



South Caucasus Project

New Field Office to Open in Georgia

By Dmitry Medlev, Country Director

This past January, Nonviolent Peaceforce began preparations for its first field office in Georgia to be located in the community of Nikozi in the Shida Kartli region. This region is adjacent to the boundary with the disputed breakaway territory of South Ossetia. The new office will face the suburbs of Tskhinval, its capital city.

Over thirty Georgian villages are located here in close proximity to the line of divide between the Georgian controlled territory and the South Ossetian controlled territory. As a rule, there is little or no communication between the communities on either side of the conflict. Also, it is generally alleged that the people on both sides do not have much sympathy towards each other as a result of the conflict and differences in culture and traditions. However, NP's first experience in the region shows that common people separated by the conflict retain connections and care for each other, disregarding the political and military reality that they have to live in.

NP's work will rely on these human connections and aim to increase safe options for communities affected by disputed boundary lines in Shida Kartli and in the South Caucasus as

a whole, enabling them to sustainably address human security challenges.

So far, there are two dedicated international and two local NP staff members who will work and live in the community of Nikozi. Another team of International Civilian Protection Officers (IPOs) has already arrived, initially to be located in a different community within Shida Kartli.

After first completing a demanding and intense Mission Preparedness Training, these IPOs were chosen to live among the conflict-affected communities and help them. Robert Rivers, NP's longstanding trainer, well acquainted with local realities and needs, led the training.

NP's Nikozi field office is the first office to be run by an international organization outside Gori, the administrative capital city of the Shida Kartli region, in immediate proximity to war-affected communities and the line of con-

flict divide. The opening of this office, the result of the hard work of the South Caucasus team, will mark significant progress for NP's mission in the South Caucasus, a mission made possible by the generous contribution of the Belgian government, a long-term NP donor that previously also supported the



NP Trainer Robert Rivers facilitating community consultations session in Georgia



Deputy Executive Director Kim Vetting with Shida Kartli Field Team

NP Deploying Eight Field Teams in South Sudan



Nonviolent Peaceforce is expanding rapidly in South Sudan, in response to the growing protection needs and insecurity in the world's newest country. This spring, NP will have 8 field teams deployed across 5 different states of South Sudan, using the unique methodology of unarmed civilian peacekeeping to reduce violence and increase the safety and security of civilians affected by violent conflict.



Stability, security and protection are issues of the utmost importance in South Sudan. Violent conflict consistently results in massive displacement, evacuation of humanitarian and development actors, ruined crops, destruction of property and interruption to essential services such as health care and education. Nonviolent Peaceforce is making every effort to work together with communities and state duty bearers to reduce violence and increase safety and security through the deployment of both international and national protection officers trained in unarmed civilian peacekeeping.



From America to Europe to South Sudan: Working for Peace

By Ann Frisch, NP Senior Adviser and Returned Peacekeeper

Representing Nonviolent Peaceforce, I traveled for two months, attended five conferences, and visited three field sites in South Sudan.

From Warsaw, where I attended the International Government Data Camp, I went to Sarajevo where I presented Nonviolent Peaceforce efforts to protect women and children and involve them in peacemaking and peacebuilding at the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) conference focusing on Security Council Resolution. I was approached about the possibility of NP doing training for numerous groups. I met women from Kyrgyzstan, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and many cities in the area as well as representatives of OSCE.

Arriving in Geneva, I met Shirley De Leon-Garnier from NP's Brussels office. She and I talked to civil society and member states of the Geneva Declaration 2nd Ministerial Meeting on Armed Violence and Development. We were pleased that the Outcome Document for the Civil Society Representatives included "civilians protecting civilians" and "providing safe spaces for civilians" in its listing of best practices that Civil Society Organizations were asking Member States to adopt.

Following this, I represented NP at two conferences in Geneva: the International Crisis Mappers meeting and UN SPIDER (the UN communication agency).

