the Sahrawi people, but also affects the Canary Islands and the countries of north-east Africa as a whole, which are part of the region claimed by the more radical currents of Moroccan nationalism.

The decision by Spain and the EU to reluctantly accept the Kingdom of Morocco as an inconvenient partner due to its geopolitical role may conceal the fact that their real commitment is to maintaining a regime that is favourable to business by companies based in Spain (the second largest investor country), France (the leading investor country) and the EU as a whole, including the Western Sahara as Moroccan territory. This approach seems very dangerous, both because of the contradictions that it fosters in Moroccan society, and for the instability that it fuels in the region.

Compared to turning this a blind eye, or to put it another way, looking towards European business interests which have prevailed among successive Spanish governments, the feeling of responsibility for the Sahrawi people is widespread among Spanish people and has led to countless humanitarian aid initiatives in support of the population exiled in the Algerian desert. However, the cynical attitude of governments has led to a prolonging of the suffering, which this humanitarian solidarity can only mitigate. Meanwhile, a political solution to the conflict would enable the Sahrawi people to leave behind the state of vagrancy to which the powers wish to reduce it.

For this reason, we planned our *Saharaction* with obviously political content, as part of a growing movement among people expressing solidarity with the Sahrawi cause. For this reason, in our subsequent initiatives we have insisted on the need for the spotlight not to focus on our action, however spectacular, daring or reckless it appeared to those investigating our motivations, nor on our physical condition, however striking some of the images were, nor the neglect of our welfare by the Spanish Government. None of these can describe the situation experienced by the fourteen people who went to El Aaiún. Our action highlighted the suffering of Sahrawi human rights activists and the Sahrawi population as a whole under the Moroccan occupation: suffering, indescribable physical abuse and neglect.

What is the outlook for solidarity with the Sahara?

While our society continues to allow those who govern us to cynically use human rights to justify military action at the other end of the world, and at the same time they find arguments involving a supposed "realpolitik" to close their eyes before the routine barbarism in Western Sahara, the situation will continue to get worse.

In this context, humanitarian solidarity, which is essential and which must increase to try and improve the conditions of resistance in exile in the camps, is clearly insufficient.

Actions like those taken by our collective and those by other activists are essential for breaking down the isolation of the conflict, but are also clearly insufficient.
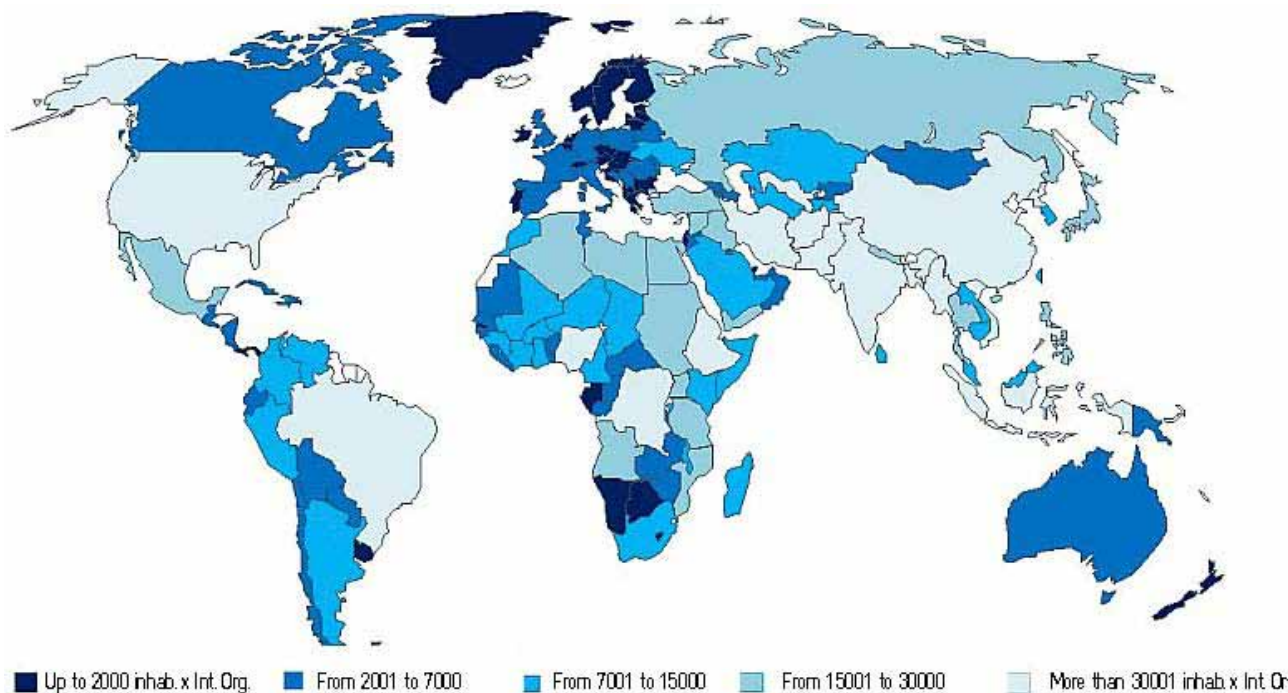
As it also happened in South Africa when the apartheid was drew to end and as it is happening now with solidarity with Palestine and the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign against Israel, it is necessary to place demand that Spain and the EU call for a solution to the conflict in the Sahara, based on respect for the human rights of the Sahrawi people, and on the agenda of social movements. This includes respect for its right to self-determination, which is internationally recognised by the institutions that humankind has provided itself with, despite their imperfections and contradictions.

This increased commitment to political solidarity is what would ultimately give meaning to the *Saharactions* we have undertaken and which we will continue to undertake at any time.

The situation of the exiled Sahrawis and those suffering from the brutality of the occupation of their land requires nothing less of us - it is our duty due to our historic responsibility.

FINDING OUT MORE

We provide two pieces of material related to civil society and international relations, a map showing countries' membership of international organisations, and a review of The Hague Agenda for Peace and Justice in the 21st century, the main document for civil society on peace in the modern world.

Legend: Up to 2000 inhab. x Int. Org. | From 2001 to 7000 | From 7001 to 15000 | From 15001 to 30000 | More than 30001 inhab. x Int. Or

What the map shows:

The benchmark publication on international organisations is the "Yearbook of International Organizations". This annual publication provides details of international non-profit making organisations, including both governmental and non-governmental organisations. The Yearbook uses various criteria when deciding to include an institution or organisation: its objectives, members, structure, offices, financing, relations with other organisations and activities. While it does not give overall figures that make a distinction between governmental and non-governmental organisations, we felt it would be useful to show the figures per country in order to show the level of integration into international society. We also thought it was essential to include the population variable, as countries with the same number of organisations but much lower populations could not be shown in the same way. We have also established a ratio of the number of inhabitants per international organisation (governmental and non-governmental) of which the country is a member. Another decision involved excluding all countries with less than 1 million inhabitants from the sample (these are shown in white on the map), as if we included them, the sample would be clearly biased as a result of this figure. Finally, the colour scheme shows the level of integration, with darker colours showing countries with a high level of integration, and lighter colours countries with a lower level.

