

International Alert.



Understanding conflict. Building peace.



About International Alert

International Alert is an independent peacebuilding organisation working in over 20 countries and territories around the world. Our dual approach involves working directly with people affected by violent conflict as well as at government, EU and UN levels to shape both policy and practice in building sustainable peace. Our regional work is based in the African Great Lakes, West Africa, the Caucasus, the Andean region of South America, Sri Lanka, Nepal and the Philippines. At both regional and international levels, our thematic work focuses on the role of business, humanitarian aid and development, gender, security and post-conflict reconstruction in the context of building peace.

International Alert

20 years of peacebuilding



Foreword



Despite the promises heralded by the end of the Cold War, the past 20 years have been some of the most destructive in history. Countries across the world have been torn apart by wars between and within states; generations have been shattered by acts of extreme violence – including genocide; and many people have lost their lives to appalling acts of terrorism.

Yet this same era also has seen causes for celebration and hope. In my own native South Africa, we have faced up to the terrible violence and injustices of our own past and have made huge efforts to achieve reconciliation and live peacefully together.

Elsewhere, the foundations of peace have taken hold in war-torn countries where many thought there was little hope. In Sierra Leone, Liberia and Burundi, for example, conflicts which destroyed so many lives have now given way to democratic elections, increasing stability and hope in the future. Much work remains to be done, of course, but their example should at the very least teach us that building peace is possible.

The pursuit of peace requires time and commitment. While the responsibility for peacebuilding ultimately lies with the authors and victims of violent conflict, external actors such as International Alert also have an important and valuable role to play.

It is International Alert’s dual focus – equipping local communities and engaging with policy-makers – which enables it to build peace in such a unique and effective way. Alert’s insightful research and analysis address the root causes of violent conflict and provide guidance at a global level. At the same time, its partnerships with local people provide practical, grounded support for many different peace processes around the world.

I was very pleased to have been involved in the work which led to International Alert’s founding and proud to have been the first vice-chairman of its Board of Trustees. Alert has achieved a huge amount over the past 20 years, and I am confident that in the future it will continue to make a major contribution to the goal of building peace around the world. I look forward to supporting this vital work in years to come. ■

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Desmond'.

Desmond M Tutu Archbishop Emeritus

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The end of the Cold War era brought with it great violence and turmoil. Since 1990 there have been over 125 armed wars, millions of civilian deaths, as well as devastation and ruin for some of the world's most disadvantaged communities. The majority of these conflicts happen within states, not between them, creating new challenges and aggravating persistent problems.

While more peace agreements have been reached since the end of the Cold War than in the previous two centuries combined, they remain fragile. Half fail within five years of being signed. Amidst a heightened global effort for peace, there remain widespread deficiencies in knowledge and understanding of how sustainable peace is achieved. To address these challenges, a long-term process is needed that lays the foundation for peaceful and stable development.

International Alert was one of the first international NGOs devoted to building peace. Our founders were proactive in identifying gross human rights violations and they understood that the best way to protect the rights of all citizens would be to identify and prevent the situations that led to human rights abuses in the first place. To this end, the new organisation focused on addressing internal conflicts, creating systems for early warning of violent conflict and establishing field programmes to support local efforts for peace.

Today Alert has grown to be one of the world's leading peacebuilding NGOs. We work in over 20 countries and territories worldwide, drawing on 20 years of experience in a wide range of conflict environments and peace processes. Our advice on peacebuilding is taken seriously by governments and international organisations. These achievements have been made possible by countless staff and partners who are passionate about making a difference in the lives of those who are most affected by violent conflict.

Our Vision and Mission

International Alert is working towards a world where differences are resolved without erupting into violence; a world where, when people seek better lives for their families and communities, any conflicts that arise are managed peacefully, with honesty and wisdom.

To achieve this vision, we have a three-part mission:

1. Working directly with people affected by violent conflict, supporting their efforts to improve their prospects for peace:

This means forming partnerships locally and regionally to develop mutual understanding between those divided by conflict and to identify new solutions to persistent problems.

2. Shaping international policy and practice that affect peacebuilding:

This means working at government, EU and UN levels, and with the private sector, to help decision-makers understand the impact of their actions and include the perspectives of war-torn communities.

3. Strengthening the expertise, impact and public profile of the peacebuilding sector:

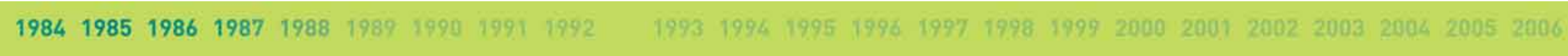
This means raising awareness of the importance of peacebuilding and working within the sector to improve ways of addressing the root causes of violent conflict.

