

# DISARMING Pax Christi TIMES

*The Journal of Pax Christi Australia*

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## 50 Years of Peacemaking 1974-2024

### A CALL TO ALL CHRISTIANS IN AUSTRALIA TO STRIVE FOR A JUST PEACE IN THE HOLY LAND.

*In the Name of Christ, our peace*

The time has come for people of faith to hear the cries of the people of Palestine Gaza and Lebanon and to do everything in our power towards the ending of the death and destruction they are suffering.

We condemn the brutal invasion of Israel, the death and destruction and the taking of hostages by Hamas on 7 October 2023. We remind you that this is the latest episode in the very long war waged by the state of Israel on the Palestinian people. They have taken land for settlements, demolished homes, restricted movements of people and goods, and imprisoned children, women and men, often without trial, and killed Palestinians on the flimsiest of pretexts.

Successive Governments of Israel remain fiercely hostile to the idea of Palestinian self-determination and are intent on maintaining the unjustifiable and inhumane occupation of Palestinian lands. While these are the actions of Israeli governments and their supporters, we acknowledge the many citizens of Israel who long for and are working for a just and lasting peace.

• Since 7 October 2023, Israeli military actions have killed over 43,000 Palestinians and more

than 2,000 people in Lebanon including close to 17,000 children. Thousands more children have lost at least one parent. Some 100,000 Gazans have sustained injuries, a quarter of which are life altering.

• Israeli forces have issued displacement orders covering over 84% of Gaza's territory and now 25% of Lebanon's territory. These orders, combined with Israel's bombardment, have forcibly displaced around 90% of Gaza's population and over 800,000 people in Lebanon.

- An estimated 400,000 Palestinians are under siege and relentless bombardment in northern Gaza without access to food, water, fuel, or medical care. (UNRWA)
- Over 300 Palestinian and international aid workers, and over 1000 health care workers in Gaza and 95 in Lebanon have been killed.
- UN peacekeeping forces in Lebanon have come under attack by Israeli forces (UNIFIL).
- Israeli military attacks on hospitals, clinics, and ambulances have decimated the health care system in Gaza, and are destroying it in Lebanon.
- Countless children and adults

are dying of malnutrition and facing the risk of starvation because of systematic obstruction of humanitarian aid and essential services.

- Nearly 1,200 Israelis were killed during the Hamas led attacks on October 7, 2023 including 815 civilians. 7,500 were wounded.
- 101 hostages remain held by Palestinian armed groups, We cannot accept the claim that Israel has the right to defend itself regardless of the harm caused by its military assault. The right to defence can never be the right to revenge, let alone the right to commit war crimes, or crimes against humanity. The right to defence cannot mean actions which the International Court of Justice described in its January 2024 ruling as plausibly amounting to genocide.

#### Contents

A call to all Christians in Australia	p 1
Message from Guam.....	p 3
I.P.A.N conference.....	p 5
The Kikuyu concept of justice.....	p 6
Pax Christi Asia Pacific statement.	p 8
Hate speech in Myanmar.....	p 9
Remembering Ann Brady.....	p 11
Remembering Eunice Smith.....	p 12

# DISARMING TIMES

A quarterly journal of Pax Christi Australia. It aims to provide members and interested peacemakers with peace news and views both local and international. We endeavour in each edition to reflect the three-fold emphasis of Pax Christi which engages members in study, Non-violent action and prayer for peace, justice, human rights, development and inter-faith and inter-civilisation dialogue.

## PAX CHRISTI AUSTRALIA

is an Australia-wide

Christian Peace Movement, affiliated with Pax Christi International.

Human rights, justice and integrity of creation are central to its work.

We take a stand against militarism, nuclear weapons and the arms race.

As an ecumenical Christian movement

Pax Christi fosters the spiritual and scriptural dimensions of peace-making.

[www.paxchristi.org.au](http://www.paxchristi.org.au)

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We cannot ignore the harm inflicted on the people of Israel. The Israeli government's refusal to negotiate a ceasefire has already led to the deaths of many hostages, the appalling suffering of those still in captivity, and unimaginable pain for the families involved. The refusal to cease hostilities has also exposed communities in northern and central Israel to an endless barrage of rocket attacks. Whether intercepted or not, such attacks deepen the sense of insecurity, and inevitably fuel the spiral of violence.

We therefore call on Christian people and Churches in this country to raise their voices in support of a simple demand: STOP THE KILLING.

We call on the Government of Israel and the leaders of HAMAS, Hezbollah and their supporters to enact and IMMEDIATE CEASEFIRE, supervised by United Nations peacekeepers

**We believe that this conflict will continue as long as the United States and its allies, including Australia, continue to supply Israel with weapons and bombs. There will be no movement towards a ceasefire, much less a permanent peace as long as this continues.**

We therefore call on the Australian churches and Christian people bring all possible pressure on the Australian Government and on our public representatives to

1. Cease all military cooperation whatsoever with the State of Israel,
2. Apply whatever economic sanctions possible on the State of Israel,
3. Use whatever diplomatic channels we may have to advocate for an immediate ceasefire, the release of hostages and Palestinian prisoners.
4. Do everything possible to urge the United States to cease supplying weapons and armaments to the State of Israel.
5. Make it clear that our military alliances with the United States are suspended so long as they continue to supply weapons to the State of Israel.
6. Take a clear stand against anti-Semitism and anti Islam move-

ments in Australia.

7. Reach out to and support the churches in the West bank, Gaza and Lebanon and Palestinian and Lebanese churches in Australia in whatever ways we can.