As a result, the map shows a country's level of integration in international society based on its participation in international organisations and weighted by the number of inhabitants (excluding countries with less than a million inhabitants) i.e. it is a ranking of countries ordered by the number of inhabitants and by each membership of an international organisation. Five levels have been established in order to distinguish between countries: the first contains countries with between 427 inhabitants per international organisation and 2,000 inhab./IO; the second, those between 2,000 and 7,000 inhab./IO; the third, those between 7000 and 15,000 inhab./IO; the fourth is for those between 15,000 and 30,000 inhab./IO; and the fifth and final level is for those with over 30,000 inhab./IO.

What the map explains:

A first observation is an obvious one - Europe is at the centre of the world in terms of international organisations. In fact, Europe accounts for around 60% of the countries with the highest level of membership. At the other extreme is Asia, with only three representatives. Population is a determining factor at this first level, in which only the Netherlands exceeds 15 million inhabitants.

Second, both Africa and America are diverse and plural continents. They both have member countries on the first two levels, and some of these have a relatively significant number of inhabitants. Meanwhile, Asia - and especially central and south-east Asia - are areas with little participation in international organisations and high population levels, which means that they are some distance from the central figures, and this is shown in the light colour of these geographical areas.

Third, population is not a determining factor, as even the large European Union countries (the United Kingdom, France, Italy and Germany) are part of the second level. The third and fourth levels include countries with medium-sized or small populations, especially in Africa and Central Asia, such as Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Burundi, Angola and Somalia.

Finally, the last level mostly consists of countries with very large populations (taken together, they account for 60% of the world's population). However, three of these countries have less than 30 million people (Uzbekistan, North Korea and Afghanistan). Furthermore, the differences are not established only by population levels. The country with most memberships of international organisations in the entire group, the USA, does not even surpass Spain in absolute terms.

It is difficult to draw general conclusions apart from those mentioned above: the central role of Europe, African and American diversity, and the distance of central and south-east Asia. However, in terms of international relations there is another piece of clear evidence: medium-sized and small countries have a greater need for integration within international society (even in absolute terms) than the world's largest countries. It is possible that the population factor remains an important asset when acting in the international arena. In this regard, small and medium-sized countries need extensive participation in international society in order to compensate for this deficit in their population.

The Hague Agenda for Peace and Justice in the 21st century

The document we present here has a threefold value which makes it extremely interesting. First, the process of creating a document involved consultation with hundreds of organisations and individuals, including many from Catalonia. Instead of involving private or state interests, the agenda is therefore a constituent document of international civil society in favour of peace, which is not based on protest demonstrations, but rather on reflection and ideas. Furthermore, the contents of the document are very important: it establishes the single objective of "saving future generations from the scourge of war," based on four key areas: the causes of war and the culture of peace; the institutions of international humanitarian law and human rights; prevention, resolution and transformation of violent conflict and disarmament and human security.

The document has a further use. It was created approximately 10 years ago, and both its spirit and its main objective remain in force today. However, it is interesting to consider the movement's progress or areas of stagnation: the International Criminal Court is a reality, as it is the prohibition of landmines. However, progress on the abolition of nuclear weapons has

been minimal, as has global action to prevent war. It is therefore a useful gauge of the strengths and weaknesses of the movement, a decade after it was created.

* The Hague Agenda for Peace and Justice in the 21st century (Catalan version)::
  http://www10.gencat.cat/drep/binaris/Agenda%20de%20la%20Haia_tcm112-31120.pdf
* The Hague Agenda for Peace and Justice in the 21st century (Spanish version):
  http://www.haguepeace.org/resources/HAP%20Agenda%20Spanish.pdf
* The Hague Agenda for Peace and Justice in the 21st century (English version):
  http://www.haguepeace.org/resources/HagueAgendaPeace+Justice4The21stCentury.pdf

Materials produced by: Pablo Aguiar and Júlia Boada

INTERVIEW

Interview with Francesc Mateu
Cèlia Cernadas

Francesc Mateu - Director of Intermon-Oxfam in Catalonia and President of the Catalan Federation of NGOs for Development

Is it possible to understand cooperation without civil society?
No. Civil society must be involved in all stages of cooperation projects, civil society cannot be left out of any process, even a process that involves conflict. The chronification of many of these processes occurs because we have left out civil society. At Intermon, we understand that any process needs active citizens and effective governments.

Indeed, the role of NGOs as intermediaries and actors has been recognised for some time by international organisations such as the UN, which includes them in its consultative councils. To what extent is their capacity for influence real?
In order to be influential, it is necessary to be very large and to have a clear desire to exert influence. There are few cases like this. The UNO, WTO and IMF are organisations where we can make our voice heard, but they have a structure that must be changed. It must not be the case that five countries at the UNO can block any decision, or the economic contribution of a country determine its ability to influence; states end up deciding for themselves.

And if the international organisations have recognised the role of civil society through NGOs, is the same true of governments? Especially in countries where the NGOs have to work with non-democratic governments
it is very difficult for us. At present, in Haiti, for example, the entire reconstruction process in Port-au-Prince is taking place with absolutely no input from civil society, and with a non-existent government. In things as obvious as working after an earthquake, we still do not allocate money or effort to reconstructing civil society first. We start by constructing buildings, without taking into account the people who have to live in them. But if we do not reconstruct Haiti based on citizenship, we will be building a white elephant and in a short time, we will be in the same position.

What does civil society being able to participate mean? How can it participate, through which channels?
People have to have the right to define their future as they wish, we cannot come in from outside and decide what has to be done in Port-au-Prince. We have to work with the organisations that were there before the earthquake, with neighbourhood associations, and strengthen these networks so that in this extreme emergency situation, we have the basics to be able to continue with all the processes that they want. If people have to dedicate all their energy to survival, it will be difficult for us to find someone who is thinking beyond that. We make life easier for them, so that there are some minimal conditions for creating civil society.

And what happens with countries facing a catastrophic situation, or armed conflict, in which the civil society is non-existent or has been completely demobilised and dismantled? Can international NGOs replace this local civil society?
No. We have already made that mistake, and we will continue to make mistakes. We often want processes to meet the deadlines that we have approved for the project, and it doesn't work like that. We should not be thinking in terms of reconstructing Haiti in three years, when the country has been in this state for decades. Reconstructing civil society will take us a long time, but that is the foundations for Haiti to move on from where it is today. Yes, we may have a very weak civil society, but let us support it, look

for groups that work, support their initiatives, and help them to organise. But we should never replace them. It is a difficult target, because it is difficult to obtain financing for these projects. It is very difficult for us, because they are not visible processes, they are projects which are often impossible to photograph.