Alert is proud of our history and of what we have learned and achieved over two decades of peacebuilding, and we look forward to the next 20 years. We believe that with patience, dedication and understanding, sustainable peace is possible. ■

Alert's Highlights

- **1985:** Establishment of SIFEC marks origins of Alert; the first country-specific programme in Sri Lanka is created to contribute to a peaceful settlement in Sri Lanka.
- **1986:** A Norwegian seminar on sources of internal conflict opens the door to Alert's work in Africa.
- **1987:** A conference in Kampala, Uganda, helps promote open dialogue about the issues surrounding internal conflict in Uganda.
- **1988:** Alert conducts an international conference on armed conflict in the Philippines, held in Manila, and produces a report, *Waging Peace in the Philippines*.
- **1989:** Two important reports are issued: *You Can't Eat Peace* on famine and conflict in Uganda and *Political Killings in Southern Sri Lanka*.
- **1990:** A conference on political violence in southern Africa takes place in Harare, Zimbabwe, leading to several important strands of work in the region.
- **1991:** Alert is awarded Consultative Status, Category II with the UN, an accomplishment at the time for such a young organisation.
- **1992:** Alert begins work in the former Soviet Union to monitor regions of possible and on-going conflict, and to offer a training programme on conflict resolution.
- **1993:** Alert works on early warning and prevention of armed conflict and conducts high level advocacy in US, UK, Canada, Austria, Switzerland, Finland, Japan, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Sweden.
- **1994:** The organisation reaches a turnover of £1.78 million.
- **1995:** Alert starts its work in the Great Lakes region of Africa with several programmes in both Burundi and Rwanda.
- **1996:** A training pack on conflict transformation is developed and used widely.
- **1997:** The West Africa programme is formalised after several projects in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Nigeria.
- **1998:** Alert publishes the first Code of Conduct for conflict transformation work.
- **1999:** Alert begins working with multinational corporations in conflict zones to contribute to peacebuilding.
- **2000:** Major lobbying effort by the *Women Building Peace Campaign* contributes to the passage of UN Security Council Resolution 1325.
- **2001:** The *Biting the Bullet* programme influences the UN Conference on Small Arms, where the UN Programme of Action is passed.
- **2002:** Alert publishes the groundbreaking study, *Security Sector Reform: The Challenges and Opportunities of the Privatisation of Security*.
- **2003:** Alert helps to establish the Consortium Initiative to address conflict between Armenians and Azeris over Nagorny Karabakh.
- **2004:** In partnership with others, two toolkits are released to build the capacity of women peacebuilders and help development agencies adopt conflict sensitive practices.
- **2005:** Alert launches new creative identity and logo; annual turnover reaches £5.5 million with nearly 100 staff; release of *Conflict Sensitive Business Practices* and *Economy and Conflict in the South Caucasus*.
- **2006:** Alert releases two significant reports: one documenting local business efforts for peace and another assessing conflict in Central Asia. New programme activities in Guinea and Uganda.

Our Founding



International Alert was created more than 20 years ago in a very different era. The 1980s were characterised by a struggle for world power between the USA and USSR. War and peace were largely depicted in relation to that global rivalry, and determined by who took what side, with what forces. While conflicts between nations were decreasing towards the end of the Cold War, internal conflicts were dangerously increasing.



Young Tamil prisoners staring out from behind barbed wire fence at a government detention camp, Sri Lanka 1986.

In this environment, efforts to promote sustainable development in many parts of the world were often undermined by violent conflict. A connection was seen between group conflict, stagnation of development, and gross violations of human rights. Governments realised that development programmes could not progress while violent conflict and human rights violations prevailed. At the same time, human rights workers recognised that the protection of political rights in conflict zones was not simply about identifying and highlighting individual violations – but also required preventative strategies and action. A different approach was desperately needed.

In 1984 and 1985, two consultations explored the potential role for non-government actors in preventing and resolving internal conflict. Unlike governments, these organisations were able to ask questions and provide information without appearing to intrude in other states’ affairs. The discussions brought together people from varying backgrounds, including internationally renowned experts in human rights, international law and conflict studies; NGOs and development agencies; and ministries of foreign affairs and politicians. They concluded

that a forum should be created to address internal violence and to alert governments and world opinion to developing crises.

