

Nonviolent Peaceforce is a nonpartisan unarmed peacekeeping force composed of trained civilians from around the world. In partnership with local groups, Nonviolent Peaceforce field teams apply proven nonviolent strategies to protect human rights, deter violence and help create space for local peacemakers to carry out their work.

Year 2008, Issue 1

January - February 2008

Sri Lanka

Highlights

- NP around the world: read the activities of Field Team Members on the field
- News from Brussels, including conferences, recent publications and NP staff news
- NP Europe Member Organisations News: Training courses, political initiatives and much more
- The Peace Building Partnership and the role of civil society in crisis management and peace

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On January 16 the Cease Fire Agreement, signed in 2002 between the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE was formally abolished. A week later D.M. Dassanayake, Minister of Nation Building, was killed in a claymore accident while travelling. The attack, together with the shooting of main opposition United National Party (UNP) parliamentarian T. Maheshweran is only attesting to a conflict quickly escalating to a level not seen during the ceasefire period.

In the weeks leading up to February 3, Sri Lanka's 60th Independ-

ence Day, reports of suicide bombings -often targeting civilians- killings, disappearances, civilian round-ups and detentions, and displacements of population were in the headlines of local and international news.

Civil society groups within Sri Lanka, as many international actors and foreign governments, expressed regret for the abrogation of the cease fire, and concern for the anticipated rise in human rights abuses and both military and civilian casualties. Chairman of the UN University and expert in inter-

national arms control, Jayantha Dhanapala, resigned his position as Advisor to the President on the Peace Process.

Local elections in Batticaloa District -the first in 13 years- are scheduled for March 10. Despite the district being fully under government control since June 2007, political parties continue to carry arms, endangering election fairness. Insecurity and fear are palpable throughout the district and the government has responded by establishing additional check points, further disrupting mobility.



Colombo Response Team oversees and works for a more coordinated response from Colombo-based and civil society actors to address human rights threats and security concerns. Networking efforts, meetings with a variety of religious denominations, advocacy visits where its main activities in January-February. NP was heavily involved with civil society actors in formulating a comprehensive submission to the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), looking at the state of human rights in Sri Lanka, for next meeting in Geneva, 5-16 May 2008. The team also is part of the UNHCR Protection Working Group, working at the moment on an Advocacy Strategy for 2008, which promises to increase the efficacy of combined advocacy efforts. In February the team supported the Jaffna team in preparing the upcoming Human Rights Defenders Workshop to be held in Colombo in March.

Further reading available online: "Counter-terrorism Sparks Human Rights Crisis for Sri Lanka's Minorities," Minority Rights Group International, 13 Dec; "Sri Lanka: Silencing Dissent," Amnesty International, 7 Feb; "Sri Lanka's Return to War: Limiting the Damage," International Crisis Group, 20 Feb 2008

Sri Lanka



Trincomalee and Mutur

Team - Humanitarian and development agencies in the area are facing bureaucratic difficulties, direct challenges to their operations and intense scrutiny from government structures. Thanks to the numerous endorsements and letters of support from local organizations, including government servants at the grassroots level, and from a variety of community and religious leaders, NP is successfully complying with all the additional bureaucracy requested.

Many groups, including the local Human Rights Commission (HRC), depend on NP presence and accompaniment for their field investigations, including in contested border areas where land disputes can quickly turn violent.

In the south of Trinco District, the team regularly visits a number of refugee camps of war-displaced IDP's (internally displaced persons), and collaborates with UNHCR, NRC (Norwegian Refugee Council) and other agencies to ensure that basic needs, including human security and protection, are addressed.

Among the activities in January-February, the team oversaw the establishment of a Safe House for conflict-affected children and youth - a project of seven collaborating organizations and the government- and an upcoming Peace Camp for 600 children. The team has also targeted the Women and Children's Desk officers of several police stations, and accompanied families and individuals to approach the police to report violations. In partnership with UNICEF and other agencies, NP has been designated for the division of Kantale for specific monitoring of child rights.

“NP provided long-term monitors during the pre-election period and will make available additional field workers for the Election Day on March 10, to provide protective presence and support to national monitors in carrying out their observation duty”



Batticaloa and Valaichchenai Teams

- NP provided assistance to the People's Action for Free and Fair Elections (PAFFREL), a national election monitoring organization and partner of NP. NP provided long-term monitors during the pre-election period and will make available additional field workers for the Election Day on March 10, to provide protective presence and support to national monitors in carrying out their observation duty.

forces and police, elections commissioners and other government officials, and concerned civil society.