Impose selective commercial, financial and political sanctions, targeting specifically those in public and corporate leadership positions who are driving the use of military force. The silencing of guns can only be a prelude to a settlement of the conflict. Only We suggest five key principles towards a just, peaceful and durable outcome:

- **Self-determination** The Palestinian people have the right to determine their own future, which means ending Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories, and addressing the Palestinian refugees' right of return.
  - **Human Rights** All parties must commit to the observance of civil and political as well as economic, social and cultural rights, including the rights of their respective minorities.
  - **Economic Justice** All parties to act responsibility to ensure equitable access of resources, including land and water.
  - **Human Security** Both parties are to can only feel secure, if they cease to rely on military force and develop processes and practices conducive to truth telling and reconciliation based on mutual respect, trust and acknowledgement of each other's humanity.
  - **The Status of Jerusalem.** Ideally, Jerusalem should be united and be seen by both Israelis and Palestinians as a place of special significance to both, a place which has a unique status for Jews, Muslims and Christians. The international community can play a constructive role in facilitating such an agreement and materially supporting its implementation.
- All of this will take much time, energy and good will. It will also require of government, media, universities faith communities and other influential institutions a more thoughtful, energetic, and where

and where necessary courageous contribution to the cause a just peace than has so far been the case. The three Abrahamic Faiths, Jews Christians and Muslims have a key role to play in

facilitating communication and reconciliation.

It is now time for people of faith in Australia to speak truth to power and challenge the wanton disregard for human life that we

are witnessing in the Middle East. We commit to doing all we can to advance a just peace.

**Signed**

Catriona Devlin

Convenor Pax Christi Victoria

**Pax Christi Victoria, which is part of Pax Christi International, a worldwide Christian peace movement, has initiated this call. It invites other Christians to associate themselves with this call, as part of an ongoing commitment to work for a just and lasting peace. The recent announcement of a ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hezbollah, should it take effect, may bring some respite to the suffering people of Lebanon, but it does little to heal the horrendous level of deaths, injuries and destruction the conflict has left behind and its deep seated roots.**

Soon we will bring the Call to the attention of Church leaders, other faith leaders, and those in leadership positions in government and the wider society. But first, we believe we should allow the Christian community in this country to make its voice heard.

We therefore seek your endorsement of the Call - some of you have already endorsed it; we thank you most sincerely.

*Above all we need you help to disseminate the Call across your networks anywhere in Australia. Please get in touch with people in their personal capacities, but also Churches, religious organisations, Christian schools, welfare groups, and all who are working to enliven communities and confront injustice. Your support is vital to the success of this initiative. We will keep you regularly updated.*

**Endorse the Call [HERE](#) OR GO TO <https://chnq.it/rDKLNDWjtx>**

## MESSAGE FROM GUAM (GUAHAN)

Professor Lisa Natividad

I want to begin by presenting an offering from our indigenous traditions to the original landowners of this land, the aboriginal people. I share Lang Siha. This is the offering to the bones, the ancestral bones of the First People to arrive here. It's so ironic that the topic of our discussion is focused on the links with Australia militarily, particularly through AUKUS, but the actual links are our peoples' migration into the Pacific. We came largely from South China into Taiwan and merged with aboriginal peoples. We moved up into the Pacific to populate the entire Pacific region, so our links are very deep and wide, longer than any of us in this room have here.

I come from an island that is a US territory. I often refer to our island of Guahan as America's best kept secret. Its military agenda is motivated, as the American population is told, with the aim of spreading democracy, yet in its own territory of Guahan democracy does not exist. We do not have the right to vote for a US President. We may have an elected delegate to the US. Con-

gress, but that person doesn't have a true vote.

They only vote in committee. If there's a tiebreaker,

their vote is voided. Those are just two examples of the illusion of inclusion of our people in the political process, when, in fact, there isn't. It is classic old school colonisation. We are one of 16 left in the world, remnants of the 1960s movement of decolonisation. We remain in this status not because we haven't tried hard enough. It's not because we haven't sent generations of people to the United Nations. It's not because we haven't held plebiscites. It's because we are the largest landmass that the US owns and will not let it go because of our geopolitical strategic location in the middle of the Pacific Ocean.



AUKUS is just another thing added to the litany of ways in which US Militarism has impacted our lives. I was here in 2,007, hosted by Jo. At the time the hot potato was the transfer of 8,000 marines from Okinawa, Japan, to our island, and since then, we've had so many other developments of the military footprint on our island. To contextualize, we are a tiny little island, literally a dot on the map the size comparable to Adelaide proper. So, we're a very small place, and the US Department of Defence currently occupies one third of the island.

The expansion continues. I was just sharing with Jo earlier that the latest expansion that they're anticipating is the creation of an iron dome on our island, similar to that in Israel, with 20 missile defence sites on our little island. Suffocating is not even the right word to describe what it feels like in occupied territory. We totally understand. And you know, genocide comes in many different shapes and forms and different strategies. With ours it's a slow, insidious death of our people. So I usually talk about

the problems of militarism, not least from the environment and land disposition, and I can go on and on about that. But I was inspired today with our visit to the navy establishment here, where the submarines are to be berthed. Here was great discussion around what we're often told as communities about why the military expansion is good for us, and it is largely to do with the economic agenda. But we're a tiny little island and AUKUS doesn't even represent us. Already there's a very clear, direct. Some words from a news story about the impact on Guahan by AUKUS: Gamma is the name of the project being developed. It says, and I'll quote, "Gamma also has the potential to serve as a hub in the Indo-pacific for educating and training members of the Australian industrial base, and perhaps personnel that support the Royal Australian Navy while the Gamma initiative is currently focused on meeting the Navy's needs. The Astro President said, *the goal is to also expand to other markets, using new capabilities to provide replacement parts for other industries, including aviation and automotive maintenance and repair.*" This just means what we already know in terms of militarisation. It is an industrial complex largely motivated by profits. We, as community members are just casualties of that process.