Bridging theory and practice

International Alert was born of this urgency to focus attention on problems of group conflict which violate human rights, inhibit development and result in mass killings and genocide. It was launched in April 1985 as The Standing International Forum on Ethnic Conflict, Development, and Human Rights (SIFEC). The organisation not only believed meaningful action should be based on solid research, it also understood it was not enough to tackle symptoms without coming to grips with root causes. Thus, it aimed to analyse the causes and effects of internal violent conflict, draw attention to their dangers, propose solutions, and provide opportunities for discussion and mediation.

SIFEC merged with the US organisation, International Alert on Genocide and Massacres, and established the first International Alert Board of Trustees in April 1986. Underlying this merger was a shared concern for human suffering, violations of human rights, and economic and

social disruption. The merging of the two NGOs resulted in a pooling of resources, information, and public support with the potential to address the world’s most intractable problems.

Contributing to peace in Sri Lanka

International Alert grew out of a particular interest in Sri Lanka, a country plagued with violence since the late 1970s due to political and ethnic tensions. In 1985, following an eruption of mass violence in the country, an international committee was formed to contribute to a peaceful settlement between the Tamil and Sinhalese parties. This approach – still evident in Alert’s work today – sought to identify, from a non-partisan point of view, the specific characteristics of the conflict, as well as the root causes of violence, including: religious dimensions, socio-economic and political developments, attempted military coups, and unfair elections. Alert understood that while international action and support for Sri Lanka would help, it must be linked to progress on the peace process.

A 1988 consultation in Norway brought together people with diverse points of view,

including Buddhist monks, Tamil groups, politicians, scholars and development experts. One recommendation was that serious and immediate attention should be paid to the worsening human rights violations in the south of Sri Lanka, where selective and arbitrary killings were taking place at an accelerated rate. The resulting report, *Political Killings in Southern Sri Lanka*, not only named those who had been killed in the conflict, but attempted to explain, in the words of the principal actors in the events, the background and motivation for the continuing tragedy. Taken together with Alert’s 1986 report on the Tamils, this work was an early demonstration of Alert’s rounded approach and impartiality in the Sri Lankan context.

The peacebuilding work in Sri Lanka was only the beginning for this new, dynamic organisation, and Alert quickly diversified its programmes into new areas in Asia, as well as Africa. In an era where ‘conflict resolution’ did not exist as a sector, Alert and its partners would build upon their human rights traditions to address human rights abuses in areas of increasing violent conflict.

Ninety-five percent of armed conflicts take place within states, not between them – mostly in the developing world.



‘It is hoped that by establishing a body whose sole and disinterested task is assistance in alleviating suffering, protection of human rights, and of furthering development and international aid... a common course of action can be found which will contribute to peace, cultural diversity, and progress’.

MARTIN ENNALS, FIRST SECRETARY GENERAL OF INTERNATIONAL ALERT

1984	■ First Consultation on Ethnic Conflict held in Utrecht, the Netherlands, financed by Novib.	1985	■ Second Consultation in Woudschoten, the Netherlands, sponsored by EKD/Diakonische Werke and Novib.	■ SIFEC launched internationally at a press conference at the Foreign Press Association.	■ Official registration , or ‘Deed of Foundation’, of SIFEC was realised in Utrecht, the Netherlands.	■ Committee formed to contribute to a peaceful settlement between opposing factions in the prolonged armed conflict in Sri Lanka .	1986	■ SIFEC merges with International Alert and names its first Board of Trustees with Martin Ennals as its first Secretary General.	■ A joint research report issued focusing on the Tamils in Sri Lanka .	■ Alert organises a seminar in Norway on internal conflict in four differing countries – Northern Ireland, Nicaragua, South Africa and Sri Lanka –to identify the common sources of conflict.	1987	■ International seminar on internal conflict in Uganda takes place in Kampala, yielding recommendations for bringing peace and security to Uganda.	■ Seminar on the New Expressions of Racism held in Amsterdam.
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Early Principles

The principles that guided International Alert's early activities were drawn from our founders' own experiences in the field, as well as from an external environment that was seeing a dramatic increase in internal wars and conflicts of self-determination and identity. These founding principles still permeate the organisation's approach today to address violent conflict and achieve sustainable peace.

From the beginning, this approach stemmed from an understanding that conflict is a necessary – indeed, even positive –

aspect of human society but that appropriate methods should be used to manage disputes peacefully. Alert's early principles recognised that the root causes of conflict need to be addressed to ensure peace is sustainable and not short-lived. This means changing the structural conditions that give rise to violent conflict, and promoting social structures for managing conflict non-violently in the future.

