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2017 WAS A YEAR OF HISTORICAL ACHIEVEMENTS, highlighted by the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) of which Pax Christi International is an active member. The award was given in response to the incredible work our movement and the other partners of ICAN accomplished in the ratification of the UN nuclear weapons ban treaty.

Pax Christi International’s influence was also evident in Pope Francis’ World Day of Peace message, “Nonviolence: A style of politics for peace”, which served as a ringing endorsement at the highest level of the church for the Catholic Nonviolence Initiative which we began in 2016. This project was instrumental in advocating for the Pope to focus his message on nonviolence.

In 2017 we also saw very important developments of our regional networks with the creation of the Africa Great Lakes regional network and their commitment to training youth in active nonviolence; the Pax Christi Asia-Pacific consultation that established our regional network on that continent and trained 25 grassroots leaders in advocacy for the Sustainable Development Goals; and the strengthening of the capacities of our member organisations as the second phase of Pax Christi’s work in Latin America, training grassroots communities in nonviolent strategies to counter the impact of extractive industries.

You’ll see in this report how advocacy for peace and human rights is at the core of Pax Christi International’s work. We defined four advocacy priorities (nonviolence, nuclear disarmament, Israel-Palestine, extractives in Latin America) and began implementing advocacy monitoring and evaluation tools to learn from past experience and enrich our advocacy capacity.

The Catholic Nonviolence Initiative continues to gain support from our member organisations but also from many partners who share our excitement of pushing the Catholic Church to become the greatest promoter of nonviolence in the world. And our global nonviolence campaign, highlighting “what nonviolence looks like” by featuring unique and creative ways our member organisations are employing nonviolence in their work for peace, is putting nonviolence at the centre of our movement.

The world continues to present us with huge challenges but our Pax Christi movement, 120 member organisations and growing worldwide, continues to foster the hope that peace is possible.

In peace,

Greet Vanaerschot,
Secretary General, Pax Christi International
We launched our new advocacy strategy for 2017-2020, prioritising these themes:

1. **Nonviolence, a Style of Politics for Peace**
2. **Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty**
3. **Renewed Israel-Palestine Peace Process**
4. **Extractives in Latin America**

Representatives from member organisations in the Asia-Pacific network gather for a training on the Sustainable Development Goals in Manila.
In 2017 we ...

- Convened more than 80 people in 2 panel discussions on ‘Nonviolence, a style of politics for peace’, in March at the UN in New York, co-organised with the Holy See Mission and the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns, and in April in Brussels.
- Published a position paper with COMECE and Justice&Peace Europe promoting nonviolent approaches for the EU Communication on Resilience in March.
- Delivered SDG-training to 25 representatives of our Asia-Pacific member organisations in Manila in November, including crafting and publishing a SDG-training guide and shooting 19 video interviews in which participants talk about how the SDGs link to their nonviolence work.

Pax Christi International put our resources at the service of passing the nuclear weapons ban treaty that was being negotiated and moving toward adoption at the United Nations. We took up the promotion of key human-centred provisions of the treaty and worked with our networks to further its ratification and the implementation of its provisions by governments.

In 2017 we ...

- Shared in the joy of the Nobel Peace Prize being awarded to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, of which we are a long-time member, and the recognition of our joint efforts in pushing for a nuclear weapons ban treaty.
- Formulated text proposals for the treaty, in collaborations with our partners, which led to 5 articles being adopted to reflect a more human-centred approach.
- Brought more than 100 people together for a film screening in the UN Trusteeship Council Chamber and coordinated a side-event assessing the human-centred aspects of the treaty during the negotiation session, both in June at the UN in New York.
- Led an 8-person delegation to the Vatican disarmament conference in November and coordinated a media strategy aimed at reaching church leaders with messages on nuclear disarmament.
- Created and promoted 5 videos with representatives of the Zoque indigenous community and our Mexican member organisation FRAYBA.

2017 marked 50 years since Israel began its occupation of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights and the annexation of East Jerusalem. We believe in the necessity of a renewed commitment to end human rights violations and to reach a just and sustainable solution guaranteeing the fundamental rights of both Israelis and Palestinians in accordance with international law. Pax Christi International called the international community to address the occupation and international law violations, to support human rights defenders, and to start a renewed Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

In 2017 we ...

- Attained 2368 signatures of our online petition addressed to EU High Commissioner Mogherini and lobbied her office with the EU External Action Service in April, sharing key messages online through video interviews.
- Conducted a media campaign in 4 languages highlighting the 50 years of occupation in June together with our member organisations in the UK, France, Belgium and Austria which was picked up by at least 20 national and international media platforms.
- Participated in the World Council of Churches conference on 50 years of occupation, contributing to their press release and the promotion of their ‘12 faces’ campaign.