A recurring criticism is that action by NGOs stops or limits initiatives by local civil society. Has that been assimilated?
The criticism has been assimilated for a long time, but there are many NGOs. Not everyone sees things in the same way, but those of us in the federation have been working in this direction for many years. The aim is to strengthen local civil society, to provide it with empowerment.

Such as?
The election of Evo Morales as the president of Bolivia is nothing more than an empowerment process at breakneck speed, whether you like him or not. Despite it being easier in South America than in Africa, because the dynamic is part of the people's make-up, which was total empowerment in record time, because it includes the political, cultural, economic and all types of other areas.

In what specific ways can an NGO like Intermon be involved in a process for strengthening civil society?
For example, there may be a situation where you have been working for some time with Guaraní communities in southern Bolivia; you've helped them to make a diagnosis in their communities, to construct a basic stable production structure, to have an environmentally sustainable education system and healthcare system. The communities move forward, and at a certain time decide that they need a mayor. As you know, these groups do not have sufficient capacities for administration, and you have to take action - in this case as the specialist adviser to local political authorities.

A great deal of mistakes have been documented in the cooperation field, such as installing telephone booths where there are no lines, which shows that there is sometimes a lack of connection between the projects and the conditions they are supposed to be dealing with. Do cases like that not happen any more?
Cases like that happen often, although perhaps more often in cases of government aid than through NGOs. The NGOs make mistakes, and I think that is fair enough. I remember a project in Namibia that we subsequently realised that we should not have carried out. We thought we had the support of the local population, and it turned out that we didn't, the cultural centre that we built was isolated and hasn't worked. But those mistakes are part of the process; the most important thing is knowing that you have made a mistake

In recent years, NGOs have become professionalized. Is there now a standard process of identification, assessment and management of the project in a country in the South?
No, because there can never be a standard process there. There are many models of cooperation, and after analysing them all, none of them has been shown to be "the model." Every place and each set of circumstances are different. We cannot create a prior strategy; we have to produce a very flexible strategy. Carrying out a project in Mozambique in an area where refugees are returning after many years of war has nothing to do with doing the same thing with Guaranis in Bolivia.

And how do you identify a need that becomes a project?
What we often have to identify is not a project, but instead a group. Let us take Africa: it is more important that we find a group and we support its activities, however crazy they may seem to us, because that group has to learn from its errors and develop on its own. To give a specific example: at the end of the war in Mozambique in 1992, with people returning en masse from refugee camps without any possessions, I only found one group of young people who wanted to do anything. The group felt that the priority was to produce the Sunday newsletter of the parish church. At times like that, one thinks: what are they thinking of? We supported the Sunday newsletter, it was a mistake, they realised that, they carried out their own assessment process, and afterwards they established a group that worked in a neighbourhood, and which did an amazing job. We made two or three mistakes, which we thought would happen, but we wanted to support the process, rather than the project itself, because in reality that is the way for the group to grow.

Can involvement by foreign civil society ever be distorting or inadvisable?
Yes. There are cases in which it can be distorting and counter-productive. There are some that don't worry me, because they can act like enzymes: they can accelerate the reaction without being consumed by it, in other words, the reaction would take place anyway, but the external involvement accelerates this reaction. These involvements which accelerate the reactions which have to take place anyway don't concern me, they are not a problem. What happens is that often, when you become involved, you cannot be completely certain that the reaction will take place. We have to try and make our level of intervention as minimal as possible, but on the other hand we shouldn't make human spaces into zoos that we have to leave untouched. There must be an interaction, we have to do the best we can on equal terms with the people and talk about the processes.

To what extent does the need of visibility of NGOs due to financing and resources determine how projects are selected and implemented?
I would like to say never, but it wouldn't be true. Any NGO has to have a basic financing strategy that provides a balance between the money you have, the source of that money and what you want to do. Projects with public organisations allow us to do that; with private financing it is more difficult because there are questions of image, and you have to be able to place the plaque and take the photograph.

Like the pharmaceutical companies that sponsor humanitarian convoys to the Sahel, for example?
That is something different. One thing is to seek a balance between the help you give them and the image you create, and something else again to use cooperation to restore your image. Some pharmaceutical companies need to be consistent: you can't give the impression that you're very generous, giving a pittance to an aid convoy, and then cut all the research into the world's most important diseases, or prevent generic drugs to be given to South Africa or India from being manufactured. Without at least some consistency, what you have is a fraudulent use of cooperation.

As president of the NGOs federation, has the debate been concluded on the need for assessment and monitoring mechanisms when valuing the effectiveness of projects?
No, that debate will never be resolved, because we will never have a formula that gives us total assessment. We can assess the results: a number of children have gone to that school, or that dispensary has treated a number of people, or we have trained a number of people. But beyond that, what we need to know is whether the project has led to a change in those peoples' lives. And that is very difficult.

What is the most important internal debate that is now taking place within NGOs?
I suppose our most important challenge now is to restore the feeling that despite the recession, the world is a global one and we have to place specific projects in the context of this global world; that ending inequalities involves considering them globally. And when people tell you that you have to think about your neighbours first, you have to ask who that neighbour is: Africa is 14 kilometres from Spain. All the messages we receive from the media and the environment are sealing off Catalan and Spanish society from their closest neighbours.

PLATFORM

A pyrrhic victory against the privateers of the twenty-first century at the United Nations Human Rights Council?

José L. Gómez del Prado
Member of the United Nations Working Group on the Use of Mercenaries

Over the last twenty years, Cuba has repeatedly raised the issue in the United Nations of mercenaries and the impact on human rights of the activities of private companies providing services involving military assistance, consultancy and security to the international market. It has also been the main sponsor of United Nations resolutions on this subject.

The attitude of the western countries, who still consider the Cuban initiatives from the perspective of the Cold War, has repeatedly consisted of rejecting the motions tabled by Cuba and voting against the creation, mandate and recommendations of a Working Group on mercenaries.

The member states of the Western Group, mainly the United States of America and United Kingdom, which account for 70% of private military and security companies (PMSC), have argued against the resolutions presented by Cuba on the basis that these companies are institutions which are legitimately registered from a commercial point of view, and their workers are not mercenaries but instead private contractors. These companies execute government contracts, mainly from the United States, for multinational companies, inter-governmental and non-governmental organisations, and among other activities, they train personnel and provide intelligence and passive security. Furthermore, the Western countries consider that the Human Rights Council is not the appropriate forum for debating these issues.

The use of private contractors in Iraq and Afghanistan since 2001, and the violations of human rights that they have committed, have led to great concern and have led to a debate in the international arena on the work that should be done by private military and security companies, the regulations that should apply to them and how their activities should be monitored.

