



*transforming the world's  
response to conflict*

# Field Notes

First Quarter  
February 2015

## Head Office

Rue Belliard 205  
1040 Brussels, BELGIUM  
+32.2.648.0076

## US Office

425 Oak Grove St.  
Minneapolis, MN 55403  
1.612.871.0005

## Nonviolent Peaceforce Receives Grant to Start Syria Project

*By Mel Duncan, Nonviolent Peaceforce Director of Advocacy and Outreach*

**N**onviolent Peaceforce (NP) has received the very gratifying news of a grant from the European Union to commence a project in support of people in Syria affected by the crisis there. This comes after almost two years of program exploration and development, training for local activists, and relationship building with Syrian civil society leaders and organizations. The goal of the NP project is to strengthen Syrian civil society capacity to protect civilians from violence.

NP will be partnering with Madani, a Syrian civil society organization promoting a peaceful and democratic Syria (<http://www.madansyria.com>) and Cure Violence, a Chicago based violence reduction nongovernmental organization (<http://cureviolence.org>). Through this partnership we will train and support civilian protection and

violence interruption programs. These programs will be locally tailored to fit the context of up to 45 various locations.

Working in tandem with these organizations, NP will offer intensive training for Syrian civil society organizations and leaders across the entire political spectrum.

These trainings will be followed by ongoing support and consultation with the local Syrian groups as plans are implemented in the areas they serve. Periodically, we will bring people together to reflect on their experience, identify lessons learned, and strengthen relationships among each other.

Nonviolent Peaceforce believes that a strong and active network of civil society organizations, working across political, religious, and ethnic boundaries, provides a foundation for a pluralistic and peaceful Syria. When

*continued, p. 2*



*NP endorser Mairead Maguire, Nobel Peace Prize laureate, during Nonviolent Peaceforce exploration of Syria in May 2013. The exploration took place within the framework of participation in a high-level peace delegation led by Maguire which has been hosted by the group called Mussalaha (Arabic word for reconciliation) and allowed the NP team access to the country.*



*continued from p. 1*

appropriate and safe, we will consider sending in international unarmed civilian protectors to further this mission.

The project, scheduled to begin this spring, will last for three years.

*While the EU grant will cover operational costs, we need donations to help with the start up. To help the Syria project get started right please donate to: <https://nonviolentpeaceforce.thankyou4caring.org/donate>.*



*Bereaved father describes the death of his son by car bomb.*



*Syrian youth. Photo by Mel Duncan during 2013 exploratory mission.*



*Syrian refugee camp, Bekka Valley, Lebanon. Photo taken during 2013 exploratory mission.*

## Diary of a Peacekeeper

# Cattle, Conflict, and Peacebuilding in South Sudan

*by David Browning, Nonviolent Peaceforce Team Leader, Mingkaman in South Sudan*

Over the last couple of months I have been privileged to support the leadership of Awerial County. These leaders are desperately trying to contain a conflict between clans that has repeatedly threatened to spiral out of control. The leadership I have witnessed has imbued a belief in me that there is hope for this deeply troubled country.

The conflict began in late October when a cattle camp infected with the tick borne disease East Coast Fever moved from Mingkaman, where the Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) team is based, to Dor Payam, 30 km north. The cattle camp had been repeatedly asked by the local government to remain in Mingkaman so their cattle could receive treatment. However, not understanding how the disease is spread, they decided to leave their camp in an attempt to escape the disease.

We were concerned that the arrival of infected cattle in Dor would cause conflict with other camps of cattle there at the time. Our team was in Dor discussing the issue with the respective camps and the local government when the fighting started. We had received assurances from the infected camp that they would not venture from the



outskirts of Dor, assurances that they had also given to the Payam Administrator. (Payam is an administrative division).

For reasons that remain unclear, mere hours after we had spoken with the camp, they began to move some of their cattle towards the center of Dor. This sparked a violent confrontation with cattle keepers from another camp. When the fighting eased, the local government requested we transport two wounded teenagers to Mingkaman for medical attention. Word quickly spread that these teenagers had been shot and as the team drove back to Mingkaman we witnessed hundreds of armed youths headed towards Dor seeking revenge.

