



The Global Coalition for  
Conflict Transformation

## Twelfth GCCT Newsletter - June 2015

### Introduction

TransConflict ([www.transconflict.com](http://www.transconflict.com)) is pleased to present the twelfth Global Coalition for Conflict Transformation (GCCT) newsletter, which provides a host of insights into the work of the GCCT and its members. The main purpose of this newsletter is to a) share information about the work of the GCCT and its members to a wider audience, and b) to strengthen co-operation and co-ordination between GCCT members themselves and with other interested parties.

- [Click here to learn more about the GCCT](#)
- [Click here for a complete list of GCCT members](#)

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**To contribute to the next edition of the GCCT newsletter – which will be published in mid-September 2015 – please contact TransConflict at - [gcct@transconflict.com](mailto:gcct@transconflict.com)**

## 1) New members of the GCCT

*The GCCT was pleased to welcome a host of new members in the past several months, including (click on the links below for further information):*

1. [South Sudan Development Agency](#) – ([South Sudan](#)) – The South Sudan Development Agency support and builds the capacity of war-affected and marginalized community in South Sudan in order to reduce vulnerabilities and improve livelihoods through the promotion of quality primary education and healthcare, human right and peace, water and sanitation and food security.
2. [Microgovernance Research Initiative](#) – ([Bangladesh](#)) – MGR considers violence in conflict is not merely an output rather a as part of the process of conflict. So MGR is more interested in research, advocacy and engagement activities related to the process of conflict and violence. The organisation believe conflict or violence is not distant from the society; it has microfoundation within the society.
3. [Danish Demining Group](#) – ([Kenya](#)) – DDG is an international NGO focused on preventing and reducing armed violence. DDG currently runs projects on community safety and conflict management in North Western Kenya and is carrying out conflict assessment in other areas of northern Kenya in collaboration with the Kenya School of Government.
4. [Young Peace Builders](#) – ([Sierra Leone](#)) – YPB strongly believes in mutual respect for all regardless of race, origin, tribe, religious or political affiliations. YPB is committed to building a sustainable world in which peace, justice, solidarity, human dignity, sustainable development and respect for human rights prevails. YPB is a composite of post-conflict countries dealing with post conflict issues like the restoration of ethnic cohesion, reintegration, reconciliation, and structural reforms in democracy and leadership.
5. [ACTION Support Centre](#) – ([South Africa](#)) – The ASC aims to create and explore opportunities that strengthen partnerships horizontally amongst civil society formations and between civil society and the stakeholders from within government and the private sector that affect the lives of the communities they are working with. These new forms of innovative collaborative partnership are intended to enable grassroots civil society to engage more effectively with policy makers at national, regional and international levels.
6. [Journalists Initiative for Youth Empowerment](#) – ([Nigeria](#)) – Journalists Initiative for Youth Empowerment is a non-profit development communication organisation supporting young people to stay away from violence, create jobs for themselves and participate in democratic governance. With partner organisations and individuals around the world, Ji4Ye works to to end youth unemployment, youth radicalization and youth apathy in democratic governance in Nigeria.

**[Please click here for further information on how to join the Global Coalition for Conflict Transformation \(GCCT\)](#)**



The Global Coalition for  
Conflict Transformation

## 2) GCCT Members in Focus – Center for Peacebuilding from Bosnia-Herzegovina

*TransConflict is pleased to showcase the work of the [Center for Peacebuilding \(CIM\)](#) from [Bosnia-Herzegovina](#), a member of the [Global Coalition for Conflict Transformation](#).*

Almost twenty years on from the end of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the challenges of peacebuilding and reconciliation remain pronounced. The Center for Peacebuilding (CIM) is a non-governmental organization – located in Sanski Most, Bosnia and Herzegovina – that seeks to rebuild trust and foster reconciliation among the people of Bosnia – Croats, Serbs, Bosniaks, and others – as well as support peace processes in other countries that have suffered from violent conflict. CIM's motto is “naš put je mir” (“our way is peace”).

Founded in 2004 by Vahidin Omanovic and Mevludin Rahmanovic, CIM is based in Sanski Most, in the north-west of Bosnia-Herzegovina. As CIM notes, "Even twenty years after the start of the war in Bosnia, deep physical and psychological divisions remain throughout society. Many Bosnian schools are ethnically segregated, and parents and family units who suffer from war-time trauma pass down negative stereotypes and perceived threats to the younger generation."