In order to deal partially with these concerns, the two governments of the countries where most PMSCs are located, the

United States and the United Kingdom, as well as the Swiss government, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and leading associations in the security industry, the International Peace Organization Association (IPOA) - from the United States - and the British Association of Private Security Companies (BAPSC) - from the United Kingdom - launched the Swiss Initiative, which culminated in 2009 with the adoption of the Montreux Document. This document reiterates the rules of international humanitarian law and human rights and presents a series of good practices to be implemented on a voluntary basis, without any obligation for the companies. However, apart from these excellent examples, which are only presented for public image purposes, good practices cannot depend on self-regulation alone: a mechanism for application regulated and monitored by governments must be established.

If they are only subject to self-regulation, military and security companies will continue to fail to apply the good practices, and the Montreux Document appears to be nothing more than a public relations operation. The tortures committed in the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, the summary executions in Nisour Square in Baghdad and the lack of screening procedures in the recruitment of the ex-soldier Danny Fitzsimons should be sufficient evidence for the need to regulate the work of private soldiers. Danny Fitzsimons was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder in January 2004 May 2008 and June 2009, but was hired by ArmorGroup and sent to Iraq without undergoing any medical examination, and 36 hours after he arrived, he killed two of his colleagues and wounded a third.

It was precisely because of the consequences of the work of these military and security companies for human rights that the Working Group on mercenaries, in its 2010 report, recommended that the United Nations Human Rights Council and the General Assembly create a binding instrument that regulates and controls the work of these companies in the national and international arena.

For the first time, the Human Rights Council is being presented this year with a different resolution, in which the activities of private military and security companies appear separately from the traditional text on mercenaries. The main co-sponsor of this resolution has been the South African government, a country that was forced to repatriate the bodies of 40 South African citizens contracted by private military and security companies to work in Iraq.

The resolution provides for the creation of an intergovernmental group with open membership, with the mandate to reduce a binding legal instrument to monitor and regulate the consequences of the activities of private military and security companies for human rights, based on the principles, the main elements and the draft text of a possible convention proposed by the Working Group on the use of mercenaries.

The resolution was adopted on 1 October, with 32 votes in favour, 12 against and 3 abstentions. The negative vote by the delegations from the western group (except for the abstentions of Norway and Switzerland) shows that the interests of the security sector, which is a new and expanding industry - with an estimated annual income of 100,000 million dollars - were defended vigorously, as on other occasions. In this respect, it is worth mentioning that the regional talks which were to be held by the Western states in Madrid in October 2010 were cancelled due to the lack of interest by the Western governments in participating.

The negative vote by the western states (including Spain, a member of the Human Rights Council), despite the amendments made by the sponsors of the resolution in an attempt to achieve consensus, highlights the firm commitment from the very beginning by the states hosting the new twenty-first century privateering industry to take no part in a far-reaching debate on all the issues raised by the activities of private military and security companies, such as the privatisation of war. Without the participation of the United Kingdom and United States, the main exporters of the PMSC's activities, and of other western states in which this new industry continues to grow, the resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council appears to be a pyrrhic victory, unless civil society and public opinion in the Western countries exert enough pressure on their respective governments.

Convergence of environmentalism and antimilitarism.
Metabolism, geopolitics and anti-cooperation

David Llistar i Bosch
Globalisation Debt Observatory. Lecturer in Political Ecology, UNESCO Sustainability Chair, Polytechnic University of Catalonia.

Pacifist and antimilitarist movements have often considered environmentalism to be a social movement with different priorities to their own. They are seen as parallel struggles, but ones that are separate and essentially different. Opposing military aggression by a State or sustaining the dictatorship of another country by the sale of arms and granting illegal loans has nothing to do with the fight to achieve a more sustainable energy pattern or model for food and agriculture inside the aggressor country. A domestic policy of consumption and production and foreign security policy are two unconnected things. If not, why has the antimilitarist and pacifist movement yet to embrace the ideas of contraction (socially sustainable biophysics)?

In reality, there are shared roots between the origins of violent conflicts and environmental conflicts, which have not been sufficiently exploited by the two social movements. They have not even been identified. A society's metabolism determines much of its geopolitics, and in particular, the violence it sends outwards as well as inwards. In other words, every society, depending on how it is organised internally, it is obliged to ensure a certain supply of materials (minerals, food, fabrics, consumable manufactured goods, etc.), energy (petrol, coal, gas, uranium and processed minerals that involve energy in their production) and to ensure that the commodities it exports reach their destination safely. They also shed various types of waste - including greenhouse gases - in a process in which they relocate their environmental liabilities to other states, as is the case in the European Union, in industries such as the production of cellulose, biofuels, mineral mining, etc.; or by means of the destruction of common assets such as the atmosphere in the oceans.

This year, the EU is importing over half the energy that it needs, and estimates suggest that this external dependency will increase to 70% in 2030[1]. In Catalonia, where there are no significant reserves of uranium, gas or petrol, dependence on sources of primary energy is almost 100% (93% in 2006, according to the Catalan Institute of Energy). In other key areas such as food, industrial production of meat and milk in the EU depends on livestock farming that uses transgenic soya protein as food, from what Syngenta calls the United Republic of Soya (Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay and eastern Bolivia), and the USA.

The countries of the North and the international consumer class scattered across the planet do not only require a guaranteed supply of raw materials, but also the cheap labour force, the appropriate security measures to keep migrations and other undesired flows under control (drugs, weapons, organised crime, diseases, terrorism, etc) and to see their wealth grow in overall terms. They must be sure that neither the means of international trade nor their investments in other countries are threatened. In the face of strong competition between countries and central business networks, they justify their right to "extend" their control all over the world, beyond their own frontiers, before their neighbour does so. It is a type of capitalist centrifugal force which is the same as the one responsible for many of the armed and environmental conflicts.

However, these great geopolitical objectives vary widely according to circumstances, and sometimes force the government to resort to timely but systematic 'military solutions.' This is not only the case with those in pursuit of the "national interest" (which is often the interests of specific corporate groups) in the form of the objectives mentioned above, but also when a group holding power considers its position in relative terms to be under threat.

In conclusion, wars, the manufacture and trade in arms, and other purely geopolitical actions that have been focused on by the movement for a culture of peace (Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran, Venezuela, Saudi Arabia, Niger, Somalia, etc.), as well as apparently internal repression such as the Bagua revolts against the industrialisation of the Amazon in Peru, the pro-mining repression by the government in Ecuador, the petrol-based repression by the Nigerian government in the Niger delta, and repression in Algeria against a supposedly radical Islamism, are directly linked to the social metabolism of a particular state or organised group of people, which is a concept created by the economic and political ecology[2]. The same is true of the creation of an environmental debt and environmental anti-cooperation condemned by the environmental justice movement and environmentalism in general. It is not only a question of distributive environmental conflicts which may be violent, or the possible convergence between the rejection of nuclear technologies due to both the danger of pollution and the ultimate war that they implied, a warning which was given by the German eco-pacifist movement of the 1970s and 1980s (Fdez-Buey, 2004)[3]. **It is an essential systemic relationship that must be highlighted and confronted before it is too late. It also means that the precepts of the culture of peace must become part of environmentalism, and environmental precepts must become part of pacifism and antimilitarism. The issue goes far beyond what could be a tactical alliance between social movements for global justice**.

