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International Secretariat

Rue du Vieux Marché aux Grains, 21
1000 Brussels, Belgium

Tel. +32 2 502 55 50 - Fax +32 2 502 46 26

www.paxchristi.net

AFRICA

[New Congolese Electoral Commission takes oath in Kinshasa](#)

DR Congo's new Independent Electoral Commission took oath in Kinshasa on 14 June 2013. After the electoral hardships of late 2011, the new commission is faced with a difficult mandate. From East Congo, Nadia Nsayi, policy officer for Central Africa at Pax Christi Flanders and Broederlijk Delen, reports on how the new commission was received and what challenges lie ahead of it. Read more [here](#) (in Dutch). Nadia's visit to Congo was also featured in the Flemish Catholic press Kerknet Nieuws. Read more [here](#) (in Dutch). ■

[Publications on Africa](#)

Two new publications on Africa are available from the Life and Peace Institute, a Pax Christi Member Organisation in Sweden. The latest issue of the [Horn of Africa Bulletin](#) features analyses on Kenya as a new test case for the International Criminal Court, the African Union and foreign policy lessons from the European Union, as well as an interesting account of local peace-building initiatives in Kenya's Sotik/Borabu border. The [New Routes Journal](#) includes updates on the recent developments in Somalia and Mali, the continuous struggle for peace in the DRC, the impact of peace-building programmes in the Asia-Pacific region, and other useful reviews and resources. For more information on the work of the Life and Peace Institute, see: www.life-peace.org. ■

AMERICAS AND CARIBBEAN

[Pax Christi USA 40th Anniversary National Conference](#)

The annual national conference of Pax Christi USA took place in Atlanta, Georgia, on 14-16 June 2013. The event entitled "*Remembering the Past with Gratitude, Living the Present with Enthusiasm, Embracing the Future with Confidence and Hope*" observed the 40th anniversary of Pax Christi USA and the 50th anniversary of Pope John XXIII's *Pacem in Terris* encyclical. Speakers included Bishop Thomas Gumbleton and Rev. Bryan Massingale, STD. The conference featured a series of workshops as well as a visit to the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for a prayer ritual. Pax Christi International Secretary General José Henríquez attended the event. Read more [here](#). ■

[24 US religious organisations oppose funding for the B61 nuclear bomb](#)

On 10 June 2013, a group of 24 religious organisations across the United States, among them two Pax Christi International member organisations, i.e. Pax Christi USA and the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns, addressed a letter to the U.S. Senate's *Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development* urging it to oppose funding for the B61 nuclear bomb refurbishment in the fiscal year 2014 budget. Read more [here](#). ■

[Pax Christi Montréal Roundtable on Pacem in Terris](#)

More than a hundred people attended a roundtable organised by Pax Christi Montréal on 6 June 2013 to discuss possible ways for commitment to justice and peace in Quebec. The event was occasioned by the publication of "*Pacem in Terris - Peace on Earth*" marking the 50th anniversary of Pope John XXIII's encyclical. The book was published by Novalis, under the editorial direction of Gregory Baum, with the collaboration of 15 authors. Read the roundtable [press release](#) (in French). The speech delivered by Claire Doran, Director of Education, Development and Peace, at the book launch, can be found [here](#). Book order details can be found [here](#). ■

Reducing inequality in Colombia

Pax Christi International hails the agreement on land reform reached at the end of May in Havana by the delegations of the Colombian government and the FARC guerrillas. It is the first agreement after more than six months of peace talks. Read more [here](#). ■

ASIA - PACIFIC

New Zealand Superannuation Fund excludes nuclear base operators

Pax Christi Aotearoa New Zealand, a member of the Aotearoa New Zealand branch of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (iCAN), welcomes the recent exclusion of a group of nuclear base operators from New Zealand's \$22 billion Superannuation Fund. iCAN Aotearoa New Zealand has been campaigning for a long time for the exclusion of companies

involved in the manufacture and testing of cluster munitions and nuclear explosive devices from the Fund. Read more [here](#). ■

