

Quaker Action

What's new in peace building?

An inside look at AFSC's work to promote shared security around the world



Pursuing peace
with North Korea

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Yes, AFSC
supports BDS

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Preventing
election
violence in
Africa

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WHO WE ARE

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) is a Quaker organization that promotes lasting peace with justice as a practical expression of faith in action. Drawing on continuing spiritual insights and working with people of many backgrounds, we nurture the seeds of change and respect for human life that transform social relations and systems.

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AFSC-sponsored delegation to North Korea in 2017. Photo: AFSC/Asia

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Photo: Larry Gindhart

Invest in social justice and promote human rights every day.

There are many ways to support AFSC's peace-building efforts in 2018:

- **Pledge to give monthly:** Support peace throughout the year with an easy, automatic gift.
- **Make an outright gift:** Donate online, in the mail, over the phone, or with stock.
- **Join the 1917 Society:** Join a dedicated group of supporters who provide a solid foundation for AFSC each year.

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Young local
peace network
members in
El Salvador.
Photo: AFSC/
El Salvador



I recently had the privilege to travel to Asia and the Middle East to see some of AFSC's innovative, courageous programs and partners. Across lands as diverse as Beijing and Jerusalem, AFSC takes different community-based approaches. Sometimes we are doing the "louder" work of organizing and speaking truth to power; sometimes we are doing the "quiet" work of delicate diplomacy and reconciliation. It was moving to see how both can be bold, full of spirit, and transformative.

If you have been a part of AFSC's work, in any role from volunteer to staff person to a trainee, I'd like to know your stories, too. Please share them with us by writing to Quaker Action's address or

email quakeraction@afsc.org, and we'll post them online and print a selection in an upcoming issue.

No matter what your role in supporting AFSC, thank you for all you do for our global network of courageous peace builders in so many countries. The successes featured in this magazine would not be possible without your support.



In peace,

Joyce Ajlouny
General Secretary

Readers respond to our last issue

Outstanding publication. Outstanding purpose.

Phillip Kanehl
Los Angeles

Sanctuary Everywhere poster

I believe you have a winner in the poster. Everyone who sees it becomes ready to join up, and wants a copy of the poster! Have you thought about making a big run of copies, and making them available in bulk?

David Burnight
El Cajon, California

Editor's response: Thanks, David! You can download printable versions of the poster for free at afsc.org/sanctuaryeverywheresigns. Our new online store (afsc.org/store) also offers Sanctuary Everywhere shirts, mugs, and tote bags.

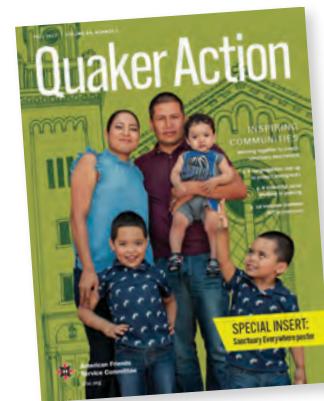
Shining a light on Palestinian children in detention

Billions [of dollars the U.S. gives] to Israel each year are spent to buy weapons from American corporations. Israel then uses those weapons to oppress the Palestinians whose lands they have occupied for more than half a century.

Thus, the American merchants of death increase their wealth with the money we taxpayers pay for foreign aid to Israel.

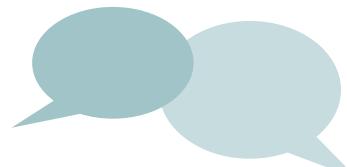
David Quintero
Monrovia, CA

Editor's note: For an update on our No Way to Treat a Child campaign, see page 6. To learn more about AFSC's approach to working for peace in Israel and Palestine, visit afsc.org/Israel-Palestine.



Fall 2017 issue, "Inspiring communities: Working together to create sanctuary everywhere."

WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU!



Tell us what you think about this issue by contacting Ronna Bolante, managing editor, at quakeraction@afsc.org or AFSC, 1501 Cherry St., Philadelphia, PA 19102.

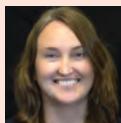
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Daniel Jasper wrote "How the U.S. can pursue peace with North Korea" (page 8). As AFSC's public education and advocacy coordinator for Asia, he brings lessons learned from AFSC's programs throughout Asia back to policymakers in Washington. His work focuses heavily on the humanitarian, peace-building, and people-to-people aspects of U.S.-North Korea relations.



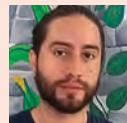
Kathryn Johnson, policy advocacy coordinator in AFSC's Office of Public Policy and Advocacy, looks at migration to the U.S. (page 18). Kathryn coordinates AFSC's policy work on immigration, trade, and U.S. engagement with Latin America. Prior to AFSC, Kathryn was a field organizer for Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch and assistant director of the Guatemala Human Rights Commission/USA.



Theresa Kirby, associate director of AFSC's Communications Department, wrote "7 strategies for preventing election violence" (page 14). Theresa facilitates editorial planning at AFSC and enjoys sharing stories of AFSC's work with supporters. Prior to AFSC, her professional path included earning a master's degree in elementary education, managing a small pottery business, and fundraising.



Melissa Lee wrote "Historical step for Palestinian rights" (page 6). As AFSC communications associate, Melissa supports a variety of efforts to engage donors, program constituents, and Friends in AFSC's mission and work. She enjoys lifting up the work and successes of AFSC's many programs and offices across the world through our online and print communications.



Javier Reyes, peace coordinator of AFSC's Guatemala Program, writes about AFSC's work with incarcerated youth (page 12). Javier is a social psychologist, student of social sciences, and a human rights defender. He is an expert in conflict transformation and has been engaged in networking, alternative education, and community organizing.