### **Establishment of Sanski Most Inter-Religious Council**

In April 2015, after ten years of sustained inter-religious dialogue, CIM finally achieved the establishment of an Inter-Religious Council in Sanski Most. The local head Imam, Husein ef Kovačević, a Catholic priest, Ivica Matić, and an orthodox priest, Alen Marić, respectively, agreed to work in unison to promote reconciliation and tolerance. These same leaders have previously presented resources for peacebuilding in their respective religious traditions, thereby setting a positive precedent for constructive inter-religious interaction. As part of these inter-religious efforts, CIM organizes an annual public Iftar in Sanski Most to mark this important Muslim tradition. In addition, CIM has supported the establishment of an inter-religious choir, “Harmony” and organizes a festival of choirs, involving women’s and mixed choirs from all over Bosnia-Herzegovina.



CIM has long engaged religious leaders, focusing in particular on the coexistence of three religions of Bosnia-Herzegovina and how one can 'Love thy neighbour.' Such discussions have focused on common family values within each religious tradition, plus their respective perceptions on mixed marriages; which were common in Bosnia before the war of the early nineties. The speakers also explored the concepts of love and caring, and their importance between neighbours.

### **Peace Camps**

CIM has been conducting peace camps ever since its founding, providing young people from different backgrounds with the opportunity to learn about peacebuilding and conflict resolution. Participants also have the rare opportunity to discuss the history of war and ethnically-based prejudice in Bosnia-Herzegovina, plus other taboo topics, while learning skills in nonviolent conflict resolution. This includes discussions on identity, stereotypes, discrimination and narratives of the Bosnian War, plus cycles of revenge and reconciliation. In order to ensure that the participants can provide trainings in their own communities, they create and conduct their own workshops.



### **International Peace Week**

CIM celebrates the International Day of Peace (September 21<sup>st</sup>) through a series of Peace Week events; comprising of concerts, film screenings and inter-religious meetings. The purpose of Peace Week is to raise awareness about the need for more peacebuilding and inter-religious dialogue in the local community, across Bosnia and Herzegovina and internationally.

### **Trauma Healing with Cranio-Sacral Therapy**

Cognisant of the trauma endured by many of Sanski Most's local population during the war of the nineties, and the profound effect it has psychologically and physically on the lives of victims, CIM has employed Cranio Sacral Therapy to help relieve traumatic stress and its side effects. In collaboration with the Swiss NGO "Baklava", CIM organized a three-year education program in Cranio Sacral therapy, resulting in therapy sessions being offered to over a thousand patients.

## **Peace Embassy**

A central element of CIM's expansion plans is the development of a Peace Embassy, which would provide secular space for members of the local community, in which tolerance and dialogue can be fostered. The Peace Embassy's sustainability would be ensured through social enterprises such as:

- 1. Hostel and International Volunteer Placement** – as Sanski Most's first and only hostel, the Peace Embassy will be well-placed to host international volunteers and tourists, thereby making an important contribution to the local economy.
- 2. Kindergarten** - a full-time private kindergarten, emphasising teamwork and peaceful communication, will create a new generation of Children for Peace. The kindergarten will provide a fundamental shift in early education, encouraging children to explore their own identities and promoting conflict resolution.
- 3. Peace Cafe, Restaurant and Internet Cafe** - coffee and dialogue are deeply-engrained traditions that deserve to be further harnessed in Sanski Most. The Peace Cafe will provide a meeting space for cultural and language exchange.

CIM works at the local, national, and international level to promote sustainable conflict transformation and peacebuilding. CIM's holistic approach addresses conflict and trauma in both individuals and larger groups. The core of CIM's work is to (re)build relationships that were destroyed during the neighbour-on-neighbour violence of the war. Over time CIM works to build trust and train people as leaders in conflict resolution. CIM's activities have brought together "men, women, and youth, from rape victims, camp survivors, and war veterans to diverse religious leaders". In this way, CIM promote individuals to become agents of change and seeds of peace in themselves, their personal relationships, and their own community. Step-by-step, person-by-person, and community-by-community CIM transform traumas into sustainable peace.

CIM is a recipient of a Tomorrow's Peacebuilders Award, organized by Peace Direct, which supports grassroots peacebuilding efforts globally, through an emphasis on local ownership and local solutions that prevent conflict. The award is recognition of CIM's efforts on the ground to transform conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

**[Please click here to learn more about  
the Center for Peacebuilding from  
Bosnia-Herzegovina!](#)**

### 3) GCCT Insight and Analysis

*This section provides an overview of the insight and analysis produced and published by members of the GCCT on a variety of conflict and conflict transformation related topics (click on the links below to read the entire article):*