I want to share a couple of case examples in terms of looking at the economic impacts of militarisation. I believe it was the last IPAN Conference held a couple of years ago in Darwin where one of your guest speakers or presenters, was from Okinawa, Shinako, Osan. Okinawa is a very good example of the fallacy of the military money that's supposed to fall from heaven, and grace us, and make life better. Okinawa occupies 6% of the land mass of Japan. Yet they host 75% of the thousands of US Military personnel stationed in Japan. It's a huge base. There are multiple bases all over Okinawa. And so, you would think, then, that with this vast military presence economy would be thriving. The reverse is the case. Okinawa is actually the

poorest prefecture in Japan. Ask yourself, *"If this is good for the economy, where's the evidence?"*

A second example was from Dr. Catherine Lutz from Brown University in the US. She wrote a whole book called *Homefront*, in which she looks at the community of Fayetteville, North Carolina, which hosts the army naval base Fort Bragg, a whole bunch of different bases, a heavily militarized community. She found the same thing in her research. Military bases at least in the US, as in the case of Guahan, are very self-contained. They have their own medical system; their own shopping system. She goes on to say a huge proportion of the military population are young, which is often the case, because the US military generally serve for 20 years and are then eligible for retirement. So, we're talking about a very young population of military personnel. What she found in the case of Fayetteville, North Carolina, was that they were paid so poorly that they didn't contribute to the tax base, a really critical factor. They don't contribute to the tax base but are eligible for different entitlement programs. In other words, rather than contributing to the economic activity of the city they exploit the place without contributing to tax?

Let me turn to second case, example, and then to a third one.

Cora Fabros, from the Philippines, often talks about the case of the closure of the bases in the Philippines. She was actually on the committee along with Walden Bello, which made the decision not to renew the lease with the United States. This was in the nineties. The Philippines converted the Subic area, which is where the US had massive military naval bases, into an economic centre granted for industrialisation and other kinds of economic projects. They were able to do this successfully.

But when the United States Department of Defence pulled out of the Philippines, they literally left their mess behind - abandoned vehicles, the whole 9 [naval] yards, and their justification for that was that it wasn't written into their status of forces agreement. But the

cleanup was not mentioned. So that's something to be very mindful of when we're talking about environmental contamination that we know is part and parcel to military preparation for war and military activities.

I also want to share a little about our own experience in Guam with this transfer of marines from Okinawa to Guam. Because we're a territory, they're bound by certain laws. They have to follow what is called the NEPA process, which stands for the National Environmental Protection Act. So we go through this process of assessing the proposed impacts of this or that project. In this case it was the transfer of marines and the construction of a base. At first, we go through a process of scoping meetings with the community. And then they actually release and have all these researchers examining every dimension of how it's supposed to impact our lives.

First, we presented a draft environmental impact process. And as a community, we submitted over 10,000 comments, from an island of 165,000 people, these were 10,000 comments of concerns about the impacts of this move. None of this changed in any way their plan, just to put this at the front. Then it went through a final environmental impact statement and they released the final record of their decision which said that this project would bring no significant economic benefit. Even though that's counter to the rhetoric that we were fed.

Whenever you have increasing numbers of military personnel, especially if they bring their dependents with them, you need to put them somewhere.

In our case, housing gets significantly impacted. The cost of housing increases because landlords will hold out to get the higher rents. This means that members of our community can no longer afford housing, and the result in some cases is homelessness. We're seeing this at home on an island where I was raised as a young child, where we never saw a single homeless person on the street or anywhere else, and because family



networks were very strong, we held them close to us, and we got through together. But now there is an impossible situation, and our homeless count in the past year was over 3,000 people, in a community of 170,000. So the direct impact in terms of housing costs is very much related to the military presence. When you have a poor community, the military is a step up. You join the military and you get a big truck. It's a very simple kind of formula for poor communities, then discounted shopping in a military commissary, which is very enticing in poor communities, especially in families where people are suffering.

Finally, I just want to refer a part of our Guam draft environmental impact statement. The economists do their calculations looking at the economy. Such calculation involves what is called a macroeconomic multiplier, which in layman terms, means social work . . . It traces the dollar in the community, and how far it circulates to impact in a positive way. What was discovered in the case of Guam is that would be a little bit of boom with the base con-

struction, and the construction period for five years. That boom comes down pretty quickly in five years, and for us the total income generated from that construction boom comes to about 230 million dollars. What we started to realise is you can save 230 million dollars. What we are concerned about as community members is, the cumulative impact on our lives. When you've got this construction boom which, by the way, needs to be filled by an imported labour force of 20,000 people. These labourers stay on. When construction is done, they generally settle. And what about their needs? When they need to go to the doctor, what hospital do they go to? They have no privileges on the base. So for us, the subsidizing of this military construction is on the backs of our own local community and it comes to more than 230 million dollars. One former governor who had actually supported the build-up was quoted as saying that it would cost us at least a billion dollars in terms of upgrading our infrastructure because we didn't have the infrastructure for such a population increase estimated at

about 30% of the native population. We need to think critically about what we're fed in terms of the economic prosperity that comes with military bases.

We need to dispel the idea that if the military bases pull out, we'll go hungry. We'll have no jobs. The economy will dry out. The Philippines had the courage to say, No, we're not going to continue this arrangement in a country that didn't have huge resources. Yet they figured it out. They found a way to make it work, and I think we all can have the courage to do the same. And so I'm here in solidarity with the people of Australia, with a lot of friendly faces across this room whom I've seen multiple times, multiple years, but really, just to reinforce that. You know, people power is the most important thing to shift our communities, and we can't ever forget the power that we have. Well, we are blessed, aren't we?

*Dr. Lisa Natividad is a Professor of Social Work at the University of Guam. She is the primary convener of the Guahan Coalition for Peace and Justice. She was a keynote speaker at the IPAN conference in Perth.*

## WORKING FOR A JUST PEACE IS PART OF OUR MISSION

Catriona Devlin

Recently, I was given the opportunity with Rita Camilleri, to represent Pax Christi at an important Conference in Perth, initiated by IPAN (Independent and Peaceful Australia Network), an organization with which Pax Christi is closely affiliated. Lots of other peace-related organisations were represented as well. Conscious of the terrible conflagration taking place in the Middle East, all present were highly motivated. Interestingly, the main religious group in evidence was the Quakers. Aptly titled "Are we Sleep-walking into War?" the Conference enabled participants to be closely informed about the various ways our Government is preparing Australia to become part of the USA's war machine, all in the name of Security – a security that is primarily based on

militarization, rather than one based on human and planetary needs.