The difficulty in recognising these highly important systemic relationships is often the result of not looking closely enough, and fragmenting reality. For this reason, it is necessary to work using a liberating, pacifist and environmental epistemology, helped by the example of the creation of new bridge concepts that help to raise the profile of our relations. We need "re-

arguard theories," in the words of Boaventura da Sousa Santos, which cover the backs of the social movements that are highlighting and condemning unacceptable human processes. These have led to bridge concepts such as "environmental debt," "contraction," "military and environmental anti-cooperation," ...[4], **"ecofeminism," and the "culture of peace." As for the close relationship between the reproduction of environmental conflicts and the reproduction of violence, we have a major task ahead of us in terms of creating deep or systemic ecopacifism, which seeks biophysical contraction as a means to peace**.

1. *European Commission Green Paper (2006). A European Strategy for Sustainable, Competitive and Secure Energy.* Available in English at http://ec.europa.eu/energy/strategies/2006/2006_03_green_paper_energy_en.htm (last accessed 2 September 2010).
2. See the works by Georgescu-Roegen, N., 1996; Fischer-Kowalski, M. and Hüttler, W., 1999, which consider the concept based on theory; or how it is applied to Spanish society Carpintero, O. *El metabolismo de la economía española*. Madrid: César Marique Foundation; or *The energy aspect in Catalonia* in Ramos, J. (coord), 2007. *Anàlisi del metabolisme energètic de l'economia catalana*. CAD. Barcelona.
3. Fernández Buey, F. (2004), *Los movimientos sociales alternativos: una balance*, available at www.edicionessimbioticas.info, (accessed 16/9/2010)
4. "Military anti-cooperation " is the North-South interference which involves the use of violence, the threat to use it or to accentuate it. It also includes the supply of all types of resources used in violence in the South, even when the conflict does not appear to involve actors in the North. See Llistar, D. (2009). *Anticooperación. Interferencias Norte Sur. Los problemas del Sur no se resuelven con más ayuda internacional*. Barcelona: Icària editorial. Also at http://www.odg.cat/ct/inicio/publicacions/11.php?id_pagina=11&id_noticia=&id_agenda=&publicacions=3&id_publicacions=24&categorialink=&id_butlleti=&any_but=&id_nota=&id=

RECOMMENDATIONS

Conflict transformation

John Paul Lederach. *Transformació de conflictes: petit manual d'ús*. Barcelona: Institut Català Internacional per la Pau; Icària, 2010

John Paul Lederach condenses much of his thought into this book, and explains why it is often more useful to transform conflicts by means of a constructive change rather than solving them in the short term. This conceptual framework is a milestone in the way we consider the construction of peace, and is therefore worth studying. From this perspective, conflict is inevitable and this is something that is very positive, because it gives us the opportunity to change. And to create a better situation than the one that previously existed.

According to Lederach's advice, we should become accustomed to considering today's problems as a window, and therefore looking to see what is on the other side, especially in the long term. The author is not naive, and is well aware that the world in which we live is highly complex. However, his approach consists of taking advantage of the benefits of these complexities, and the existence of the many choices that this implies, which are not necessarily mutually incompatible, while respecting everyone's feelings of identity. Although all this may seem a very dense subject matter, this is no longer the case in the final chapter, in which the author applies his theory to a real case, a controversy based on the role of the police in Colorado, the North American state where Lederach lives.

To find out which option to choose, the author asks us to consider the context carefully, and to ask ourselves a number of questions and to rethink a number of issues. This is the only way in which we will be able to use the transforming potential of conflict at all levels, ranging from those linked to the individual to the future of historic change, in which according to Lederach, patterns of violence and coercion will be replaced by social capacity for dialogue and non-violent systems guaranteeing human security and social change.

J.A.

Rethink!

Agneta Söderberg Jacobson. *Repensar en femení!: manual per a una pau sostenible*. Barcelona: Institut Català Internacional per la Pau; Icària, 2010

The ICIP has decided to begin its collection of tools for peace, security and justice with two useful books: *Transformació de conflictes*, by John Paul Lederach and *Repensar en femení!* by Agneta Söderberg Jacobson. Both books are short and clear manuals that provide the reader with specific resources. The first should be compulsory reading for everyone who works in this field. The second also includes the gender perspective, which is becoming increasingly influential in conflict resolution theory and in practice.

Agneta Söderberg explains it and gives many examples from Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cambodia, Liberia, Israel-Palestine, Macedonia, Guatemala, Serbia and Montenegro, Rwanda, East Timor, Somalia and the International Criminal Court. In all these cases, the participation of women in peace processes has had a positive influence on the evolution of these conflicts. This is true to such an extent that she concludes that it is a requirement for sustainable development. At this point, the book makes a qualitative leap in terms of theory, by suggesting a holistic model for the construction of peace in which gender equality plays a key role in all phases: during the war and conflict, during the peace negotiations and during the post-war reconstruction process.

As well as the recommendations based on this proposal, which form the core of the book, readers also have the opportunity to learn from the examples of good cooperation practices between civil society in the South and North (often in Scandinavian countries) which are always focused on strengthening the organisations in the South so that they can play an active role in development and conflict transformation. The links between civil national and international society are therefore present in this book, which ends with a positive and optimistic thought: if we succeed in including women in all stages of the peace process, the ideal of a just and egalitarian world will no longer only be a dream.

J.A.

Fifty years of progress in research for peace: trends and proposals for observation, research and action

Rafael Grasa. *Cinquanta anys d'evolució de la investigació per la pau: tendències i propostes per observar, investigar i actuar*. Barcelona: Oficina de Promoció de la Pau i dels Drets Humans, 2010. Col·lecció Recerca per la Pau, 4

All scientific disciplines are liable to revision and the construction of their own historiography. However, in the case of research for peace, this review is even more necessary due to the fact that it is unprecedented. This study is a real manual for the discipline. The first section is a "bird's eye view," in the words of the author, of the discipline over the last fifty years. The second section is divided two subsections: the first focuses on the origins and causes of the birth for research into peace, reviewing its philosophical predecessors; and the second establishes the factors involved in this research. The third major section brings the topic up to date and provides keys for understanding and research in the post-cold war period. The final section contains the conclusions. The volume is accompanied by very useful appendices, providing examples of the use of indicators and the establishment of observatories, as well as complementary information on ethnopolitical conflicts by other authors.