Many Latin American communities have been heavily affected by the activities of companies exploiting natural resources and establishing large-scale development projects. Pax Christi International is working to raise the voices and stories of those communities devastated by the extractives industry in Latin America and have these problems addressed on the human rights, trade and development agendas of the international community.

In 2017 we ...

- Addressed a letter with our member organisations in Montreal and Toronto to Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau in February for the creation of a national ombudsperson dealing with extractives cases; thanks to this effort and joint work by civil society members, his government decided to do so.
- Hosted and coordinated an advocacy campaign with three Latin American human rights defenders meeting with journalists and EU officials in Brussels in October.
- Convened 35 people, including representatives from Latin American indigenous communities, human rights defenders, NGOs and EU institutions, for a panel discussion on extractives organised with CDiSE and hosted by COMECE in Brussels.
- Created and promoted 5 videos with representatives of the Zoque indigenous community and our Mexican member organisation FRAYBA.
Pax Christi’s Catholic Nonviolence Initiative (CNI) is focused on promoting a renewed commitment to Gospel nonviolence at the heart of the Catholic Church, including the possibility of a new official teaching on nonviolence. Determined to find an effective remedy for the cycles of violence that terrorize local communities, justify widespread militarisation, and ultimately fail to provide inclusive, life-giving security, we have discovered in the Catholic Church and beyond a substantial interest in nonviolence as a way of life but also as a multidimensional, diverse platform of activities able to transform conflict and to reduce violence.

CNI recognises that the role of women needs significant attention in the Church’s exploration of nonviolence and just peace. We are grateful and humbled by the women who are giving so much of their time and energy to the Catholic Nonviolence Initiative. In regard to the topic of nonviolence and women, in his 2017 World Day of Peace message, Pope Francis noted that “women in particular are often leaders of nonviolence.” The CNI promotes that women assume roles as strategists, organisers, and active participants in various nonviolent campaigns and movements. Research shows that sustainable peace is more likely if women are meaningfully involved. More research into the important intersection between gender inclusion and nonviolent movements is necessary.

2017 HIGHLIGHTS

ROUND TABLES AND RESEARCH PROJECTS

In 2017, CNI initiated five roundtables, with virtually equal representation of men and women (around 60 participants from around the world), and five special research projects to create material that, by the fall of 2018, will be coalesced into a document that we hope can be used as a Church teaching on nonviolence and peace.

ACADEMIC DISCUSSIONS

CNI participated in several events of universities during 2017. Just two examples: A gathering was held at the University of San Diego (California, USA) in October which was designed as a dialogue on nonviolence with military leaders and Catholic thinkers; and a consortium on nonviolence in the Catholic tradition was organised at DePaul University’s Center for World Catholicism and Intercultural Theology (Chicago, USA) in early November.

In 2017, we recognised ZODEVITE, the Movimiento Indigena del Pueblo Creyente Zoque en Defensa de la Vida y la Tierra (the Indigenous Movement of the Zoque Believing People in Defense of Life and the Earth), based in Chiapas, Mexico, as the recipient of the Pax Christi International Peace Award.

ZODEVITE is part of a wider movement, MOVEDITE, composed of indigenous groups, that in recent years has waged a nonviolent campaign to stop fracking, oil exploitation and mining business in southern Mexico. With the accompaniment of Pax Christi International member groups FRAYBA (the Centro de Derechos Humanos Fray Bartolomé de las Casas) and SIPAZ (Servicio Internacional para la Paz), ZODEVITE has organised nonviolent resistance actions to halt hydrocarbons and mining projects in the Tecpatán municipality.

Pax Christi International has prioritised extractives in Latin America as an issue for our movement, and we have increased our commitment to nonviolence in all its forms, in relationship to all of creation including the Earth itself.
Building on the success of 2016’s Africa consultation which took place in South Africa and the decision to create a structure formed by several sub-regional networks, most of 2017 was dedicated to establishing the Great Lakes regional network.

With the support of Pax Christi’s Africa Coordinator, the network held two planning meetings: the first one taking place in May in Goma and the second in November in Kisangani, both in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

At these meetings, representatives from Burundi, DR Congo and Rwanda committed to:

- Create a regional structure based in 7 clusters representing a group of communities, with the 7 clusters coming together through a steering committee. The Great Lakes network consists now of 16 member organisations.
- Training youth in active nonviolence as the thematic focus for the next three years.
- Incorporate an advocacy element to the work of the network, especially bringing issues of violence affecting the youth into the policy arena.