1. [Upholding a human right to peace](#) - TransConflict is pleased to endorse and promote a joint statement to be submitted to the 29th session of the UN Human Rights Council. This will be a decisive session on this issue, as some States will try to adopt a minimum declaration, not defining the Human Right to Peace nor its elements, ending the codification process with a meaningless declaration.
2. [On the Right to Peace](#) - The UN Working Group on the Right to Peace continues to be defined by a lack of progress, with civil society organizations requesting the full recognition of the human right to peace in the draft declaration and asking States to finalize the drafting process.
3. [The effects of wedding costs on the peace process in Afghanistan](#) - by Khalid Rahman - The costs of marriage is one of the root causes for social conflict and family disputes in Afghanistan. Accordingly, the Sanayee Development Organization (SDO), a member of the Global Coalition for Conflict Transformation, is working to decrease excessive dowries through its peacebuilding and conflict transformation program.
4. [“We need more peacebuilders to prevent future violent conflict”](#) - TransConflict is pleased to present a report from the Peace Channel, a member of the Global Coalition for Conflict Transformation, about its efforts to promote peacebuilding among young people.
5. [Agreeing to end civil wars – reflections from the Balkans to Ukraine](#) - by Matthew Parish - If civil wars were not destined as a rule to yield uneasy but stable partition, then it is hard to see why they would be fought. The weaker side would simply capitulate and avoid the human suffering and mortal political risks. Civil wars matter, precisely because they result either in new territorial boundaries being created or in existing boundaries moving.
6. [Inertia, violence, inertia](#) - by David B. Kanin - Balkan communities have little hope of escaping the treadmill they are on unless they turn away from the EU, US, Russia, and other outside “helpers” and treat each other as partners instead of enemies.
7. [The future of \(nuclear\) war](#) – by David B. Kanin - The taboo against the use of nuclear weapons is fading as newer nuclear powers consider whether to use them as they would any other tools of war.
8. [NPT – nuclear weapons and tension areas](#) - by Rene Wadlow - Today, there are four tension areas that involve States which have nuclear weapons and where no negotiations to reduce tensions are going on: Korea, India-Pakistan, the wider Middle East, and USA-Russia.
9. [The refugee crisis](#) - by Gerard M. Gallucci - Europe has tried to hide from this basic fact, that nothing but a sea separates them from the millions seeking a better life. In the immediate future, it might look to the model of the North American Free Trade Agreement, through which the US looked to increase trade and development to begin creating conditions for Mexicans to have a better life where they already live.

10. [Combatting environmental crime](#) - by Sean Mowbray - Environmental crime – worth between \$70b and \$213b annually according to UNEP estimates – is one of the great challenges of our age. To tackle the issues which are driving these illegal trades we must look towards developmental solutions rather than criminal enforcement. In addition, there is also the need for a national reevaluation of environmental practices.
11. [Civic fantasy](#) - by David B. Kanin - The United States is trying to build the South Vietnamese Army in Iraq (and Syria).
12. [What to do about civil war?](#) - by Gerard Gallucci - As difficult on a human level as it may be to stand back and not intervene, the best approach to the conflicts in the Mideast may be to do nothing, take no sides. Perhaps better to work within the international community and the UN Security Council to encourage peace through diplomatic means while standing ready to undertake peacekeeping should there eventually be a peace to help keep.
13. [New Missions for the UN and a Secretary-General to fit](#) - by Rene Wadlow - To be effective, the UN, its program and Specialized Agencies need leadership which can promote world interests without undue influence of individual states. The challenges ahead for the emerging world society require strong and devoted leadership.
14. [Implementing the UN's sustainable development goals](#) - by Dr. Yossef Ben-Meir - While there are no absolute preconditions to sustainable human development there are undoubtedly conditions conducive to such development. Enabling local communities to plan and implement their future in an empowering decentralized environment is a recipe for success on an historic scale in this respect.
15. [Yugoslavia, Syria and Iraq – lessons learnable?](#) - by Gerard Gallucci - The demise of Yugoslavia has several important lessons for other divided contexts. First, if you want to maintain the stability of internally divided states, it might be better to work with the leaders you have. Second, collective identity remains the essential basis for political power as wielded by those seeking to gain and hold it and as recognized by those ready to follow. Finally, the process of breakup once underway is essentially unstoppable.
16. [What has Turkey 2015 to learn from Yugoslavia 1989?](#) – Part One - by Dr. Ulas Doga Eralp - Call it a twist of fate or whatever you like, but the recent political developments in Turkey remind too much of Yugoslavia in 1989. Often times it is considered erroneous to draw parallels between political processes that are 26 years apart, but the similarities are a little too many.
17. [Xenophobic attacks in South Africa – redefining apartheid](#) - by Phillip Nyasha Fungurai - Conflict mapping manifests that there is a disturbing nexus between the phenomena of xenophobia and apartheid in South Africa; both deeply-grounded in exclusionary practices and evoking cultural and structural violence coinciding with identity, space and territory. This is a sad case in light of post-apartheid South Africa's supposed culture of inclusiveness. To combat this scourge, there is a need for intensive civic education on xenophobia and its implications for South Africa.

