

# EUROPE NEWSLETTER

**Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) 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.**

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## Lobbying Europe

We roll up our sleeves in the run up of the European Parliament elections.

**"The Union's aim is to promote peace". - Let's do it!** -In preparation for the 2009 European Parliament elections, civil society organisations working on peace and conflict issues from nine EU member states have united...(continues in page 6)

**Since 2003 Nonviolent Peaceforce is deploying multinational professional peace teams in Sri Lanka to increase security of civilians, especially the most vulnerable ones, and those working for peace and human rights.**

### NP PROGRAMME IN SRI LANKA

There are between 200,000 and 230,000 internally Displaced People (IDP) in the Vanni region. Consequently, representatives of Sri Lankan civil society issued an appeal to the Government and to the LTTE to guarantee security assurances and basic humanitarian assistance.



NP Sri Lanka team members patrolling a volatile area in the Eastern part of Sri Lanka

**Internal Displaced People need more support** - A National Consultation on their needs raises IDPs' hopes on the improvement of their living conditions. (continues in page 2)

**Former child soldiers are assisted to go back to normality** - a Safe House could mean a definitive departure of their violent past. (continues in page 2)

**Celebrating the pursuing of peace: the International Peace Day**- by promoting this sort of festivities, the population gets a chance of tasting peaceful coexistence. (continues in page 2)

**Boosting understanding when spots of community violence surfaces**- and in doing so, it is crucial to boost dialogue among each of the society layers. (continues in page 3)

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**In Mindanao, the main Southern island of the Philippines affected by a protracted armed conflict, NP is deploying since spring 2007 multinational professional peace teams to increase the capacity of local civilians in early warning and early action for conflict prevention in isolated and volatile areas.**

### NP PROGRAMME IN MINDANAO (PHILIPPINES)



Mindanao location within Philippines

The armed fights have been going on for weeks, amplifying the sufferings of Internally Displaced People (IDPs). At present, more than two hundred thousand people have been displaced and the number of IDPs is constantly been increasing. It is a humanitarian crisis with no signs of mitigating.

**Ceasefire violated and masses of people displaced in a new escalation in Mindanao**- an unexpected setback prompts the escalation of hostilities. (continues in page 4)

**Supporting people displaced by war in Central Mindanao**- the IDPs volume has been dramatically expanded. (continues in page 4)

**Making the voice of the vulnerable communities heard**- in the midst of violent, the worse hit are often the less heard. (continues in page 5)

**Addressing communal violence in the islands**- and the challenges faced in poses (continues in page 5)

# NP PROGRAMME IN SRI LANKA

*The over-30 year old conflict in Sri Lanka has seen a worsening of the violence in 2008 following the end of the ceasefire between the Tamil rebels of LTTE and the Sri Lanka Government. Displaced communities and human right defenders are often the first victims of the consequent human rights violations.*

**NP teams coordinate with UNICEF, Save the Children, government agencies, and other organizations in meeting the rights and protection needs of children and youth. The safety net of a number of children was enhanced with NP accompaniments**

## Internal Displaced People need more support



The CRT communicated to the field teams information regarding the national efforts on Internal Displaced Peoples (IDPs), including a National Consultation now underway which will be focusing on three intervention areas for IDPs in Sri Lanka: a) Land and property issues and compensation for what they have lost; b) addressing the challenges of long-term displacement, and c) the role of development actors in finding durable solutions. The Consultation is based on **the needs of the more than 312,000 IDPs, a number that will increase in the coming months as an effect of the military operations in the north.**

Furthermore, the CRT regularly responds to requests from human rights defenders to help them in helping others, provide legal aid etc. As an example, when three people were arrested from a sanctuary, NP was with them at the police station, making its presence known throughout the process of the inquiry of those being detained and questioned by five different government security agencies.

## Former child soldiers are assisted to go back to normality



There are very limited options for youth who return from having been part, either forcibly or voluntarily, of an armed group. In partnership with UNICEF, NP has been part of a multi-agency and government coalition working together on a variety of Children Affected by Armed Conflict (CAAC) initiatives. **In Trincomalee District the NP team is part of a long process of trying to establish a Safe House in the district** for, although the resistance has been strong from some quarters.



