



The Global Coalition for
Conflict Transformation

Fifteenth GCCT Newsletter - March 2016

Introduction

TransConflict (www.transconflict.com) is pleased to present the fifteenth 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-June 2016 – please contact TransConflict at - gcct@transconflict.com

1) New members of the GCCT

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

1. [Action for Nonviolence and Peacebuilding \(Kosovo\)](#) - Action for Nonviolence and Peacebuilding is a multi-ethnic peace organization, founded in 2002 in order to achieve permanent and stable peace in Kosovo and the Balkans through the promotion of democratic values, the protection of human rights and the development of civil society.
2. [Aware Girls \(Pakistan\)](#) - Aware Girls is a young women-led organisation working for women empowerment, gender equality, and peace in Pakistan. Aware Girls works to strengthen the leadership capacity of young women enabling them to act as agents of social change and women empowerment in their communities.
3. [Peace and Development Network Trust \(Kenya\)](#) - PeaceNet networks and coordinates peacebuilding efforts in Kenya through partnership with relevant stakeholders and actors. The main aims are to build structures and capacities of downstream/grassroots partners, whilst maintaining a formidable alliance with upstream partners for peacebuilding advocacy and policy formulation.
4. [TPO \(Democratic Republic of Congo\)](#) - Since 1994, TPO's mission has been to support and partner with civil society organizations and government to empower communities with the skills and tools they need to effectively address their problems. TPO's goal is to leave behind communities capable of resolving their own problems.

***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 – Somali Observatory of Conflict and Violence Prevention from Somalia

TransConflict is pleased to showcase the work of the [Somali Observatory of Conflict and Violence Prevention from Somalia](#), a member of the [Global Coalition for Conflict Transformation](#).

In the absence of central government control over most of its territory since the 1991 Civil War, Somalia is consistently ranked as the world's number one failed state. The impact of conflict and violence has been to drive community mistrust, resulting in the division of the county into three political divisions; namely, Somaliland, Puntland and South-Central.

To this end, the Somali Observatory of Conflict and Violence Prevention (OCVP) was established in 2009 in order to "improve the effectiveness of community safety interventions by advancing learning and evidence-based programming." OCVP's mission is to "contribute to peace building and state-building across all regions of Somalia through research, education and dissemination of information that promotes harmony, social cohesion, security, safety, and sustainable development within all regions of Somalia and Somaliland."

OCVP has established itself as the leading source of knowledge on the pressing issues affecting Somalia. In a context short on reliable data - especially on peacebuilding and governance in Somalia and Somaliland's diverse regions - OCVP has become a vital resource for policy-makers and those designing interventions. OCVP's contribution to the monitoring and evaluation of programmes and progress has helped a variety of stakeholders revise and tailour their approach to this challenging conflict-ridden territory. OCVP's activities cover three major areas - research, training and its knowledge management department.



Gathering evidence-based data on crime, conflict and violence for shaping policy, developing responses and monitoring progress

OCVP's flagship publications are its District Conflict and Security Assessment (DCSA) Reports, which "regularly gather and analyse community perceptions on the providers and delivery of services related to security, justice and governance; as well as examining the drivers of local conflict". The reports play an important role in policy-making, aiding the identification of year-over-year trends in a particular district. With the support of support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for Somalia and later the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID), OCVP has conducted district level assessments in places such as Erigavo.

For instance, the Salahley District Conflict and Security Assessment for 2015 found that "police as a formal security provider is overstretched and operate under poor transportation to respond to security incidences in the distant places outside Salahley town", whilst the Burtinle District Conflict and Security Assessment for 2015 noted that "the new administration garnered public support by holding continuous consultation meetings with stakeholders and various civil society groups, along with raising awareness of the pressing needs in the community." The report for Balanbale found that the "most pressing needs which the community faced were poor health, unemployment and poor education", whilst for Afgoye "land and tenure disputes, rape, Al-Shabaab attacks and clashes among the different security providers pose a threat to the security of the district"



In order to share the findings of the DCSA reports, OCVP also organizes a range of District Data Dissemination Workshops in different locations, involving women, youth, traditional (i.e. elders) and religious leaders, plus members from local authorities (i.e. Regional Governors and Humanitarian Coordinators) and security/justice providers (i.e. Police Commanders).

OCVP also publishes a series of 'Safety and Security District Baseline' reports, which has to date covered five different districts across Somalia. For OCVP, "the picture of safety and security that emerges from these baseline reports...[guides] the elaboration of appropriate responses by communities, local and state governments."