**[To contribute analysis and insight to TransConflict.com, please contact us by clicking here!](#)**

## 4) GCCT Activities, Advocacy, Research and Requests

### Peacebuilding through sport

*Sport for peacebuilding dovetails well with Johan Galtung's 3 Rs for holistic peacebuilding - reconstruction, reconciliation and resolution.*

**By Phillip Nyasha Fungurai**

Sport is an international language which transcends ethnic, religious, national and other barriers that drive conflict and negative peace, making it a powerful tool for peacebuilding. With the conflict rife around the world, the time is ripe to fully engage sport as a vehicle for peacebuilding. Sport provides a significant avenue for social cohesion, social capital consolidation, occupational therapy and psycho-social support, which are fundamental aspects of holistic peacebuilding. Most of the values inherent in sport like resilience, fair play, cooperation and respect further present a hub of opportunities which render sport an effective peacebuilding apparatus. The United Nations Inter Agency Taskforce on Sport for Development and Peace (2003) affirms the pivotal role of sport in peacebuilding where it asserts that sport facilitates a healing process which re-establishes a sense of normalcy. It therefore presents an ideal forum for resuming social dialogue, building understanding, bridging divides between conflicting groups, breaking down prejudice, appreciating ethno-religious diversity, strengthening community involvement and channelling energies from aggression and self-destruction to productive and constructive ends.

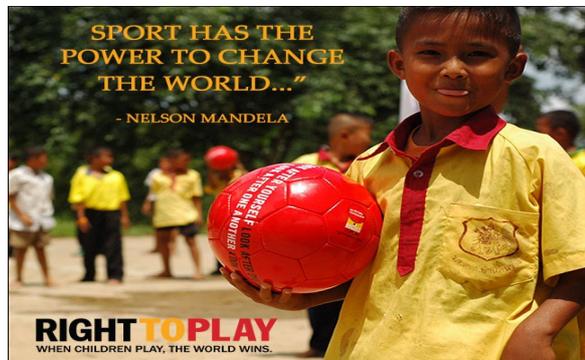
Sport is an important aspect of socio-political life. It can be employed to directly engage conflicting parties and victims of conflict, bringing them together in a participatory way. This is important in building social capital and strengthening social fabric. Sport thus brings people together in a way that cuts across boundaries and breaks down barriers, making the playing field a simple and often apolitical site for initiating contact between hostile groups. It is therefore an ideal forum for establishing dialogue by making hostile groups understand each other's identities, religions, values and cultures. The social interaction instigated by sport also sets in motion political interaction. Political interaction will result in adjusting of incompatible interests and ideologies, thus generating an enabling environment for peacebuilding. Strife and war torn regions like Sudan can exploit a phenomenon like sport to set in motion holistic peacebuilding that can stabilize the country. For example a football match between the North and the South, with both teams intermixed with the varying ethnic groups in the country. This will result in social interaction that will foster the embracing of diversity, breaking down of prejudice and achievement of positive sustainable peace.

Many of the core values inherent in sport resonate well with the principles necessary for holistic peacebuilding. These range from fairness, sharing of resources, cooperation, respect and tolerance. Hence when applied robustly, sport programmes can help reduce tension. The convening power of sport makes it a powerful tool for peacebuilding. As a natural crowd puller, sport is perfect for social mobilization. In turn excellent social mobilization is a great ingredient for enhancing community participation and involvement in peace processes.

Sport further nurtures in people the value of effort and how to manage victory as well as defeat. This is particularly important as it teaches conflicting parties to handle political defeats, and creating win-win situations in times of conflict to avert explosive violent confrontations. The process of rebuilding the ability to trust in conflict-ridden areas is also a daunting challenge. In this light, sport can play a pivotal role in facilitating healing and reconciliation that is essential for gradual but certain reestablishment of trust. Imagine an anti-xenophobic football match between Zimbabwe and South Africa. Such a match

would make fruitful strides towards ameliorating xenophobic tendencies and violence based on nationality. The match will spark healthy social interaction between foreigners hence breaking down prejudice and societal boundaries.

By engaging in sport together, conflicting groups can increasingly grow to feel that they are alike. This shared experience can give birth to shared ritual identity which can mitigate tension and hostility. This in turn will facilitate bonding. For example, the net effect of the Darfur crisis has been the displacement of over 1.6 million and over 210,000 refugees crossing the border into Chad alone. This has led to ethnic clashes between the local population and the refugees which has made youth vulnerable to terrorist recruitment. In response to this predicament and in the peacebuilding spirit, a humanitarian organization called 'Right to Play' embarked on a project that uses sport to build life skills among refugee youth and local youth. This has promoted community cohesion and a united voice against violent conflict by youth in the region. The sport project has also been a form of occupational therapy which has averted the recruitment of youth by terrorist as they have something occupying them. This bears concrete testimony to the fact that, sport is an effective peace building tool.



