



Pax Scotia

Issue 34

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We hold the power to demand solutions, says SCIAF's campaign chief

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"In fact, the deterioration of the environment and of society affects the most vulnerable people on the planet: 'Both everyday experience and scientific research show that the gravest effects of all attacks on the environment are suffered by the poorest'" (LS 48).

As soon as I open my eyes each morning, I reach for my phone. Reflexively, compulsively, sleepily, I check the news. What happened to our shared world while I slept? The headlines, inevitably, are climate chaos. Flash floods in Malawi; hunger crisis in Ethiopia; drought in Kenya; record breaking heatwaves in India and Pakistan. Emergency. Crisis. Destruction. Displacement.

Climate related disasters have become a familiar, ever-increasing threat – somewhat existential (for now) for us in the west, but all too real and devastating for our neighbours in the global south. We shake our heads, feel the pain of our brothers and sisters in climate vulnerable countries. What can we do?

The answer, as Catholics in Scotland, is a lot. Through our faith and through our individual and collective actions, we can move from climate chaos to climate justice.

Climate justice is about fairness and equality in the face of climate change, with the welfare of our brothers and sisters living in the world's most climate-vulnerable communities at the heart. It's recognising historical responsibilities – like the fact that countries in the west have contributed the most to greenhouse gas emissions throughout history. It's calling for actions that address the needs of these climate-vulnerable communities - like the establishment of a [Loss and Damage Fund](#) to support vulnerable countries hit hard by climate disasters - ensuring their involvement in decision-making processes and access to resources. Crucially, it's reflected in the Church's core teachings on stewardship, solidarity, and the dignity of all human beings.

So, who holds the power to achieve climate justice? Put simply, we all do.

Governments, corporations, and international organisations shape climate related policies and actions, while grassroots movements, organisations like SCIAF and individuals like you hold the power to challenge and demand solutions. On an individual level, you can advocate for fair policies and practices both locally and globally that promote the dignity and wellbeing of our neighbours in climate vulnerable places. Whether through signing a petition, attending an event, or sharing on social media, taking action as a campaigner helps to achieve meaningful change for people in the world's most vulnerable communities.

We can look to the bible to feel inspired - individual actions, when combined with collective efforts, can create a powerful force for change:

"For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another." Romans 12:4-5

Signing this letter (<https://campaign.sciaf.org.uk/firstforjustice>) to Scotland's new First Minister through the SCIAF First for Justice campaign is one way to put your faith into action. Our supporters are calling on the new First Minister Humza Yousaf to establish his commitment as new First Minister to put Scotland at the forefront of calls to build a just and green world. People, parishes and communities across Scotland want to see Scotland's New First Minister commit to solving the most challenging issues we face globally – add your voice to the growing chorus.

Taking action for climate justice not only honours Catholic teaching - it also works towards building a more just and sustainable world, where the needs of all people and the planet are respected and protected.

To quote Margaret Mead: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

<https://www.sciaf.org.uk/about-us/news/509-climate-impacts-and-non-economic-loss-and-damage>

Pax Christi Scotland was proud to successfully seek signatures from leading Church figures and peace groups to add to a letter from Pax Christi International that was delivered to the Japanese prime minister in his home city of Hiroshima, where he hosted one of the G7 meetings. The letter asked that the G7 leaders would, remembering the horrific nuclear attack Hiroshima was subjected to in August 1945, reconsider their stance on the possession, threat of use, and use of nuclear weapons. Delia Chatoor reflects on pre-G7 meetings she attended.



Hope for a safer and nuclear weapons free world?

Delia Chatoor is a retired lawyer & diplomat, having served at the Trinidad and Tobago Permanent Mission to the UN (1983-2014). She is a life member of the Trinidad and Tobago Red Cross Society; a lay minister in the Catholic Archdiocese of Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago; and a member of the Caribbean Climate Change Network. She continues to monitor UN meetings concerned with international peace.

The 49th Summit of the Members of the Group of 7 (G7) was held in the city of Hiroshima, Japan from May 17-21, 2023 in a security-driven and uncertain international environment. In the weeks leading up to the event, substantial deliberations were held on a variety of thematic areas that have been expressed as of major concern to the leaders of the G7 and by extension, the international community as a whole.

In a communiqué issued in April, foreign ministers affirmed their "... commitment to the ultimate goal of a world without nuclear weapons with undiminished security for all, achieved through a realistic, pragmatic, and responsible approach".

The communiqué made reference to the commitment of the G7 to work with all states "to further identify and implement measures to minimise risks of nuclear weapons use and to strengthen arms control". There was the further affirmation that as long as nuclear weapons exist, they "should serve defensive purposes, deter aggression, and prevent war and coercion".

These laudable sentiments emanate from governments where, for the most part, there are democratic structures that could ensure transparency, imposition of realistic checks and balances and practical risk reduction measures.

