

The Sri Lanka Project

In December 2002, NP member organisations selected Sri Lanka as the first site of NP's work. During a 19-year war, 64,000 Sri Lankans died and 1.6 million were displaced. While diplomatic peace is now being negotiated, the country could still return to armed conflict.

NP will work with People's Action for Free and Fair Elections (PAFREEL), a respected, non-partisan organization that invited NP to Sri Lanka. NP will support local peacebuilders as they carry out reconciliation work among conflicting parties. NP will thus help build a sustainable peace and increase popular participation in the political process. The NP team will provide presence, monitoring, and accompaniment in vulnerable regions. NP plans to evaluate its pilot project and exit Sri Lanka in 2006.

Nonviolent Peaceforce Canada

Nonviolent Peaceforce Canada's mandate is to educate Canadians in the methods of nonviolence and support Nonviolent Peaceforce and similar organisations. NPC organises public education and training sessions and mobilizes Canadian involvement in Nonviolent Peaceforce.



Nonviolent Peaceforce Canada

211 Bronson Avenue, room 309A, Ottawa, Ontario K1R 6H5
info@npcanada.ca; tel (613) 564-0999; fax (613) 564-0068

www.npcanada.org for local updates

www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org for international updates and information

NONVIOLENT PEACEFORCE

Peace by Peaceful Means!

NONVIOLENT PEACEFORCE

Canada

Non-violence is not inaction. It is not discussion. It is not for the timid or weak... Non-violence is hard work. It is the willingness to sacrifice. It is the patience to win.

– Cesar Chavez

What is Nonviolent Peaceforce?

NP is a multinational, civilian "peace army" composed of dedicated personnel prepared to respond to appeals from people and communities threatened with violence. NP is sustained by a global network of supporters whose active involvement makes the peace army's non-violent tactics effective.

At the invitation of local people working for justice and peace, the Peaceforce enters conflict areas to help deter violence and protect human rights. NP enables groups seeking a just and peaceful resolution to the conflict to continue their important work. NP's work is thus not only protective – it is also transformative.





Jericho (Eric Drooker)

Why the Nonviolent Peaceforce?

Some people support armed interventions because they cannot imagine alternatives. Our militarised culture encourages us to think that oppression and violent force can only be met with violent force.

But that is not the case. In many situations, power that does not rely on violence can outwit brute violence.

The Nonviolent Peaceforce can help confront and overcome violence in ways which maximize respect for human life and well-

being. It is an important addition to other ways of achieving greater peace and justice.

A brief history of nonviolent peace teams

Nonviolence is a translation of *ahimsa* - the word Gandhi used to describe the type of resistance he advocated in the struggle to liberate India from British occupation. The direct translation is closer to "truthforce" and implies a strong allegiance to dialogue. Nonviolence has shaped struggles in the United States and Canada, the Philippines, Poland, South Africa, Chile and elsewhere.

Gandhi was assassinated just days before a conference to found the *shanti sena* - the peace army.

Since World War I, this idea of a standing peace army to protect lives and defend justice has been a recurrent theme. There have been numerous successful initiatives on a smaller scale:

- Witness for Peace placed observers along the Nicaragua-Honduras border in the 1980's. Attacks by American-backed Contras were deterred by this international presence.
- Project Accompaniment-Guatemala provided protection to Guatemalan refugees returning to their villages.
- Peace Brigades International (www.peacebrigades.org), founded in Canada in 1981, has successfully developed the technique of protective accompaniment of individuals - activists, human rights workers or others - at risk of violence or disappearance.
- Christian Peacemaker Teams (www.cpt.org) is another established peace team with projects in Canada, where they support the rights of indigenous peoples, and elsewhere.
- Iraq Peace Team (www.iraqpeaceteam.org), in Iraq, and the International Solidarity Movement (www.palsolidarity.org), in Palestine, are important new initiatives.

Although approaches vary, in general, the presence of peace teams is not only protective but also transformative, since it allows people working for just and peaceful change to continue their work.

Enter the



In 1999, at the international gathering "the Hague Appeal for Peace", a number of people with years

of experience in nonviolence issued a call for a global peace army.

The call was soon endorsed by five Nobel peace laureates, as enthusiasm was channelled into effective action.

NP differs from existing peace teams in several ways:

- NP is laying the foundation for a large scale peaceforce;
- NP trains its personnel to engage in a broad range of roles;
- NP is international in membership, governance and in the composition of the peaceforce itself;
- NP will provide an enabling wage to peaceforce personnel.

What will NP do?

Nonviolent Peaceforce's work falls into four broad categories:

accompaniment - this has been used to safeguard activists, leaders and returning refugees, as well as people in neutral zones;

international presence - the presence of internationals in threatened communities can deter violence and sends a message of solidarity;

monitoring - during elections, cease-fires, and other volatile situations, internationals can play an important role as observers and recorders; and

inter-positioning - sometimes opposing parties can be physically separated, to prevent escalation and offer a 'cooling-off' period.

How is NP organised?

In December 2002, seventy member organizations from Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East and North America elected a regionally representative International Governance Council (IGC) to oversee a head office and staff in different parts of the world.

In addition to member organisations, NP has a growing number of country groups, like **Nonviolent Peaceforce Canada**, which bring together local affinity groups and individual supporters.