The conciliatory nature of sport also contributes immensely to peacebuilding. Sport for peacebuilding dovetails well with Galtung's 3 Rs for holistic peacebuilding - reconstruction, reconciliation and resolution. Reconstruction involves rehabilitating structures as well as victims of conflict. In this regard sport assists in the reintegration of conflict combatants and victims by providing psycho-social support. Reconciliation employs sport's conciliatory character to rebuild plausible relationships, establishing positive sustainable peace. The resolution of conflict can be achieved by using sport to promote dialogue, starting with social interaction.

However it is essential to harness these positive aspects of sport carefully because it also has its own challenges. Neo-conflict theorists contend that sport is a by-product of development and thus can never be an engine for peace. Such theorists argue that sport is a social construct which has ills like hooliganism and exclusionary practices that are impediments to holistic peacebuilding. This school of thought is misguided because sport is one of the only means through which conflicts can be transformed to be potentially a positive and fruitful force of constructive change.

*Phillip Nyasha Fungurai is a researcher who holds a BSc Honours Degree in Peace and Governance from Bindura University of Science Education. He is also a peace, governance, human rights and democracy specialist, working in co-operation with civil society organizations, think tanks and research institutes in Zimbabwe. The arguments herein are the author's views, thus no institution should be held accountable for the contentions in this article.*

## **The Soul of Europe and the EU referendum**

*TransConflict is pleased to present a paper by the Soul of Europe, a member of the Global Coalition for Conflict Transformation, making a powerful case for reform of the EU.*

**By Reverend Donald Reeves MBE**

### **Europe's Story**

In popular imagination there is a lack of story about Europe. Europe disappears from the map after the end of the Second World War, then surfaces again at the fall of the Berlin Wall, and emerges once more with the present question as to whether the UK should be 'in' or 'out' of Europe.

This lack of perspective about our place in Europe plays into deeply held prejudices. The Empire, the Commonwealth - the English speaking peoples. This has meant that Europe, generally called the 'Continent', has never been a priority. Today there are few EU flags flying on our public buildings, unlike in other European cities.

Moreover, the European question is complex. Most politicians and economists are unable to write in plain English about Europe which makes it easy for the Far Right to make xenophobic statements about 'immigration' and 'sovereignty'.

Our place is in Europe. One of the most trenchant advocacies for the UK remaining in the EU was expressed by Geoffrey Howe, a former foreign secretary during Margaret Thatcher's administration, in an article in the Observer on the 18th May 2013. I will not repeat his arguments except to say that if the UK turns its back on Europe we will be diminished in every way - become a little England.

Because of the complexity of the institutions which have grown over the years and which make up the European Union, I will write about what I know and what I have experienced of the European Commission in Sarajevo, Pristina, Belgrade and Brussels over the last sixteen years, bearing in mind that Serbia, Bosnia and Kosovo are seeking to become members of the EU.

Philip Pullman states: 'Stories are the most important thing in the world; without stories we wouldn't be human'. And that is why, lacking a popular story, I write about what I know.

Commentators about Europe are gloomy about Europe's future. They catalogue the disillusionment with political elites. Europe is losing respect for its politicians. And leaders from the Far Right are emerging with their dangerous rhetoric about racism, islamophobia, anti-Semitism; and inhumane treatment of minorities like the Roma and refugees is becoming acceptable as part of the public discourse.

There is a structural problem. All the EU states operate independently. There is no common treasury. So when it is said 'Europe' must do something about migration, there is no agreement. Each state has its own policy on migration, and each one differs markedly from the other. Some like Sweden have a liberal open policy; others like neighbouring Denmark are strictly exclusive.

The EU is perceived as an old people's club - middle aged men (mostly) - getting in and out of cars ready for more talks in Brussels. Yet, those in their twenties and thirties take the freedom to travel in Europe for granted - ignorant of Europe's story, of its scarred history.

Meanwhile the Russian bear is stirring. Europe has not found a way to curb these disturbances. Is Russia exploiting Europe's weakness? When there is talk of Greece leaving the Eurozone, analysts go into overdrive: the Eurozone will collapse, the EU will fall apart, and Armageddon will have arrived. Lastly in this gloomy scenario there is the threat from Islamic State. If Christians and other ancient religions are being wiped out in the Near East, will it be our turn next in Europe?

### **Planet Brussels**

Recently the Times and Financial Times reported that each member of the European Parliament will be receiving an additional £18,000 a year to spend on assistants. Each MEP has a budget of £275,000 for staff. This means taxpayers will face a million pound bill for a five year term. It will bring total potential spending on assistants for seven hundred and fifty MEPs to more than £206 million a year. German MEPs, vociferous in their call for austerity, particularly for poorer countries, have also been the campaigners in favour of these increases. On average, assistants in Brussels earn about £7000 a month.