## Celebrating the pursuing of peace: the International Peace Day-

NP-Jaffna, along with 10 other organisations, received an unsigned, undated letter saying they should all leave Jaffna by the end of September. Consultation with the authorities and an emergency security meeting concluded that the internationals would not heed the warning at this time, but would continue to maintain the highest vigilance in case of further signs or threats.



Over the last months, the bulk of the NP work with community-based structures was centred on preparations for **the International Peace Day** on the September 21<sup>st</sup>. Teams played various roles as part of preparations and participation in the day's events throughout all the districts in the north and east. In Jaffna, the commemoration for the Peace Day actually lasted over a week, involving many partners, including the Center for Peace and Reconciliation and World Vision, with hundreds of children, parents, community leaders and school personnel taking part in various activities. **Such celebrations in the midst of war are highly beneficial for children and communities alike, providing a hiatus in the violence and conflict so that a future of peace can be envisioned.**



**NP Sri Lanka team members Kati Hoetger of Germany and M.K. Suhaib, Field Officer**

### **Boosting understanding when spots of community violence surfaces**



Tamil-Muslim communal violence remains a problem in Batticaloa. In September a Muslim man was killed in a Tamil area. Two days later two young Tamil men went missing as they took a goat to sell it in a Muslim town. The NP team **met with the police as well as the families of the missing youth, visiting both communities, and offering facilitation and communication among community leaders.**

When there are problems in IDP camps, NP is often notified as was the case when the fighting broke out in September in one of the resettled areas in Batticaloa District that the Valaichchenai Team was monitoring. IDPs trusted NP to bring letters of concern about being resettled to the authorities, when the IDPs have not been convinced that the area they are being resettled in is actually a stable and safe environment. This month permission was also given to NP to enter a resettlement area in the interior of Batticaloa in which was previously not allowed to go to. This is an important area to monitor as IDPs have complained that they are not allowed to take sufficient supplies to and from the resettlement areas following the attack on a camp.

In Batticaloa there is a strong initiative spearheaded by Terre des Hommes (TdH), a French child-focused organisation, to establish, with government structures, Village Child Rights Monitoring Committees. NP will be working to add a stronger protection element to these monitoring efforts in the coming months.

In Valaichchenai the team supported a key local partner in preparing for a large celebration in occasion of the International Peace Day; almost a thousand people showed up, also bringing Sinhalese school children and teachers from communities outside of the area, in a day-long, multi-ethnic celebration.

***NP teams in Sri Lanka are getting more involved with UNHCR's efforts to initiate and strengthen a variety of Confidence Building and Stabilization Measures (CBSM) so the IDPs could safely be resettled in their home or another area of their choice.***

# NP PROGRAMME IN THE PHILIPPINES

## Ceasefire violated and masses of people displaced in a new escalation in Mindanao

In August the Supreme Constitutional Court of Philippines rejected as not constitutional the concessions that the Government was making in the negotiation table with one of the main rebel groups in Mindanao, the Mindanao Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). One of the consequences has been a new series of armed clashes in Central Mindanao and a rising number of Christian-Muslim communal violent episodes.

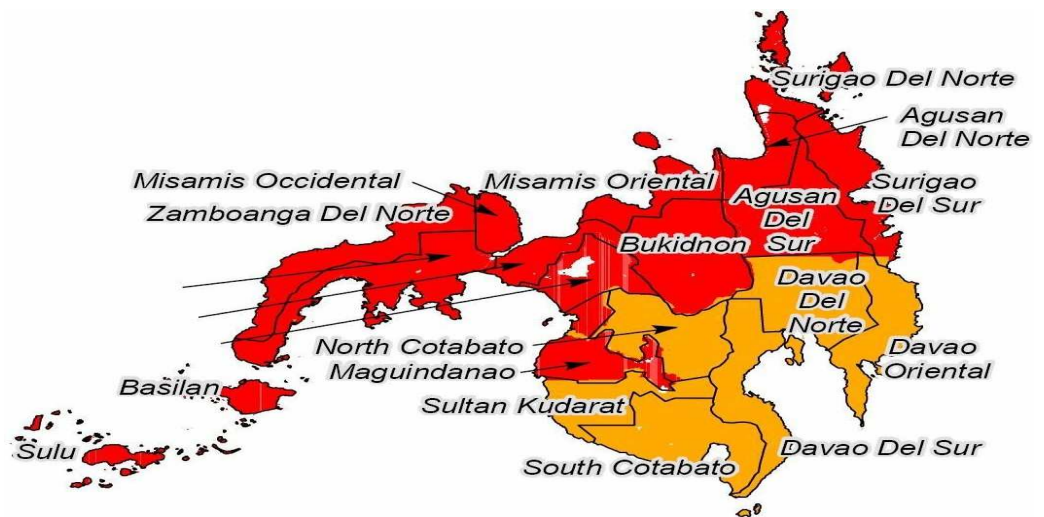
**"The European Union is deeply concerned by the escalation of violence in Mindanao, the growing number of civilian casualties and displaced persons. The EU strongly believes that the conflict in Mindanao can only be resolved through dialogue and calls upon all parties to show restraint and genuine respect for rule of law"**