The unfortunate reality, however, is that there are certain nuclear weapons states that are members of the G7, and which continue to devote large percentages of their defence budgets to the modernisation of their conventional and nuclear weapons arsenals.

A new report from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) issued in April stated that there was a 3.7% increase in total military expenditure "in real terms in 2022." This increase amounted to \$2240 billion with the largest spenders in 2022 being the USA, China and Russia.

The increase was seen as a response to an apparent "deteriorating security environment" with the conflict in Ukraine and simmering tensions in other flash points adding fuel to the fire. A 2022 SIPRI Report stated that China was involved in "a substantial expansion of its nuclear weapons arsenal". This could include "the construction of over 300 new missile silos". And it is disturbing to note that Europe has the highest number of states that are opposed to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), so that out of 44 States, 33 have stressed their objection to the Treaty.

It is, therefore, somewhat disconcerting to try to comprehend the contents of the Communiqué of the Foreign Ministers on the "commitment to the ultimate goal of a world without nuclear weapons" and yet vehemently oppose the TPNW which provides the mechanisms to achieve such a goal. It is also questionable whether the leaders are mindful of the growing opposition to such weapons among their citizens and the wider spectrum of civil society from academics to medical personnel, retired military personnel and diplomats.

When the Charter of the United Nations was adopted and signed on June 26, 1945, there was the hope that the ravages of World War II would inspire the peoples of the world to, as the Charter states "unite our strength to maintain international peace and security." Of course, before the ink was dry, two nuclear bombs had been detonated, one on Hiroshima, the city where this year's G7 was held.

The Secretary-General of the United



Delia Chatoor, Pax Christi Scotland's eye on the UN

Nations has himself acknowledged that the international community with its leaders must work towards a "more effective security response" to the unbridled challenges and risks.

This is one avenue where the G7 could demonstrate its leadership role.

It is clear then that we as civil society should be the ones to give them a big nudge.

We also have a duty to urge and encourage the public authorities who perpetuate the necessity of weapons of mass destruction and who produce and sell arms that they have a duty "to regulate them". (Catechism of the Catholic Church #2316).

Violence and conflict with the possession of arms do not belong among communities which openly declare that they are seeking an end to injustice, inequalities, peace and a nuclear weapons-free world. Or is that mere rhetoric?

The G7 leaders and others should pay heed more than ever before to the words of the prophet Isaiah:

"...they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." (Isaiah 2:4).

Delia Chatoor



‘One small nuclear bomb the size of a kitchen table...’

Siveen Tiernan was deputy head at a primary school in Dumbarton. Husband **Alex** was a chartered civil engineer. They spent two years in Sudan and ten in Nigeria where Alex's work was mainly to bring fresh water to local villages. Now retired, they recently journeyed to Japan & visited Hiroshima, scene of the first atomic bomb attack in August 1945. The contrast between modern Japan's tourist spots and the memorials in Hiroshima was life-changing...

After a great time in Tokyo, Sapporo and Hakodate we went by bullet train to Kyoto. The following day we travelled an hour by train to Hiroshima. As we hurtled towards our destination at 300 kilometres an hour our sense of anticipation was heightened.

Walking from the station down through the town towards the Peace Memorial Park Area containing the Atomic Bomb Dome, this anticipation was slightly tempered. We were unsure what to expect. Street cafes, restaurants and the many shops reflected a normal town full of normal people going about their daily business.

Reaching the Peace Park site and coming upon the ruined and bombed dome shored up to help preserve the remains of this horrific event, our mood was reflective. We toured the Peace Park site, taking in its many aspects: the Children's Peace Monument, the Rest House, the Flame of Peace, the Cenotaph and much more – but all of this still left us wondering what all this was about.

We finally reached the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, where we hired the audio commentary earphones.

Instantly, our senses were heightened as we looked at and listened to the horrific story of what actually happened here.

History can perhaps distort events from hundreds or even thousands of years ago. But not so in this case. The Hiroshima bombing only took place in 1945, so we have graphic illustrations and audio commentary to show and tell us about the terrible act committed.

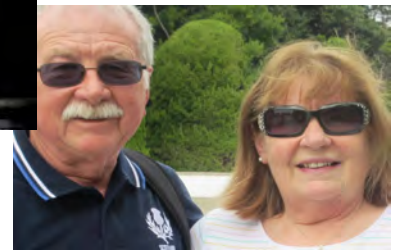
Any war is horrific – we see people being bombarded daily in Ukraine with mostly “conventional weapons” – but a “nuclear war” is unthinkable, even if threatened by President Putin. Recently Putin sent 23 missiles to Ukraine in one day with some destruction and a reported 25 or so deaths.

At Hiroshima, one small nuclear bomb the size of a kitchen table – a full scale model is on display – killed approximately 160,000 men, women and children instantly – vaporised to dust in a few seconds.