Given that Greece and Spain are in melt down, it is incredible these proposals are on the table: incredible and also wrong. Why is this? Simply because the EU headquarters in Brussels and Strasbourg are too large. They devote more attention to themselves, their positions and offices than to the purpose for which they exist.

Furthermore, the European Commission headed by unelected Commissioners, who are effectively unaccountable and control large pots of money, operates on an old fashioned model: hierarchical and patriarchal, even when women are employed in top jobs. New ways of working in smaller groups, where the lap top becomes the office, have not arrived in Brussels. The working environment needs to be more like a plate than a pyramid.

In the Balkans I have met many officials - trying to interest them in my work, and seeking advice for funding. More often than not, these officials are withdrawn and disinterested. They operate in a working environment where they are not appreciated. I doubt if they begin meetings with: 'And how are things for you?' So their energies are focused on preserving their jobs.

I cannot recall one official who is passionate about his or her work. On my first visit to Kosovo I was told by a leading local NGO that at weekends internationals depart for Vienna or Thessalonica, and return on Monday. So when a Commissioner appears and makes a statement he or she seems to come from another planet.

Here is a story from Kosovo. The tone, the style is what I want to draw attention to. The story might be different in other countries like Bosnia, economically dependent on the EU, but the tone and style are the same.

Dimitris Avramopoulos is the EU Commissioner for Migration. Avramopoulos was minister for foreign affairs and a former mayor of Athens. He came to Pristina on March 10 this year. He met the president, the prime minister and a couple of ministers. The purpose of his visit was to discuss the mass exodus from Kosovo which had been taking place over a period of months. At its height a thousand people a day were travelling to the Hungarian border via Serbia. He also came to discuss the process of the liberalising of visas. At the end of his visit, he held a press conference. His statement can be found on his website under Announcements.

Reading his statement, ten words come to mind:

- **Aloof, detached, tired.**
- **Stern** - he comes across as a head teacher reprimanding an unruly pupil.
- **Patronising** - The president of Kosovo was singled out for some good work she had done. She is a model for a head of state - shrewd, calm and unruffled. I have met her. She did not need to be commended for just doing her job.
- **Threatening** - 'Unless you do this, I personally will not be able to recommend, etc...'
- **Ignorant** - he said we had to find out why this mass migration had taken place. The commissioner has fourteen full time advisors in Brussels. The Exodus had been widely commented on and analysed. But the advisors failed to notice, or failed to brief the commissioner. He also gave no indication that he knew about a long tradition in Kosovo of migration from impoverished rural communities.
- **Moral tutor** - the commissioner implied that unless Kosovo cleaned up its act about corruption he personally would not support the process for the liberalisation of visas. The EU sets itself up as a moral tutor. But Europe is in no position to do this. In a wide ranging article in the London Review of Books, The Italian Disaster, Perry Anderson describes the pervasive corruption of the political class across Europe (LRB 22 May 2014).
- **Obscurantist** - In the course of his statement the commissioner said the EU is assisting Kosovo in its economic development. I turned up the EU plans for 2014-2020. I read three pages and then gave up. I could not understand what the writers were trying to say.

The people of Kosovo deserve better than this. Kosovo has been invited to integrate with Europe. Then a tired, tawdry and sclerotic way of managing puts every difficulty in its way. The Kosovo story is an illustration of how Planet Brussels functions in the Balkans, and I guess elsewhere.

Two other matters are pressing. One is how illiterate many internationals are about religion in the Balkans. Religion is not just about what people believe and do, but is an expression of people's identity.

The second is the way in which Europe has become 'marketised'. Rowan Williams in a review of David Marquand's *An Essay on Britain Now* writes: 'The issue is whether public service or

public good can be so completely translated into the language of market provision that nothing remains that cannot be rendered in business models - no goal without profitable outcomes.' (New Statesman 30th May 2014).

No wonder that the debate about the Referendum perpetually focuses on the economy and business. To address this matter requires a huge intellectual and spiritual effort.

### **Reforming the EU Commission**

The commission needs reform. It needs to be accountable, more flexible and less managerial. Its officials need to seize opportunities and not miss them.

A story from Bosnia: in February 2014 Bosnia erupted. Across Bosnia people gathered, set up what became known as 'plenums' and expressed their frustrations, sometimes violently, against endemic poverty, hunger, and resentment against politicians. The EU was alarmed. Stefan Fule, then Commissioner for Enlargement, flew into Sarajevo, lectured the politicians and flew out. What he should have done was to take time to meet the leaders of these citizens assemblies - even though they were not elected but self-appointed, and listen - listen as if his job depended on it. This was a missed opportunity.

