

Dear friends, colleagues, comrades, and family,

Yesterday marked the closing of the internal International Fellowship of Reconciliation (IFOR) Council, thus also concluding three weeks of very intensive peace proceedings taking place in Juba, South Sudan – the world's youngest nation-state. Over four years of building work now turns to follow up and evaluation. I write this note with the knowledge of my partner and co-coordinator of this process, the extraordinary Moses Monday John, executive director of South Sudan's Organization for Nonviolence and Development (ONAD). The errors and particularities of it, however, are all my own.

There is no coalition name or acronym, no new formation coming out of this intensive process, or even a single joint meeting of all of us going in. This then will be the main holistic report of the full weeks, with each network and organization included in this email free to proceed as you will regarding how you'll describe what took place with your own networks. The main "network of networks" which Moses and I will be promoting within the African context will be the Pan African Nonviolence and Peace-building Network (PANPEN), which we have helped build from the start, ten years ago. We do, however, ask that however you follow-up on these weeks, each of you keep TWO things in mind:

- Please make note that your part was part of a larger whole, and make some mention of the whole as you report to your members; and
- Please let us stay in touch! Whatever ways we proceed in the future, let us try to continue to build networks and coalitions – both in, with, and for African peace and justice, and for the world entire!

Allow me now, please: one moment for some acknowledgments and another to list some significant outcomes.

It goes without saying that anything of this enormous nature requires many hearts and hands, and that without the steady hand of a number of folks, especially from South Sudan, none of this would have been possible. Moses and I are both coalition-builders and networkers, both part of IFOR and the other lead partner in these weeks—the International Peace Research Association (IPRA) for which I serve as Secretary-General. Moses has his PhD in peace studies, and it is possible that by now I also hold an honorary membership in ONAD! So it is simply necessary to write here that working with Moses as a partner through these years has been nothing short of a joy.

The former and founding executive director of ONAD is Light Aganwa Wilson, another dear brother who dates us both when he recalls that we began dreaming about something like this taking place in Juba a full 16 years ago. Sometimes the best ideas take time!! Often the best ideas

also take the best people, and Light is surely one of those. After Moses and Light, deep acknowledgements must be made to Victoria and Cesar, Flora and Michael, Joseph, Angelina and so many, many others in the ONAD organization and circles. They rescued us from immigration officials around the world, negotiated with their own nation's top governmental and religious leadership and bureaucracy, drove everywhere and then some, and also did all of this with smiles and embraces and open hearts. Juba is a city I'd be pleased to live in, feeling now more welcome and well-taken care of in Juba than in many of the 108 countries I've had the honor to travel to. In addition to ONAD, the offices of the Episcopal Church of South Sudan, with many supporting clergy and lay people right up to the Primate and Archbishop, made so much of our time in their country smooth, simple, and blessed. BRAVO and THANKS to all our South Sudanese sisters and brothers.

Outside of acknowledgements to South Sudan, there are ALL of you on this coalition e-list, and hopefully not too many who I've missed. If you are reading this, you are one of those people deserving thanks, part of the leadership which made the whole process possible. I shall just take a moment to name a few in need of special spotlight here: Peter Cousins, outgoing (now former) IFOR Vice President, was with us for the entire past four years after the last IFOR Quadrennial gathering concluded with a great desire to hold this one (finally) on African soil. Like Moses and me, he has one foot in peace theology and one in peace studies, working on his PhD right now. We also like to remind Peter that his wife was on my IPRA Executive Council BEFORE they got married! Peter is another man of many hats, whose consistent work on all fronts laid the foundations for the entire process even though he himself could only attend the last part of it. IFOR African leader Jean Pierre Massamba of Brazzaville (now newly-elected IFOR Vice President - YAY!) has been a significant and magnificent force for all parts of this work, and one of the very few who came at the very beginning and stayed till the very end. His election to a new level of IFOR leadership is GREAT NEWS FOR ALL OF US! Just behind him is the other major IFOR African leader, Makios of Zimbabwe, who just help finish these weeks out by expertly coordinating a "symbolic gesture" ending yesterday's sessions – looking at the divides between Africa and the colonizing world, and the continuing need for recognition, reparations, and reconciliation. IPRA's main African leader, African Peace Studies and Education Association (AFPREA) President Charles Wasike was a core part of overall planning, and Sister Wamuyu Teresia Wachira, President of Pax Christi International, joined the work a bit late in the process—but with such passion, enthusiasm and wisdom that one could hardly tell she wasn't part of the planning from the beginning. IPRA's Elavie Ndura, IFOR's Lotta Becker, IPB's Rainer Huhle, Sean Cooper and Tyson Smith Berry, ICIP's Oscar Mateos and Kristian Herboltzheimer, Resistance Studies' Stellan Vnthagén, TCDC's Phil Wimont, WRI's Chris Ney (who also wears IFOR, FOR-USA and peace studies hats), Björkåfrihet's Kristen Ivarsson, South Africa's Thadeka Tutu-Gxashe, Uganda's Stella Nyanzi, and finally GNWP's Honorable Betty Achan Ogwaro all made these weeks together much more than they would have been if any of you/them or your/their networks had been absent. There are truly too many individuals to name,