Beyond election monitoring, the work in Batticaloa focused on strengthening the relationship with government agencies mandated to help protect children, such as the Probation Department and the National Child Protection. The team succeeded in getting various ex-combatants kids enrolled in school, a very difficult operation. NP facilitated initial meetings with government servants, accompanying and supporting parents, whose confidence and ability to advocate on their own increased considerably.

Valaichchenai Team has gained additional partners

in the Muslim community and regular support of small CBOs is helping to lay the groundwork for a strong Early Warning Network on the northern half of the District. The team hosted a meeting of 17 local community-based organizations in their area, facilitated by an NP field team member, with plans for a second meeting to be held in Vakarai in the north, to spread the impact and value of developing community networks.

Two mothers' groups meetings were held in Valaichchenai, joining together parents who lost children to armed groups and those whose children came back. A poetic booklet gathering women testimony in Tamil, Sinhala and English will be published in March.

Sri Lanka



Jaffna team -

While most International organization pulled out of the district after the broken cease fire agreement, NP -tremendously supported by its local communities and partners- confirmed its engagement in Jaffna. International partners also showed great support. UN OCHA made it clear that a protection actor like NP pulling out from the district would leave civilians in a very vulnerable situation.

The team continued throughout January-February to focus its protection efforts on individuals and families under threat, people who surrendered to the authori-

ties, children and women, human rights defenders and community animators, INGO's staffed with only national staff, University students, and a number of vulnerable communities, such as the Light House in Point Pedro, Meesalai and Kodikamam, and the community of Allaippiddi, displaced in Jaffna since August 2006.

In the area of child protection, NP and UNICEF are collaborating on drafting safety tips for children while travelling to school and at home, which will be used as part of an awareness campaign in local schools.

NP in Jaffna has continued to strengthen good relations and build trust with

the authorities at both the prison and a new rehabilitation centre. NP co-sponsored a two-day district level meeting on child protection mechanisms, with participants from I/NGOs, CBOs and GoSL representatives.

Jaffna team also takes a lead role in the Jaffna INGO Security Tree and on the Protection Working Group, coordinating meetings every two weeks with UNHCR, UNICEF, ICRC, the Danish Refugee Council and Save the Children, to discuss the many protection issues in the district. Incontestably, NP's presence in Jaffna fills an important protection niche in an extremely vulnerable District.

NP stepped up the processes of registration in Uganda, and was deeply engaged in networking with civil society representatives in Kampala

Uganda

In February, the Ugandan government and Lord's Resistance Army have signed a "permanent cease-fire" agreement. With only a demobilization deal left to be agreed on, negotiators and mediators like UN envoy Chissano are predicting that a final accord will be reached soon. The talks have been a torturous process since they began in mid-2006, but the speed of progress in recent days has taken observers by surprise. The question of the indictment of the leaders of the LRA by the International Criminal Court has however remained an unresolved issue.

There have been sporadic land clashes in the north in February, when some militias have been using fire-arms to chase away returning IDPs in Amuru District from accessing their land. NP partner Peoples Voice for Peace and Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative have been engaged in settling the dispute through mediation in areas affected.



NP work - In February, project director Charles Oloo Otieno stepped up the processes of registration of NP in Uganda, was engaged in networking with civil society in Kampala and attended to UN OCHA meetings. NP also visited IDPs camp in Mulanda area in

Soroti district with UNHCR.

NP personnel has been participating to a human rights public symposium at Makerere university about the peace talks in Juba, southern Sudan.

Philippines

On February 4, the killing incident of eight villagers in Barangay Ipil, Maimbung Sulu by the Armed Forces of Philippines rocked the depleting, uncertain and vulnerable political and security structures of Mindanao. NP Sulu team, along with local partners, was the first international group which managed to move inside the Baranagay Ipil area, the next day after the day of incident.

