

## 42<sup>ND</sup> HRC event on MINSTRIES OF PEACE

September 20<sup>th</sup> 2019

### IFOR's speech (Zaira Zafarana)

I would like to thank the Permanent Mission of San Marino and Associazione Papa Giovanni 23 for organizing this event on the implementation of the Right to Peace<sup>1</sup> and for inviting the International Fellowship of Reconciliation IFOR to contribute.

I will present some considerations on this issue and a brief overview of existing peace ministries and alike initiatives.

The other distinguished speakers have clearly explained that the Ministry of Peace can be a valuable concrete tool to implement the Right to Peace.

As stated in the Declaration on the Right to Peace and more recently during the last session of the Council<sup>2</sup>, peace is not only the absence of conflict or the opposite of war. This Right is a vital requirement for the full enjoyment of all human rights.

Human rights and peace are strongly connected and mutually reinforcing. Art 28 of the Declaration of Human Rights details that every person is intitled to a social and international order where the human rights therein proclaimed can be fully realized.

The proclamation of the International Day of Peace, September 21<sup>st</sup>, and the UN Decade for a Culture of Peace and Nonviolence<sup>3</sup>, have been cornerstones in the path towards the recognition of the Right to Peace.

As we talk about peace we need to refer to a Culture of Peace. A radical switch is required, from a Culture of violence, we are all aware of, to a Culture of Peace and Nonviolence.

We can't achieve peace, lasting peace, through war.

Peace is the goal and nonviolence is the path, as repeatedly outlines Alain Richard, the French Franciscan brother -founder of the circles of silence-.

Peace itself includes different elements, different aspects and areas of individual and society's life, as already mentioned in the Plan of Action for the 2001-2010 UN Decade on a Culture of Peace.

Some of these are: Solidarity, Dialogue, Education, democratic participation, sustainable economic and social development, human rights, gender equality, security, free exchange of information and knowledge.

Disarmament is, as well, a key element for peace, meaning to end the production and arms trade and to their use as a deterrent.

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1 The Declaration on Right to Peace was adopted by General Assembly on 19 December 2016 (A/RES/71/189).

2 Resolution A/HR/41/L.2.

3 Resolution A/RES/53/243.

As IFOR just stated at this Human Rights Council, If the right to life is violated, no other rights can be exercised and this should include the exercise of this right as well as individuals refusing to kill and declaring conscientious objection to military service.

We are talking about a dynamic participatory process of change.

This process towards a Culture of Peace takes time and further efforts because it involves different levels of society and it implies the transformation, often radical, of customs, traditions and norms consolidated over time.

The spiral of violence has to be interrupted and reconciliation is the essential process to heal individuals, communities and societies.

Peace needs to be planned and organized at least as much as war is precisely organized. Giovanni Salio, an Italian peace researcher, a dear member of MIR Italia who passed away a couple of years ago, and president of the Centro Studi Sereno Regis<sup>4</sup>, used to stress the importance of investing resources on peace, and have a structured approach to its implementation. He used to point out that there are military training centres, ministries to prepare for war and officials and there is nothing comparable for the realization of peace.

Infrastructures of peace are vital and all actors of society should be involved; from individuals and family unit, to teachers, religious groups

If we want peace we need to prepare for it, we need to educate to peace and to fund peace.

Governments have an essential role to play in promoting and strengthening a culture of peace and civil society needs to be fully involved to achieve its full development.

Last year APG 23 issued a publication and launched here, during the Human Rights Council, a calling on ministries of peace all around the world.

There are four countries which have a Ministry for Peace.

Costa Rica

MINISTRY OF JUSTICE AND PEACE: With the 2009 reform of the Organic Law on the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry was renamed as “Ministry of Justice and Peace” and its structure, mission and tasks were transformed.

South Sudan:

MINISTRY OF PEACE AND CPA IMPLEMENTATION: It was established in July 2011 to assist the government in setting peace policies after the independence and coordinating all programs of peace and conflict prevention.

Solomon Islands

MINISTER FOR NATIONAL UNITY, RECONCILIATION AND PEACE: It was established after the conclusion of the Townsville Peace Agreement (TPA) in 2000 for facilitating the peace process and creating condition for living again in peace after the 1998- 2003 civilian armed conflict.

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4 [www.serenoregis.org](http://www.serenoregis.org)

## Nepal

MINISTRY OF PEACE AND RECONSTRUCTION: Established in April 2007 after the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Accord (CPA), it has the responsibility to ensure peace and security.

It is relevant to notice that the majority of these Ministries have been created to accompany a peace process and moreover that the experience of Costa Rica clearly combines Peace and Justice.

Hildegard Goss-Mayr, honorary president of IFOR, clearly explained that “a reconciliation is true if it happens on the basis of truth and justice; truth meaning the recognition of the facts and justice the recognition of rights<sup>5</sup>.

Around the world civil society campaigns for the Right to Life and the Ministry of Peace; efforts are put in place and several initiatives are undertaken.

In 2017 Associazione Papa Giovanni 23 has launched together with other organizations the Italian Campaign for the Ministry of Peace to create a new national system for the promotion of peace.

MIR Italia has joined this Campaign for a Ministry of Peace which should, in collaboration with other ministries and bodies within state administrations, identify coordinated national actions and finally implement a structural policy for peace.

This new Minister, aimed to be a concrete, transversal and subsidiary instrument, would have competence over:

Promotion of peace policies for the construction and diffusion of a culture of peace through education and research, promotion of human rights, development and national and international solidarity, intercultural dialogue, integration.

Disarmament, with the monitoring of the implementation of international agreements and promoting studies and research for the realization of the reduction of expenditure on armaments and the progressive reconversion for civil purposes of industries in the defence sector.

Non-armed and non-violent civil defence, with particular regard to the Civil Peace as non-violent instruments of intervention of civil society, in situations of conflict and in contexts of structural and cultural violence. It is relevant to outline that there is a collateral campaign for a law proposal on a civil, Non-armed and nonviolent defence and the proposal is pending in the parliament.

Other areas of competence for the Ministry of Peace are:

Prevention and reduction of social violence and promotion of hate-free speech.

Implementation of education policies with respect to peace education, nonviolent conflict transformation, human rights and peacekeeping.

Social mediation, reconciliation and restorative justice.

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<sup>5</sup> Goss-Mayr 2009.

Looking to another continent we can mention the Campaign run by Peace Alliance to establish a U.S.A. Department of Peacebuilding<sup>6</sup>, aimed to providing practical, nonviolent solutions to the problems of domestic and international conflict.

City Council of Indianapolis passed a resolution<sup>7</sup> on September 9<sup>th</sup> 2019 which proclaims Indianapolis a City of Peace in perpetuity, actively engaged, as an International City of Peace, in the implementation of a culture of peace, striving to create a balance of prosperity, justice and hope that nurtures peace within the entire community through dialogue and cooperation.

There are many initiatives around the world to create infrastructures for peace.

A Ministry for Peace, on a national level, would be a concrete instrument to coordinate, strengthen and enhance all local and individual efforts.

IFOR Japanese branch is very active on this issue and campaigns for the implementation of the Constitution of Japan where it says that “all people of the world have the right to live in peace, free from fear and want”.

They have even been proposing for a Special Rapporteur on the Right to Peace. Could that be an additional measure to call on States’ accountability as to the implementation of this right?

It is important to exchange on good practices and maintain a high attention on the issue. This event today has been a valuable opportunity and I thank again the organizers and participants for being here.

Thank you.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://peacealliance.org/issues-advocacy/department-of-peace/>

<sup>7</sup> City of Indianapolis, Marion County, city-county special resolution n. 31, 2019