Three men died in that day's fighting. Yet at the time of this writing there have been no more fatalities. Considering the rage and sorrow I have witnessed in these communities this is an extraordinary achievement. South Sudan is a deeply traumatized country in which the line between soldier and civilian has been blurred by decades of militarization. The potential for conflicts to escalate out of control is enormous.

NP has played a simple yet vital role in maintaining the current truce between the sides, providing transportation to local leaders, shuttling them between the two camps. This increases the speed and scale in their response to the violence. With our support the local government, religious leaders and clan chiefs have been able to mediate effectively between the two sides, staving off revenge attacks.

Yet, the situation is volatile and the truce is fragile. In late November I finished a weekly report, expressing, with good reason, cautious optimism that the truce might hold. But a day later one of the warring clans mobilized and was marching towards Mingkaman to launch a frontal assault on their enemy. The government requested that NP drive a delegation of neutral clan chiefs to intercept the oncoming force. NP rightly prides itself on our ability to measure risk. We are taught to analyze and weigh different factors when making a decision. But in moments of heightened tension such as this, split-second decisions are needed.

From what I had seen in the previous weeks, I decided I could trust

the official who was making the request. Consequently, in a display of superb driving, our driver hurtled us towards Dor. Thankfully, the force had branched off the main road before we reached them. We merely had to drop the chiefs off on the side of the road. Watching these men trudge into the bush I was humbled by their courage.

Remarkably, they were able to convince hundreds of armed men to turn back. First, they relayed a message from the wife and father of one of the men who had been killed in the fighting. Their message was "if you go ahead with the attack, do so knowing that you are not doing it for us and we do not support you."

The chiefs then reprimanded the community for the foolhardiness of their attack. They argued that marching into a heavily fortified and well-guarded defensive position was tantamount to suicide. With remarkable courage they berated the community for allowing anger to cloud their judgment. The community retreated, averting what would have been a slaughter.



*Dave with NP colleagues at their induction training.*

*Remarkably, they were able to convince hundreds of armed men to turn back... Their message was "if you go ahead with the attack, do so knowing that you are not doing it for us and we do not support you."*

To have been able to support these leaders so that they could reach the community in time fills me with immense pride. However, the rage and bitterness I have seen leaves me no doubt that there is an enormous amount of work left to do. It may be that the leadership of Awerial will not be able contain the violence. Yet, even if this is the case, NP will remain and do its utmost to support those who are striving for peace. Looking ahead on one of the many trips shuttling between the two camps, I saw the NP flag fluttering above the lead vehicle. In that moment I felt proud not just to be part of NP but also of a broader community of men and women who challenge the sense of hopelessness and despair that violence wreaks.

# Update on NP's Many Arms of Advocacy and Outreach

*Over the past few months, Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) has continued to advance the idea and practice of unarmed civilian protection. Here are some of the exciting developments and highlights:*

## **Mel Duncan Receives Honorary Award**

In October 2014, Mel Duncan, Director of Advocacy and Outreach, received the Vincent L. Hawkinson Foundation Honorary Award, which is given to individuals who have made a long and significant contribution to the causes of peace and social justice. He was nominated by Arvid "Bud" Dixen, a 2008 Honorary Award recipient.

## **NP Co-founder Promotes New Book**

In December 2014, Nonviolent Peaceforce hosted three book events in New York for NP Co-founder David Hartsough. He is promoting his new book, *Waging Peace: Global Adventures of a Lifelong Activist*.

## **Australian Mission to UN Awards NP \$63,000 Grant**

The Australian Ambassador to the United Nations (UN), His Excellency Gary Quinlan, has notified Nonviolent Peaceforce that his

*Sami Rasouli, founder of Muslim Peacemaker Teams, 2013 Hawkinson Award recipient, and Mel Duncan at the awards ceremony*



mission's International Development Fund has awarded \$63,000 to NP to enhance the capacity of humanitarian workers protecting civilians under threat in South Sudan.

With the return of the dry season, the danger of a full-scale war looms. By providing training to nongovernmental organization workers, NP is able to expand protective coverage for civilians and at the same time strengthen protection skills. In the first few months of 2015, NP will train 150 people in five areas in South Sudan. After a summary meeting in Juba to capture lessons learned, NP will work with the Australian mission to disseminate results at the UN. (<http://www.geneva.mission.gov.au/gene/idf.html>)

## **Progress for Peace at the United Nations**

On December 15, 2014, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) approved a Resolution noting unarmed civilian protection (UCP).