The Ethics of Drone Warfare

Pax Christi Australia's Joe Camilleri has authored an opinion editorial on the ethical battle over the use of drone technology, published by the Australian opinion and analysis portal, ABC The Drum. The article questions the United States' use of drone technology in the name of the 'just war' doctrine. Read the full article [here](#). ■

Women's Human Rights Activities Award

The Women's Fund for Peace and Human Rights, winner of the 2007 Pax Christi International Peace Award for their initiative on Women's Active Museum on War and Peace, is currently launching the Women's Human Rights Activities Award (Yayori Award) 2013. The Yayori Award focuses on women activists, journalists, and artists who work at the grassroots level with socially marginalised peoples throughout Asia in order to create a 21st century free from war and discrimination against women. Nominations can be submitted until 25 August. Further details can be found [here](#). ■

Sri Lanka: outreach programmes as social instruments of healing

A new resource on outreach programmes as social instruments of healing is available from the Human Rights Office Kandy, a Pax Christi Member Organisation in Sri Lanka which aims to assist survivors of the civil war in their pursuit for justice. Read more [here](#). ■

MIDDLE EAST

Peace movers in Afghanistan

A group of peace activists, among them Christine Hofmann, Secretary General of Pax Christi Germany, and Reiner Braun, Board member of the International Peace Bureau, has recently completed a one-week visit to Kabul, Afghanistan. The group met with a range of Afghan interlocutors from the government and the Islamic and secular opposition, as well as representatives of the Taliban, NGOs and civil society organisations. The picture of daily life in a war zone and the conclusions put forward regarding steps to be taken to bring peace to this tragic land are both important and challenging. ■

Dutch economic links with the Occupation

Cordaid, ICCO and IKV Pax Christi are three Dutch peace and development organisations that advocate a resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in line with international law provisions. These three organisations regard international trade relationships with the Israeli occupation forces as an obstruction. Together they have commissioned a report which aims to identify past and current Dutch economic links with the Israeli occupation of Palestinian and Syrian territories. Read the full report in [English](#) and [German](#). ■

EUROPE

Pax Christi International Annual General Meeting

Pax Christi International held its Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 10-12 June 2013 in Berlin, Germany. The event was attended by representatives of the Pax Christi sections and the International Secretariat. Pax Christi Germany hosted the event.

The 2013 AGM was dedicated to the renewal of the international leadership structures for the timeframe 2013-2016. Strengthening the Pax Christi International movement through knowledge-sharing and coordination planning around core issues pertaining to its mission, was also on the agenda.

Ms. Marie DENNIS (United States of America) and Msgr Kevin DOWLING (South Africa) were re-elected as International Co-Presidents of Pax Christi International for the timeframe 2013-2016. Fr. Jan PETERS s.j. (Netherlands) was re-elected as International Treasurer of Pax Christi International 2013-2016. A new International Board 2013-2016 was also elected.

The 2013 AGM included further sessions on the economic roots of conflict, drones and automated war systems, the current situation in Syria, and other issues of common concern. Participants also received input and shared their experiences with campaigning, advocacy, and networking.

The next Pax Christi International AGM will be held in Sarajevo, in June 2014.

Read the 2013 AGM press release in [English](#), [French](#), [Spanish](#) and [German](#). See pictures from the event [here](#). ■

Pax Christi International: Annual Report 2012

Pax Christi International's 2012 Annual Report is now available in [English](#) and [French](#). It highlights the International Secretariat's networking, capacity building, and advocacy efforts over the past year. In 2012, networking activities focused on Latin America and the Caribbean, and on the Middle East with the aim of enhancing dialogue and strengthening regional coordination. Interregional and/or cross-border capacity building initiatives were undertaken with the Pax Christi sections and other partners to meet the goals of the Pax Christi Global Strategic Framework 2012-2015.