In conclusion, a wide variety of groups could use the book: from universities to activists in the movement or workers in organisations. The language used does not prevent more profound issues and more complex issues in the development of research into peace being covered. It is also a break with the collection's past, as starting with the next issue, it will be published by the ICIP. It would be difficult to choose a work that embodies this transition better.

P.A.

Zeitoun

Dave Eggers. *Zeitoun*. Barcelona: Mondadori, 2010

The second novel in the series that the North American writer Dave Eggers (born Boston, 1970), editor of the cult literary journals *McSweeney's* and *The Believer*, began in 2006 with *What is the what*, relating stories from contemporary history based on the testimony of a real protagonist, in novel form.

In *What is the what*, Eggers reconstructed the story of children lost after the Sudanese civil war, based on the personal experience of Valentino Achak Deng. In this second book, the main character is the Syrian Abdulrahman Zeitoun, the anonymous hero of Hurricane Katrina which afflicted New Orleans in 2005, who became a victim of the errors and prejudices of the anti-terrorist policy implemented in the USA after 9/11 and the Al-Qaeda-based hysteria.

Zeitoun is being published in Spanish after having received numerous prizes, including the American Book Award, the Robert F. Kennedy Distinguished Honor Award and the Muslim Public Affairs Council Media Award. Eggers succeeds in reconstructing dramatic stories without succumbing to sentimentality, and even includes touches of humour, in a combination of the historical context with the personal adventures of the protagonists. All the profits from these novels will go to non-profit making foundations.

C.C.

Democratic Republic of the Congo, 1993-2003

République démocratique du Congo, 1993-2003. Rapport du Projet Mapping concernant les violacions les plus graves des droits de l'homme et du droit international humanitaire commises entre mars 1993 et juin 2003 sur le territoire de la République démocratique du Congo. Haut-Commissariat des Nations Unies aux droits de l'homme. Nations Unies, 2010

Available at: http://www.ohchr.org/fr/Countries/AfricaRegion/Pages/RDCProjetMapping.aspx

Without aiming to be the result of thorough judicial investigations, the report provides one of the most comprehensive descriptions of the violations of human rights and international humanitarian law committed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo between March 1993 and June 2003. Its 550 pages are based on 1,280 eyewitness accounts and 1,500 documents, and relate 617 violent incidents that took place in various regions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, perpetrated by regular and irregular armed forces, both Congolese and foreign, which mainly affected the civilian population.

This United Nations report, which is the result of an investigation that began in 2005 and ended in 2009, has been eagerly awaited. Despite the first draft that was initially circulated in August 2010, it was not officially published until 1 October.

Without aiming to be the result of thorough judicial investigations, the report provides one of the most comprehensive descriptions of the violations of human rights and international humanitarian law committed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo between 1993 and 2003. Its 550 pages are based on 1,280 eyewitness accounts and 1,500 documents, and relate 617 violent incidents that took place in various regions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, perpetrated by regular and irregular armed forces, both Congolese and foreign, which mainly affected the civilian population.

The vast majority of the human rights violations documented could be considered war crimes or crimes against humanity by the competent judicial authorities. While the report also refers to evidence of genocide against the Hutus in the Congo, it concludes that a comprehensive judicial investigation will be necessary in order for a competent tribunal to rule on this issue.

The report focuses particularly on violence against women, sexual violence, and violence against boys and girls. Meanwhile, the chapter on the exploitation of natural resources highlights the relationship between this exploitation and the prolongation of the armed conflict and human rights violations. The report also includes an assessment of the Congolese criminal justice system and presents options for transitional justice in the country.

The report was subject to severe criticism from countries including Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and Angola, and has also been subject to comments on specific aspects from the Congolese government, despite the latter acknowledging its usefulness in general terms, and stressing that the details it provides on all the victims and are a reminder of their right to truth and redress.

S.P.

Deviance, Terrorism and War: The Process of Solving Unsolved Social and Political Problems

John Burton. *Deviance, Terrorism and War: The Process of Solving Unsolved Social and Political Problems*. Palgrave Macmillan, 1979.

John Burton, who died on 23 June 2010 aged 95 (see PIP issue PIP 4 http://www.icip-perlapau. cat/revista/numero-4-setembre-2010/ens-han-deixat-dues-persones-cabdals-de-la-investigacio-a-la-pau-elise-boulding-i-john-w-burton.htm) was a high-ranking Australian diplomat (as a member of the Curtin Labor Government of the 1940s, he designed much of Australian foreign policy towards Asia and the Pacific) and was also a unorthodox and influential academic in the field of international relations.

A brief review of two of his works us enables us to present part of his thought. The first, *Deviance, Terrorism and War: The Process of Solving Unsolved Social and Political Problems* (Oxford, Martin Robertson, 1979), is the work that made Burton one of the advocates of the theory of basic human needs. Burton, taking his inspiration from the work of Abraham Maslow and Paul Sites and their eight needs which if met would ensure "normal" human behaviour, considers the objective grounds for understanding the causes of conflicts, transcending local political and cultural differences. He said that it would thereby be possible to design processes for conflict resolution and for the analysis and resolution of conflicts as an autonomous discipline. His pioneering vision was subsequently adopted by many others. In specific terms, while criticising realism-based approaches, Burton believed that the main needs for understanding destructive social conflicts were identity, recognition, security and personal development. However, he subsequently emphasised the shortcomings of the modern state system for meeting the needs of identity as being a major source of contemporary ethnopolitical conflict.

A second book, with very strong links to the first, is *Conflict: Resolution and Provention* (New York, St. Martin Press, 1990), which provides a historical and theoretical overview of approaches to conflict resolution, with a special emphasis on the approach called "problem-solving" and above all on preventing violent conflicts, which he called "prevention," thereby inventing a neologism to avoid the connotations of containment - of mere management of behaviour - implied by the term prevention. The first part of the book is concerned with general questions, and in particular basic assumptions on human nature, the role of the theory of needs, the context of conflicts, and the focuses of traditional approaches. The second part, from chapter 7 onwards, examines the political context of conflicts and in particular the relations between authorities, the problems of legitimisation of authority and above all, the way to intervene constructively in conflicts, from a social to an international level. The third part, starting at chapter 12, looks at conflict resolution, and the fourth looks at prevention.

In the final chapters, he returns to a key point in his thought: resistance to the institutionalisation of a conflict prevention system reflects a need to change the paradigm, the creation of an international political system centred on resolution and provention, a system that he describes (in chapter 2) and education, the main instrument for taking us towards it.
These two books therefore provide an overall focus on the thought and work of a leading light in peace research.

R.G.