"...the initiatives of civil society, in collaboration with governments, to strengthen civilian capacities to enhance the physical safety of vulnerable populations under threat of violence and to promote peaceful settlement of disputes,"

This is the first time UCP has ever been referenced in a UNGA Resolution.



*Non-violence sculpture by Carl Fredrik Reuterswärd of Malmö, Sweden, at the UN building in New York.*

*continued, p. 5*



*Nonviolent Peaceforce Co-Founder and Director of Advocacy and Outreach, Mel Duncan*



*Huibert Oldenhuis conducts research in South Sudan.*

### **NP Begins Case Studies on Unarmed Civilian Protection**

Led by Ellen Furnari, we are currently conducting three rigorous case studies of unarmed civilian protection projects. Ellen has completed the first case study review in South Sudan. In January, John Lindsay Poland and Michael Weintraub will lead a review in Colombia, and in February Ellen and Bhat Lutombo will be going to Mindanao, Philippines. These projects, supported by the Irwin Andrew Porter Foundation, will provide the basis for discussions at an unarmed civilian protection (UCP) good practices conference later this year.

### **Workshop on Women and Peace at the UN**

Together with the New Zealand Federation of Graduate Women, NP will conduct a workshop at the UN Commission on the Status of Women Parallel Forum in March entitled “What Would the UN Peace Operations Panel Recommend if Women Were Leading It?” Recommendations will be submitted to the Peace Operations Panel.

### **NP in Consultation with UN Peace Operations Panel**

NP is currently providing background information to the 17-member Peace Operations Panel that was appointed by the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon to review and make recommendations about the work of the Departments of Peacekeeping and Political Affairs. Their report is due in April 2015.

### **NP to Lead Good Practices Conference on Unarmed Civilian Protection in 2015**

A UCP good practices conference will take place later this year using results from the aforementioned case studies. The intent is to bring practitioners, policymakers and academics together for the first time to analyze which UCP practices are effective, under what circumstances, and which can be replicated and scaled up. We hope to help advance the entire field of UCP as well as increase the stature of the practice.

*To read the full report go to: <http://www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org/who-we-are/375-nonviolent-peaceforce-update>*

# Invest in Peace



Peace bonds are striking works of art created by international artists, illustrating the intangible work unarmed civilian peacekeepers do every day. Each purchase is an investment in the continuation of that work. To purchase go to:  
[nonviolentpeaceforcestore.com](http://nonviolentpeaceforcestore.com)  
or call (612) 871-0005



425 Oak Grove Street  
Minneapolis, MN 55403

[nonviolentpeaceforce.org](http://nonviolentpeaceforce.org)  
Phone: (612) 871-0005

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
PERMIT #3675  
TWIN CITIES MN

Check out our new website:  
[nonviolentpeaceforce.org](http://nonviolentpeaceforce.org)

*better searching - improved design  
enhanced mobile browsing*

## Field Notes

February 2015  
(First Quarter)

## Meet Our Donors

*Nonviolent Peaceforce is a global community of people who believe in nonviolent solutions to the world's conflicts. Our supporters come from countries all around the world and have a genuine concern for the flourishing of all of humanity. To help you get to know each other, in each Field Notes we will feature one of our supporters whose personal commitment to peace and protecting others inspires us. We hope you will be inspired too.*

Donor Helena Halperin comments: Some time ago, a former NP fundraiser invited me to lunch. I thought I might donate \$150, but she did such a good job of thrilling me with NP's work that I wound up committing myself to donate \$5,000 a year for the foreseeable future, a very large sum for my habits and capability.

I learned about Gandhi when I was quite young, and when I reached an age to begin serious reading of my own, Gandhi's movement was my first serious

interest. This was long before the Civil Rights Movement, and naturally tied me to that. With small children I wasn't free to be as active as I might have liked, but had NP existed before I had family commitments, I am sure I would have wanted to commit my life to it.

I have only been a friend and donor, not yet had a chance to visit field sites. But I have connected with NP people visiting Boston or living anywhere I might be visiting, and have helped in the ways I can with fundraising and publicizing the work. I have had the privilege of being inspired by many in the NP orbit, and greatly value the occasional visits I have from NP staff.

What does Nonviolent Peaceforce mean to me? It's by far, no runners-up, the best hope for a better future.