The International Secretariat's advocacy efforts in 2012 were centered around articulating a clear and coherent message to international institutions and decision-makers on policies that shape peace processes and that affect the lives of people who live in situations of violent conflict; ensuring competent representation of the global network at international decision-making centres; addressing international bodies of Church and other religious leaders in view of stimulating greater action for peace with justice; and expanding global relationships by linking with international campaigns, coalitions, and other NGOs. ■

Pax Christi Italy against F35

Pax Christi Italy deplores the Italian Government's decision to purchase 90 F-35 fighter-bombers. In a press release dated 21 June, Bishop Giovanni Giudici, President of Pax Christi Italy and Bishop of the Diocese of Pavia, declared: "we do not understand

how is it possible to combine the purchase of a fighter-bomber, which is an attack weapon, with our constitutional principle of repudiating war". Read the full press release in [English](#) and [Italian](#). ■

Freedom of expression and of assembly in Germany

In a press statement from 13 June 2013, Pax Christi Germany deplores the violent intervention of police forces during the Blockupy Frankfurt Protest in early June.

Blockupy Frankfurt gathered about 20,000 people from all over Germany and nearby countries to protest against the policy of the government and the banks regarding the European debt crisis. What started as a peaceful demonstration soon escalated into a violent crackdown, whereby more than 200 activists were brutally injured by the police. The German section of Pax Christi sees this as an unacceptable infringement against the freedom of expression and of assembly in Germany and demands competent authorities to clarify the situation and prevent future escalations. Read the press release in German [here](#). ■

From Croatia to Kosovo: a European peace in process?

On 13 June 2013, IKV Pax Christi Netherlands together with Platform Spartak and Pax It hosted a BalkanBorrel entitled "From Croatia to Kosovo: a European peace in process?". The event discussed the impact of EU enlargement on peace and prosperity in Croatia and northern Kosovo. This BalkanBorrel was part of the Week of Human Rights organised by the municipality of Utrecht. ■

Pax Christi Austria against Arms Transfer to Syrian Rebels

Pax Christi Austria strongly opposes the decision of certain EU-states, notably the UK and France, to release the transfer of arms to the rebels in Syria.

In a press release dated 2 June 2013, Pax Christi Austria explicitly welcomes the position of the Austrian government, which – in keeping with active neutrality and a policy of peace – supports the continuity of the arms embargo and a political solution of the Syrian conflict through negotiations. Read the full press release in [English](#). ■

Pax Christi Ireland Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of Pax Christi Ireland, an all-Ireland section of Pax Christi International, was held in Dublin in May. Dr. Bryan Maguire was elected Chairperson of the organisation. Mairead McKeown from Belfast and Sr. Margaret Ivers from Dublin were also elected to the executive committee. There was a short reflection on *Pacem in Terris* (Peace on Earth) that was occasioned by the 50th anniversary of Pope John XXIII's encyclical. The AGM reviewed some of Pax Christi Ireland's international advocacy initiatives on issues related to anti-personnel landmines, cluster munitions, the Arms Trade Treaty and nuclear disarmament. For more information, see: <http://www.paxchristi.ie>. ■

**DISARMAMENT/
DEMILITARISATION**

Nuclear Abolition Week

On 6 – 13 July 2013 Nuclear Abolition Week kicks off with activities across the world for a ban on nuclear weapons. This global week of action is intended to raise awareness of the unacceptable harm caused by nuclear weapons and of the urgent need for a ban treaty. During this week, supporters of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) from all around the world will take to the streets, meet with policymakers, organise public meetings and more to show their government that they expect full-fledged support for a treaty banning nuclear weapons.