Jason Tower writes about building bridges between companies and communities (page 16). As AFSC's Global Quaker international affairs representative, he supports a team of international affairs representatives based in strategic locations around the globe. Jason has lived and worked in China for nearly 20 years and is an expert in peace and conflict studies.

News from around AFSC



In January, AFSC helped sponsor an Immigrant Advocacy Day in Des Moines, Iowa, including lobbying training and visits. Photo: Jon Krieg/AFSC

Responding to attacks on immigrants

The Trump administration's decision to rescind DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) and end Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for certain countries has put hundreds of thousands of immigrants at risk. AFSC is standing with immigrant communities to protect human rights.

"TPS and DACA recipients are integral parts of our communities," said Kristin Kumpf, director of Human Migration and Mobility at AFSC. "We are calling on Congress to enact a permanent solution that creates a roadmap to lawful permanent residency and citizenship for all TPS and DACA recipients and the millions of other immigrants without permanent status in the U.S."

AFSC is also supporting immigrant-led organizing and advocacy efforts to protect these programs. We've helped coordinate opportunities for DACA and TPS recipients to share their stories at press conferences, legislative visits, and demonstrations in their communities as well as in Washington, D.C.

In cities like Miami; Des Moines, Iowa; and Newark, New Jersey, AFSC is offering legal services to hundreds of DACA and TPS participants and their families as well as educating community members about their rights and options. In Newark alone, AFSC represents 300 DACA recipients and 500 long-standing TPS clients from El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Haiti.



TAKE ACTION: afsc.org/immigrant-rights



Get trained on Sanctuary Everywhere

Hundreds of people across the country have taken part in our free Sanctuary Everywhere webinars, learning from activists and AFSC staff how to make their communities safer and more inclusive.

Visit afsc.org/sanctuaryeverywherelive for recordings of past webinars, including:

Sanctuary policies in schools and cities:

Hear from activists who have run successful campaigns to protect immigrants and others targeted by Immigration and Customs Enforcement and other law enforcement.

Bystander intervention training:

Learn how to stop racist, anti-Muslim, anti-trans, and other forms of harassment.

Quaker Social Change Ministry:

Find out how to incorporate spiritual practice into your work for social change.

How to offer sanctuary:

Hear from congregations, organizations, and legal experts on their experiences—and challenges—in offering sanctuary.

Who's watching:

Learn how to spot and stop government surveillance of Muslims and other targeted groups in your community.

And tune in live May 17 at 8:30 p.m. ET for our next webinar: Ending abuse in policing.

 **MORE:** afsc.org/sanctuaryeverywherelive



A congressional briefing on Capitol Hill, which was organized by the No Way to Treat a Child campaign last fall. Photo: Carl Roose/AFSC

A historical step for Palestinian rights

In November, 10 House members introduced legislation that would prohibit the U.S. from financially supporting the detention of Palestinian children by the Israeli military—an unprecedented step to protect the human rights of Palestinians.

The measure is the result of years of advocacy led by the No Way to Treat a Child campaign, which is a joint project of AFSC, Defense for International Children-Palestine, and other faith-based organizations.

“Since 2015, thousands of individuals have contacted Congress—through emails, petitions, phone calls, and visits—to demand they protect the human rights of Palestinian children,” says Jennifer Bing, director of AFSC’s Middle East Program. “This historical legislation would not be possible without their commitment and action.”

Every year, 700 Palestinian children are detained and prosecuted by the Israeli military court system; nearly three-quarters experience abuse during the process. The resolution would require the U.S. State Department to ensure funds are not used by the Israeli government for the military detention or prosecution of Palestinian children. It also encourages Israel to create a juvenile justice system that would not discriminate between Palestinian and Israeli children.

This important legislation now has 22 sponsors, and we hope to add more in the year ahead. Help us keep the pressure on Congress.

—MELISSA LEE



VISIT: nowaytotreatachild.org

AFSC in the media

Staff from around the country are working hard to make change on the ground—and in the news. Here are some of the highlights:

On the border wall

“The experience that we’ve had with border walls over 20 years, 25 years now, is that border walls don’t work. People who are desperate and in need find a way to make it into the U.S. to get work and provide for their families. What it will do is worsen conditions for migrants crossing the border.”

—PEDRO RIOS, DIRECTOR OF THE AFSC’S U.S.-MEXICO BORDER PROGRAM, ON CNN

On funding for privatized detention centers

“Congress has the power to reject these bills, and any bills that include additional funding for immigration detention and enforcement. They can listen to the millions of people calling on them to invest instead in human needs, in the institutions and infrastructure that genuinely help communities thrive.”

—KATHRYN JOHNSON, AFSC’S POLICY ADVOCACY COORDINATOR, IN THE HILL

On immigration policy

“Further embedding racism in our immigration system—through bans and quotas, through detention and deportation, and through the termination of vital, life-saving programs like TPS [Temporary Protected Status]—is a moral and spiritual disaster for the United States.”

—PENIEL IBE, POLICY FELLOW, IN TRUTHOUT



Photo: Don Davis/AFSC

Kerri Kennedy

Associate general secretary of international programs

Q: How do you describe AFSC's international work?

A: AFSC works to build peace and transform systems of oppression. The goals of peace and justice unify all our work, but the strategy may vary in different countries. Our work is rooted in communities and also strategically addresses conflict and oppressive systems at the national and international levels.

Q: How does AFSC's peace-building work differ from other organizations' approaches?