The first part of the Conference involved being taken by bus to see first-hand, the Stirling Naval Base, on Garden Island, where it is proposed that our Nuclear armed Submarines will be housed and maintained, as part of the AUKUS agreement - an agreement about which there has been no consultation and little transparency, in spite of the billions of dollars being spent. On the way home we stopped off at another huge facility allied to this,



called BAE Handerson Systems. Both facilities were heavily guarded, with NO ENTRY signs on all gates. The Federal Police had been warned of our visits, and were there watching us, as we displayed our banners, made by local artists. I think they thought we were fairly harmless, as we were all "of an age"! On the way home we stopped off at another huge facility allied to this, called BAE Handerson Systems. Both facilities were heavily guarded, with NO ENTRY signs on all gates. The Federal Police had been warned of our visits, and were there watching us, as we displayed our banners, made by local artists. I think they thought we were fairly harmless, as we were all "of an age"! During the next days of the Conference, we were treated to various eloquent speakers: Senator Fatima Payman, Carmen Lawrence,

John Lander, David Shoebridge, Margie Beavis and many more. The take home message from the Conference was one of hope, impressing the need for searching out and speaking the truth about what is happening, and for spreading this awareness.

On the way home we met a young Sri Lankan woman who was heading to Wantirna to make a 9-day Buddhist retreat – to gain peace in her own life. She has made this retreat for the past 6 years. This is her way of creating peace in our world. Meeting her provided some balance to the ideas we had been consider-

ing at the Conference. Working for peace and justice does call on us to actively work for it: write letters, attend rallies and become informed. But it also calls on us to create peace wherever we are, by our very kindness to one another.  
*Sister Catriona Devlin is Convener of Pax Christi Victoria*

## INDEPENDENT AND PEACEFUL AUSTRALIA NETWORK 2024 CONFERENCE DECLARATION

### 6 October 2024, Boorloo (Perth)

The Independent and Peaceful Australia Network (IPAN), met on the lands of the Whadjuk Noongar people in Boorloo (Perth) from the 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> October 2024 to hold its national conference, **Sleepwalking into War**, opposing AUKUS, nuclear submarines, and the nuclear industry and nuclear waste.

### WE SEEK A JUST, PEACEFUL AND SUSTAINABLE WORLD.

This conference, which attracted well over one hundred people, nationally and internationally, affirms its commitment to campaign for an independent Australia which pursues peaceful relations with all countries on the basis of equality and mutual respect. To this end, IPAN will work with all like-minded people and organisations in a broad-based mass campaign to drive the necessary political change.

### IN THE NAME OF PEACE, THIS CONFERENCE CALLS ON THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT TO;

- Terminate the AUKUS agreement/treaty.
- Terminate the 2014 Force Posture Agreement between Australia and the USA, which sees a permanent rotation of 2500 USA Marines stationed in Darwin
- Withdraw all ADF personnel from all areas of the world outside of Australia's immediate territorial boundaries, except for those on UN peacekeeping missions
- Declare that Australia will not be involved in a war against China, or any other country, or allow Australian territory to be used to support such wars
- Support an immediate and permanent ceasefire in the Middle East and unequivocally condemn the genocide that is occurring there and cease supply of any weapons components
- Establish a Ministry for Peace under the auspices of the Foreign Affairs portfolio and,
- Ensure AUKUS is investigated by the National Anti-Corruption Commission
- Finally, this conference calls for an end to the nuclearisation of Australia.

## THE KIKUYU CONCEPT OF JUSTICE.

Loretta Brennan

Kenya is on the East Coast of Africa and is home to more than 42 ethnic communities of which the Kikuyu community is 22% of the population. According to Britannica the Kikuyu came from the northwest of Africa around 300 years ago. They belong to the Bantu language group of ethnic communities on the West and East coast of Africa. Before the British took over their land the Kikuyu farmed millet, sorghum, peas, beans and sweet potatoes. They also kept cows, goats and fowls. The Kikuyu lived independently in their own land which contained huts for the wives

and a separate one for the husband. They were patrilineal and the men ruled the community by ages sets according to their years of birth. Traditionally, the Kikuyu believed in God (Ngai) and the teaching of their ancestors.

After the Second World War the British Government granted some of the ex-servicemen farmland in Kenya. This meant many of the Kikuyu families were separated and dispersed. In the mid nineteen fifties the Kikuyu decided to fight for their independence and the Mau Mau was born. Jomo Kenyatta had been im-

prisoned for taking part in the rebellion but later became the First President in 1964. He had studied for his PhD at the London School of Economics and published an ethnographic account of the Kikuyu people in 1938 : *Facing Mt. Kenya*.

Over the decades the Kikuyu people have modernised and adapted to 21<sup>st</sup> Century technology and education. They have written down their language and have a number of scholars who have researched their traditional beliefs and culture. One scholar of note is Hannah Kinoti who died unexpectedly in 2001. Hannah

. Hannah had a PhD in Religious Studies and wrote numerous articles on traditional kikuyu ethics and values. She believed that the missionaries misunderstood the beliefs and values of the African people and had unwittingly frustrated their rightful expression. She spent her academic life researching and writing about the effect of colonisation on her community. Her concern was that traditional Kikuyu values be researched and studied because in spite of modernisation the culture lived on.

This paper is based on research by Kinoti and will address the Kikuyu understanding of justice as expressed in their language. The Kikuyu articulated their concepts in proverbs, rules and practices that directed their daily lives.