There are many ways you can [get involved](#). To sign the petition and call on your government to initiate and support negotiations for a treaty to ban nuclear weapons at the earliest possible date, click [here](#). ■

"Time To Go" Campaign against Nuclear Weapons

Pax Christi Flanders, Vrede, Vredesactie and Coordination Nationale d'Action pour la Paix et la Démocratie have initiated a campaign for the removal of American nuclear weapons stationed in Belgium. The ['Time To Go'](#) Campaign aims to mobilise the entire Belgian social sector, including labour unions, key political figures, and the cultural sector. The campaign will end with a big manifestation on 20 October 2013 in the Jubilee Park (Cinquantenaire) in Brussels with a clear message: "Time to Go! Nuclear weapons out of Belgium." To learn more about this campaign, including how you can get involved, visit: www.timetogo.be. ■

Arms Trade Treaty signing ceremony

The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), adopted by the UN General Assembly on 2 April 2013, opened for signature on 3 June at the UN headquarters in New York. 67 States signed the new treaty, enough to pass the 50-signature minimum threshold and secure entry into force within 90 days from ratification. Switzerland and Trinidad and Tobago expressed interest in hosting the ATT Secretariat. Beth Begley, Representative of Pax Christi International at the United Nations, attended the signing ceremony. ■

Campaign to Stop Killer Robots

Fully autonomous weapons or “killer robots” were discussed for the first time ever at the United Nations on 30 May 2013, following the presentation of the [report](#) on ‘lethal autonomous robotic weapons’ by UN Special Rapporteur Christof Heyns. General consensus was reached that killer robots must be addressed as a matter of priority.

A [statement](#) was delivered to the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva on this occasion by the “Campaign to Stop Killer Robots”. Launched in London in late April, the Campaign calls for urgent action to preemptively ban fully autonomous weapons or killer robots which, once activated, can select and engage targets without further intervention by a human.

The Campaign has meanwhile received support from 33 NGOs in 16 countries. IKV Pax Christi Netherlands is part of the Steering Committee. Pax Christi Aotearoa/New Zealand is also one of the campaign supporters. All NGOs, community groups, and professional associations that wish to support the Campaign's call for a ban on

killer robots are invited to join. Details on how to get involved are available [here](#). ■

Open-Ended Working Group Nuclear Disarmament

In October 2012, the UN General Assembly convened an open-ended working group (OEWG) to develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons. Chaired by Ambassador Manuel B. Dengo Benavides of Costa Rica, the OEWG met in May and June, and it will convene again on 19-30 August 2013. An OEWG report to the UN General Assembly's First Committee is foreseen for October 2013. Susi Snyder of IKV Pax Christi Netherlands is participating in some of the working group's meetings. ■

HUMAN RIGHTS

International Day in Support of Victims of Torture

On the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, 26 June, Pax Christi International joined an appeal by nine international and Mexican human rights organisations to express their concern regarding the implementation by the Mexican authorities of their obligations under the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

Torture and ill-treatment continue to be widely used in Mexico, particularly by law enforcement agencies and judicial police

at state level and municipal police on arrest or during the first hours of custody. Impunity for torture remains the norm and raises serious concern that measures to combat torture have so far been insufficient to overcome many of the factors that make it a common phenomenon. Read more here in [English](#) and [Spanish](#). ■

Open-Ended Working Group on the Right to Peace

Pax Christi International expressed its support for the written statement entitled "*Progress report of the Open-Ended Working Group on the Right to Peace: Civil, Society Organisations assessment*" before the 23rd Session of the UN Human Rights Council that took place in Geneva in June. Read the full statement in [English](#).

Pax Christi International was also present at a press conference on "*Future Challenges of the Open-Ended Working Group on the Right to Peace*" organised by the Permanent Mission of Costa Rica to the UN on 5 June, in the margins of the 23rd session of the UN Human Rights Council. ■

HUMAN SECURITY

Protecting civilians in Syria

In a recent editorial on the situation in Syria, Bishop Marc Stenger, President of Pax Christi France, recalls the urgent need to assist and protect civilians caught up in the escalating conflict, as well as refugees who have fled the country to neighboring Lebanon and Jordan. Bishop Marc Stenger urges humanitarians and peace advocates to join

efforts with Pax Christi in order to address this situation. Read the full editorial in [French](#). ■