A: The Quaker belief in the light in all people and the AFSC position that we work with all groups distinguish us. We employ a variety of strategies—quiet diplomacy, advocacy, civil resistance, peace building, and humanitarian service—to achieve our goals. Our values lead us at times to take courageous positions, even if it risks our program operations.

We're also one of a few organizations with offices overseas and across the U.S. doing on-the-ground work, an office in Washington, D.C., and an office in the United Nations. Our ability to convene and mobilize people is uncommon.

Q: What's the biggest challenge in this work?

A: Our biggest challenge is that governments and institutions are adopting much more restrictive policies on the space that civil society organizations, like AFSC, can operate in. It can amount to the criminalization of peace building.

Recently, AFSC was among 20 organizations barred from entering Israel because of our support of the nonviolent Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement. In the U.S., with different anti-terrorism legislation, it's illegal for any group to engage with anyone the U.S. government chooses to put on a list. But as a peace-building organization, we are called to engage with everybody. If you don't engage armed groups, you can't come to a resolution for a conflict.

Q: Can you tell us about some of the innovative tools you use in this work?

A: We are using a great strategic tool called "network weaving." Where we have been most successful in our history, say the anti-apartheid movement, we've consciously linked movements—like the pan-African movement with the Civil Rights Movement in the U.S.—to bridge and spark energies. Now we're using tools to map where we have connections and determine where we can make more connections to create lasting change.

Another innovative approach we're using is narrative change. That's using communications research to map out where current public narratives are regarding an important issue and figuring out how to influence people so new alternatives become politically possible.

Q: What are some examples of the impact that AFSC has had in recent years?

A: In every country, AFSC's programs have changed lives. In Indonesia, we've been instrumental in supporting local partners to build interfaith tolerance and harmony through community and youth activism. That promotes pluralism and supports partners working for change on the national level. In places like Guatemala, we're working with youth in violent communities to reclaim public spaces and show it's possible to find peace in places where it seems impossible.

Q: How can people in the U.S. support peace-building work in other countries?

A: Americans can help amplify voices of people building peace in their communities. Look for progressive peace builders on social media and share their messages. Support local organizations with funding, especially those led by people most affected by conflict and oppression. Talk to your elected officials about conflicts you're concerned about to make it a priority for them and organize others.

AFSC's work promotes shared security, which essentially means "my peace is your peace." All of us can do better to make the world more tolerant, more loving, more peaceful, more courageous in speaking out against injustice. There are larger systems that need transformation, but these are things we can practice every day. ■

Linda Lewis, AFSC country representative for DPRK/China (second from left), with staff and partners on a delegation to North Korea in 2017. Photo: AFSC/Asia



HOW THE U.S. CAN PURSUE PEACE WITH NORTH KOREA

BY DANIEL JASPER

I don't need to tell you that tensions between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK/North Korea) are running high. You have heard about the nuclear and ballistic missile tests. And you are probably aware of President Trump's "fire and fury" threat, as well.

All the dramatic real-time news coverage may leave you wondering, "Is peace between the U.S. and North Korea even possible?"

The answer is absolutely yes. And the way forward can be seen through the lens of AFSC's experience—from the beginnings of our involvement in 1953, when we worked with refugees and families divided by the war, to our current program, which helps North Korean farmers raise farm productivity and improve food security.

Educating policymakers in Washington, D.C. about possibilities for cooperation with North Korea is part of my work with AFSC. Here are just a few of the points we have been making in our meetings with the National Security Council, the State Department, and Congress about ways to pursue peace.

The news coverage may leave you wondering, "Is peace between the U.S. and North Korea even possible?" The answer is absolutely yes.

Humanitarian issues are a good starting place for dialogue.

If you are looking for a politically low-risk way to relieve tensions, humanitarian engagement is your best bet. Why? The stakes are lower. Common ground is easier to find. Success is more likely. Plus, these kinds of projects present opportunities

for building mutually beneficial relationships—and trust.

AFSC has the longest-running program in North Korea of any U.S. nongovernmental organization. Our program began in 1980 and has helped maintain what little stability there is in the U.S.-DPRK relationship. That's why it is vitally important for Congress and the administration to ensure humanitarian access by organizations like AFSC when they consider travel restrictions to North Korea.

Repatriating remains could help build bridges.

In 2016, AFSC worked with former Gov. Bill Richardson (who also served as Secretary of Energy and U.N. ambassador) and with families of U.S. servicemembers to sponsor a delegation to North Korea. Their mission? To discuss bringing home servicemembers' remains—something that would mean a great deal to the families of those who died in the Korean War and present a practical opening to de-escalate tensions between the U.S. and North Korean militaries.

The U.S. had worked with North Korea to repatriate remains until operations ceased in 2005. In 2016, the delegation learned that North Korea had up to 200 sets of remains that they would be willing to hand over to a third party if the U.S. government would simply acknowledge—in any forum, from a tweet to a more formal speech or memo—the repatriation as a humanitarian gesture. AFSC is advocating for the U.S. to offer this recognition—and make the most of the opening it would create for establishing a collaborative project and channel of dialogue.

Family reunions bring countries closer.

Korean and Korean-American families offer another opportunity for the U.S. and North Korea to collaborate on an achievable project. Following the Korean War, families became separated by the demilitarized zone separating the two Koreas. More than 100,000 members of those divided families came to the U.S., thousands of whom are still alive and remain eager to reunite with their loved ones after almost

65 years of separation.