NEWS

ICIP NEWS

Success of the seminar on the consolidation of peace on Côte d'Ivoire

Over three days, between 27 and 29 September, experts from international organisations, foreign and African academics, politicians and civil society debated the outlook for peace in Côte d'Ivoire at the seminar "Conditions for the consolidation of peace in Côte d'Ivoire," organised by the ICIP in the country's economic capital, Abidjan. The seminar, which also involved the collaboration of the CERAP (Centre de Recherche et Action sur la Paix) and the University of Bouaké, was structured in five themed panels, covered from various perspectives. The debate analysed some of the structural causes of the conflict in Cote d'Ivoire, such as access to land ownership and the definition of Ivorian nationality, and other aspects such as the future of young people and the inclusion of ex-combatants. At the closing ceremony, the ICIP president Rafael Grasa committed the institute to continue working in the country's peace process, which has been under way since 2003. The next presidential elections, on 31 October, could be a significant step forward in this process.

More information at: http://www.gencat.cat/icip/cat/noticies5.html
Program of the seminar: http://www.gencat.cat/icip/pdf/programa_27-29_09_2010.pdf
The seminar in the Ivorian press: http://www.reseauivoire.net/news/article/5239
The seminar in the Ivorian press: http://www.fratmat.info/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id =5602:consolidation-de-la-paix-en-cote-divoire-la-condition-minimale-cest-la-reflexion-selon-le-pr-lazare-poame&catid=34:politique

Seminar on Peace Movements

An international seminar carried out a comparative analysis of the peace movements in Italy and in Catalonia/Spain on 29 and 30 October. The seminar was jointly organised by Rafael Grasa and Javier Alcalde, president and research specialist of the ICIP respectively, and Mario Pianta of the University of Urbino. It was part of the first research programme begun by the ICIP, on "Human security, conflict transformation and research for peace." The seminar was preceded by a discussion entitled "Experiences of the peace movement in Italy and Spain," and those involved included Luciana Castellina, an ex-MP in the Italian and European parliaments and activist, and Francesc Tubau, from the Aturem La Guerra Platform.

See the summary of the participation of Luciana Castellina:
http://www.gencat.cat/icip/eng/noticies.html

Seminars on conflict and security in Africa

Between 3 and 5 November, the seminars "Peace, conflict and security in Africa. New challenges and new perspectives" will look at the current state of security in Africa, including analysis of specific cases, such as Rwanda and Sierra Leone. The seminars, coordinated by Óscar Mateos, an ICIP collaborator and researcher for peace brought together leading analysts, academics and members of civil society in Europe and Africa. Among them were Asma Ismail Bushara, of the Institute for the Development of Civil Society in Sudan and the G-40 Women Leaders group (G-40) from the Horn of Africa; Mohamed Salih, professor of Politics of Development at the Institute of Social Studies in The Hague; Jannie Malan, member of the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes; and Admore Kambudzi, Secretary of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union.

The seminars analysed the situation of Africa's ongoing conflicts, the development of peace processes, the role of civil society and regional bodies, and the emerging role of the African Union as the African countries celebrate the 50th anniversaries of their independence.

More information at: http://www.gencat.cat/icip/eng/noticies8.html
Program of the seminars: http://www.gencat.cat/icip/pdf/programa_jornades_africa.pdf
Biographies of panelists: http://www.gencat.cat/icip/pdf/biografia_jornades_africa.pdf

New Working Paper and other publications

"The evaluation of the climate change regime: beyond a North-South Divide?" by Daniel Abreu Mejía, is the title of the new Working Paper - the sixth in 2010 - published by the ICIP. The document analyses the negotiating patterns used for the Climate Change Convention, based on the North-South division, and shows the emergence of two dynamics in the post-Kyoto era: the importance of the relationship between the United States and the leading developing countries, with the marginalisation of the European Union's role, and the fragmentation of the negotiating process between the countries of the South.

Meanwhile, the report has been published of the Seminars of the Peace Movement held in Barcelona on 13 and 14 November 2009, organised by the Catalan Federation of NGOs for Peace and the ICIP. This publication is the first volume in the Documents collection, which will contain the results of all activities of this type.

The new collection "Classics of Peace and Non-violence" is now available at the book shops

The first two volumes of the collection "Classics de la Pau i de la no violència" (Classics of Peace and Non-violence), which are co-edited by the ICIP and the publishing house Angle, are already available at the book shops. Mahatma Gandhi, by the French intellectual Romain Rolland, is the opening volume of the collection because of its historical and symbolic value as it is the book that divulged Gandhi's figure in the western countries. The second volume is dedicated to Pau Casals and it compiles a series of his writings and statements related to the topic of Peace. The book has been edited by Josep Maria Figueras and it is entitled Pau Casals, escrits i discursos: pau, pau i sempre pau! (Pau Casals, Writings and Statements: Peace, Peace and always Peace!).

With the collection "Classics of Peace and Non-violence" the International Catalan Institute for Peace wants to promote and divulge personalities and works which have become a reference point for their inspiring potential and their historical impact (past and present) as they have established new ways that continue to be valid in the present. With this collection, the ICIP also intends to create and establish a library of the classics in Catalan, so that it can put together a series of authors who have never been translated into the Catalan language before.

More information: http://www.gencat.cat/icip/eng/noticies7.html

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Callixte Mbarushima, one of the suspects sought by the International Criminal Court, detained in France

On 11 October 2010, the French authorities detained Callixte Mbarushima for his alleged responsibility for war crimes and crimes against humanity in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, according to an arrest warrant from the ICC. The suspect will remain in French custody while the Court's application is under consideration.

The ICC's preliminary hearings chamber considers that there are reasonable grounds for believing that the individual in custody, a 47-year-old Rwandan, was the Executive Secretary of the Forces démocratiques pour la libération du Rwanda - Forces combatantes Abacunguzi (FDLR-FCA) and is legally responsible, according to article 25(3) of the Statute of Rome, for crimes against humanity (murder, inhuman acts and persecution) and war crimes (attacks on the civilian population, destruction of property, murder, torture, rape and inhuman treatment). These crimes were committed during the armed conflict in the provinces of Kivu in 2009.

More information at: www.icc-cpi.int

The UN restates the legally binding nature of the right to water and sanitation

In a historic resolution, the Human Rights Council of the United Nations reaffirmed on 1 October that the right to water and sanitation is derived directly from the right to a reasonable standard of living and is inseparably associated with the right to the highest possible level of physical and mental health, and the right to human life and dignity. In the words of the United Nations Independent Expert on the issue of human rights obligations related to access to drinking water and sanitation, "this means that the United Nations, the right to water and sanitation is included in human rights treaties and is therefore legally binding."

The resolution was tabled by Spain and Germany. Apart from the United Kingdom and Guatemala, which withdrew their support for this proposal, the other countries gave extensive and significant support.

As Amnesty International has pointed out, this reaffirmation will reinforce the ability of people who have been denied their right to water and sanitation to hold their governments to account.