Syria: avenues for non-violent conflict resolution

The Brussels-based European Bureau for Conscientious Objection organised a debate on Syria "*Conflict in Syria, back from the border: Can Pacifists act?*" on 1 June. Recently returned from Lebanon, where he met with key players in Lebanon and Syria in order to explore and support possibilities for reconciliation throughout the Syrian conflict, Francesco Candelari, Secretary General of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation, gave an account of his experience in the field and discussed with the audience potential avenues for non-violent response to the Syrian conflict. Pax Christi International Secretary General, José Henríquez attended the event. ■

Post -2015 Development Agenda

On 30 May, the High Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda released a report entitled "A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies through Sustainable Development" which sets out a universal agenda to eradicate extreme poverty from the face of the earth by 2030 and to deliver on the promise of sustainable development. The report states that "freedom from fear, conflict and violence is the most fundamental human right, and the essential foundation for building peaceful and prosperous societies." This report is the starting point of a global discussion leading to a special UN General Assembly meeting on the post-2015 development agenda in September 2013. The report in full length can be found [here](#) (English).

On 31 May, the High Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda held a discussion with delegates of NGOs at the UN headquarters in New York. Panellists put forward recommendations regarding the report. Beth Begley and Alexandra Hiniker, Pax Christi International's representatives to the UN, attended the meeting. ■

Peace and security on the post -2015 Development Agenda

IKV Pax Christi and the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC), welcome the inclusion of "ensuring stable and peaceful societies" as one of 12 universal goals and national targets proposed by the High Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda in its recent report "A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies through Sustainable Development".

The two Netherlands-based organisations have decided to jointly address the inclusion of a peace and security goal in the post-2015 development agenda. Jan Gruiters (IKV Pax Christi): "Since violence and instability are the largest obstacles to development, we now have the opportunity to ensure better results are achieved in conflict-affected countries. The challenge now is to engage governments to adopt 'stable and peaceful societies' as a universal goal and to agree upon clear indicators measuring progress within the post 2015 framework."

The two organisations are in the process of finalising their campaign strategy. More information can be found [here](#). ■

Protecting civilians under International Humanitarian Law

The International Coalition to Ban Uranium Weapons (ICBUW), IKV Pax Christi and the Toxic Remnants of War Project (TRWP) delivered a joint statement at the "Reclaiming the Protection of Civilians under International Humanitarian Law" conference in Oslo on 23-24 May 2013.

ICBUW, IKV Pax Christi, and TRWP believe that greater attention should be paid to the long-term post-conflict civilian health legacy from environmental contamination and degradation. Documenting, communicating, and managing environmental contamination must be viewed as a key component of protecting the long-term health of civilians, particularly where the capacity of national authorities to provide these services may be constrained. Further details can be found [here](#). ■

JUST WORLD

Post -2015 Education Agenda

The First NGO/UNESCO International Forum on Education entitled "Which Education Goals for Tomorrow's Citizens of the World: Is Quality Enough?" will be held on 23 September at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, France and will bring perspectives from higher education and civil society to inspire reflection on the post-2015 education agenda. ■

PEACE EDUCATION

Peace and non-violence education

A new publication is available from the International Network for a Culture of Non-violence and Peace of which Pax Christi International is a member. It includes updates on the Network's international campaign for children's rights to a non-violent education, as well as an overview of non-violence and peace initiatives, including calls for action, campaigns and events organised by the Network and its members around the world. Further details can be found [here](#). ■

PEACE SPIRITUALITY

The Spirituality of Transformative Justice and Democracy

Bishop Kevin Dowling, Co-President of Pax Christi International, delivered a presentation on the spirituality of transformative justice and democracy during the Peace Spirituality Encounter organised by the International Secretariat in Warsaw, in May 2013.