At one time, these families could travel to the DPRK on their own if they could locate their family members, but today, they require government permission and assistance to reunite. While the South and the North have carried out 20 rounds of family reunifications over the past 18 years, Korean-Americans have never been allowed to participate. We have seen these reunions serve to de-escalate tensions—and we urge the U.S. to consider initiating a family reunion, both to do right by separated Korean-American families and as a means of building better relations.

Even in this political climate, we have reason for optimism.

AFSC supports an amendment to the North Korea Human Rights Reauthorization Act that would require the Trump administration to report back on planned activities to reunite Korean and Korean-American families and the repatriation of U.S. servicemembers remains left in North Korea. I was encouraged to see the House pass this amendment in 2017.

I have also been encouraged that in recent months, North Korea sent athletes to the Olympics, the South and North agreed to restart a military hotline, and the U.S. and South Korea agreed to suspend military exercises during the Olympics. These are all favorable signs for U.S.-DPRK humanitarian cooperation—and an indication that the opportunities we have identified remain viable—and urgent—for policymakers to pursue in the coming year. ▀

WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

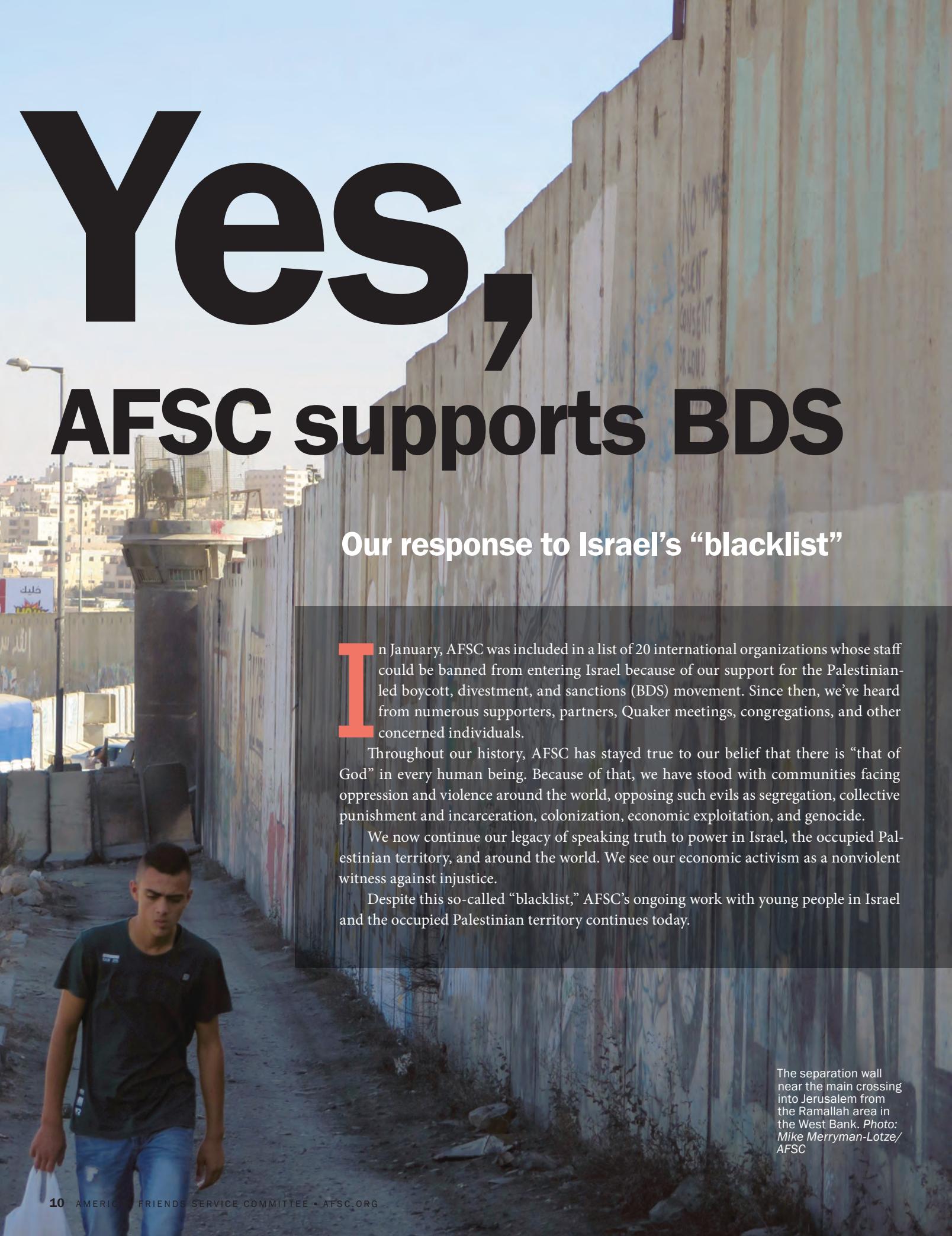
Visit our website to:

- Urge your elected officials to work for peace.
- Get tips on how to talk about North Korea.
- Find resources, reports, and videos on AFSC's work in North Korea.



MORE: afsc.org/engageNK

Yes, AFSC supports BDS



Our response to Israel's "blacklist"

In January, AFSC was included in a list of 20 international organizations whose staff could be banned from entering Israel because of our support for the Palestinian-led boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) movement. Since then, we've heard from numerous supporters, partners, Quaker meetings, congregations, and other concerned individuals.

Throughout our history, AFSC has stayed true to our belief that there is "that of God" in every human being. Because of that, we have stood with communities facing oppression and violence around the world, opposing such evils as segregation, collective punishment and incarceration, colonization, economic exploitation, and genocide.