Around 140,000 more poor souls died over the next few days and weeks – a horrendous death from excruciating burns and cancers. More deaths were added over the years to come and



Pope Francis at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial



Alex & Siveen Tiernan

the museum portrays with artefacts and stories from survivors the human suffering that was endured.

It was heart wrenching and we felt compelled to find out more.

Further tests of nuclear bombs carried out by the US in the Marshall Islands caused death and injuries some 150 miles away.

We cannot just sit on the sidelines allowing the possibility of this happening again.

The Dalai Lama has said, “As humans, we all have the duty to eliminate from this earth weapons with destructive capacity beyond expression and conception. Please every one of you, use all of your power to accomplish this duty.”

What can we do now that we are safely home in Scotland living close to the Faslane site which not only berths the nuclear fleet but stores the weapons of mass destruction within its bunkers?

One obvious action is to take part in peaceful demonstrations at Faslane and other locations.

We can spread the word, urging others to read up about what actually happened at Hiroshima before it is condemned into ancient history,

Mother Teresa said, “Let us love one another as God loves each one of us – so that the terrible evil that has brought so much suffering to Hiroshima may never happen again”.

We leave the final words to the late Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who expressed what we feel:

“I heard what others said about Hiroshima. Now I have seen for myself and I am utterly devastated”

Alex & Siveen Tiernan

Our website

Blogs, podcasts, past and future events – these are all on our Pax Christi Scotland website. All newsletters are archived there. You can pay your annual membership fee on the Membership page and make donations. Please explore and share:

<https://www.paxchristiscotland.org>

Continued thanks to webmaster Chris Boles of Caledonian Websites:

<https://www.caledonianwebsites.com/>

Membership Reminder

Easiest method? Pay on the membership page of our website.

If you pay by online banking, please give your name to identify your payment.

If you wish to pay by cheque, send to the address below, cheques payable to Pax Christi Scotland.

You can also make regular donations on our 'donate' page - thank you.

Membership fees are £10 for waged, £5 for unwaged.

Explore the website for all our activities:

<https://www.paxchristiscotland.org>

Where to find Pax Christi Scotland:

<http://www.paxchristiscotland.org>

[@PaxScotland](https://www.facebook.com/PaxChristiScotland)

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[@PaxScotland](https://www.facebook.com/PaxChristiScotland)

Snail mail:

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YouTube Channel

You can find recordings of all our events at:

[https://www.youtube.com/](https://www.youtube.com/@paxchristiscotland)

[@paxchristiscotland](https://www.youtube.com/@paxchristiscotland)

Click on the word 'Subscribed' and you will be informed whenever a new recording is posted.

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The Holy Land: Seeking a Nonviolent Future

As the situation in the Holy Land deteriorates, we continue to join our voices with all who seek a peaceful and just solution there.

Our online event on **June 22** will bring together the Church of Scotland's Mission Partner **Rev Muriel Pearson**, who is currently minister at St Andrew's Church of Scotland, Jerusalem and Tiberias, and **Dr Abdelfattah Abesrou**, founder and general director of the Alrowwad Cultural and Arts Society for Children, Youth and Women in the Aida refugee camp in Bethlehem.

We will also hear from **Paul Gibson**, an EAPPI (Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine & Israel) volunteer very recently returned from a tour of duty in the Holy Land.

And on **September 7**, we will hear from a member of **Breaking The Silence**, an organisation of former Israeli soldiers who now speak out for a better future for Palestinians and Israelis - as they say, a future "free of siege and occupation". Please put that date in your diaries too.

We look forward to sharing this time: **June 22, 2023 19:00 UK time:**

Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/join/zoom/register/tZErF-yqqDksGtXy2SQZicnH8iuKhVQgRXz3>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

The Faslane Vigil & The Ongoing Anti-Nuclear Campaign

This month's newsletter puts heavy emphasis on nuclear weapons, and we make no apology for that - nor for reminding you again that at **12 noon on June 24** we will meet with Archbishop William Nolan and the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland at the **South Gate of the Faslane nuclear submarine base**.

We hope to see you there, and if you can't make it, please keep the issue in your prayers.

Those of us who campaign and protest are 'ordinary' people, like Siveen and Alex Tiernan, who recount their experience of visiting Hiroshima on P3.

As part of a worldwide Catholic peace organisation, campaigning to remove nuclear weapons from our common home is a priority, as it has been for our Popes and Bishops for decades. In 1962, Pope John XXIII helped to broker a peace plan that prevented the US and Russia unleashing nuclear weapons during the Cuba crisis. The next year he wrote his encyclical *Pacem in Terris*, in which he categorically stated that the arms race must end and that nuclear weapons must be banned.

Scottish Bishops made the same demands in 1982. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is in force. We ask you to continue to make our anti-nuclear voice heard.