### Justice - Kihooto

According to Kinoti (1991) in the Kikuyu language the concept of *Kihooto* is closest to the English term for justice. As a moral principle it guided and safe guarded the individual and the society to live in peace and harmony. *Kihooto* is more comprehensive than the English concept of justice for it affects all daily transactions. The idea of fairness and equity permeated the people's everyday personal and communal *decisions*. Its purpose was to maintain order in the community. One of the most quoted proverbs: "A just answer breaks the bow set ready to shoot" expresses the belief that justice prevails over the force of might. In Kikuyu the word *Kihooto* is derived from the verb "hoota" which means: to defeat or defend by argument. (1991, p.58)

Having an oral tradition, the Kikuyu were skilled in debate and discussion. Conflicts between neighbours were settled through the council of the Elders. Given that the community shared the same language, beliefs and traditions they also shared the same values. Besides the council of elders there were *ad hoc* committees (*njama*) that were constituted to keep the peace and enforce proper moral conduct. For example, an extended family would have a committee that would oversee disputes concerning inheritance, debts, and the welfare of orphans. There



was also a women's council that issued fines to any elder who harassed or neglected his wives. (Lambert 1956)

Through stories and proverbs values were handed down the generations and affirmed through practice in their daily lives. Their communities were sufficiently cohesive for them to articulate their learning in catchy proverbs that they taught to their children.

### Kikuyu proverbs for Justice.

The proverb *He who is driven away by justice does not return but he who is driven away by the club does* (*Mulgative na kihooto ndacokaga na nuingatwo na njuguma mi achaga*) captures the understanding that when justice has been denied especially with violence it will not bring peace. The injustice will be passed down the generations: the call for justice lives on. The following proverbs *Justice resists all efforts to chase it away* (*kihooto grtingatikaga*) and *Justice cannot be leapfrogged over* (*Kihoot gitingiagaranka*) expresses the community's desire for fairness and equity; people expected justice and it was futile to ignore it..(Kinoti 1991, 59) Retaliation was not encouraged as life was considered sacred: *He who revenges himself is the bad one* (*mwiririhiria niwe muuru*) justice is not about an 'eye for an eye' but is meant to restore the equilibrium in the community (Kinoti 1991, p.64). According to Kinoti's informants in the field, justice was "an irresistible force of right that was indisputable and self-vindicating" (p. 58) Kinoti highlights the point that justice lives in people, that they know there is a reasonable way of doing things to which they subscribe (1991. P.59)

### The Kikuyu Justice System

According to Lambert (1956) the Kikuyu justice system was based on three principles:

1. Settlement of disputes was by discussion not by force.
2. Correction of the issue was by restoring the imbalance through compensation not physical punishment
3. The Elders were to adjudicate and assess given their age and wisdom. (Lambert 1956)

For major crimes the Council of Elder would conduct their court in an open space where the victim and accused with their relatives would make their case. The death sentence was rare and only applied if the person was incorrigible and a threat to the community. However, every attempt would be made by his age mates and family to redeem him and restore him to the community. In the end, the decision to execute had to be agreed to and his family involved in the action.

Forgiveness and reconciliations were practised through means of rituals. The Kikuyu were not so concerned with the breaking of the rules and taboos. Of most importance was the harm done to relationships in the community. The restoration of family bonds and kinship ties was necessary for peaceful coexistence and balance. In tight knit communities the practice of forgiveness was essential in restoring harmony. Fines had to be paid and restitution made but in a reasonable and equitable way.

### Belief in God

The Kikuyu believed in God as creator and giver of life. They did see God as punishing them but not in a malicious way but more as a consequence of their actions. Their behaviour created imbalance and so there was a reaction to their careless and thoughtless actions. God was understood as a God of justice and that God was on the side of the just. Kinoti (1991) regards the action of the Mau Mau is because of their belief that God would restore their land from the British. Cornfield (1959/60) in writing his report to the British Parliament on the Kikuyu uprising shares the following comment:

The attitude of the Kikuyu to land is summed up well in the following

words of Mr. Eliud Mathu (Note 3): — "It is on the land that the African lives and it means everything to him. The African cannot depend for his livelihood on profits made through trading. We cannot depend on wages. We must go back every time to the only social security we have—the piece of land. The land stolen must be restored, because without land the future of the African people is doomed. God will hear us because that is- the thing he gave us." (p. 11) The people firmly believed that the land would be returned to them because God was in charge. If justice made sense to them in their daily lives, then God must be a just God. Receiving back their land at independence has affirmed this belief.

### Conclusion

Kinoti (1991) maintains that *kihooto* was the foundation of Gikuyu morality because its practice preserved order and peace in the society. Values such as courage and industry

were highly affirmed in the community as they brought peace and harmony. Rules were adhered to because they made sense. For individuals being honest, reliable and trustworthy meant they were appreciated and respected by the clan. Moral values such as honesty, justice, diligence, generosity and temperance were reasonable because they promoted peace, harmony and good will in the community.

Kinoti would have been well aware of how the first President took power in a similar fashion to the colonial masters by deliberately taking land from other ethnic communities for his clan. The issue of land still remains an issue in Kenya. The concept of Kikuyu justice has been over ridden by the dominant global culture and left to scholars and individuals to remember, reclaim and preserve their cultural values. This does not mean that Kenyans lack a sense of justice but that the public affirmation

of these Kikuyu values is no longer guiding public discourse. However, recent events in Kenya have shown that the younger generation is well aware of the lack of justice in their government and are prepared to protest and demand accountability of their President.

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- Loretta Brennan is a Brigidine sister and former Director of Institute of Spirituality and Religious Formation in Tangaza University. Kenya. She initiated a Centre for Leadership and Management

## PAX CHRISTI ASIA-PACIFIC STATEMENT

### Impact of the Ukraine-Russia Conflict and Rising Tensions in the Asia-Pacific Region

#### "Resist Militarisation, Embrace Diplomacy for Regional Stability and Peace-building"

8th November 2024

As Pax Christi Asia-Pacific, we are deeply concerned about the unfolding consequences of the Ukraine-Russia conflict for peace, stability, and security in Asia and the Pacific. This conflict has transcended national boundaries, with its effects reverberating globally and risking an escalation of military tensions across our region. We are particularly alarmed by recent news of North Korea's "dispatch of military troops" to Russia and South Korea's consideration of providing military assistance and munitions to Ukraine. In this regard, we strongly support the statement of the Special Committee for National Reconciliation of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Korea (CBCK) on 5 November 2024, urging restraint in military escalation on the Korean Peninsula and calling for dialogue and diplomacy. Such actions increase the risk of regional instability and contribute to a global arms

race beyond the Korean Peninsula. We look forward to further actions by other national bishops' conferences in the region.