We now continue our legacy of speaking truth to power in Israel, the occupied Palestinian territory, and around the world. We see our economic activism as a nonviolent witness against injustice.

Despite this so-called "blacklist," AFSC's ongoing work with young people in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory continues today.

The separation wall near the main crossing into Jerusalem from the Ramallah area in the West Bank. Photo: Mike Merryman-Lotze/AFSC

“May we look upon our treasures, and the furniture of our houses, and the garments in which we array ourselves, and try whether the seeds of war have nourishment in these our possessions.”

—JOHN WOOLMAN, 18TH CENTURY QUAKER ABOLITIONIST

What you should know about AFSC’s support for the BDS movement

We believe that all people, including Palestinians, have a right to live in safety and peace and have their human rights respected.

For 51 years, Israel has denied Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territory their basic civil, political, and human rights—in defiance of international law. Among other things, Palestinians don’t control their own economy, can’t travel without Israeli military permission, are denied access to religious sites, are restricted from accessing needed medical care, are denied educational opportunities, have their speech restricted, have their homes destroyed and their land confiscated, and can be arrested and detained indefinitely without charge or trial. The Palestinian BDS call seeks to change this situation using proven non-violent social change tactics with support from the international community.

AFSC supports boycott and divestment campaigns that target companies complicit in the occupation.

Violations of Palestinians’ rights result not only from Israeli government policies and actions, but also from corporate and institutional policies and actions. Our position does not call for a boycott of companies

simply because they’re Israeli or doing business in Israel. BDS campaigns target institutions that help sustain the occupation, not individuals.

BDS has proven effective as a nonviolent tool for realizing political and social change.

Economic activism is both an appeal to conscience aimed at raising awareness among those complicit in harmful practices and an effective tactic for removing structural support for oppression. Quakers pioneered boycotts in the 1800s, when they helped lead the “Free Produce Movement,” boycotting goods produced with slave labor. In the 1980s, AFSC answered the call for divestment from apartheid in South Africa. Supporting the call for BDS from Palestinians seeking freedom, equality, and justice is just as critical today.

The ban on entry to Israel is part of a larger effort by the Israeli government to silence human rights and anti-occupation activists.

Over the past decade, the Palestinian-led BDS movement has succeeded in raising awareness about the occupation and changing the behavior of many corporations,

such as Veolia and Unilever—even as the government of Israel has spent hundreds of millions of dollars to try to suppress this nonviolent effort. Tragically, in recent months, more Palestinian activists have faced arrest, threats, and imprisonment without charge or trial in response to non-violent activism for human rights.

We’re also seeing attacks on BDS supporters in the U.S.

In recent years, several U.S. states have approved policies that bar businesses and organizations that support BDS from getting state contracts—a clear violation of protected free speech and action under the First Amendment. Similar legislation known as the “Israel Anti-Boycott Act” is now under consideration in Congress. That bipartisan bill would make supporting any boycott against Israel a felony punishable by up to a \$1 million fine and 20 years in prison.

You can help.

- Contact your members of Congress, and urge them to help end the occupation and oppose any attacks on BDS: afsc.org/Israel-Palestine.
- To see a list of companies we recommend for divestment, visit afsc.org/investigate.
- Read “5 ways to support Palestinians through boycott, divestment, and sanctions” at afsc.org/5ways-bds. ■



BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS THROUGH ART

A first-of-its-kind program in Guatemala is helping young people in prison escape violence and build new lives

Youth in detention learn performing arts.
Photo: AFSC/Guatemala

BY JAVIER REYES

Carlos García's* story isn't unlike that of many other young people in Guatemala, a place where escaping brutal violence can seem impossible. The country has one of the highest homicide rates in the world for people under age 20, according to UNICEF, and deaths are often related to gang activities, including drug trafficking, turf battles, and extortions.

It's no surprise that many young people like Carlos are recruited—voluntarily or involuntarily—by gangs, or *maras*. That's often the only option for survival for youth struggling with poverty, lack of basic services, violence, and instability at home and in their communities.

When Carlos was 12, his involvement with a local gang landed him in a youth detention center. But unlike most other incarcerated youth, the time he served provided him with an opportunity to

reimagine a new future for himself—and the tools to work toward it.

Carlos is one of 20 youth who took part in AFSC's "There are No Barriers to Artivism" project while incarcerated in a youth detention center in Guatemala. Through intensive counseling and art workshops, this first-of-its-kind project in the country helps youth find healing, address personal issues, and gain the skills they need to rejoin and contribute to their communities outside of the detention center walls.

"I was a person who got angry very easily, and now I have learned to control that," Carlos says. "I discovered that I have in my hands the power to control negative emotions. My fellow inmates and I started to put that into practice, and after a long time, I understood what they were referring to when they talked about living together peacefully."

For well over a decade, Guatemala has

relied on *mano dura* (iron fist) policies to crack down on gangs—further fueling violence in communities without improving safety. This approach has increased discrimination against youth, who are viewed with suspicion by local authorities and potential employers.

It's easy to understand how young people get caught up in gangs when they don't have the opportunity to develop their own aspirations.

AFSC is one of the few organizations in Guatemala working with young people to develop the skills they need to see nonviolent alternatives and create a better future for themselves and their communities. In several communities around the country, AFSC supports local peace networks—groups led by youth who meet regularly to reflect, build understanding among community members, and plan projects that promote nonviolence in their



Public exhibits feature artwork by incarcerated youth. Photo: AFSC/Guatemala

neighborhoods. Youth also receive trainings on peace building, democracy, human rights, and citizenship.