OCVP's training department has developed different manuals on areas of Conflict Analysis, Conflict Sensitivity, and Mediation and Negotiation skills. These manuals are designed for different sectors of society; including, but not limited to, district safety committees, womens' groups, traditional leaders, government officials and local councils at district levels.

OCVP also publishes a number of policy briefs, including 'Youth Based Urban Crimes and Violence in Puntland', 'Youth Based Urban Crimes and Violence in Somaliland' and 'On Community Perceptions of Security, Justice and Governance in Baidao District'. These briefs provide vital policy recommendations for a host of domestic and international stakeholders.

Complementing this data collection and policy work, OCVP has been instrumental in the development of an Early Warning and Response Network (EWARN), which brings together local authorities, communities, NGOs, academics and other experts in order "to prevent and respond to violent incidents as well as any other threats to peace and security in the country".

Strategic Outlook

As part of its 2014-2019 strategic plan, outlined five strategic priorities - a) Post Conflict Governance and Development; b) Displacement and Migration; c) Trauma Healing and Social Reconstruction; d) Environment and Livelihoods and e) OCVP Capacity Strengthening and Development. The direct links that OCVP has cultivated with local communities has allowed it to develop highly-contextualised interventions and targeted advocacy campaigns that contribute to building long-term solutions to the plethora of challenges facing Somalia and Somalia and Somaliland.

Please click here to learn more about Somali

Observatory of Conflict and Violence

Prevention from Somalia!



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. [From survival to life – Rwanda’s healing process at a glance](#) - Never Again Rwanda - While many Rwandans have healed to varying degrees there is a need to address the wounds that still run deep. Today, the healing process is still ongoing. The question is: what work still needs to be done and how do we go about helping those who still suffer deep psychological wounds to this day?
2. [Sri Lanka – lighting the lamps](#) - Sri Lanka Campaign for Peace and Justice - In the interests of reconciliation the Government of Sri Lanka would do well to signal that it is bringing to an end its war on mourning. In 2016 we hope that people will be able to grieve openly – free from government interference, and we hope, freer also from the spectre of the LTTE.
3. [Never Again Rwanda hosts a Community Forum in Bugesera](#) - NAR, a [Global Coalition for Conflict Transformation](#) member, organized a special Community Forum in Bugesera district to discuss challenges of peace in the region and how to overcome them through dialogue.
4. [Never Again Rwanda will never relent to promote rights of all the youth](#) - Never Again Rwanda organized a conference on the theme, “Promotion and protection of human rights: My voice counts,” to mark International Human Rights Day.
5. [Police involvement in the delivery of restorative justice in England and Wales](#) - Ian D. Marder - In many areas, restorative justice is now used as a diversion from arrest or court alongside a variety of disposals, though it appears that it is most commonly being used at the level of the Community Resolution. This allows the police to resolve crimes and other incidents quickly and effectively, while both repairing the harm done to the victim and avoiding criminalising the offender.
6. [Burundi – in the moments of crisis the wise build bridges](#) - Rene Wadlow - The UN Human Rights Council Special Session on preventing further deterioration of the human rights situation in Burundi has well highlighted the dangers. The difficulties of restoring order are strong. More basic reconciliation is even more difficult. The Expert Mission is unlikely to discover new elements. Thus we must watch the situation closely and see what means to bridge building are possible.
7. [Long road to peace – a practitioner’s experience in Kenya](#) - Kisuke Ndiku - Kenya and neighbouring countries would benefit from an in-depth analysis of the past decade of peacebuilding interventions, in order to determine to what extent communities are better positioned to transform conflict, and what future courses of action might be pursued.
8. [Building peace through education](#) - Kirthi Jayakumar - A social climate of peace can thrive only if there is a communal approach to it through education, but not just literacy-driven education – rather, peace education.

