

## **PEOPLE'S FORUM ON PEACE FOR LIFE: No Peace Without Justice!**

**Draft Report of the International Workshop on People's Forum on Peace for Life**  
October 10-12, Seoul, Korea

### **Background**

The International Ecumenical Conference on Terrorism in a Globalized World held in Manila on September 23-26, 2002 raised the urgency of a world faced with massive threat to life by heightened fears and military action. It called attention to growing U.S. military presence in the Philippines, designated by Bush as the "second front of the war on terror." The intensified expansion of U.S. military, political and economic aggression in the past year has wrought untold suffering on peoples in Iraq, Afghanistan and around the world. The Manila conference gave this unprecedented U.S. global reach a name: it is Empire.

Since the Manila conference in 2002, the geopolitical changes in Asia as well as Africa and Latin America have seen the growth and expansion of U.S. global hegemony, supported by the "coalition of the willing", through terrorism, militarization and political-cultural-economic globalization. This is reflected in increased impoverishment, massive displacement and migration of people, intensified violence and conflicts, created or enforced division or enmity of peoples along racial, ethnic and religious lines, and increasingly irreversible ecological destruction.

The Empire has waged control, command and unilateralism for itself; threats, punishment, exclusion, military aid, bribes, and forced compliance, vengeance, wars of invasion, and death for others outside the "coalition of the willing." It reserves for itself the right to decide who is a threat and how it should be treated.

The Empire has very efficiently couched its doctrines and ideology in religious language, thereby implicating Christianity itself, while at the same time robbing the people of the true meanings of peace and security. It has resorted to outright lies, fabrications, deceit and barring as well as manipulation of information to advance its unholy agenda.

The Empire has threatened peace efforts in Asia such as that for reunification in the Korean peninsula by the doctrine of "axis of evil". It has also scuttled the peace talks in the Philippines by labeling the CPP-NPA as "terrorists".

### **Rationale**

The new global situation calls for new and radical responses as we work and affirm with the people that "another world is possible!"

We have heard testimony to the worsening geopolitical situation in Asia but understand that it is in fact a global reality, affecting especially Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Pacific, and the Middle East.

**As people of faith, we who came together for the International Workshop on People's Forum on Peace for Life, believe that the current geopolitical reality of state terror and economic globalization calls for new responses. Hence, we worked together to give birth to this People's Forum.**

We affirm the need to take a multidimensional approach, challenging the growth and expansion of the Empire as well as lifting up people's responses, struggles, and victories. This will take multifaith/interfaith dimensions, recognizing the similarities in our struggles and tasks with people of other faiths or no faith.

### **Our Vision of this Forum**

This Forum will be a coalition or network of ecumenical, inter-religious and multifaith movements in solidarity, in resistance and opposition to expanding state terrorism and global political-cultural-economic domination.

Taking various forms, this Forum will facilitate the sharing of stories of the voiceless and those faced with the threat to life. The Forum will be a space to listen and analyze, organize alliances and networks, and bring people together for common action and advocacy. It will foster creative expressions of spirituality for peace and life as an embodiment of people's visions and aspirations for fullness of life.

The Forum will create new possibilities for networking and solidarity links to enable people's resistance and opposition to the global hegemony.

The Forum will create space for cultural and spiritual resistance in the struggle for peace for life. It will be an ecumenically initiated vehicle for developing a theology and/or spirituality of resistance.

This Forum or network of shared commitment is conceived as a people-centered coalition, not institution-centered.

### **Objectives of the People's Forum**

In resistance and opposition to expanding state terrorism, US/global hegemony in support of global economic agenda, the People's Forum will do the following:

- provide space to share stories, name reality (analyze), and articulate visions of peace from the perspectives of the people;
- initiate a creative and participatory process for the formulation of a People's Charter on Peace for Life, thereby creating a common rallying cry;
- plan and implement new processes of communication and networking that would enable further people's resistance and opposition to the Empire in the struggle for peace for life;
- create space for cultural as well as spiritual resistance through cultural festivals, theological reflection and liturgical renewal, prayer vigils and rallies;
- engage together in common advocacy, action and solidarity.

## **Immediate Plans**

The Workshop participants agreed to convene the first face-to-face meeting of the Forum within the next twelve months. Care will be taken to make the activity representative, involving more women and youth and engaging people from other faiths. It was agreed to explore the possibility of holding a major cultural cum solidarity event that will give visibility to the Forum.

The Forum will set up a secretariat, provisionally based in Manila under the hosting of the National Council of Churches in the Philippines. Attention will be given to building the capability of the secretariat for effective coordination and information sharing.

There will be a Continuation Committee, composed of the representatives of the convenors/ sponsors of the Manila conference: WCC, CCA and NCCP (with an invitation to the NCCK, local host and a convener of the Workshop). In addition, there will be a Reference Group comprising the participants of the Workshop and others who may be coopted later. While decisions by both committees will be undertaken largely through e-mail exchanges, actual meetings will be convened as necessary.

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