The European Commission needs to scale down its headquarters in Brussels, and become local. Its officials need to learn to listen. They need to move out of their fortress-like offices. They need to stay close to the ground listening to the cries for help, the demands for justice and the growing protest movements. The European Commission should be advocates for all the marginalised, the forgotten and unwanted, and so find its role as the conscience of Europe.



### **A Proposal - Down to Earth**

*'So on a day when newcomers appear  
Let it be a homecoming, and let us speak  
The unstrange word, as it behoves us here,*

*Move life, move minds and make*

*New meanings flare'.*

(From the Beacons of Bealtaine by Seamus Heaney - written for the occasion of admitting ten new member states in Phoenix Park Dublin, when Ireland held the Presidency of the EU, 1st May 2004. Bealtine is a Gaelic holiday marking the start of summer.)

So what will it take to 'move life, move minds, and make new meanings flare'? As I was preparing this paper, I reread Pope Francis' speech to the European Parliament in Strasbourg on November 25 2014. I realised that what I was writing reflected the Pope's critique of Europe and how especially his understanding of the human person, not as a cog in the economic machine, not even as a citizen, but as one who is endowed with 'transcendental dignity' - so everything must be done to recognise and enhance that dignity.

So a programme for the conscience of Europe will have at least four elements.

- A first is to establish a network across Europe of those groups who are already struggling for change.
- A second is to ratchet up inter-faith activities, some already well established across Europe, so those in synagogues, mosques and churches stand shoulder to shoulder in solidarity with each other for the benefit of their communities.
- A third is to honour artists of every sort, and particularly film makers, who recognise and tell the stories of the migrant, the displaced person, thus reminding us of the human face of those who are labelled as this or that.
- And fourthly there is the intellectual and demanding task of dismantling the marketising of the state, and looking for new ways of organising our affairs.

For myself I have always been inspired by the words of St Irenaeus, inscribed on the plaque honouring Michael Ramsey, a former Archbishop of Canterbury: The Glory of God is the living Man, and the life of man is a vision of God.

*Reverend Donald Reeves MBE is an Anglican priest and the founder of the Soul of Europe. The Soul of Europe works as catalysts and mediators to ensure a peaceful resolution to conflicts, particularly in the Balkans.*



The Global Coalition for  
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## **Youth as essential partners for peace**

*TransConflict is pleased to present a petition by the [United Network of Young Peacebuilders](#), a member of the [Global Coalition for Conflict Transformation](#), calling on the United Nations Security Council to adopt a Resolution on Youth, Peace and Security.*

### **By the United Network of Young Peacebuilders**

We want the Security Council to recognize that youth are essential partners for peace. A Security Council resolution on youth, peace and security is needed to ensure that this large sector of society is included in the promotion of peace from the community to the international level. If youth remain excluded from national and international efforts at building peace, violent extremism and instability will remain a threat for all sectors in society.

Please [sign our petition calling on the United Nations Security Council to adopt a resolution](#) that highlights and supports young people to act as positive agents in building peace and security. In addition, we encourage you to publish content under this hash tag: #youth4peace. Thank you for your contribution.

Youth are change makers in conflict-affected regions around the world, yet their work often lacks support and is unrecognised. There are more than one billion youth around the world, of which approximately 600 million live in conflict-affected areas.

Youth are the majority of the population in most countries affected by armed conflict and the United Nations Economic and Social Council acknowledges that they are disproportionately affected by violent conflict. Despite this, youth are not given the opportunity to engage with decision-makers on issues of peace and security.

If youth remain excluded from national and international efforts at building peace, violent extremism and instability will remain a threat for all sectors in society. The most effective way to counter extremist movements is to offer young people meaningful ways to make a difference and positively contribute.

The United Nations Security Council can play an important role in creating space for meaningful participation to ensure that youth have access to national governments and international organisations. As the body charged with maintaining peace and security, only through the Security Council can the international community show its commitment to including youth as a key actor to work towards sustainable peace.

We want the Security Council to recognise that youth are essential partners for peace. A Security Council resolution on youth, peace and security is needed to ensure that this large sector of society is included in the promotion of peace from the community to the international level.

A growing body of evidence shows that when faced with violence and conflict, the majority of young people play active and valuable roles as agents of positive and constructive change. In fact many already do, but they do so without strong support from key national and international actors. Young men's and young women's participation in peacebuilding is a largely untapped resource.