Then to South Sudan, where Country Director Tiffany Easthom and International Protection Officer Lea Krivchenia welcomed

me at the airport and showed me around Juba. I met the team of national and international protection officers stationed there and made a visit to the hospital where the team was protecting a girl rape victim. During the two days I was there, I observed the team as they provided information about conditions on the ground in Yida for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and several other groups working in the area. NP remained while most of the other

humanitarian groups fled when the north bombed the refugee camp. While I anticipated joining Lea at Yida, there were no flights available, so I went by car to Mundri where I spent two days with Jimmy Okumu and the national staff. Then I joined them for the first day of their capacity building training in Yeri. Some significant memories of that visit were:



Ann Frisch at the Sarajevo workshop

One of the women attending the training session from the town of Lessi, walked 20 miles to Yeri to attend the conference. Although the team sent out motorcycles to pick up the participants the night before the workshop, she walked because she was worried that there wouldn't be enough space on the motorcycles for everyone. If there weren't, it would be too late to get to Yeri. So, late in the evening before the workshop, she arrived at the motel where we were staying for the night.

John Nbolo Layi, veterinarian, from the town of Lessi, at the end of the first day, read a letter he had written to Nonviolent Peaceforce. "The presence of Nonviolent Peaceforce has brought a just peace within these few months, which has resulted in no more killing or further displacement.

Sri Lanka

A Durable Legacy

By Steve Alston, Sri Lanka Country Director
Written in the field, December, 2011

NP may have left Sri Lanka but will not forget. Following a careful assessment, NP came to believe that providing civilian protection and finding nonviolent means of resolving conflicts could now be effectively continued and accomplished by local organizations. Nonviolent Peaceforce sees this as the best possible result of our nine year presence in Sri Lanka.

We are now in our last week of the Nonviolent Peaceforce program in Sri Lanka. Our files are being prepared for shipping or destruction, many of our local staff have now found other employment, a few colleagues remain with us to assist in finally closing the office. It may be with a heavy heart that we leave but it is knowing that we, and all those colleagues who have come before us, have achieved a lot. Our exit evaluation is now completed and gives us a range of sound recommendations for future country programs, but one thing sticks out and that is the deep appreciation expressed by so many—that NP has been with them during the most difficult years.

NP only recently started working closely with Human Rights Center for Social Justice (HRCSJ), a well known local NGO in the Eastern province. We have assisted in information sharing, context analysis and providing trainings in Basic Negotiation Skills for Threat Mitigation (BNSTM) to their large network of youth volunteers. We have also provided workshops for them on Protection for Human Rights Defenders as they now prepare to work without NP's direct support into 2012 and beyond.

Our BNSTM training is our attempt at localizing the essential skills needed to be a local Unarmed Civilian Peacekeeper. Eighteen HRCSJ youth are now trainers and can replicate the trainings throughout communities across the district. This is one of the key legacies that will remain once we have gone.

In December, HRCSJ invited NP to be part of its 63rd International Human Rights Day program--"Living with Dignity in a Diverse Community by Respecting Human



Chika Onah receiving a plaque from HRCSJ

Rights". This is a clear message that many in the Tamil and Muslim communities of Eastern Sri Lanka yearn to live in a spirit of reconciliation and peace built on respect for rights and dignity. Our Batticaloa Head of Field Office, Chika Onah, representing the whole of NP, was honored at the event and presented by HRCSJ with a small plaque, a token of their deep appreciation.

Our last act will be to transfer the small funds received from the donations many local organizations have made for our office. NP has taken a particular interest in child protection as a group most affected by war. Two Women's Rural Development Societies from the areas badly affected by the conflict will receive a cash donation to help them construct Children Centers for each community. Our local staff will remain in contact with both communities long after NP has left.



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Minneapolis, MN 55403

nonviolentpeaceforce.org
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Field Notes

Spring 2012



Nonviolent Peaceforce team member in South Sudan

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