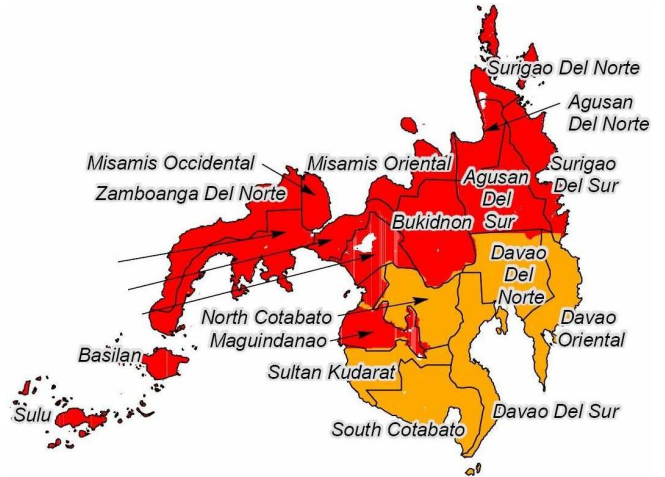
The incident happened when pursuing a false lead the military conducted a rescue operation to find one of the kidnapped victims by the Abu Sayyaf group. In the end, the military operation resulted in the death of eight civilians (including women and children) and two soldiers. The military was unable to find neither the kidnapped victim nor any of the alleged members of the Abu Sayyaf group.

Representatives from the government and Moro

National Liberation Front (MNLF) are met in Istanbul, Turkey, to discuss with officials of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) on the progress of the "implementation of the salient provisions" of the 1996 GRP-MNLF peace agreement.

GRP and MILF to sign the peace agreement within this year. The civil society organizations are persistently urging and mobilizing both the parties to return to the negotiating table as soon as possible and resolve the Mindanao conflict through peaceful means.

"Top officials of the Ceasefire Committee in Mindanao recognized NP as a genuine grass roots based civilian peace-keeping organization and highly commended NP activities to strengthen the peace process in Mindanao, especially refining the 'Early Warning and Early Response' System in vulnerable areas"



The GRP-MILF Peace talks have been stalled on the delicate issue of ancestral domain. Both parties are making continuous efforts to arrange executive level exploratory talks and find a breakthrough on the presently prevailing stalemated situation. There is an intensive pressure on



Cotabato Main Office - NP Mindanao Philippines project secured more recognition, acceptance and support as the top officials of the Ceasefire Committee in Mindanao recognized NP as a genuine grass roots based civilian peace-keeping organization and highly commended NP activities to strengthen the peace process in Mindanao, especially refining the 'Early Warning and Early Response' System in vulnerable areas close to NP field sites. The officials and NP agreed to maintain regular communication and collaboration at the headquarters and the field sites level. In January, the Joint CCCH (GRP-MILF-IMT) invited NP to visit along with the Monitoring Teams to one of the ongoing conflict affected areas in Datu Piang and requested NP to 'observe' the situation of the civilians at the grassroots level along with NP partner organizations, and to observe the return of IDPs back to their villages. NP organized a four day training retreat for local staff. Meetings were held with key partner organizations like Mindanao People's Caucus (MPC), Consortium of Bangsamoro Civil society CBCS) and Institute of Autonomy and Governance (IAG). In January NP participated in a Civil Society Forum organized by the CBCS, MPC and the Institute of Bangsamoro Studies on "MILF Meeting with Non Moro NGOs", with more than 35 local and international NGOs and representative from International Organizations.

Philippines

NP Sulu team visited Ipil along with local partners to confirm the causalities reported. NP was the first international team that managed to go inside the site of the incident. The team accompanied the local CSO partners to assess the situation, meet the victims and providing protective presence. The team documented the incident to circulate information among local partners, local and international NGOs and government bodies. NP contributed to the control and clarification of rumours, mitigating the possibility of further clashes.

Central Mindanao Team - In January, the security situation became tense in the Datu Piang area after a series of armed clashes between the paramilitaries, supported by local government units, and one of the strongest commanders of MILF. The clashes started in one area and later armed skirmishes happened in other nearby areas. One of the MILF commanders along with his full combatant force moved very near to the town of Datu Piang, which created massive panic. The armed clashes in Datu Piang caused some injuries on both sides, forced the people in more than 5 barangays to evacuate from their houses and some houses and shops were put on fire. On the invitation of GRP MILF CCCH, NP monitored the situation in the area. The regular visits and the visibility of NP along with other groups gradually normalized the security situation.

Guatemala

Notwithstanding the fact that at least three well known human rights activists have been invited to take significant posts in the government, including Ruth del Valle, former director of the National Movement of Human Rights, impunity and corruption are deeply entrenched in politics and administration, and the system is very resistant to change.

NP work - NP accompaniment project officially closed on January 31. NP staff has accompanied La Unidad de Protección de Defensoras y Defensores de Derechos Humanos, El Consorcio de Actoras de Cambio, the community of Los Cimientos and their various advisors, reaching and protecting approximately 425 people over the past 10 months. NP received many expressions of appreciation for its presence some requests for possible future presence in Guatemala.