Furthermore, the growing geopolitical confrontation between the United States and China is fuelling divisions that threaten the region's stability, raising concerns about an unintended drift toward militarized alliances under the guise of mutual defence.

As a member of Pax Christi International, a global Catholic peace movement, Pax Christi Asia Pacific calls on all nations in the region to prioritize diplomacy, dialogue, and non-military solutions to these tensions. We urge leaders to resist the momentum toward militarization and instead seek paths to resolve conflicts based on the principles of just peace and common security.

We encourage regional leaders to pursue pathways for inclusive dialogue on common security, engaging civil society organizations, religious

communities, and grassroots activists. By actively investing in peaceful solutions and people-centered policies, we can build a future where the Asia-Pacific region remains a beacon of peace, justice, and solidarity, reflecting our shared commitment to the sanctity of life and the intrinsic worth of every human being.

With these shared understandings, we present the following concrete demands to prevent the spread of militarization and promote a more stable, cooperative region:

**1. Immediate ceasefire and diplomatic resolution:** We call for an immediate ceasefire and urge Russia, Ukraine, and their supporters to pursue diplomacy that prioritises Ukraine's sovereignty and addresses the security concerns of all sides to achieve a peaceful resolution. The tragedy of thousands dying every day on the battlefield and the widespread destruction of the environment and social infrastruc-



1. Infrastructure must end immediately.
2. **End to arms transfer and military spending reductions.** We urge and end to arms transfers to conflict zones and call on all states to reduce their military budgets. Resources should be redirected toward humanitarian needs and essential areas such as food security, health, education, and housing for those affected by conflict.
3. **Nuclear disarmament:** We condemn nuclear threats and call for a renewed commitment to disarmament by the nuclear-weapon states. All nuclear-armed states, countries under nuclear umbrellas, and nuclear-weapon-free zones should work towards a world free from nuclear weapons, including adherence to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty

(NPT) and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). The nuclear weapon free zones in the South Pacific, South-East Asia, Central Asia and Mongolia must be expanded to South Asia, Northeast Asia and beyond.

4. **Invest in peacebuilding initiatives:** We urge all states in the region to invest in peacebuilding initiatives that strengthen disarmament efforts and conflict resolution in accordance with common security. We encourage multilateral efforts through regional and international organizations such as the UN, ASEAN and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) to address the root causes of conflict and prevent future tensions.

In presenting these demands, we reaffirm our commitment to building

an alliance of hope and solidarity against militarization and war in the region, in partnership with other Catholic organizations, people of all faiths, and peace movements, guided by Catholic principles of non-violence, just peace, and common security.

Pax Christi Asia-Pacific stands ready to work with all nations, leaders, and communities to turn the tide of violence and destruction to nonviolence and recreation in these challenging times. We hope our collective efforts will create a world where war and conflict are no longer pursued, and where lasting peace is established for the benefit of all humanity.

*Pax Christi Asia Pacific Pax Christi Aotearoa New Zealand, Pax Christi Australia, Pax Christi Pilipinas, Pax Christi Korea*

## HATE SPEECH A WEAPON IN MYANMAR

In this report, Burma Human Rights Network has analysed hate speech in the context of the ongoing political tensions in Myanmar. Sometimes, when measured by international standards, what might look like misinformation takes on a different significance in the aftermath of the 2021 coup. This is because misinformation, particularly when aimed at individuals, groups with opposing political beliefs, or minority religious communities, can have severe consequences, even leading to loss of life and the intensification of religious and community conflicts.

Hate speech in Myanmar's current political climate is more than just false information; it can be a catalyst for very real and harmful outcomes, especially in the post-coup environment. Understanding this complex relationship between hate speech, misinformation, and their tangible impacts is crucial for grasping the region's broader social, political, and intergroup dynamics.

As hate speech is a term that comes from emotion, there is a wide spectrum in defining it, not a specific one. BHRN, therefore, standardized

the definition of hate speech for this



report as follows. Hate speech in this report means aggressiveness and hatred against protected characteristics of a person or a group, blaming, discriminative expression, writing, gesture, or art expression of excoriation, or dehumanization.

It means attacking someone's faith, language, gender, sexual orientation, origin, ethnicity, skin color, race, belief, citizenship, and physical appearance. The monitored hate speeches were categorized as (1) Criminalizing Hate Speech, (2) Abusive Hate Speech, (3) Dehumanizing Hate Speech, (4) Violence Inciting Hate Speech, (5) Threatening Hate Speech, and (6) Hate Speech that supports prejudicial actions inspired by hate speech.

BHRN has daily documented hate

speech terms and usages found in the contents –based on the current political crisis - disseminated by the military.

This report was written after monitoring both online and printed media which were used by Junta and its supporters to spread their hate speeches. BHRN has monitored 3 Facebook groups, 13 Facebook accounts, 24 Telegram channels, 21 TikTok accounts, and 4 Printed Media during October of 2024.

### **Junta's Propagative Methodology**

The spreading of hate speech in Myanmar is more intensified based on the politics after 2010. Many massacres happened among different ethnicities as a result of spreading hate speech. When the use of social media increased in Myanmar, the spreading of hate speech increased as well. The social harmony among people collapsed and social tension is increased. According to the BHRN's monitoring, it is found that hate speeches were created to incite religious and ethnic conflicts among different communities during October. It is recorded that, those areas where the military faced

losses, were more targeted by the hate speech such as Kokang, Pa-laung, Ta'aung, Chin, and Rakhine ethnicities. The military portrayed the ethnic people as terrorists and portrayed themselves as the holy people who were saving the country.

The Myanmar military is also using a particular technique of spreading hate speech that can affect the emotions and feelings of the residents of those areas where they target a particular area or an organization. The military also applies the propagative mechanism that creates disaffection, aggressiveness, fear, and hatred so that the public will give up on revolution and turn to disunion.