*[Please sign our petition calling on the United Nations Security Council to adopt a resolution that highlights and supports young people to act as positive agents in building peace and security.](#)*

## **What is inhibiting peace in the Greater Horn of Africa?**

***Research on peace in the Greater Horn of Africa demonstrates a complete lack of recognition of the role of non-violent means and techniques to address conflicts.***

***By Kisuke Ndiku***

In an encounter at a local peace forum, an elder remarked that:

*"the problem is that peacemaking has become highly commercialized in our locality, just like the conflicts. The government, NGOs and foreigners (meaning local external persons including non citizens as well), and also some of our own local respected people come to us with few short-term activity projects that only focus spending money for peace and this spoils our peace. But if they leave us alone, we can deal with this (conflict) and there will be peace you will see but they don't want to leave until their money is finished!"*

(Council Elder speaking to author in an interview Mandera County, 2013)

This was very instructive in that it underscores what undermines peacemaking in the Greater Horn of Africa. It is local steps towards peace that would assure sustainable peace (Thich Nhat Hanh, 1991), and it is local peace that shall ensure a strengthened culture of peace based on definitive knowledge, values, beliefs, attitudes, behaviours and choices (Adams D. (2000) pg. 1).

### **Factors inhibiting peace in the Greater Horn of Africa**

The diversity of root causes of conflict in the Greater Horn of Africa is widely reported on. What seems not to have been fully-explored, however, are the key factors inhibiting peace in communities in the region, which can be clustered into several inter-related categories.

A central factor is an over-emphasis on community diversities, its manipulation and exploitation by incumbent leaders, external peace dealers (e.g. law enforcement agencies as outsiders to a community setting), and compromised internal peace makers. Interactive peace dialogues and the real peace makers are hindered from creating socio-environmental contexts capable of fostering resilient means for sustainable peace. The result has been fractured local relations due to externally-structured peace processes that ignore local wisdom and techniques. This seems to have contributed to the inappropriate use of proper means for peacemaking that negate the functions and roles of the most-affected persons to address the real issues towards forgiveness, healing and restorative justice.

The continued existence of unresolved historical injustices - beginning with pre- and post-colonial factors related to land, politics and inadequate access to justice - has been persistently raised by community groups. Closely-linked to this is institutional and policy marginalization, where the state deliberately ignores or withdraws the delivery of services to particular communities and locations, fuelling discontent. Socio-politically exclusive dimensions, meanwhile, hinder inclusive representation by gender and marginalized groups (indigenous minorities, youth, women, ethnic, etc). Dispossession of land and local productive assets materialises through exclusive acquisition of land by governments, extractive-based

conglomerates, multinational corporations, private sector entities, wealthy individuals and politicians. Vested interests of external governments - operating through formal and informal structures - from time-to-time enforce regimes that favour instability to create opportunities for the exploitation of natural resources.

The impact of economic projects on communities and the local environment - whether for infrastructure, reforestation or other public goods - have caused communities to lose their productive resources, leading to deeper levels poverty. Radicalization and easy access to arms (cultural, political or sectarian), meanwhile, has become a significant threat (Ncube & Jones, (2013). Africa Economic Brief Vol. 4, Issue 5, pg. 4-5 ). The fact that strategies of externally-supported peace actions tend to have inadequate local links and often lack legitimate institutional foundations meant such efforts had a short-term impact. The short-term nature and narrowness of externally-supported peace initiatives carry the hallmarks of shallow ownership and limited scope to deal with peace needs and priorities, ultimately leaving the local context in a vacuum.

### **Shifting Paradigms on Community Solidarity and Peace**

In the Greater Horn of Africa, pre-independence activism united communities. After independence, however, the models of leadership, governance, political, administrative and service delivery structures created discontent within communities. Discontent led to dissent and new opposition to the governments formed after independence. In response, most newly-formed governments used repressive means, while others sought external support to quell discontent. In some cases, government law enforcement agencies adopted inappropriately unjust responses against civilians (Mandrup, (2012) pg 5-7). External supporters were influenced by relative affinities to power blocks defined in the lines of communists versus capitalists (ISS; (2011) Monograph 178,). Repression often led to human rights abuses and institutional marginalization, often disfranchising whole communities (Ncube & Jones, (2013) Africa Economic Brief Vol. 4, Issue 5; pg. 4). Local discontent often grew into orchestrated conflicts, with one community against another supported by the big powers directly or indirectly (Human Security Report (2010) pg 20).

### **Reverting to Local Peacemaking**

Frequent occurrence of conflict in many communities of the Greater Horn of Africa calls for a practical re-discovery of local peace mechanisms and pillars through which restorative justice, transitional justice and sustainable peacemaking dialogue can be re-founded. Practitioners and researchers alike need to re-think non-violent peacemaking from within (Funk N.& Said A.A, 2010). There is a need to embrace new skills and recognize that internal functionaries in communities have crucial roles and responsibilities in peacemaking (de Rivera J. Culture of Peace, 2012). It is time to put down externally-designed tools and embrace more locally-crafted techniques that resolve root causes of conflict, whilst strengthening local peace pillars, thereby providing the basis for lasting peace. A resolutely long-term perspective in addressing peace is needed if peace dialogues and initiatives will be resilient to yield sustainable peace.

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