

# **United for Peace and Non-violent Peaceforce working together for a better future**

Nonviolent Peaceforce is an international NGO, based in Brussels, Belgium, dedicated to non-violent conflict resolution and post conflict peace building, deploying peace keeping teams and monitors in troubled regions. The NP director, Tim Wallis, made a presentation to the March 2010 Uniting for Peace AGM. The following is a summary:

## **Highlights**

- NP needed in Sri Lanka more than ever as threats to civil society increase
- 11 new International Civil Protection Monitors (ICPs) arrive in Mindanao and complete In-Country Training
- NP's first peacekeeping team in Sudan is now operational
- Proposal for further exploration and confidence-building in South Caucasus
- Geneva UN Consultation brings NP more credibility among 'protection' agencies

## **Sri Lanka**

NP has been in Sri Lanka for nearly 7 years now, through the thick and thin of ceasefires, pitched battles, displacements, resettlements, and now the uncertainties of 'peace'. NP cannot remain in Sri Lanka for ever and have already begun developing our exit strategy for an eventual withdrawal from Sri Lanka. While the recruitment of child soldiers has all but ended in Sri Lanka, NP continue to work with various governmental agencies and NGO partners to assist with the reintegration and protection of former child soldiers who face serious threats from many parties for whatever roles they may have played during the war.

## **Philippines**

Eleven new ICPs who completed their Mission Preparedness Training in February arrived in Philippines at the end of May and have just completed 20 days of In-Country Training in NP's newly inaugurated training centre. This was the first time national staffs have been extensively trained alongside their international counterparts. The ongoing work of NP teams in Mindanao continues, with remaining Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) still awaiting approval to return to their homes and local outbreaks of violence continuing to threaten the stability of the ceasefire that has been in place since last December.

The Malaysia-led International Monitoring Team (IMT) is already in place to monitor this agreement and NP continues to play a key role as the link between official IMT monitors and local groups on the ground who see and report what is happening.

UNICEF signed an agreement on the protection of children from recruitment into their armed forces and will be sub-contracting NP to monitor implementation of that agreement over the coming year. This will be an additional component of NP's general programme in Mindanao.

## **Sudan**

NP's first team of 3 international and 6 local civilian peacekeepers is now operational in Mundri, Western Equatoria. They have begun working in the context of heightened tensions in the area following the election in April of an independent candidate as governor of Western Equatoria. This was the only state in the south of Sudan where the heavily dominant SPLM was seriously challenged and its candidate defeated, posing a threat to the unity of the south but also making Western Equatoria a litmus test for the viability of a democratic and pluralistic south Sudan.

The Mundri team is focused initially on building relationships with key military actors, religious leaders and local authorities in the area, but they have already been drawn into a potentially violent dispute involving the local agent of the newly elected governor, who was arrested by local SPLA forces and then 'freed' by a gang of armed youths who have subsequently gone into hiding. After a public meeting in Mundri involving the army general from Juba, a retired archbishop, the commissioner for Mundri district, the local member of the south Sudan parliament and other religious and community leaders, it was announced that Mundri would be forcefully disarmed of all weapons unless people began handing in their guns the following day. The 'voluntary disarmament' is currently underway and the NP team is monitoring this very tense situation closely.

The NP team is also working with an external consultant from Mundri to conduct a baseline survey against which to measure our impact over the coming months. The survey will produce a data set that describes the current environment for armed violence and insecurity at each of our proposed deployment sites in Sudan, and establish indicators that will enable NP to track progress toward achievement of the intended outcome of its intervention. The survey will also seek to capture the current organizational capabilities of NP's key partners, providing a baseline against which the effect of capacity development activities can be measured.

### South Caucasus

The exploration team that went to Georgia and the disputed territory of Abkhazia earlier this year are proposing a further phase of exploration and confidence-building with key stakeholders in the region prior to any NP deployment on the ground there. An initial workshop on the possibilities and potential for unarmed civilian peacekeeping in the South Caucasus region would then take place in Brussels in September or October, with partners and other individuals from the region invited to attend.

### Honduras

Since the situation in Honduras has changed dramatically since the coup there last year, NP are seeking now to determine what role, if any, they could usefully play in the country.

### UN advocacy

A 'core team' from NP met with key people from the ICRC, UNHCR, UNDP, UNICEF, the Geneva Call, the Kofi Annan Foundation, the Geneva Centre for Security Policy and other relevant NGOs and country missions.

A key aim of the Geneva consultation was to present NP to the UN agencies and INGOs dealing explicitly with 'protection of civilians' (POV) and 'armed violence reduction' (AVR).

### In Summary

As interstate and international wars continue in different parts of the world, the need for organisations like NP is greater than ever. The only way to end long, drawn out conflicts in the world is the use of unarmed civilian peacekeeping.

Uniting for Peace executive has decided to support NP with publicity and liaison through its UK office. We look forward to a happy cooperation ahead.

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