



International Day of Peace 2019 Statement

The International Day of Peace is turning 31 years this 2019. Established by a unanimous resolution in the UN General Assembly, Peace Day is an opportunity and reminder for humanity to continually and actively commit to Peace above all differences.

Pax Christi-Asia Pacific wishes everyone a Happy International Day of Peace!

Being the regional arm of Pax Christi International in the Asia Pacific, we continue to work on interfaith and intercultural cooperation, decolonization, education and peacebuilding; and address issues on environmental degradation, disarmament, and human rights violations.

This year the UN celebrates Peace Day with the theme “Climate Action for Peace” focusing on the global climate emergency. Extreme weather events as well as more frequent and severe disasters raise the risk of dispute over resources, and other climate-related conflict.

We affirm this year’s theme on Climate Action and emphasize that Climate Justice is a critical aspect in long-lasting peace. The Asia Pacific region is vulnerable and is at the receiving end of the harsh effects of climate change. Our geographic position puts a lot of pressure on being proactive actors to protect livelihoods, to prevent resource-related conflicts, and maintain peace where it exists.

Regional tensions, militarization, weapons proliferation and armed violence also continue to challenge peace in our region. Hence, we welcome the gradual decommissioning of firearms in the recently created Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) as well as the arms amnesty being carried out by the government in New Zealand as a consequence of the Christchurch massacre. This arms amnesty asks people with guns capable of intense automatic fire to hand them in for compensatory payment, with the aim of limiting their presence in the community and availability for mass murder as in Christchurch. As we continue to find hope in significant steps made towards peace in the BARMM and in New Zealand, we continue to work for the elimination of nuclear weapons in the Korean Peninsula and Northeast Asia, and in the world. As Fr. Paul Lansu, Senior Policy Advisor to Pax Christi International wrote:

The time has come to embrace the abolition of nuclear weapons as an essential foundation of collective security. A major task still to be done is encouraging all Governments of States who adopted the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons to sign and ratify... We need a worldwide dialogue, including both the nuclear and non-nuclear States and the burgeoning organizations that make up the civil society, to ensure that nuclear weapons are banned finally to the benefit of our common home.

On this Peace Day, we wish to remind governments in the Asia-Pacific and the world to safeguard laws within their constitution that promote international peace and renounce war, such as Article 9 of Japan's Constitution. We also ask our policy makers and governments to remember the human dimension in making or changing policy – emphasizing on life, human dignity, human rights and human security. Democratic practices such as the right to dissent and free expression must be fully respected.

Pax Christi is grounded in the belief that peace is possible, and that vicious cycles of violence and injustice can be broken. May we live out the values of peace and nonviolence on this Peace Day, and continually in every single day.