A three-year project of active nonviolence training will provide youth with skills and a support network to find alternatives to violence. The project will address youth in youth movements as well as schools and universities and also include an income-generating element, giving disadvantaged young people who were trained a chance to start up a small business.
The People Power Monument commemorating the events of the 1986 People Power Revolution in the Philippines. Over 25 representatives of our member organisations in the Asia-Pacific region learned this history during the consultation in Manila in November 2017.

**REGIONALISATION**

**Asia-Pacific**

In 2017 all efforts in Asia-Pacific were put toward the planning and realisation of Pax Christi’s Asia-Pacific consultation entitled “Towards a Sustainable Peace through Active Nonviolence in Asia and the Pacific”.

From 27 November through 1 December, Pax Christi International brought together in Manila, the Philippines, more than twenty-five grassroots leaders from our member organisations and partners throughout the Asia-Pacific region. The regional consultation included representatives from Australia, Indonesia, India, Japan, the Philippines, New Zealand, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Bangladesh, and Thailand.

The Asia-Pacific consultation’s programme included keynote presentations, workshops, small group discussion and activities, exposure visits, strategic planning, and an advocacy training on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their implementation.

At the consultation, representatives from member organisations:

• Constructed a regional team made up of representatives from key member organisations in the region to lead the effort in identifying structures and ways for regional collaboration.

• Seeded regional initiatives (World Assembly collaboration for 2020, strategies to address the conflict on the Korean peninsula, cooperative addressing of SDGs, etc.) and began devising a joint analysis on conflicts in the region as the first steps in creating a common roadmap for securing peace.

• Strengthened their grassroots base to influence religious and political leaders while employing strategies of active nonviolence for social change by training in and identification of best practices within the region.

• Issued a consultation statement that included a commitment from representatives to work together across national boundaries on issues of common concern.

A 50 page executive statement plus annexes was prepared by all of the participants which gives an overview of the consultation, its outcomes and next steps.
The Latin America and Caribbean network of Pax Christi International is implementing the second phase of the project with communities experiencing conflict where extractive projects are developed.

In 2017, the activities in Latin America focused on preparing and running trainings in Chile, Mexico and Paraguay. The project also continued to work with our partners in Peru, Colombia and Guatemala, who after receiving their trainings in Phase 1 have now moved on to designing and implementing their strategy plans.

In the past year …

• 551 people, across six countries, were trained and exercised their political actions in resisting the extractives industry in Mexico, Chile and Paraguay.

• Citizens’ actions included the mobilisation for change in policies that affect participant communities, like in the case of Santa Rosa community (Guatemala) and the Zoque indigenous people in Chiapas (Mexico).

• Methodologies have been replicated by grassroots representatives as in San Andrés (Chiapas) and Los Queñes y Alto Mañihuales (Chile).

• 796 people implemented their action strategies in Guatemala, Colombia and Peru to incorporate an advocacy element to the work of the network, especially bringing issues of violence affecting the youth into the policy arena.

Member organisations in six countries trained 551 people to take political action in their communities.
The “Young Peace Journalists” (YPJ) project of Pax Christi International started in 2016 as an effort to engage young people on important issues of peace and justice while raising up the stories of marginalised peoples experiencing conflict or injustice. Young people were taught the rubrics of responsible “peace” journalism as well as the practical skills of how to do an interview. They conducted interviews with refugees, listening to their stories and gaining a better understanding of the situation, then sharing and promoting the interviews online to raise awareness of the plight of people seeking refuge.

Twenty-nine stories were published in 2017 on the Peace Stories blog launched by Pax Christi International. The stories were viewed 3,810 times on the blog and promoted over social media. Twenty-three Young Peace Journalists from 14 different countries on 4 continents were trained and submitted stories.

The training sessions were conducted via video conference and focused on peace journalism, refugee issues, and how to conduct an interview. The YPJ project was presented by Johnny Zokovitch, Senior Communications Officer, to over 150 participants from around the world in the opening plenary session of the SIGNIS international conference for Catholic communications in Quebec, Canada in June 2017.

Young people were taught responsible “peace” journalism ...

Young people were taught responsible “peace” journalism ... They conducted interviews with refugees, listening to their stories and gaining a better understanding of the situation ...
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Women march in favor of the nuclear weapons ban treaty in New York City.
Indigenous Peruvians come together to protest for their rights.
This is what nonviolence looks like.