9. [Mistakes were made – part II](#) - Gerard M. Gallucci - The US is now in the process of choosing its next president. Everyone – in America and beyond – should insist that all the candidates clearly define their notion of national interest and explain how it addresses limitations as well as possibilities. Then the American people must choose very wisely. The 21st Century appears to be just beginning a wild ride.
10. [International Community urged to protect education from attack in Syria](#) - Joseph Nhan-O'Reilly - Children cannot wait for the conflict to end before there is adequate investment in their education; but the opportunity to experience the safe, quality education that is their right will also elude them unless all schools in Syria are protected.
11. [The US and Russia](#) - Gerard M. Gallucci - Russia and the US have a deep shared interest in their own and global security. They form, in effect, the Western and Eastern boundaries of the Atlantic community. Conflict between the two helps neither.
12. [Erecting a giant prison for all Israelis](#) - Dr. Alon Ben-Meir - Instead of reaching out to the Palestinians and the whole international community to reach an agreement with the Palestinians, Netanyahu seeks to turn Israel into a garrison and apartheid state, detested by and isolated from the international community.
13. [The year Europe breaks](#) - Gerard M. Gallucci - Another year of an unstoppable refugee flood will tear up the reality of a borderless EU while raising a popular political backlash. And when Europe finally breaks, the world will have taken a dangerous step back into the past.
14. [A hole in democracy](#) - David B. Kanin - In the Balkans, the impermanence of borders and states and entrenched social and economic informality work against academic and official theories of formal institution building.
15. [No prison is an island – the role of civil society in post-conflict penal reform](#) - Terry Hackett - Correctional practitioners and the international community should take note of the diverse role civil society can play in correctional reform within a challenging post-conflict environment in assisting our collective efforts in working towards the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (SMRs).
16. [Preventing the persecution of women in Africa](#) - Tendaishe Tlou - In most violent conflicts, women typically become easy targets due to a widespread tolerance of sexual violence, the absence of a strong legal framework, an inaccessible criminal justice system, a lack of will to prosecute offenders and a security force that treats victims with disrespect and contempt.
17. [Turkish democracy – an unfortunate casualty of Erdogan’s ambitions in Syria and Turkey?](#) - Dr. Ulas Doga Eralp - What is more tragic is Europe’s ambivalent response to Turkey’s ongoing crackdown on political freedoms, as Brussels struggles to find a solution to its own racist and Islamophobic constituencies amidst the refugee crisis. Brussels seems more willing than ever to shake hands with authoritarianism.

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

4) GCCT Activities, Advocacy, Research and Requests

UN Security Council adopts resolution on Youth, Peace and Security

On 9 December 2015 the United Nations Security Council adopted resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace & Security. The historical document is the first of its kind to recognize the positive role young people play in building sustainable peace and to lay out the need for governments and other stakeholders to support young people in this role. It represents a landmark for the participation of young people involved in transforming conflict, peacebuilding and countering violence.

With a larger global youth population than ever before, there is a demographic and democratic imperative to meaningfully involve youth in matters of peace and security, especially considering how conflicts impact on young people's lives and futures.

At UNOY Peacebuilders we have been working intensively since 2012 to lay a path leading to this resolution. We have fostered dialogue between young peacebuilders and policy makers at the international level, bringing young peacebuilders to discuss with representatives at the UN in New York. At the same time, we have been working for the recognition of young people as actors of positive change with civil society partners including Search for Common Ground and World Vision, as well as key institutional partners through the Inter-Agency Working Group on Young People's Participation in Peacebuilding.



Shifting the conversation

The dominant policy discourse around youth has traditionally viewed young people as threats to global peace and security, or occasionally as vulnerable groups to be protected. In short, either as victims or perpetrators of violence. This is a harmful reduction of the role youth play in conflict and post-conflict settings and that's why we have been calling for a third point of view – a point of view which sees youth

as peacebuilders who deserved to have their efforts recognized and supported. It is this third point of view which is now being recognised by the UN Security Council.

The new UN Security Council resolution outlines the duties of parties to armed conflicts to protect young people during conflict and in post-conflict contexts. Importantly, the resolution goes further and also calls on governments to promote youth participation in processes of peacebuilding and peacekeeping at all levels, including peace processes and dispute resolution mechanisms.

The resolution calls on Member States to facilitate an enabling environment for youth to prevent violence, and to create policies which support youth socio-economic development and education for peace equipping youth with the ability to engage in political processes. It urges member states to support youth peace efforts in conflict and post-conflict settings, including through the the work of UN bodies involved in peacebuilding and development. The resolution also encourages all those involved in disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration to ensure that programs are designed to consider the special needs of youth in these processes.

Finally, the resolution requests the UN General-Secretary to carry out a study on the impact of conflict on young people, as well as their contributions to peace, and to report to the Security Council on the implementation of the resolution in one year's time.