Hate speech and propagation are the main sources that create hatred among different communities and lead to conflicts. Even though there were organizations that tried to tackle hate speech in Myanmar, it was not enough yet.

### **Context of misinformation as hate speech**

In this report, BHRN has analysed hate speech in the context of the ongoing political tensions misinformation takes on a different significance in the aftermath of the 2021 coup. This is in Myanmar. Sometimes, when measured by international standards, what might look like because misinformation, particularly when aimed at individuals, groups with opposing political beliefs, or minority religious communities, can have severe consequences, even leading to loss of life and the intensification of religious and community conflicts.

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### **3. Findings of hate speech in Social Networks**

A total of 103 hate speech cases

were found during BHRN's monitoring process this month. Facebook and TikTok accounts were not consistently used but temporarily and moved to other accounts and some moved to Telegram channels. The military mainly used Telegram channels and TikTok accounts to spread hate speeches and the hate speeches were done through the cartoons as well.

#### **Hate Speech Targets and Usages**

In this month's (the month of October) monitoring, the hate speech targeted the most was PDF and the second most was the Arakan Army (AA) and the third was the Muslim community. Moreover, hate speeches targeting NUG, Rohingya ethnicity and the Muslim community were found as well.

In addition, the most used terms of hate speeches for this month are "dog, terrorists, illegal immigrant Bengali, Kalar (a derogatory term referring to Muslims), and evil.

#### **Hate Speeches Targeting Arakan Army**

A pro-military channel posted a cartoon drawn by MaGa. The cartoon's message is that AA is genociding the Rohingya community and they are trying to hide it to the Muslim leaders. In that cartoon, AA leader Tun Mrat Naing was referred to as the Drug King and Rohingyas were referred to as Bengali. The cartoon used Criminalizing Hate Speech against AA and Rohingya.

A pro-military telegram channel named Min Chit Oo posted that the Arakan Army was defeated by the Myanmar military and then ran away after the clash happened between the military and the Arakan Army while the Arakan Army was heading to takeover Kalarpyin village located 7 miles away from Kyitenali township on October 1st. In that post, Arakan Army members were referred to as dogs. That post used Dehumanizing Hate Speech.

A pro-military Telegram Channel posted that ARSA has defeated Arakan Army who is always killing Bamar people everywhere. In that post, Arakan Army was referred to as dog. That post used Dehumanizing Hate Speech.

A pro-military telegram channel named Min Chit Oo posted that the Arakan Army was defeated by the Myanmar military and then ran away after the clash happened between the military and the Arakan Army while the Arakan Army was heading to takeover Kalarpyin village located 7 miles away from Kyitenali township on October 1st. In that post, Arakan Army members were referred to as dogs. That post used Dehumanizing Hate Speech.

A Tiktok account named Sisthuka posted that the Myanmar military was not killing the residents but the PDF because PDF pretended to be the residents when they faced losses. In that post, PDF were referred to as terrorist Padat and PDF's speeches were referred to as prostitute's speeches. That post used Criminalizing Hate Speech and Abusive Hate Speech against PDF.

A telegram channel posted that the Myanmar military attacked a PDF hideout in Thantalan township on October 5<sup>th</sup> and six PDFs along with the weapons were arrested by the military. It urged that PDF should be totally abolished. In that post, PDFs were referred to as terrorists, criminals and dogs. That post used Criminalizing Hate Speech and Dehumanizing Hate Speech.

#### **Hate speeches targeting the Muslim community**

A Facebook account named Lu Thar posted that Muslim organizations get permission to establish their armed base and hideouts in Bangladesh and they even get permission to forcibly collect money from those Rohingyas who have fled from Myanmar to Bangladesh by crossing the border. The AA's statement said that Muslim armed groups get permission to camp their groups on the islands of Bangladesh and those armed groups are disturbing AA camps by coming to the camps by boats. The post also mentioned that the security of Rakhine State is now more needed as Bengali terrorist groups dare to do anything because of the new Bangladesh government. In that post, Rohingyas were referred to as Muslim terrorists, and Rohingya and the Bangladesh government were portrayed as threats to Rakhine border security. That post used Criminalizing Hate

to Rakhine border security. That post used Criminalizing Hate Speech.

Western News posted that AA issued a statement saying that AA has taken over four strong bases of ARSA Muslim armed groups in Buthidaung, Maungdaw and Mayyu Townships. Moreover, AA is doing clearance operations against Muslim armed groups who fled away from battles and who were trained by the Myanmar military. In addition, Western News commented that AA is attacking the No.5 BDF base of the Myanmar military and they are attacking Muslim armed groups at the same time. In Western News's comment, ARSA was repeatedly mentioned as Muslim militants rather than as an armed group. That post used Criminalizing Hate Speech that Muslims in Myanmar are criminals.

### **Hate Speeches Targeting Rohingyas**

A pro-military Facebook account named Lu Thar posted that both illegal immigrant Bengali and Bangladesh citizens are harming the Rakhine State. He posted it along with a screenshot of AA arresting five Bangladeshi fishermen in Naf River.

In that post, Rohingyas were referred to as Illegal Immigrants.

### **Hate Speech Targeting Women**

Miss Grand Myanmar National Director Htoo Ant Lwin did a Live Streaming on Facebook about Myanmar Miss getting 2nd runner up position. In the video, Htoo Ant Lwin repeatedly said that Miss Grand International wants to give awards to only Masala women, Kalama (a derogatory term referring to Indian Miss), Patek women (referring to Indonesian Miss) and Papaya women (referring to Thailand Miss). That post used abusive Hate Speech against women.

### **Conclusion**

In the monitoring of hate speech during October, hate speeches were created based on religion and ethnicity. Particularly, hate speech against the Muslim community and Rohingyas based on their ethnicity and beliefs was more intensified. Rohingyas in Rakhine State have been the victims of basic human rights violations due to the ethnic and religious conflicts under the successive governments. Rohingya stayed as a human shield in the power dynamic until today. In addition,

the Muslim community in Myanmar faces serious human rights violations like the Rohingya community does. The Myanmar military incites violence against the Myanmar Muslim Community by creating religious hate speech so that they can divert their political challenges. During this month, the spreading of hate speech was found that the Islam religion was labeled as the religion that supports murders and killings based on an issue of an individual and an organization.