Alert's early work was primarily influenced by the key concepts of human rights, early warning, and a complementary multi-track approach. ■

Human rights

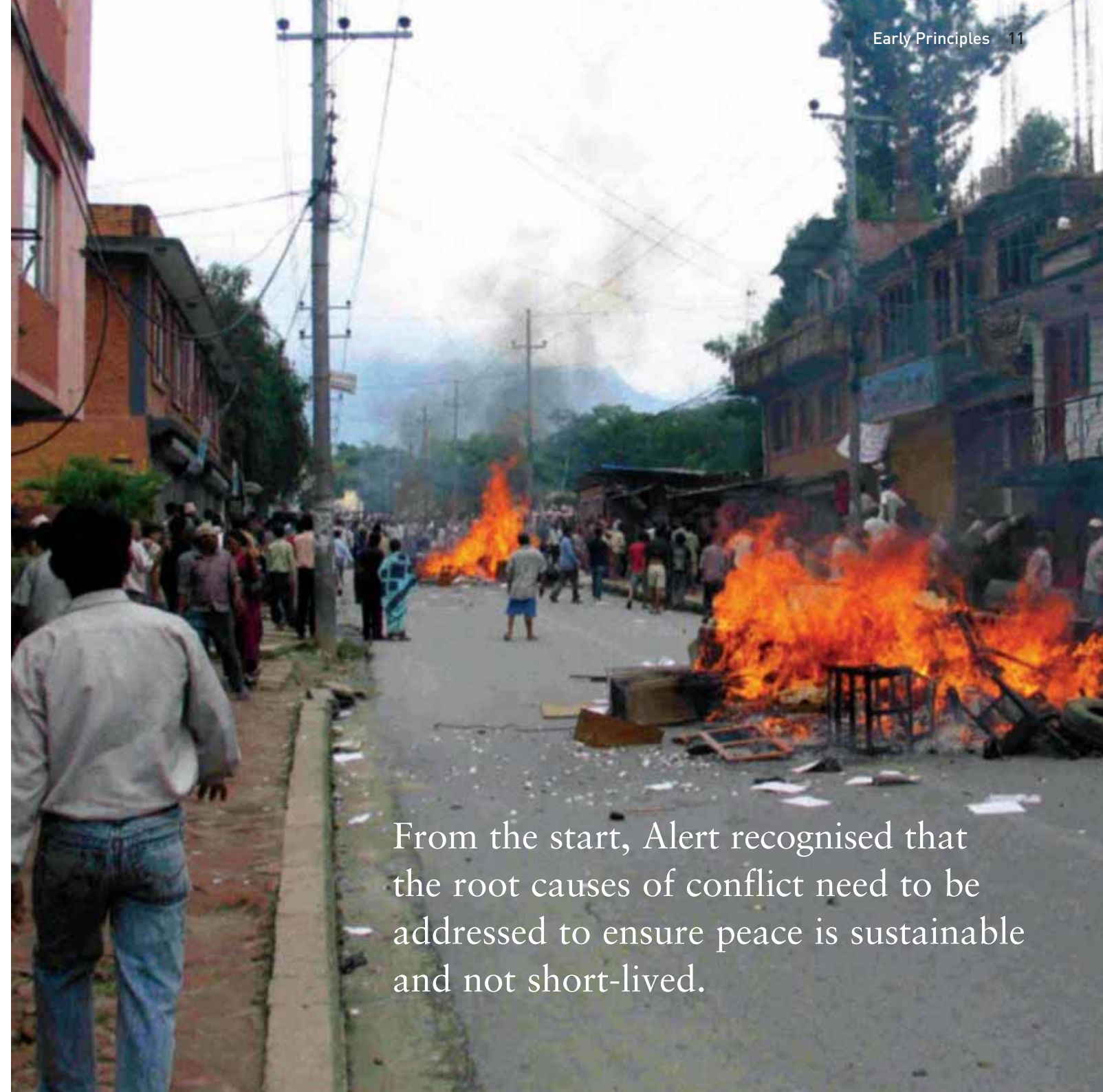
The protection of rights for all people was a fundamental element of Alert's founding and early work, with many early members coming from the human rights community. Our founders recognised that there was a clear need to combat the systematic violation of rights that occurred in violent conflicts – particularly those sparked by internal ethnic or political divisions where one or more social groups could be targeted and abused. Alert sought legal measures to protect and respect ethnic, religious, linguistic and other minorities to ensure that people's civil and political rights were respected and that internal divisions did not escalate into violence.