including ALL of those who came from seven different peoples still under military occupation and direct colonial rule, to move forward the burgeoning Occupied People's Network. It may be worth it to say that one of them, Ambazonia's Rudolf Nsang who came as an IPRA colleague, ended up recruited to stay till the very end as a valued IFOR interpreter/translator. And another, Palestine's Zoughbi alZoughbi, was elected IFOR President on the last days together, another great piece of news for all of us. Again, this is not a comprehensive list of thanks, but apologies to anyone I've left out in any case.

Now, some of the most notable experiences and outcomes we achieved, in my evaluation, are:

- The most successful conference in AFPREA's history, following preceding regional conferences in South Africa and Nigeria, and global conferences in South Africa, Kenya, and Sierra Leone, and with exciting preliminary plans to hold the next one in two years in Tanzania;
- A moving and forward-looking tribute to 1984 Nobel Peace laureate Archbishop Desmond Mpilo Tutu, coming up on the first anniversary of his passing and with his grandson presenting in person and daughter with us via video;
- Challenging and moving sessions on feminist, women's and indigenous peace-building in Africa, and the need to greatly support, expand and extend this work;
- A series of gatherings and strategic meetings of Occupied Peoples still under direct colonial control, including representatives from Western Sahara, West Papua, Palestine, Puerto Rico, Tibet, Rojava/Kurdistan, and Ambazonia ;
- An ICIP-sponsored panel on Transitional Justice, featuring Colombian activist and Servicio Paz y Justicia (Latin American nonviolence network) representative Blas Garcia, and South Sudan's respected parliamentarian and woman's rights activist the Hon. Betty Achan Ogwaro MP;
- An IPB-sponsored panel on Climate Change and Conflict in Africa, with new IPB Council member Tyson Smith Berry ;
- Excursions through South Sudan, including to two ONAD-supported schools with active peace clubs, and to the mausoleum of founding President John Garang ;
- A special seminar on "Renewed Resistance and Solidarity" with US Black liberation movement leader and Spirit of Mandela coalition representative Jihad Abdul Mumit, and with South African former Member of Parliament Magdelene Moonsamy, Chief Jurist of the 2021 Tribunal which found the US guilty of five counts of ongoing genocide;
- A rousing evening of poetry, protest, and inspiration spotlighting the work of Ugandan militant Dr. Stella Nyanzi
- A meeting of a renewed PANPEN, with commentary from most of the above-named networks and international organizations present in-person;
- An afternoon of South Sudanese culture, music, dance, and celebration;

- The Opening of the first IFOR Quadrennial Council and Public Event held on African soil, with Anglican Archbishop and Primate the Most Reverend Justin Nadi Arama, Senior South Sudanese Presidential Advisor Kuol Manyang Juul, plus Jean Pierre, Sister Wamuyu, Peter, Moses, and myself;
- An inter-faith Sunday service at the Episcopal Cathedral, including prayers from Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, and spiritualist traditions;
- A closing of the internal IFOR Council with a symbolic gesture and statement recognizing the evils of colonialism and continuing white supremacy, and calling for justice and reconciliation;
- And we did this all without a single huge contribution (though two or three significant medium-sized ones), and without breaking the bank or causing economic or logistical hardship to any of our organizations!

WHEW ! I know I was part of the inner workings of much of the above, and am proud and inspired that we succeeded in pulling it all off. But I must admit that I got tired again just writing it all out!

I will sign off here, in hopes that we will continue to trade photos, stories, and most importantly plans for the future.