

Communiqué

People's Forum on Peace for Life: **No Peace without Justice**

INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP CLOSING DECLARATION

A call and challenge to churches and partners around the world
to join in movement for inter-faith, multi-religious solidarity
to resist domination and militarized globalization
and to build peace for life

*The thief only comes to kill, steal and destroy.
I have come that you may have life and have it abundantly.*
John 10:10

Launching a People's Forum on Peace for Life

Recognizing the urgency to respond to the massive threat to life and the well-being of communities posed by the U.S.-led war on terror amidst a world already suffering from the onslaught of economic globalization and the discontent resulting from the attendant homogenization of culture, the World Council of Churches, the Christian Conference of Asia, and the National Council of Churches in the Philippines organized the International Ecumenical Conference on Terrorism in a Globalized World in Manila on the 23rd to the 26th of September 2002. The conference declared that, indeed, another world is possible! 135 persons from 28 countries in Manila committed themselves to a covenant on peace for life.

Born from that commitment, the organizers in cooperation with the National Council of Churches of Korea convened 26 persons from 12 countries to hold this international workshop on people's forum on peace for life. We who gathered in Seoul, Korea, on October 12, 2003, launch the Peoples Forum on Peace for Life!

We envisage a global coalition of ecumenical, multi-religious and inter-faith movements in opposition to expanding state terror and U.S. global domination. While focusing on Asia and South-South solidarity, the forum's ultimate objective is to build global alliances.

Drawing attention to Asia's brutal geopolitical reality today and its global context, the workshop brought together people who are rooted in churches and social movements from Asia and from Africa, Latin America and Caribbean, Europe, Canada, and the United States.

We gathered to assess the aftermath of the U.S.-led invasion and occupation of Iraq and the growing expansion of militarized globalization; to analyze the increasing military incursions and territorial occupation for control of resources—not just for oil but for other resources including water—and markets; and to organize a response in faith and hope.

A Call to All People

We call on people of faith to join us in common witness and action against militarized globalization as we strongly raise our voices to stop the U.S.-led offensive.

For the Bush Administration's declaration of a war on terror is an opportunistic use of violence to consolidate and expand the U.S. economic, political, cultural and military power. This global domination has a name. It is empire.

We lament the wanton loss of life, destruction of communities, and mounting injustice because of the greed and arrogance of the Empire. In solidarity with victims of injustice and people in struggle against all forms of oppression, we are driven to reclaim the gift of life given us by God: "I have set before you life and death... Now choose life, so that you and your children may live." Deuteronomy 30:19

The poor, already victims of state- and corporate-led globalization, are caught in the widening scope of violence as their own states implement increasingly repressive policies along U.S. anti-terrorist mandates. Claiming national security interests and invoking the name of God, these states train their arsenal against their own people. This is sin against God and creation.

While the post-September 11 world is caught up in new forms of domination-preemption, unilateralism, global capital masked as 21st century Christian crusades, we see hope as we also witness, as never before, the rapid and massive emergence of a global movement in defense of life and advancing the cause of world peace.

The people of Iraq are suffering, subjected to brutality, human rights violations, and threat to life under the unjust, illegal, and immoral U.S. occupation of their country. We join the millions worldwide demanding the immediate termination of foreign occupation of Iraq and the return of sovereignty and the right to self-determination to its people.

As we meet, the South Korean government is being pressured to send troops to Iraq. We are with the Korean people in their resistance against the dictates of U.S. power and in their opposition to sending of troops to back the occupation.

We are in solidarity with the people of the Philippines in opposing the reestablishment of U.S. military presence in the country, particularly plans for a permanent base in Mindanao made more certain by George W. Bush's pronouncements during his visit to the country.

The growing brutality of military occupation of Palestine has led to mounting deaths on both sides. The continued bulldozing of Palestinian homes and building of the Apartheid Wall that is separating farmers from their fields and their water are increasingly transforming the Palestinian state into an Israeli prison. We add our voices to the various groups, including the Israeli peace activists and the soldiers who refuse to do the bombing raids, in denouncing Israeli aggression and occupation of Palestine.

Encouraged by the U.S. doctrine of pre-emptive strikes, Israel has bombed Syria on the pretext of self-defense, inflicting further violence; this is state terrorism. We condemn state terrorism in all its forms.

The war on terror has militarized problem-solving—a doctrine supported by a crusade-like theology of ‘us versus them,’ which has spread everywhere—resulting in increased arms trade, stockpiling of weapons, and disturbing use of the military in domestic law enforcement in one country after another.

The urgency of the threat to life calls us all to a creative, concerted and organized response to rediscover peace. We challenge the churches, religious bodies, and our partners to join us in the furthering of ecumenical, inter-faith, and multi-religious coalition of people’s movements and other groups. The Peoples Forum for global peace for life—a space for cultural and spiritual resistance, for hearing the stories of those pressed down by militarized globalization, and for articulating people’s visions and common actions for just peace in the face of U.S. unilateralism and quest for global domination.

We are committed to holding the first gathering of a people’s forum during 2004. We will also begin a participatory process for a people’s charter announcing a vision for peace and justice in service of abundant life.

We will launch new ways of communicating and networking as we organize our resistance and articulate our hopes.

We will celebrate life in spiritual expressions and cultural forms of resistance and peace building through people’s art and liturgy.

This is a world fallen among thieves. We are called to choose life so that all may have life and have it in all its fullness.

Seoul, Korea
13 October 2003