*The EU French presidency*

### Supporting people displaced by war in Central Mindanao

Over the last months, the NP Central Mindanao Team (NP CMT) has managed to achieve greater progresses in its actions aim at making sure that the IDPs living conditions are as appropriate as could be given the circumstances. Hence and coupled with the support of NP main office and in direct coordination with local authorities and army commanders as well, the NP CMT managed to reach a number of evacuation centres in Libutan and Mamasapano– two of the more remote locations in the municipality. The objective was to assess the resources with and conditions in which the IDPs must carry out their daily routines and the threats faced in their situation of vulnerable refugees.

In the region of North Cotabato, NP CMT arranged a series of meetings with security officials and partners in the municipalities of Pikit and Midsayap. A remarkable outcome was the request made to NP CMT to devote more time in the critical areas of North Cotabato. It shows the widespread recognition of NP CMT's commitment to closely **work with local organisations**; since the NP CMT was set up, it has boosted the **further consolidation of human rights structures and inter-faith based** relations among communities of different religious and ethnic background in Central Mindanao.



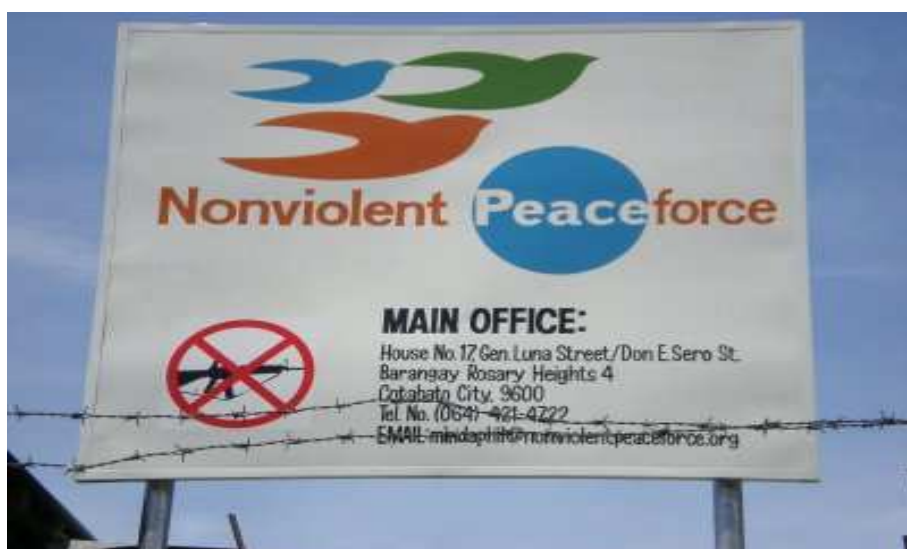
**Mindanao administrative division**

In order to strengthen the relations of the NP Philippines (NP P) team with local authorities, the NP Cotabato Main Office (NP CMO) has been holding regular meetings with key leaders and senior officials, as well as with armed commanders in the island.

One of the principal tasks carried out by NP CMO is to provide coordination and grassroots support to the rest of NP P field teams. Because of the degree, number and unforeseen nature of the challenges faced by the teams of NP in Philippines, the NP CMO bears a great deal of responsibility in facilitating the teams to devise innovative strategies and action plans to successfully cope with the conflict changing dynamics.