In 2015, AFSC expanded this work to reach incarcerated youth in Guatemala. “There are No Barriers for Artivism” is a unique model, using art as the main tool for transformation. Painting, dance, music, theater, and circus arts help to create a dynamic, participatory, and interactive environment where youth can learn to solve situations peacefully.

“Through personal counseling, we work with youth on their self-image, self-esteem, and emotional intelligence,” says project facilitator Néstor Mijangos. “We also work to build a sense of community, helping youth understand and recognize social values and human rights for violence prevention.”

Transforming young lives

The impact of AFSC’s project can be seen throughout the Centro Juvenil de Privación de Libertad para Varones (CEJUPLIV II) Anexo Gaviotas detention center. The project has contributed to creating a more peaceful environment at the facility. Last year, it was the only detention center in the country where riots did not occur. Many more centers have expressed interest in bringing AFSC’s project to their facilities.

“Young people have shown a strong commitment to the process,” says Néstor. “Workshop after workshop, we have been able to observe small but constant changes in their attitudes and behaviors. At first, they behaved in a hostile and insecure

way. As time passed, we could see that they gained trust in themselves, their abilities, and in their environment. In general, they improved the relationships with their fellow inmates and even with the staff of the detention center.”

“We work to build a sense of community, helping youth understand and recognize social values and human rights for violence prevention.”

— NÉSTOR MIJANGOS,
PROJECT FACILITATOR

Lasting transformation abounds in the stories of the youth who took part in the project. For Carlos, now 21, his involvement helped him prepare for family and community life. Like other youth involved in the project, he began to see a new path for himself and an interconnected relationship with his community.

Also, by participating in the project, Carlos reduced his time in detention. He was released 18 months ahead of schedule.

AFSC’s work extends outside the

detention facility, too. AFSC organizes public art exhibits featuring participants’ work to show the success of the project and need to change the narrative on youth in the community. In 2016, a painting by Carlos was included in an art exhibition. And more recently, Carlos was invited by AFSC to sing at a community event, which was attended by the state social welfare secretary and other local authorities. These officials were moved by Carlos’ performance.

“Thanks to AFSC, I was able to get on a stage to sing the songs that I wrote, and that filled me with a lot of joy and satisfaction,” says Carlos. “When I felt sad and alone in prison, I found in hip hop a way to cheer myself up, to say and express what I felt but that I wasn’t able to express in other ways. It was a refuge during my stay in prison. Now, I can show my talent to other people.”

Carlos recently earned his high school diploma and now participates in a program to learn English, a skill that will help him find a better job. Next year he wants to major in psychology at the state university, so he can help others avoid his past mistakes.

“If someone had talked to me about managing my emotions, how to handle frustration and feelings of hatred, I probably would not have ended up in jail,” Carlos says. “I appreciate the support of American Friends, because now I can see things from another point of view and I want to share that with others.” ▀

* We’re using a pseudonym for Carlos to protect his identity.



On this spread: Photos from a 2017 conference in Nairobi, Kenya, which convened youth from across Africa to discuss preventing election violence. Photos: George Mimano

1

Commit to the long haul.

"International aid agencies normally fund peace building efforts starting just six months before an election," says Pauline Kamau, AFSC's Quaker international affairs representative based in Nairobi, Kenya. "But we need to look at elections as a process and make funding available throughout the whole cycle. It cannot be touch and go. This doesn't help, because even if people quiet down after an election, the same issues will come back four or five years down the line."

In Burundi and Kenya, AFSC forges long-term partnerships with religious leaders and others with deep community ties. These partnerships combined with other kinds of outreach and dialogue bring continuity to violence prevention efforts, broadening popular commitment to nonviolence long before election campaigns begin.

2

Recognize that change must be locally led.

Organizations like AFSC can help by sharing ideas and resources, but ultimately it is the people of the country who bring about the change.

When outsiders get involved without a commitment to listening, things often get worse, says Pauline. "Leaders say, 'Don't come here to lecture us. You have enough problems to sort out in your own country. We are a sovereign state. We can sort ourselves out.'"

3

Find partners who share your values and develop a plan together.

"Certain institutions have a mandate to work on elections," says Moses. "We map out who has that mandate, and we look for ones with similar values."

In Burundi, AFSC partners with Norwegian Church Aid and International Christian Service for Peace (EIRENE), headquartered in Germany. A joint 2016–2020 Action Plan for Peace is serving as a roadmap for supporting Burundi religious leaders in peace work within the country and beyond. The plan provides for the development of common training materials and tools as well as strategies for reaching politicians and the public.

Preventing election violence

SEVEN STRATEGIES FOR PEACE

BY THERESA KIRBY

The wind of change blows through every country," says Moses Chasieh, AFSC's country representative in Burundi. "No leader can stay in power forever, and non-violence should be a prime value in bringing change."

Across Africa, tensions sometimes escalate between those trying to stay in power and those trying to come into power. When norms that support free and fair elections are not respected, citizens pay the price.

A legacy of colonialism contributes to ethnic and political conflict. Despite the continent's rich natural resources, extreme inequality leaves too many people struggling to survive. Against this backdrop, politicians incite violence with hate speech tied to historical injustices or by offering young people money to disrupt competing candidates. In Kenya, more than 1,100 people were killed and over 500,000 displaced following its 2007 elections—just one example of the devastating toll such violence can take.

What can be done to reduce the likelihood of violence at election time? AFSC's programs in Africa have begun to find out. Here are a few key findings and examples of the lessons in action.

4

Invite people in positions of influence to join you.