Not the end of the road

UN Security Council Resolution 2250 is a huge step forward in the right direction, recognising and supporting young people's contributions to building peace. However, a UN Security Council resolution is not the end of the road. Young peacebuilders around the world, youth-led and youth-focused organizations must now focus their efforts on ensuring that the resolution gets translated into real policies at regional, national and local levels.

UNOY Peacebuilders welcomes the adoption of the declaration as a tool for young people's empowerment and calls on every young peacebuilder to join us in the next steps.

***Please click here to learn more about the work of
UNOY Peacebuilders!***



[Global Coalition for Conflict Transformation \(GCCT\)](#)

A mine free world is possible

It is possible to fully implement the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, but it requires political will, commitment and sufficient resources, the Danish Demining Group (DDG) stated ahead of the High-level Panel on the Ottawa Convention held on March 2nd in Geneva.

Ahead of the March 2nd Pledging Conference in Geneva, leading global personalities who can generate a debate on the most efficient way to achieve a mine-free world are attending a High-level Panel. The Danish Demining Group is represented as the only operator in the panel and the message is clear.

“Back in the 1990s people spoke about years and not decades, for a complete ban on anti-personnel mines. This was perhaps a bit over the top, but now we once again have the momentum, and we’re aiming at addressing State Party obligations under the Convention by 2025, before another decade goes by. We are reaching the last stretch and what is now needed is a credible commitment and enough resources to be channeled towards demining —then we can make it happen,” says Tammy Hall, Head of the Danish Demining Group, who will be speaking at the panel – including, among others, former UN Secretary General, Mr. Kofi Annan, and the chair, Chile’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Heraldo Muñoz.

The optimism is returning and the need for momentum is clear. But, the possibility is not enough.

“We also need political will, a commitment to using best practice to prevent wasting resources; and of course sufficient available resources dedicated to the 2025 goal. This is why events such as this pledging conference that reinvigorate the momentum are an important step,” says Tammy Hall.



The Danish Demining Group has extensive knowledge on demining from some of the most conflict affected and fragile environments around the world. It is this first-hand knowledge which makes the organization able to say that a mine-free world is possible, but not something that is easily reachable.

“If we for instance take the case of Afghanistan, which is one of the most mined countries in the world, it is possible to finish clearing the minefields that we know are there. The problem is that even though there are still some 524 square kilometers of minefields and 89 square kilometers of battlefield areas that need to be addressed, organizations like DDG have been forced to reduce their work force over the last three years due to reductions in funding. We have the political commitment, a trained work force and a scenario where areas cleared still have a considerable impact; but despite this, Afghanistan, and other major mine/ERW-affected countries may not be able to reach the 2025 deadline unless a more concerted effort is made for them to meet the target. With the right resources and commitment, meeting the deadline is possible, so let’s make it years, not decades,” says Tammy Hall.

Danish Demining Group (DDG) is the Humanitarian Mine Action Unit of the Danish Refugee Council (DRC). DDG operates in some of the most fragile and conflict-affected places in the world. DDG’s focus is on those countries most affected by landmines and other explosive remnants of war, as well as armed violence and the widespread proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

[Please click here to learn more about the work of the Danish Demining Group!](#)



Youth migration - a result of the Afghan government's failed peace policy

Failure to bring peace and security to Afghanistan was lead to mass youth migration. The National Unity Government must adopt a clear policy for reconciliation with armed oppositions in order to bring peace and stability in the country. It must respond to people's demands and problems in order to save this young generation and prevent them from leaving.

The 2014 Afghan presidential elections were considered a hope for positive change and it was expected that the National Unity Government would adopt a clear and practical policy for reconciliation with anti-government elements to bring peace and security to Afghanistan. It has, however, failed. This failure resulted in increased insecurity, instability and growing crises due to which a large number of Afghans, especially young people, started fleeing in search of a better future.

The people of Afghanistan, including young educated people, left the country, either through special immigration visa programs or illegally. Illegal migration is not something that people can decide for fun or it's not just traveling from one country to another. But when there is no life and no hope for the future, people decide to change their future and the future of their children. They risk their life and spend a large amount of money leaving everything behind hoping that if they reach a secure country, they will be able to spend the rest of their life in peace. Many people have lost their life and their dear ones while illegally migrating, or have ended-up in difficult situations.



Afghanistan is a country of which 65% of its population is comprised of young people. This youthful population was the embodiment of hope, with the future of the country depending on these young women and men. There is a hope that this generation that rose after the fall of the Taliban regime and have received good education would contribute to re-establishing the country

and working for change. But the government failed to use the young people's power for a better country. It failed to bring them opportunities so that they realize their full potential.

