



# *Church and Peace*

## **International Office**

Church and Peace is an ecumenical network of Christian communities, churches and organisations in Europe committed to the peace church vision.

### Church and Peace Calls for Consistent Development of Strategies for Civilian Conflict Transformation

Press release from 27.03.2011

We are appalled that, once again, the international community uses military violence to contain an escalating conflict. This time it is in Libya, between the dictator Moammar al-Gadhafi and the people who oppose his oppressive regime. The basis for the use of military force is the UN's concept of "Responsibility to Protect (R2P)", authorizing military action to protect endangered peoples.

In this situation, we underscore our conviction:

'Even in situations where no solution seems possible and where violence is so endemic that a call to counter it with further violence rises amongst victims and within us too, we persist in recommending the use of nonviolent means towards every human being, means which we as disciples of Christ have in abundance. We plead for strengthened commitment of OSCE missions (Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe) as well as substantial support for nonviolent intervention organised by the state as well as by churches, inspired by the models of Alternative Service for Peace, Christian Peacemaker Teams, Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel and Peace Brigades International. Violence in any form can never serve to bring about lasting peace with justice. Only the path of loving one's neighbour and loving one's enemy holds any promise. We invite all churches to resist together with us the temptation of justifying the use of deadly weapons even as a last resort.' (Church and Peace Declaration on R2P, June 2009)

In the many explosive conflict situations worldwide, especially in the Mediterranean, urgently needed steps were not taken. The international community needed to support, to finance, and to strengthen the nonviolent conflict resolution processes of the region's people. We call for a consistent development of civilian instruments for conflict transformation.

Once again we state: 'Even if military force is held only in reserve for use as a measure of last resort, this influences the planning of civil action during the earlier phases of conflict by consuming a disproportionately high share of the resources available for aiding civilians. Also its availability strengthens the traditional attitude that military force is the inevitable answer. We maintain our rejection of using violent means to attempt to create good outcomes, even when under the guise of policing.' (see declaration of Church and Peace on "Responsibility to Protect (R2P)": [www.church-and-peace.org/documents.html](http://www.church-and-peace.org/documents.html) )

As a European network of churches and communities committed to nonviolence, we are holding an international conference May 20–22, 2011. It will take place at the Communauté de l'Arche in St. Antoine, France. During our conference we aim to communicate with the Peace Convocation of the Decade to Overcome Violence taking place simultaneously in Jamaica. We will pursue dialog with conflict resolution practitioners in the Balkans and Iraq. Additionally, we will work on theological foundations and political and strategic steps for alternatives to military intervention. We invite you to take part in this conference (invitation: [www.church-and-peace.org/events.html](http://www.church-and-peace.org/events.html)).

More about Church and Peace at: [www.church-and-peace.org](http://www.church-and-peace.org)

Church and Peace is a European Ecumenical peace church network made up of communities, training centres, peace organizations and peace service agencies. Their common conviction is that the peace witness and nonviolence of the Gospel are essential characteristics of the Church and lead to nonviolent service for peace and reconciliation. Church and Peace is an associate member of the Conference of European Churches (CEC), a partner in the Assisi Coalition, a member of Action Committee Service for Peace (AGDF), and a member of the Network of Christian Peace Organizations (UK).