Hundreds to defy US militarism and build new movements for peace

Tuesday 23 September, 2025

Nairobi, Kenya // 11 September 2025 – Peace Direct, an international NGO dedicated to supporting local people to build peace that lasts, is hosting a global gathering for local peacebuilders to build solidarity and resist militarism.

Held in Nairobi over 13-17 October 2025, Peace Connect will bring together hundreds of local peacebuilders from around the world for a week of meaningful connection, creativity and collective action.

With peace actors from countries like Afghanistan, Myanmar, Palestine, Ukraine and Sudan in attendance, this gathering's timing is vital. As the US Department of Defense rebrands to the Department of War, governments globally cut overseas funding, and conflicts escalate worldwide, it is crucial that local peacebuilders share their expertise and build cross-border solidarity.

"The multiple crises facing the world right now, including 120 active armed conflicts, demand an urgent and creative response," **Dylan Mathews, Peace Direct CEO**, said. "This is what Peace Connect aims to do, bringing together some of the most pioneering, brave frontline activists and their allies to share experiences and build solidarity. The world needs more peacebuilders and we hope that Peace Connect will help catalyse new ideas and movements for peace."

Lina María Jaramillo, Local Peacebuilding Expert in Colombia and Peace Connect Advisory Group member, said: "It is paradoxical and tragic that just when the world needs more acts of solidarity to counteract the suffering of war, a cloak of doubt has been raised over the importance of humanitarian assistance and cooperation. Today, we must connect our ideas of peace and solidarity with action if we are to sustain humanity amid this pain, death, and fear. For peacebuilding to remain possible, we must reconfigure the system and strengthen our collective action. That's why Peace Connect matters in this moment."

Around 500 peacebuilders and allies are expected to attend, including global leaders in peacebuilding and representatives from Peace Direct's local partners across 15 countries including Afghanistan, DRC, Sudan, Syria and Colombia. Networks like CIVICUS, MCLD, ICAN, UNOY, and Peace Starts Here will be sharing the stage.

Shaped by local peacebuilders, Peace Connect will disrupt the pattern of international events that exclude local voices and serve the interests of global North power holders. With a programme shaped by peacebuilders, the gathering offers space to focus on topics that truly matter to them: sessions cover practical peacebuilding approaches, integrating indigenous wisdom, making decolonisation a reality, climate-responsive peacebuilding, and more. As well as discussions and workshops, there will be art, poetry, and space to prioritise wellbeing and reflection.

For **Diana Ishaqat**, **Advisory Group member and Peace Starts Here campaign co-creator from Jordan**, Peace Connect is vital amid the current funding crisis: "It can be isolating to believe in peace. In my context, peace is a word associated with giving up on rights, with painful compromise, loss of indigenous rights, and Western interference. It's important that peace is made local, localised, and that it speaks to local peacebuilders; those who are often the first to point out the signs of brewing conflicts and their many manifestations in everyday life."

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Diana Ishaqat (she/her), Peace Starts Here campaign co-creator, Peace Connect Advisory Group member. Jordan.

Lina María Jaramillo Rojas (she/her), Local Peacebuilding Expert in Colombia, Peace Connect Advisory Group member. Colombia.

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Notes for editors:

Peace Direct is an international NGO based in the UK which supports local peacebuilders to stop violence and build sustainable peace. We provide funding, training and other resources to help them do the work that they feel is most relevant in their contexts. We currently support local peacebuilding efforts in 15 countries. While we have been convening local peacebuilders for almost 20 years, Peace Connect is the first global gathering of peacebuilders that we have organised.

For too long, local peacebuilders' voices have been missing from mainstream narratives about conflict resolution and peace outcomes. Peace Connect will offer journalists press passes to ensure media representatives have opportunities to learn about the vital work of local peacebuilders preventing violence globally and share the real stories of peacebuilders with their readers. These passes give full access, covering the total cost of the ticket. Peace Direct is reserving at least two press passes for local journalists in Kenya. To access a press pass and/or images to accompany coverage of Peace Connect or Peace Direct, email the contacts above.

Peace Connect has two hosting partners. Our Kenya-based co-host is IPHRD-Africa, a non-profit organisation with a focus on promoting a human rights approach to governance and peacebuilding for sustainable development in Africa. Peace Connect's official media partner is The New Humanitarian - an independent, non-profit newsroom that believes in journalism as a force for good. TNH produces fact-based journalism from the heart of conflicts and disasters to build understanding of how to improve the lives of the millions of people affected by humanitarian crises.

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PDF format press release
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