"We identify key people within the country," says Pauline. "People others listen to." These include eminent personalities, United Nations officials, religious and regional leaders, media personalities, celebrities admired by youth, mediators, and even politicians themselves.

Religious leaders can play a particularly important role. "Burundi has about 600 religious groups," says Moses. "But instead of looking at it as a challenge, we see it as an opportunity. Everyone comes from a religious background. Religious leaders can easily speak and have people listen. So, we work to build their capacities to preach the message of peace and nonviolence."

5

Have a clear message.

When partners, community leaders, and others share a common message that clearly speaks to the issues at hand, they can have a larger impact.

Candidates who see elections as their only avenue for exerting influence are more apt to incite violence, so our message is that there is no need for violence because the election is not an all or nothing prospect. Other avenues are available for leading and being influential, regardless of election outcomes.

We also promote the concept of shared security—the idea that peace is only possible when it is achieved collectively. This concept has been adopted for peace conferences in Somalia and East Africa and has spurred the interest of regional bodies such as the African Union. The idea has caught on in local contexts, as well. "I am because you are," says Pauline. "When I am at peace you are at peace. That is our motto."



6

Involve youth.

Youth are especially affected by election violence, in part because very high unemployment rates make them more susceptible to candidates offering to pay them to disrupt an election.

Pauline finds that direct outreach to youth is effective. "We talk to them and say, 'you do not have to do this,'" she says. "You can see them changing and influencing others." This outreach can take the form of one-on-one conversations—or large convenings like one that brought 100 youth leaders from across Africa together for a Dialogue and Exchange Program in 2017 in Nairobi.

She adds that outreach to women is also important. "They talk to their sons and daughters and we see a change."

7

Share successful strategies.

Bringing key groups together to share their experiences and ideas helps to lay foundations for peace more broadly.

In addition to convening youth, AFSC's Dialogue and Exchange Program brought members of the media together last year to consider how to cover elections without magnifying calls for violence. And a series of convenings for religious leaders has opened the door to multi-faith efforts to promote peace.

These exchanges facilitate the spread of successful strategies. More importantly, they help set the stage for peaceful elections.

Building bridges between companies and communities

In Asia, companies are learning how to avoid inflaming conflict.



BY JASON TOWER

In 2007, public protests erupted in the Koh Kong province of Cambodia. Community members were demonstrating against China's Union Development Group (UDG)'s multi-billion-dollar deal with the Cambodian government to develop a new city in the impoverished province.

Although the Cambodian government praised the project, local communities had never been consulted by the company. That's despite the fact that more than a thousand families would be affected—and in many cases, displaced—by the massive development.

Tensions worsened when it was discovered that funds marked for compensating and resettling families had been mismanaged by local officials, with large sums missing. And the dispute continued to escalate over the next several years, as UDG failed to share project plans—or even talk—with local communities. At least one protest turned violent when armed security forces clashed with families.

The Koh Kong project is just one of many well-documented examples of how international business operations—which have the potential to benefit local communities—can also be a catalyst for conflict and violence.

AFSC's Business and Peace Program is trying to change that. In vulnerable communities in some of the poorest countries in the world, we're applying peace-building strategies to transform the way communities, governments, and businesses interact. And we're finding that this approach can improve community rights, support justice, and increase economic growth.

In dollar terms, foreign direct investment in most countries outweighs aid spending by a ratio of seven to one. That is a

powerful force for economic development.

But given its tremendous economic footprint, these business investments also present tremendous risk, especially in places where the state and political institutions are weak—as was the case in Koh Kong.

International corporations can use the help of civil society groups like AFSC. An AFSC study found that Asian companies largely fail to accurately measure the cost of conflict. They do not devote sufficient funds to building relationships with local



AFSC arranged for Cambodian NGO representatives to meet with senior management of the Beijing Huawei Company about its plans for a major energy project in Cambodia. Photo: AFSC/Asia

communities, instead relying on governments, even when those governments have no capacity or interest in representing or resolving community problems. Our study also found that companies lack staff and internal structures to prevent conflict in their operations.

The result is an ad hoc approach—companies fighting fires as they emerge, often at great cost to both community and company.

Without peaceful intervention, broken company-community relationships can fuel vicious cycles of violence. Once tensions start, companies increasingly view the community as a threat and deploy securitized responses, such as armed guards, more walls, or working through local authorities to police neighboring communities.

As the relationship further deteriorates, open violence can break out. That's what happened in the case of the Wanbao Let-padaung mining operation in Myanmar in 2013. Community members protesting company practices camped out in front of the main gate of the operation for several days, until security forces violently cleared the crowd. In another example, community members and representatives from local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in Cambodia have been repeatedly detained by authorities, which recently forced the shutdown of several human rights organizations working to stop hydropower and sugarcane projects.

Few peace-building organizations work with investing corporations to prevent conflicts like these—or to explore how they



AFSC organized a seminar in Beijing that brought together NGOs, government officials, and company representatives to discuss sustainability issues in Chinese investments in Cambodia. Photo: AFSC/Asia

made. In 2013, AFSC helped facilitate quiet dialogue with policy advisors from the Chinese Ministry of Commerce and assembled a fact-finding team, including staff from the Chinese Ministry and local NGOs, to investigate restoring peace and justice to Koh Kong. The findings led to a high-level seminar for 32 Chinese companies in Cambodia, including UDG, on preventing conflict in overseas investment projects. Representatives learned a lot about the costs businesses incur when they don't assess community needs.

UDG also asked AFSC and local partners for help in building relationships with local communities. With AFSC's guidance, UDG has opened direct dialogue with communities, made fairer its process for compensating residents who relocate, and is exploring partnerships with NGOs to improve community conditions and mediate outstanding conflicts created by years of overlooking local concerns.