However, it was expected that the government do something to prevent young women and men migrating from the country by adopting a clear strategy and policy to end conflict and instability. Unfortunately, the Afghan government was silent and motionless in this regard. But the National Union of Afghanistan Workers (NUAW) launched a campaign aimed at encouraging youth not to leave the country. The week-long campaign - under the slogan "Stay in your country and force the government to answer" - comes after tens of thousands of Afghans fled the country in the hope of a better life in European countries through danger routes.

On the other hand, the government lists other reasons behind the migration, including organized crime, a dwindling economy, backbreaking poverty, unemployment, rampant corruption in government departments and nepotism and others. But these are again connected to an absence of peace and security, which limits the opportunities for the new generations.

Peace and security is a must for Afghanistan and the National Unity Government must adopt a clear policy for reconciliation with armed oppositions in order to bring peace and stability in the country. It must respond to people's demands and problems in order to save this young generation and prevent them from leaving the country.

Maryam Safi, from Afghanistan, works for Sanayee Development Organization (SDO), a member of the Global Coalition for Conflict Transformation, as Program Manager for Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution.

***Please click here to learn more about the Sanayee
Development Organization (SDO)!***



An open letter to Donald Trump from Iraq

TransConflict is pleased to present an open letter by Sami Rasouli - founder of the Muslim Peacemaker Teams, a member of the Global Coalition for Conflict Transformation - outlining why Donald Trump should take time to visit Iraq.

Dear Mr. Trump,

Warm greetings from Iraq. Although I became an American citizen in 2001 and lived for 25 years in Minneapolis, Minn., I returned to my native Iraq in 2003 to work for peace after my adopted country attacked my birth country.

As both an American and an Iraqi, my family and I would like to invite you and your family to visit us in Iraq for as long as you would like. We, and other Iraqi families, would be delighted to have you here as honored guests at our homes.

These guest visits are part of the cultural exchange program for Muslim Peacemaker Teams. They have been ongoing between citizens of Najaf, Iraq, and of Minneapolis since the two officially became "sister cities" in July 2009. The purpose of your visit would be educational in nature-- focused on learning about Arab-Islamic culture, including opportunities to visit Iraq's major historical cities, such as Babylon, and its holy cities, such as Najaf, Karbala and Baghdad. You would learn about Hammurabi, who wrote the first code of law, and you would visit the countryside in the South, where an Iraqi woman invented the wheel 3,000 years ago.



Conversely, you would also witness how Iraq has been largely destroyed since 2003 by the ongoing U.S. military presence here. We could show you how ISIS is smuggling oil out of our country and tell you who is laundering it for the funds that support terrorism.

I'm not rich, Mr. Trump, but my family and I are renting a house in Najaf, the holy Shia city where I was born. Our home is small, cozy and full of love. You would stay with us and share

what we have. In addition, there are other Iraqi families who would love the opportunity to host you and treat you as family.

In Najaf I assure you that you would find that we (a so-called infidel visiting terrorists) are all brothers and sisters sharing the same bread and the same universe. You would learn how our peoples, including the Jewish, share the Old Testament as the foundation of our respective religions. We have far more values in common than we have differences. We are all "people of the Book." We could even take you to Ur, where Abraham was born, to Jonas' tomb near Mosul, to Daniel's tomb near Babylon, and to the monastery founded by Saint Matthew.

Such a visit from you would counter the negative stereotypes about Muslims and help to discredit those in the United States who promote Islamophobia. We fear most what we do not understand, and the visit we offer would deepen your insights and perceptions about the part of the world we all call home.

In return, should you accept our offer to visit Najaf, my family and I would gladly visit you in New York or Vegas. We would even spend money and have fun-- despite the fact that our faith as Muslims bans us from entering the "Sin City." But, for you, we would break the rules. All you need is to purchase your plane ticket, and we will gladly cover the cost of everything else.

I know you're busy with the presidential campaign, so, if you understandably can't make it at the present time, our offer remains open for you to visit us at any time you choose.

But no matter when you would visit, Mr. Trump, I guarantee you this: You would fall in love with Arab-Islamic culture. Aside from superficial cultural differences, our peoples and their desires are very similar. You would feel at home among us.

As a politician and businessman you know that the resolution of conflict begins and ends with educated and open minds sharing meaningful, productive discussion. Our offer to you is an opportunity to resolve global conflict. Please give it thoughtful consideration.