As an example, there have been certain situations in Central Mindanao in which the NP CMO office had responded to immediate requests originated from local partners- largely to **provide protective presence to the more vulnerable communities in critical areas where IDPs are exposed to violence and threats.**

**On a regular basis, NP Philippines meets officials of the British, German and Dutch embassies as well as delegates of the European Commission to discuss the situation of civilians in the conflict**



*Small arms proliferation is an issue in Mindanao*

### Addressing communal violence in the islands

Given the conflict escalation in the last months, mixed Christian and Muslim communities witnessed a higher risk for religious clashes to emerge. This also the case for the island of Basilan in the Sulu Archipelago. This is why the NP Sulu-Basilan team (NP SulBas) decided to set up a NP field office near the city of Lamitan.

NP's role is also to be in contact with armed actors, so to increase their sense of responsibility towards civilian populations. Thus, in the framework of its initiatives to tackle the increase of communal violence, the NP SulBas team held a meeting with the acting commander of the first marine brigade of the Philippines Army in Basilan to strengthen the follow up of security and protection issues. As a result, the acting commander gave his full support to NP's work in the island of Basilan.

Local authorities are key to local protection strategies for vulnerable communities. Given the spread recognition of the NP P teams in effectively dealing with the region human rights violations, NP was invited to **give briefings to key staff of the Human Resource department of the local government in Basilan.** The key outcomes of the meeting were to identify the security-weak areas in the zone and assist NP to meet with Basilan's Governor and Vice Governor.



## "The Union's aim is to promote peace". - Let's do it!

In preparation for the 2009 European Parliament elections, civil society organisations working on peace and conflict issues from nine EU member states have united around a common position. Jointly our organisations promote more efficient, more sustainable and less cost-intensive approaches to international conflicts and crisis. **Together we advocate for the further development of professional peacebuilding and civilian conflict resolution capacities**, with special attention to the added value civil society organisations can give in these fields.

The involved organizations are: Österreichische Friedensdienste (Austria); Sadankomitea (Finland); Promoted by Mouvement pour une Alternative Nonviolente (MAN); Promoted by Forum Ziviler Friedensdienst and Bund für Soziale Verteidigung (Germany); Centro Studi Difesa Civile (Italy); Peace Action Training and Research Institute of Romania (Romania); Partners for Democratic Change Slovakia (Slovakia); Centre per a la Innovació Social (Spain); Nederlands Expertisecentrum Alternatieven voor Geweld (Netherlands); and Nonviolent Peaceforce (International).

### European Parliament elections 2009 – campaign meeting focuses on key requests

On the 26-27 of September the NP office in Brussels hosted a meeting among the European Parliament elections 2009 campaign partners. The meeting drew **the campaign's key lines, which ask for:**

- Increase investment in building civilian capacities for handling conflict should be a clear priority, and ongoing institutional reforms should be used to strengthen the EU infrastructure for civilian peace policies.
- The important contributions both local and international non-profit civil society give to peacebuilding and crisis prevention need to be better recognised and supported within the EU institutional framework.
- The EU's image and efficiency as a global actor for peace would benefit from institutional support for a "European Civil Peace Service" (ECPS) programme.



*Agnieszka Komoch, NP Fundraising Director, with the backdrop of several meeting participants*

**The European Union has a particular strength in a preventive and civilian approach of dealing with international conflicts**

### Something to read

The International Crisis Group (ICG), a Brussels-based conflict resolution think tank, published last October a 14 pages report on the latest developments occurred in the Mindanao conflict. The report entitled '**The Philippines: The Collapse of Peace in Mindanao**' concludes that; "the immediate task now is to prevent escalation and discourage the government and local officials from plans to arm civilians. Interested governments and donors should press both sides to keep existing ceasefire mechanisms in place, while quietly urging a return to talks." The full report is available at [http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/asia/south\\_east\\_asia/b83\\_the\\_philippines\\_the\\_collapse\\_of\\_peace\\_in\\_mindanao.pdf](http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/asia/south_east_asia/b83_the_philippines_the_collapse_of_peace_in_mindanao.pdf)

This November the peace-consultants Inge Sauren and Jörg Winter are establishing the first **forum Civil Peace Service (forumZFD) project office in Mindanao** (Philippines). It is the third region where *forumZFD* is active with Civil Peace Service projects. Since the conflicting parties in the Mindanao conflict failed to sign a peace-treaty a few weeks ago, the fighting is escalating again. *forumZFD* seeks to support local peace-organisations and contribute to the peaceful settlement of the conflict.