Early warning

At Alert's founding, early warning was a little understood or applied concept in relation to violent conflict. Alert was instrumental in the initial research and dialogue on early warning that explored ways to prevent disputes from arising, escalating or spreading into violence. We not only brought together those already active in the field and those with a direct interest in early warning information, but looked at practical ways to develop a global early warning capacity. Making this a reality proved to be an enormous challenge. In 1996 Alert, with other key organisations, reached the point of establishing systems for monitoring potential conflicts with the creation of the Forum on Early Warning and Emergency Response (FEWER).

A complementary multi-track approach

Alert's approach in the early years recognised that the protection of human rights was not simply about identifying and highlighting individual violations; it required an understanding of the root causes of conflict that lead people to violate those rights in the first place. To better ensure peace is sustainable requires taking a multi-track approach which would enable advances to be made in all aspects of society – government, civil society, education, and local economies. Similarly, peacebuilding is most effective when approached at various levels, with various actors and organisations. This idea has been expanded to form the strategic peace-building approach Alert advocates today.



From the start, Alert recognised that the root causes of conflict need to be addressed to ensure peace is sustainable and not short-lived.



Martin Ennals (1927-1991)

‘Without peace, there is little hope for human rights’.

As a pioneer of the human rights movement, Martin Ennals inspired many with his tireless devotion and life-long commitment to individual justice. Throughout his career, Ennals was involved with a wide range of activities in his search for peaceful solutions to conflict and his defence and promotion of equal rights for all. He was instrumental in the founding or early development of many noteworthy organisations including Amnesty International, HURIDOCs, Article 19 and International Alert.

As Secretary General of Amnesty International from 1968 to 1980, Ennals saw the organisation grow in a manner which could not have been dreamed of at its inception in 1961. During his stewardship, Amnesty was awarded the Erasmus Prize, the UN Human Rights Award and the Nobel Peace Prize – recognition of its credibility and authority throughout the world.

Ennals was a founding member of International Alert and its first secretary general from 1986 to 1990. From his vision – to address the widespread violations of human rights inherent in violent internal conflicts – Alert embarked on its path to become one of today’s leading peacebuilding NGOs. Friends say it was Ennals’ modesty, boundless energy, and contagious commitment that attracted support to his projects and allowed them to succeed. ‘He infected people with his own enthusiasm, harnessing others to his beliefs’, recalls Leah Levin, a long-standing board member.

Sadly, International Alert would be one of Ennals’ last contributions to the field. He died of lung cancer in 1991, aged 64, leaving many in the human rights community shaken. Two years later, the Martin Ennals Foundation was established to honour his legacy and, since 1994, the Martin Ennals Award has been distributed in recognition of human rights defenders who share Ennals’ vision and drive. Through the award that bears his name – and through the work of so many organisations he shaped and supported over a life-time – Ennals will be remembered. ■

Martin Ennals was not only the first Secretary General of International Alert, he was the source of Alert’s early energy, inspiration and development. His untimely death in 1991 was a severe blow to the organisation – and a great loss to the field of human rights.

- born **July 27, 1927** in Walsall, West Midlands
- **1951-1959**: UNESCO: active on the staff association
- **1959-66**: general secretary of UK National Council for Civil Liberties
- **1966-68**: Information Officer for the National Committee for Commonwealth Immigrants
- **1968-80**: Secretary General of Amnesty International
- **1982**: established HURIDOCs Network
- **1982-1985**: Head of the Greater London Council’s police committee support unit
- **1985-86**: First executive head of Article 19
- **1986-90**: First Secretary General of International Alert
- **1987-89**: Chairman of Defence for Children International
- Supported International Service for Human Rights, SOS Torture, the Rehabilitation and Research Centre for Torture Victims and the UK Commission for Racial Equality
- Honorary President of the European Human Rights Foundation
- **1991**: Professor of Human Rights, University of Saskatchewan
- died of lung cancer, **October 5, 1991** in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada; aged 64
- **1993**: Martin Ennals Foundation created
- **1994**: First Martin Ennals Award presented to Harry Wu, a Chinese activist. Since then, the MEA has been distributed annually [see www.martinennalsaward.org].

‘He believed in creating institutions that would transcend us all, institutions that would span the full spectrum of human rights’.