The Myanmar military even creates narratives that can cause misunderstandings and negative impacts on a particular ethnic group by other ethnic groups. The military is using Burmese supremacy ideology to continue their oppression politically and ethnically of the ethnic communities by labelling them as supporters of terrorism.

The Myanmar military is trying to keep its power longer by labelling revolutionists, ethnic communities, non-Buddhist, and minorities as threats and illegal groups. The military leaders are using the same techniques that were used by their senior dictators.

## REMEMBERING ANN BRADY

Joseph Camilleri

**R**ita and I first met Ann in 1974 Australia. What brought us together was a mutual friend, Bruce Kent, the charismatic figure that became one of the leading Chap-driving force in its early development (72), we became close friends. Once moves afoot to get Pax Christi off me and expressed interest.

Before long Ann became active in assumed the chairing role, a position She brought to the organisation keen interest in issues of peace and Being an Anglican and married to was able to give effective expression cal peacemaking. Many of Pax held at Ann's and Jim's spacious Carlton. Ann was especially adept at and encouraging their ongoing par-

In later years, Ann assumed other responsibilities. She was a committed supporter of East Timor, an active and well informed Friend of the Queen Victoria Market, and a dedicated secondary school teacher. She taught for some 35 years at the Catholic girls' school, Star of the Sea College, where she became the HSC coordinator with particular responsibility for religious education (Ann had a degree in biblical studies).

Pax Christi Vic is deeply saddened at the death of this longstanding friend of Pax Christi. Our heartfelt condolences go to Jim, and their children, Sebastian and Emma.



soon after we established Pax Christi in together was an extraordinary coincidence, Bruce Kent, the charismatic figure of Pax Christi in England, and the ment. During my stay in England (1969-Ann heard from Bruce that there were the ground in Melbourne, she contacted

the fledgling organisation, and soon as she held for three years (1975-1977). unique talents, especially her vitality, a justice, and generous hospitality.

Jim Brady, an Anglican minister, Ann to Pax Christi's commitment to ecumeni-Christi's memorable social events were residence at 63 Queensberry Street, extending a warm welcome to everyone, ticipation in the life of Pax Christi.

## REMEMBERING EUNICE SMITH

Caesar D'Mello

### NEW SOUTH WALES Pax Christi Meetings

We normally meet on the First Monday of each month at 6.00pm for shared meal that members bring and the meeting follows at 6.30 pm.

Contact: **Claude Mostowik**  
**0411 450 953**

The venue: 209A Edgeware Road,  
Enmore.

### QUEENSLAND Pax Christi Meetings Pax Christi Queensland

Contact:

Pam Nair (Secretary): 07 3711  
3273 [pamnair@hotmail.com](mailto:pamnair@hotmail.com)

### VICTORIA Agapes and Public Forums

Contact:

Catrina Devlin, Convenor  
0419 109 830  
[catriona3171@gmail.com](mailto:catriona3171@gmail.com)

### Pax Christi National Council Meets on Zoom for national issues

Contact:

0411 450 953

**C**entenarian Smith, a tireless menism, justice place of women in passed away on Friday Born on the 3rd Septemgon, Victoria, she milked on a bareback horse, did showing early signs of a side a feeling for children World War II in 1939, brought times of scar-mas Leo Smith in 1946, dren, eventually opening were active locally, with first female President of a local ICC (interchurch council).



*Eunice at 2015 Pax Christ National Conference*

Eunice Isobel advocate for ecu- and the rightful Church and society, October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024. ber 1923 in Traral-cows, rode to school household chores, 'can do' spirit, along-poorer than herself. her 16<sup>th</sup> birthday, city. Married to Tho- they had three chil- their own store. Both Eunice becoming the

With the zeitgeist of the 1960s raging, Eunice's inchoate interest in world peace, social justice and other issues led to thinkers such as Paolo Freire, Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Teilhard de Chardin. In 1976 she enrolled at the United Faculty of Theology, but travel to Melbourne for lectures while attending to the business was stressful, but nevertheless she sensed a call to ordained ministry. With the business sold in 1981, she became the Victorian Council of Churches' Field Officer for Local Ecumenism. Her Gippsland Presbytery ordained her in 1987 at the age of 64. After ministering to her congregation at the Cairns Memorial Church till 1991, she began 'active retirement'.

A genial companion, Eunice was also a strongly motivated change-maker. Even in retirement she was engaged through the Uniting Church Synod, VCC, women's groups, as a Minister in Association in the Pakenham Parish, carrying on, in her words, 'as long as God gave...the strength'. She loved being a long-term member of Pax Christi, whose 'Agapes' on justice and peace she sometimes hosted. Many are those who have been touched by her empathy and concern marking a long, well-lived life. Vale, Eunice. RIP.

*Caesar D'Mello, a member of Pax Christi in Australia, and a Board member of Pax Christi International, was formerly National Director of Christian World Service, He often consulted Rev Eunice Smith during phases of his work.*

*A Holy and blessed Christmas and a Peaceful 2025 to all our readers*

**I/We wish to apply for or renew membership of the International Christian Peace Movement - Pax Christi Australia.**

(Membership is from January to December)

**(Please tick box if you wish to receive your copy of Disarming Times by e-mail)**

**New South Wales Members** please return your membership application/renewal to PO Box A 681 Sydney South 1235 NSW

**All others:** please return your membership application/ renewal to 13 Mascoma St, Strathmore, Vic 3041 . Direct transfer to Pax Christi Victoria Inc **BSB 063-161 Account number 00900935**

**Please Advise John Ball:** [johnball12@bigpond.com](mailto:johnball12@bigpond.com)

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**ENCLOSED \$..... (Single \$35; Low income \$20; Family \$45)**