Happy new year,

Sami Rasouli

***Please click here to learn more about the Muslim
Peacemaker Teams!***

[Global Coalition for Conflict Transformation \(GCCT\)](#)

Peace Dialogue's request to partially annul Ministry of Defence executive order rejected by Administrative Court

The Administrative Court of Armenia rejected [Peace Dialogue](#) NGO's complaint challenging the legitimacy of the classification of secret information, which includes information regarding fatalities in the Republic of Armenia Armed Forces from 1994-2014.

The Administrative Court of Armenia rejected [Peace Dialogue](#) NGO's complaint challenging the legitimacy of the classification of secret information, which includes information regarding fatalities in the Republic of Armenia Armed Forces from 1994-2014.

In a court hearing on March 11, 2016 the Administrative Court of Armenia rejected Peace Dialogue NGO's complaint challenging the legitimacy of the classification of secret information mentioned in Section 17, Point 42 and 43 in the list provided by Executive Order N9 of the Ministry of Defense, dated July 9, 2015, and to partially annul the executive order. The order calls for the classification of information mentioned in the extended list provided by Executive Order N9, which involves official information regarding the fatalities in the Republic of Armenia Armed Forces from 1994-2014. This includes the full names of the deceased soldiers, the location of the incident, the date, unit number, unit commander's full name and title, the cause of death and all other unrestricted information.

According to Peace Dialogue, the classification of this information severely restricts the abilities of the public to exercise oversight over the activities of the Republic of Armenia's Ministry of Defense, and clearly separates the Ministry of Defense from the policy of transparency of state bodies adopted by Armenia.



The details of the complaint charged that the information mentioned is not included in the list of the encrypted information provided by the Republic of Armenia Law on State and Official Secrets, that it does not fit into the formulations prescribed by the law and does not ensure the implementation of the provisions of the law. That the encryption of the information mentioned does not aim at preventing possible arbitrariness of the law and does not guarantee the rights of the persons or the groups of people

as it is provided by the Republic of Armenia Law on Fundamentals of Administrative Action and Administrative Proceedings.

Furthermore, that it impedes the interests of national security, public order, crime prevention, public health and morality, constitutional rights and freedoms, and the protection of honor and reputation of others since, according the Armenian Constitution, the fundamental rights and freedoms of the citizens can be restricted only by the mentioned reasons and that it contradicts the Armenian Constitution, the Republic of Armenia Law and the principles of international agreements ratified by Armenia.

The court stated that, “assessment of the emergency incidents and the accidents in the armed forces and the short descriptions revealing the causes of these incidents, as well as the information disclosing the official investigation materials prepared based on the illegalities that were the result of such incidents are not included in the restrictions of the listing of information as state and official secrets specified in Article 10 of the RA Law on ‘State and Official secrets’.” However, taking into consideration the (military) nature of the information mentioned in Point 42 and 43 that the executive order refers to and the nature of this information, the Court found that in the present military and political situation this information may include details, the disclosure of which, may present threats to the security of the Republic of Armenia. The decision of the Administrative Court can be appealed to the RA Court of Appeal within one month after its publication.

Peace Dialogue NGO strongly disagrees with the Court ruling as it is not clear how Armenia’s safety can be jeopardized and intends to appeal the verdict. According to lawyer for the case, Mushegh Shushanyan, by issuing the executive order N9 dated July 9, 2015, as well as the provisions that were challenged in the complaint, the RA Ministry of Defense; 1) exceeded its powers, particularly by including in the mentioned extended list the information that is not listed in the exhaustive list of state and official secrets provided by Article 9 of the RA Law on State and Official Secret and, thus, 2) the Minister usurped the legislative power, since by including in the extended list the information that is not provided by the exhaustive list of state and official secrets he provided a basis for a restriction of a fundamental right guaranteed by the Constitution (this may be prescribed only by law).

After examining the verdict of the Administrative Court lawyer Mushegh Shoushanyan concludes that such a Court is a threat to the security of the Republic of Armenia itself.

Edgar Khachatryan is the director of [Peace Dialogue](#), a member of the [Global Coalition for Conflict Transformation](#). He specializes in international peacebuilding trainings, consultancy and expertise in gender and peace processes, violence prevention, and post-war stabilization and recovery.

[Please click here to learn more about Peace Dialogue from Armenia!](#)

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6) Follow the GCCT and the TransConflict

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