Although the security situation in Guatemala



continues to be tenuous, the personnel of La Unidad haven't received direct threats or harassment in the period of NP accompaniment. El Consorcio was subject to one threat and two acts of intimidation, which were promptly addressed. The internal refugees from Los Cimientos returned successfully to their home thanks to NP accompaniment and support, although tensions remain high due to the lack of security and food, as the group was not able to plant and harvest this year.

NP attended an event celebrating the release of a study by Renata Avila Pinto, from Rigoberta Menchú Foundation a NP partner organization, "El Genocidio en Guatemala Como Forma Extrema de Racismo" (Genocide in Guatemala as an Extreme Form of Racism). The author analyzes the intensive military campaigns in the countryside in the early 1980s, from the perspective of international law and the historical roots of racism against indigenous population. The study highlights the frightening occurrence of crime repetition, given that perpetrators often remain in positions of power.

In Guatemala NP successfully concluded its nonviolent accompaniment for 'La Unidad de Protección de Defensoras y Defensores de Derechos Humanos', El Consorcio de Actoras de Cambio, the community of Los Cimientos

Events and News from Europe

On March 7, EPLO organized in the framework of the Initiative for Peacebuilding project the seminar "**The Interface between Peacebuilding and Transitional Justice**". Experts from the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) provided insights on several themes, including the TJ tools (prosecution, official victim reparations, truth commissions and institutional reforms) as well as a TJ approach to Disarmament, Demobili-

zation, and Reintegration (DDR) and Security Sector Reform (SSR). Consistent with a phased approach, with a necessary mapping part before any possible reform, the practice of **Census and Identification** is paramount importance. In January the ICTJ issued the "Census and Identification of Security System Personnel after Conflict: A Toolbook for Practitioners" available here: <http://www.ictj.org/en/news/pubs/index.html>

On March 20, the Red Cross organizes the 9th edition of "**Procès simulé**" in Brussels. Students from 4 universities will simulate an international human right case and tribunal. www.croix-rouge.be/page.aspx?PageID=600

On April 18, the Belgian NGO Le Monde selon les femmes organises a **1-day training on Gender and Communication** in Brussels. More info: www.mondefemmes.org/formations/

Nonviolent Peaceforce and forumZFD have started a common 2-year advocacy project to promote ProNTI, Professional Nonviolent Third-Party Intervention.

Nonviolent Peaceforce and forumZFD have started a common 2-year advocacy project to promote ProNTI, **Professional Nonviolent Third-Party Intervention**. The project will include Brussels-based as well as activities at national level and targeted to national audiences. If interested, please contact Jochen Schmidt for more

information: +32 2 2804076, schmidt@forumZFD.de

The International Peace and Development Training Centre (IPDTC) of the Peace Action Training Research Institute of Romania (PATRIR) and the UK Ministry for Peace will be hosting two trainings in May 2008 in London.

"Systemic Peacebuilding: Enhancing Coherence and Effectiveness in Policy and on-the-ground Peacebuilding", 6-8 May; "Transformative Mediation", 9-10 May. More info: www.patrir.ro/training



Publications

United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (UN-INSTRAW), the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) have issued a "**Gender and Security Sector Reform Toolkit**". It is designed to provide policymakers and practitioners with a practical introduction to why

gender issues are important in Security sector reform (SSR) and what can be done to integrate them. <http://www.uninstraw.org/>

The **Annual Report 2007 on the EC development policy and the implementation of external assistance** is available here: http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/infopoint/index_en.htm. Full report available in FR and EN, highlights in 22 languages

The March-May issue of **Université de Paix bulletin** is available here: www.universitedepaix.org/ressources/

ECDPM and ActionAid announced the launch of a website for their joint project '**Whither EC Aid?**' This project aims to re-position the debate on monitoring the effectiveness of EC aid by seeking to open it up and bring in the views of a wide variety of stakeholders. <http://weca-ecaid.eu/>

The Peace Building Partnership

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On February 4, the Unit DG1A2 of DG External Relations, responsible for Crisis Response and Peace Building, invited NGOs from CONCORD and EPLO platforms to discuss the current and future action plans of the newly established Peace Building Partnership and on the ways to improve the dialogue between the Commission and Civil society actors on the issues under its responsibility.

The **Peace Building partnership (PBP)** is an integrated part of the Stability Instrument. It is one of the programmes established under the long-term crisis-preparedness component of the Instrument for Stability, and it aims at mobilizing and consolidating civilian expertise for peace-building. It addresses, in particular, non-state actors, international organizations and EU Member States.