KUMAR RUPESINGHE, FORMER SECRETARY GENERAL OF INTERNATIONAL ALERT

At a Crossroads

1984 1985 1986 1987 1988 1989 1990 1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 1996 1997 1998 1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006

Faced with dramatic changes within the organisation and in the outside world, International Alert’s viability and survival were tested in the early 1990s. With the collapse of the former Soviet Union in 1991, a wave of nationalism swept through Southeast Europe, Russia and Central Asia. In the post-Soviet vacuum of power, desires for self-determination provoked civil war in many countries. A new world order was emerging in which the UN had far more capacity than before to deploy peacekeeping operations and offer its good offices for peace negotiations. The role of non-governmental organisations also began to be better understood and more widely accepted.

Border guard looks out from behind a hole in the Berlin Wall.



Meanwhile, instability troubled Alert at home with the tragic death of its first Secretary General. This was not only a tremendous loss for the peace and human rights community, but to an organisation just growing into its own, gaining credibility around the world. Alert faced a crossroads and, revisiting the vision of the founding members, it undertook a strategic review that assessed its own role, points of entry in conflict, and new ways to stimulate funding. In particular, Alert evaluated its response to the new global context, with emphasis on areas where there were political and military developments or an escalation in the level of human rights violations.

With several years of achievements owing to the hard work and networking of its founders, Alert was just at the point of becoming more confident and assured. This period of reflection gave the organisation space to now take a more strategic and systematic approach to its programmes. New standards were developed to scrutinise each programme and thus create a priority approach based on programme balance

and other agreed criteria. This included ensuring that all future programmes had the potential for a positive contribution by Alert, that funding and programme capacity were available, and that no other body was playing a comparable lead role – criteria that still hold today.

By the end of 1992, Alert had restructured its governing body, discussed a business plan, and made concrete plans for future direction. It appointed Kumar Rupesinghe, a long-standing Alert board member, as its new Secretary General. The organisation focused on developing a stronger support base to carry out its vision through increased staffing, funding for core activities, and the creation of a positive work environment.

Responding to a new world order

The end of the Cold War had a significant impact on the global conflict landscape, further provoking intra-state conflicts characterised by ethnic and political divisions. In 1992, Alert began its programme in the former Soviet Union following a formal request by the Russian

Federation Minister for Nationalities to monitor the situation in regions of possible and on-going conflict. Alert organised a series of fact-finding missions to Tatarstan, the North Caucasus and outer Mongolia, as all three regions, though geographically and ethnically distinct, shared common aspirations and grievances. By 1993, Alert also was exploring a role in facilitating negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorny Karabakh.

The importance of on-going analysis and the ability to respond flexibly to changing situations became paramount in such a fluid landscape. What were to be regarded as ‘frozen’ conflicts towards the end of the 1990s were, at this stage, very active.

Healing wounds in southern Africa

While International Alert’s longest-established and best-developed programme at this time was in Asia, the organisation was increasingly exploring work in Africa, where many countries were emerging from long internal conflicts. Much of this work focused on southern Africa, where Alert co-organised a major conference, *The Consequences of Organised Violence in Southern Africa* in Harare, Zimbabwe, in September 1990. The conference aimed to identify and focus

attention on the direct consequences of apartheid, destabilisation, imprisonment, torture, and other related traumas in southern Africa. In a regional context marked by prolonged internal conflict, this was an exercise both in peacebuilding and in ‘early warning’, as it not only addressed the consequences of organised violence in the region, but also problems that could emerge in the future.

The Harare conference resulted in additional fact-finding missions to explore other work in the region. Of particular note was Alert’s evaluation of the National Peace Secretariat in South Africa, which brought together an international and cross-cultural fact-finding team and produced a detailed and well-received analysis. Beyond southern Africa, fact-finding missions were sent to Kenya, Sudan and Ethiopia, although this work was affected by sweeping political/military changes in these countries.

The expansion of Alert’s work into the former Soviet Union and across Africa demonstrated how the organisation emerged from its re-evaluation period with renewed clarity of direction and focus. By 1993, Alert had tripled its previous year’s funding and increased staff from 10 at the start of the year to 35 at the end. More confident and assured, Alert was on its way to a much higher profile in the growing field of peacebuilding.

Much of the recent decrease in armed conflict is due to its suppression or containment, rather than its resolution.



■ International Alert awarded **UN Consultative Status**, Category II, with the United Nations.

■ Alert conducts exploratory work in **Papua New Guinea/Bougainville**.