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**NOVA** and NP were invited to the 2nd **Conference on Conflictology in the Open University of Catalonia** which took place last October 28th-29th. The occasion was used to present two articles that will be edited in English and Spanish along with other contributions in the form of a publication. One of the articles were authored by Rolf Carriere, entitled "Global Civil Society initiative to create a large-scale, Unarmed Peaceforce - A New Instrument for the Peacebuilders' Toolkit"; the other entitled "What does Nonviolent Peaceforce do in the Field?- Concrete actions that Unarmed Civilian Peacekeepers do," was gathered from Nonviolent Peaceforce reports by Simonetta Costanzo Pittaluga .

This event widened and reactivated the network with the Catalan Regional Police members interested in cooperating on the trainings for unarmed civilian peacekeepers. Separately, Nova is also working for funding a face to face meeting of NP's IGC and directors in Barcelona March-April 2009.

**The NP Working Group Germany** (including members of both German MOs) seeks financial support for a project in awareness raising and promotion about NP in schools and events for general public. It has also updated the German NP-website, issued a German version of the international NP-flyer and wrote a number of articles on NP in magazines. A more detailed brochure on NP will be printed soon. The group's coordinator Outi Arajärvi has been appointed European member of IGC, so German coordination will turn to Stephan Brües. ([www.nonviolent-peaceforce.de](http://www.nonviolent-peaceforce.de))

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**The Frisian Peace Platform, together with NEAG and EIRENE Netherlands**, organised a widely attended information meeting with, among others, Marcel Smits, former director of the NP programme in Sri Lanka. The moderator, chief editor of Friesch Dagblad (a regional newspaper), concluded that NP's work represents a genuine and concrete contribution to peacebuilding.

## NP Internal News

You can find NP's updated job offers at

<http://www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org/en/workwithus>

### Internship in Brussels: Fundraising and Policy Research Assistant

NP Brussels office seeks energetic and creative individuals to assist Fundraising and Strategic Relations Departments for 6 months minimum. Knowledge or willingness to learn about the specific themes related to NP, including civilian peacekeeping and human security will be an asset. We offer a unique internship opportunity based on the values of education, participation, and hands-on practical knowledge. **How to Apply:** Please send a cover letter with your motivation, expectations, and relevant experiences (1 page) and your CV (max. 2 pages) in pdf format. Please submit it to [europa@nonviolentpeaceforce.org](mailto:europa@nonviolentpeaceforce.org) to the attention of Mr. Javier Delgado, mentioning "Fundraising and Policy Research Assistant" in the subject. Only successful candidates will be contacted.

### New staff incorporations to NP Brussels Office

NP Brussels has welcomed three new staff members into its office:

**Javier Delgado Rivera**, Project Assistant, holds a bachelors degree in Political Geography from the Universidad de Castilla la Mancha (Spain) and a MA in Peace and Reconciliation Studies from Coventry University (UK); before joining Nonviolent Peaceforce Javier interned for the International Crisis Group and the EU Committee of the Regions and worked in China, India and Cambodia.

**Stephanie Patrois**, Finance and Administration Assistant and former intern in NP. Stephanie holds a Business Bachelor degree and a MA on Political Sciences by the *Université Nice Sophia Antipolis* (France). She worked in the U.S. (New Jersey) on the pharmaceutical industry, particularly dealing with the organisation and coordination of meetings.

**Joachim Gamper**, Fundraising and Policy Research intern, just received his bachelor degree in business and administration from the *University of Luigi Bocconi* (Milan). Joachim speaks German, Italian and English.



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## Supporting local peace initiatives

## Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP)

We are an International NGO engaged in the creation of a large-scale international unarmed peace-keeping 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 peace-makers 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 over 70 Member Organisations from around the world and is endorsed by 8 Nobel Peace Laureates.



**NP International Convening Event in New Delhi**

## CHECK OUR WEBSITE:

[WWW.NONVIOLENTPEACEFORCE.ORG](http://WWW.NONVIOLENTPEACEFORCE.ORG)

### NP

**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.



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