In post-conflict situations after the end of a war and in all efforts to work for peace in situations of violence, what has become central to discussions over the past years has been a reflection on the numerous issues encompassed by 'Transitional Justice'. Transitional Justice emphasizes the centrality of *justice* as the cornerstone of both process and outcome of the transition time from conflict and violence. One objective is to create and nurture an environment where past evils and atrocities will never occur again. Transitional Justice equally speaks of the possibilities of justice for victims, the accountability of perpetrators responsible

for injustices, and of the process leading to reconciliation, where possible, and a decent society.

Catholic Social Teaching principles can bring a distinctive value to the broader conversation around Transitional Justice. Read the full contribution of Bishop Kevin Dowling [here](#). ■

Peace House in Lourdes

The Pax Christi Peace House in Lourdes will open its doors again this year from 10 July till 28 August. Volunteers are needed to welcome guests visiting the pilgrimage site of Lourdes. Should you wish to get involved, please contact the secretariat of Pax Christi France at: pax.christi-france@paxchristi.fr. ■

ADVOCACY

Sign the Petition: Don't let Syria Down

Pax Christi International has joined a petition launched by Oxfam International calling on U.S. President Barack Obama and Russian President Vladimir Putin to make the long-promised Syria peace talks a reality. Signatories to this petition are calling for peace talks to happen urgently and for participation from all parties to the conflict, in order to make talks a success. To sign the petition, click [here](#). ■

Committee of Religious NGOs at the UN

Beth Begley, Pax Christi International representative at the United Nations in New York, was nominated as Secretary of the Bureau of the Committee of Religious NGOs

at the United Nations which will be effective in September 2013.

The Committee of Religious NGOs at the UN is a coalition of representatives of religious, spiritual and ethical non-governmental organisations who exchange views and are dedicated to the pursuit of peace, understanding and mutual respect. The Committee meets regularly to share information and insights about the complex issues and events at the UN. ■

Büchel Action Camp

This summer (9-13 August) the No Nukes team of IKV Pax Christi Netherlands organises a bus trip to the action camp at the nuclear weapons storage base of Büchel, Germany. Büchel is one of six bases that host U.S. nuclear weapons in Europe. Along the way, the group will stop at Volkel where the Netherlands hosts U.S. nuclear weapons. Joining this four-day bus trip is a great opportunity to connect with other activists and act for nuclear abolition. Click [here](#) for more details. ■

PAX CHRISTI INTERNATIONAL IN THE MEDIA

Pax Christi International in the Media

In an interview for the Catholic News Service (CNS) on 19 June, Pax Christi International Co-President, Marie Dennis, welcomes President Obama's decision to scale back the US nuclear arsenal: "We hope that President Obama will honour his commitment to move toward nuclear zero as rapidly as possible." Read the full article

in [English](#). The interview was also featured on Radio Vatican on 20 June (in [French](#)), and in the Flemish Catholic press Kerknet Nieuws on 21 June (in [Dutch](#)).

The renewal of the Pax Christi International leadership structures was reported on by the Flemish Catholic media Kerknet Nieuws. Read the full article in [Dutch](#).

On 14 June, Pax Christi International Co-President, Marie Dennis, was featured in a Special Report "Pacem in Terris at 50" published by the Catholic World Report. Marie Dennis talks about the relevance of Pacem in Terris today which highlights today's urgent need to address nuclear disarmament and drone warfare. Read the full article [here](#) (English).

The Peace Spirituality Encounter organised by the International Secretariat in Poland, on 15-20 May, was featured in the Polish Catholic media. The Bielsko-Żywiecka Diocese published two articles on the event (for details in Polish, click [here](#) and [here](#)). Klub Inteligencji Katolickiej (KIK), a Pax Christi member organisation in Warsaw, reported on the Peace Spirituality Encounter in their monthly [info bulletin](#) (in Polish). ■

INTERNATIONAL CALENDAR

Click [here](#) to view the International Calendar of upcoming events.

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To make a donation to Pax Christi International please click [here](#). ■