■ Publication of racism report, *Equal Treatment and Discrimination in Europe*; later followed by ‘Alternative Maastricht Summit’ on racism in Europe.

■ Alert conducts missions to **Kenya and South Africa**.

■ Conferences on People’s Right to Participate in Governance and Role of Military in Democratic Transitions, in the **Philippines**.

■ **Kumar Rupesinghe** is appointed new Secretary General.

■ Programme in the **former Soviet Union** starts with monitoring and fact-finding missions

■ Alert starts its train-the-trainer programme on conflict resolution in **Moscow**.

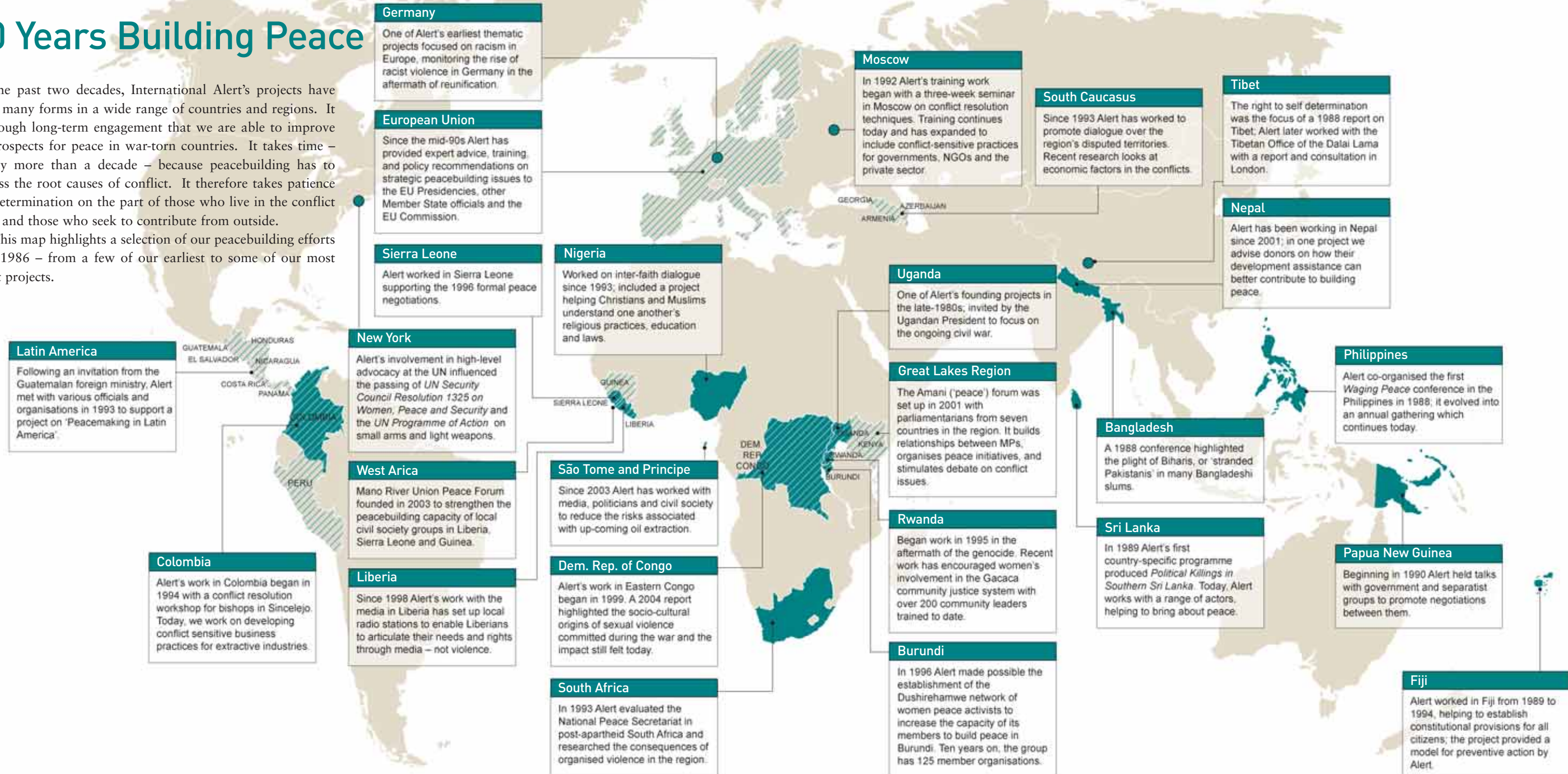
■ Mission to **Germany** to look at racism and xenophobia in Europe.