The Commission prepared an annual action plan 2007 for the PBP with a total budget of 7 million. The biggest amount is allocated to the first component of the plan, the Peace-building Partnership Support to develop the capacity of non-state actors to anticipate and respond to crisis, and to improve the dialogue between non-state actors and policy makers at European level; with the following priorities:

- a. Capacity-building and early warning
- b. Best-practices – ex-

changes of experience

c. Participation of the EC in international networks

For the civil society related aspect, two **calls for proposals** will be launched. The first one will focus on **capacity building** and will be targeted at NGOs active in the following areas: establishment of networks, training, improved logistical, communications or financial management systems, the codification and dissemination of best practice, development and maintenance of standby arrangements for crisis response (including expert rosters, acquisition of baseline data), the adoption, establishment and testing of relevant technologies (e.g. mine-detection technologies) and the promotion of co-operation between non-state actors and the EU, as well as other regional or sub-regional organisations.

A second call for proposals will aim at enhancing **the dialogue with civil society** through a series of round-tables to allow relevant organizations to take the initiative in proposing the provision of policy advice to the EU institutions on issues such as mediation, natural resources and conflict, gender issues, early warning and the contribution of technologies to crisis response and preparedness. In this context, small grants will be awarded to prepare papers for these round-tables, contribute

to the costs of participation, and codify and disseminate the conclusions.

The remaining funds of the PBP will be allocated to the development of **multilateral and regional co-operation on early-warning**, post-conflict and post-disaster needs assessment and to strengthening the EU's contribution to international civilian stabilisation missions through training of EU experts.

It is recommended to register to the web-portal in case an organisation is active in this field of operation and is interested to take part in calls for proposals or in the policy dialogue with the EC.

More information on the PBP at:
webgate.ec.europa.eu/tariqa/PeaceBuilding/conference.html

Annual action plan available at: ec.europa.eu/external_relations/grants/2007/prog_2007_crisis.pdf



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Creating space for Peace

CHECK OUR WEBSITE:

WWW.NONVIOLENTPEACEFORCE.ORG

Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) is an International NGO engaged in the creation of a large-scale international unarmed peacekeeping force, composed of trained civilians. In partnership with local groups, NP members apply proven non-violent strategies to protect human rights, deter violence and help create space for local peacemakers to carry out their work.

Launched in 1999 at the Hague Appeal for Peace and established at the convening event in Surajkund, India in 2002, NP brings together 85 Member Organisations from around the world and is endorsed by 8 Nobel Peace Laureates.

Nonviolent Peaceforce

Deploys international, trained, civilian field teams to conflict areas upon invitation by local peace groups.

Builds capacity for nonviolent intervention through trainings, assessment, recruitment, rosters, and rapid response mechanisms in crisis areas.

Conducts public awareness campaigns and political advocacy to increase international support and recognition of civilian nonviolent intervention's effectiveness in preventing violence and fostering a global culture of peace.



Slovenian presidency priority - Children in armed conflicts

Presentation of the ECDPM study "Enhancing the EU Response to Children Affected by Armed Conflict with Particular Reference to Development Policy"

On January 11 the Slovenian Presidency of the EU has organised a presentation of the ECDPM study "**Enhancing the EU Response to Children Affected by Armed Conflict with Particular Reference to Development Policy**". Slovenia commissioned this study early in 2007 to develop ideas for how EU development programmes might more adequately address the needs of children affected by armed conflict.

Andrej Šter, State Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia in the introduction to the pres-

entation emphasized that the situation of children in armed conflict has been a priority of Slovenia's foreign policy for several years.

Besides an overview of international approaches and a comprehensive existing EU response to children affected by the armed conflict, the author of the study, Andrew Sherriff, presented possible options for improving the existing EU approach. He noted the need for further mainstreaming the issue, improving EU expertise, knowledge and personnel capacity, improving awareness and guidance at the operational level.

During the debate the panellists from the Trio presidency, the NGOs and the Commission representatives stressed that the

needs of girls and young women in developing countries affected by the armed conflict should be better analysed and addressed by the EU development programmes, and that long term engagements are paramount and necessary.

The study is available through the Child Rights Information Network, here: http://www.crin.org/docs/Sherriff_CAAC%20study_final.pdf

On 17/18 April, The Slovenian Presidency and the EC will organise a conference in Ljubiana on Children Affected by Armed Conflict where NP Sri Lanka programme coordinator Angela Pinchero will be participating to expose its field work in child protection in conflict areas.