We're preparing further technical resources that can help companies see the value of such efforts in reducing costs. And we're training large groups of community members and organizations in Cambodia and Myanmar on how to effectively engage businesses.

As my colleague, Business and Peace Coordinator Pouy Keang, observed: "We tried what no other group attempted—to talk to the investor about the problem. It turned out that they had no information about local groups, and no resources to build local relationships. They now understand that they cannot have security if the local people are missing security."

AFSC's work to build bridges between business and communities has had an impact, but we know that this is a delicate process, requiring patience, resilience, and long-term financial support to ensure sustainability. We hope to build on this success throughout Asia—and beyond. ▀

"We tried what no other group attempted—to talk to the investor about the problem."

—POUY KEANG, BUSINESS AND PEACE COORDINATOR

might contribute to peace. And few nongovernmental organizations have a deep understanding of business administration or try to engage the corporate sector.

Many civil society organizations do try to address these issues by raising community awareness of rights and training government officials. While important, those efforts have not addressed the underlying conflict between company, community, and government.

AFSC's work shows signs of breaking cycles of violence and oppression—and making positive contributions to peace. Our Business and Peace Program educates businesses on the costs associated with conflict. We also show how strong relationships with local communities and contributing to peace-building initiatives benefit not just the local population, but also the company's bottom line. It's a wise investment.

Today, the Koh Kong project shows how progress can be

Understanding why people migrate

And why the U.S. should welcome them with compassion and humanity.

BY KATHRYN JOHNSON

Two years ago, I met with members of one of AFSC's local peace networks in one of the more dangerous neighborhoods of San Salvador, El Salvador. I asked the group—mostly teenagers—to raise their hands if they had a family member who had migrated to the United States. Almost every hand went up.

I wasn't surprised. I've heard from our staff in El Salvador about the violence, inequality, and lack of opportunity facing much of the country.

Working in both the U.S. and Central America makes me acutely aware of the many factors that force people to flee their home countries. It's a daily reminder of the role that U.S. foreign policy plays in destabilizing the region. And it makes even more stark our country's failure to create a humane immigration system that addresses the consequences of mass displacement and migration.

I moved to Washington, D.C., after years of living in Guatemala and seeing how much U.S. policies affect people there and how little they can do about it. In Guatemala, I watched as the U.S.-led "war on drugs"—which funnels resources to police and militaries in Central America that consistently violate human rights—exacerbated cycles of violence. I saw how the Central American Free Trade Agreement

(CAFTA) flooded the region with cheap, subsidized corn from the U.S., destroying local markets and pushing out small farmers. CAFTA also opened the way for foreign mining companies, which threatened to devastate the environment, with little or no compensation to local governments or people.

I was in Guatemala during the 2008 U.S. elections, knowing that people around me would feel the impacts of who won as much as I would. And yet they didn't have a vote. So I came back to the U.S. to bring those voices to policy debates here.

There are many reasons why people make the difficult decision to leave their homes and migrate to the U.S. Most migrants have several reasons, if you ask. They may say they came because it was impossible to support their family, but they may also have been forced to close their family business because of extortion, which is not uncommon. Or they may have feared for their lives because they faced violence, whether at the hands of military, gangs, or even the people closest to them.

Young people in San Salvador like those I talked to face both economic insecurity and violence; they were targeted by local gangs for recruitment because they lacked other opportunities. These intersecting realities are driven in part by U.S.

policy, which has systematically destabilized the region over decades.

As we push back against xenophobic policies designed to keep people out of the U.S., it's crucial to recognize our own government's part in forcing people to flee. This understanding should strengthen our resolve to respond with compassion to those who arrive in the U.S., and it gives us one more reason to stop the detention and deportation machine that tears apart families and communities.

Across the U.S., AFSC staff are working every day to protect immigrants from attacks by the Trump administration. At the same time, in Central America—where many migrants are from—AFSC is helping young people form local peace networks to reduce violence and build peace in their communities. We're also calling on national governments to recognize the migrant crisis and provide protections to people displaced throughout the region.

By working directly with communities in Central America to build peace, challenging destructive U.S. foreign policy, and advocating for a just and humane immigration system, we can help to create a world where everyone has the opportunity to thrive. ■



SNAPSHOT

A look at AFSC around the world

Youth across Africa took part in an AFSC-sponsored conference in Kenya on preventing election violence. Photo: George Mimano



Photos: Gabriela Flora/AFSC, Larry Gindhart, Bryan Vana/AFSC, Brant Rosen/AFSC, Jon Krieg/AFSC, AFSC/Asia, Arnie Alpert/AFSC, Ben Olsen, George Mimano, Noam Perry/AFSC, Bryan Vana/AFSC, AFSC/Middle East region

Left to right, top to bottom:

1. An award for the Colorado Rapid Response Network; Denver
2. "We all belong here" rally; Indianapolis
3. Urban farming gathering; Baltimore
4. To Gaza with Love campaign; nationwide
5. Midwest staff retreat; Ypsilanti, Michigan
6. Delegation to North Korea
7. Interfaith prayer vigil for immigrant justice; New Hampshire
8. AFSC centennial celebration; Arizona
9. AFSC centennial celebration; Nairobi, Kenya
10. Economic activism workshop; Oakland, California
11. Urban farming gathering; Baltimore
12. Gaza Day of Action photo challenge; Gaza



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Indianapolis press conference on the one-year anniversary of the Muslim ban.
Photo: Larry Gindhart