According to the UN, 884 million people do not have access to improved sources of drinking water, and over 2,600 million people do not have access to basic sanitation services. Diseases related to water and sanitation are responsible for the death of approximately 1.5 million boys and girls under 5 years old every year, and for 443 million failures to attend school annually.

More information at:

United Nations High Commission on Human Rights:
http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/RightToWaterAndSanitation.aspx
United Nations Independent Expert on the issue of human rights obligations related to access to drinking water and sanitation:
http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=10403&LangID=E
Amnesty International:
http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/IOR40/018/2010/en/dd7392c8-cfdd-41ac-9fd8-1d33d8f38b86/ior400182010es.pdf

Noble Peace Prize for Liu Xiabo: a deserved prize, loaded with significance

The fully deserved award of the Nobel Prize Peace to Liu Xiabo (a human rights activist, a leader of the Tiananmen Square uprising, political prisoner and the inspiration for the Charter 08 Movement) prompts a review of many of the cliches and reflections linked to a prize that has been highly controversial throughout its history.

First, this year's prize is fully deserved, which has not been the case with some of the winners. Leaving aside his links to Tiananmen Square, Liu Xiabo, vice-president of the Chinese Pen Club and currently serving an 11-year prison sentence, is the main writer and benchmark for Charter 08, a document inspired by Vaclav Havel's Charter 77 in Czechoslovakia (1977). This is a document which advocates a coherent and robust political alternative for the first time in China, based on the need to fully comply with the civil rights recognised in the Chinese constitution (to date only rhetorically, of course), while arguing for a reform process leading to a democratic and federal China. The Charter has already been signed by thousands of people, and for the Chinese Government, it is the

main threat for the future. It is therefore a third source of concern for the establishment in the face of international pressure, together with the revolts in Tibet and Xinjiang. The prize is therefore very welcome, as is the support for the cause of Charter 08, which aims to achieve an unambiguous political opening by the regime, with full respect for civil and political liberties. The response from the Government, which was harsh towards the prizewinner as well as to the outside world, shows that it it is aware of the potential of Charter 08 and of the support and publicity that the Prize entails.

Second, it is an example of how the prize alternates between negative peace (prizes for peace negotiations and/or agreements, disarmament treaties, etc.) and positive peace (the struggle for human rights and justice and development) and between continents. This year, after last year's preventive Nobel for Obama, based on the change in tone in international relations, and what this could do in the arena of nuclear disarmament and the Middle East conflict, it was time for a positive peace prize and a winner from Asia or Africa. As is usually the case in prizes awarded for positive peace, the prize went to a specific individual despite having a collective dimension. The bishop of Chiapas, Samuel Ruiz, put it magnificently when he presented the Nobel Prize to Rigoberta Menchú, whom he sheltered in his residence when she fled Guatemala: "There are hundreds of Rigobertas and when she is given the prize, the prize is given to all of them!" We should not forget therefore that the struggle for political and social rights under very adverse conditions of repression is still something that is unfortunately very common and very difficult in many places in the world.

Third, it also highlights the frequently political nature of the prize. To put it another way, the explanation for Liu Xiabo winning the prize, rather than the three or four other human rights activists that deserve it as much as he does, is that it enables the West to put pressure on China, a strong competitor, without involving key economic interests directly. This would explain the rapid response from the United States, with President Obama calling for the immediate release of Xiao - a call which we at the ICIP fully support - a demand that had not been formally made at the high level meeting in 2009.

In the early seventies, when China had not yet taken its place at the UN (it was occupied by Taiwan) and had not re-established diplomatic relations with much of the world, ping-pong diplomacy was invented. Now the West seems to have decided to use Nobel Peace Prize diplomacy.

R.G.

Spain submits to the United Nations Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review

In 2010, Spain was examined by the Human Rights Council by virtue of the new mechanism for the protection of Human Rights known as the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). This mechanism, which is applicable to all the member states of the United Nations, aims to unify the monitoring and assessment criteria for the human rights situation in the various countries. However, the fact that it is the states themselves that examine each other is responsible for most of the criticisms regarding politicisation of the UPR and has reduced the legitimacy and authority of its recommendations in the two years in which it has been in force.

In the case of Spain, the result of the UPR focused on well-known aspects that have already been condemned by other United Nations bodies, such as various special relators and the Human Rights Commission. The fight against terrorism, increasing racism and xenophobia, gender-based violence, the situation of immigrants, historical memory and asylum and refugee policies are the subjects which received most recommendations in the total number of 137.

The Spanish Government accepted the majority of them and undertook to continue working to improve and strengthen the system of rights and liberties, but rejected 21. These referred to the need to end the regime of solitary confinement, the incomplete definition of the crime of torture in the Penal Code, the signing of the Convention for the protection of the rights of migrant workers and their families, and the international obligation to investigate the crimes of Francoism, among others.

In 2011, the United Nations Human Rights Council will be implementing the monitoring mechanisms arising from the recommendations made by the UPRs to date. That would be an appropriate time to analyse the application of the measures that Spain has undertaken to adopt, and to continue to demand acceptance of the rejected recommendations.

More information at the website of the Human Rights Institute of Catalonia, the organisation that has monitored the entire process: http://www.idhc.org/cat/182_EPU.asp#20100921

Thomas Lubanga, on trial at the International Criminal Court, will remain in custody

After the Appeals Chamber of the International Criminal Court (ICC) revoked the decision by the Chamber of First Instance to halt proceedings against Thomas Lubanga Dyilo on 8 October and free him, confirmation was received that the accused will remain in custody and the trial will resume.

The Chamber of First Instance took the decision as in its opinion the accused was not guaranteed a fair trial because the Prosecutor had not followed the judges' order to provide the defence with information on an intermediary. The Appeals Chamber also ruled that the immediate suspension of the trial is too drastic a solution in this case, and that there are other means of making the Prosecutor comply with judicial orders.

Lubanga, leader of the political and military movement Union des patriotes congolais (Union of Congolese Patriots, UPC) is accused of complicity in the forced enlistment and recruitment of minors aged under 15 years old in the Forces patriotiques pour la libération du Congo (Forces patriòtiques per l'Alliberament del Congo, FPLC) and making them participate actively in hostilities, often on the front line, at various locations in the Ituri area, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Many of these minors lost their lives during the fighting, while others were forced to kill. According to the Statute of Rome, these acts are war crimes. Congolese and international human rights organisations have repeatedly condemned the limited nature of the charges as there is evidence that Lubanga and his militia are also responsible for many other crimes, such as murder, sex crimes and looting, which the ICC Prosecutor did not include in the case against him.

Lubanga was handed over to the ICC in March 2006. The charges against him were confirmed in January 2007, and the trial, the first by the ICC since it was constituted in 2002, began on 26 January 2009.

More information at: www.icc-cpi.org