■ Mission sent to **Colombia, Guatemala, and Peru** to gain advice, support and participation in the project ‘Peacemaking in Latin America’.

20 Years Building Peace

For the past two decades, International Alert's projects have taken many forms in a wide range of countries and regions. It is through long-term engagement that we are able to improve the prospects for peace in war-torn countries. It takes time – usually more than a decade – because peacebuilding has to address the root causes of conflict. It therefore takes patience and determination on the part of those who live in the conflict zones and those who seek to contribute from outside.

This map highlights a selection of our peacebuilding efforts since 1986 – from a few of our earliest to some of our most recent projects.





Waging Peace in the Philippines

Ed Garcia, Senior Policy Advisor to the Philippines programme, on the origins and evolution of Alert's successful Waging Peace Conference

“ International Alert co-organised the first ever international conference on armed conflicts in the Philippines in 1988, and I recall Martin Ennals encouraging the assembled academics, religious and youth leaders, members of the government, the opposition, and representatives from Congress to consider the message of Archbishop Desmond Tutu: ‘There is no problem which cannot be solved by people, given the willingness and the capacity to sit down and negotiate’.

Ennals reminded the delegates: ‘Political problems have no ultimate military solutions. Peace is a slow process with few shortcuts. But the longer armed combat continues, the longer and harder will be the road back to peace’. And he urged them: ‘This may be one step but it must not be the last’.

Since then, the groundbreaking Waging Peace Conference has evolved into an annual gathering bringing together peace advocates from different conflict regions in the country representing diverse perspectives. It has provided a safe space for forging a shared analysis and arriving at recommendations to advance the process. It has made appeals for the people's Christmas cease-fire, called for humanitarian pauses, recommended that third party facilitators engage in talks, supported monitoring of the cease-fire in Mindanao (the citizens' *Bantay Cease-fire* experience) as well as compliance with the human rights accord (the *Sulong Carhrihl*) and, finally, has addressed the core issues of the armed conflicts confronting the country. The conference encouraged the formation of a multi-sectoral group of peace advocates, giving voice to the aspirations of citizens to advance the process despite doubts from some quarters.

Alert initiatives have included innovative efforts. For example, an international conference on people power focusing on the people's right to participate in governance resulted in recommendations on electoral and political reforms. In another

instance, an international exchange on the role of the military in periods of political transitions included people who had been involved in analysing measures to respond to military coup attempts in the first democratically elected government after the dictatorship. Finally, an international colloquium on peace-making convening peace-makers from Asia, Africa and Latin America resulted in the Manila Declaration on people's participation in peacemaking.

In the 2000s, the Waging Peace process has also focused on themes relevant to the Asian region: the regional context in the aftermath of the events of 11th September; the role of third party facilitators in the peace processes in Mindanao, Aceh, Sri Lanka and Nepal; the importance of engaging a new generation of peace advocates – youth.

Alert has provided low-profile support to those engaged in facilitating the often stalled negotiations between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the National Democratic Front. We have sat down with the negotiating panels of both the GRP and the NDF, exchanged experiences with the staff of the Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace Processes as well as NGOs working to build peace constituencies. Alert has met with political leaders to explore ways to incorporate the peace process into their political platforms, and to encourage the drafting of a national peace policy that would favour the negotiated path as a way of settling serious differences.

The work of peacemaking requires a marathon mentality across generations. Alert's recent efforts to accompany peace advocates now include the broadening of the support base for peace over the long term, encouraging youth to take part in the building of a more peaceful future – one that is different from the past. ”



‘Political problems have no ultimate military solutions. The longer armed combat continues, the longer and harder will be the road back to peace’.

MARTIN ENNALS, FIRST SECRETARY GENERAL OF INTERNATIONAL ALERT.

Dynamic Transformation



In the second half of the 20th century, the world changed at unprecedented speed and in varied ways. Yet many global concerns and problems went essentially unaltered – particularly those relating to peace and justice. International Alert’s first decade of work confirmed the importance of the insights and commitment that brought it into existence; tragedies in internal conflict, such as Chechnya, Bosnia and Rwanda, showed that international institutions were still struggling to prevent violence.



A corroded sign reflects the landscape in Monrovia, Liberia.

While the international community saw the need for organisations such as International Alert, it was a trying time for the peacebuilding sector – struggling in comparison with the global reach of many development agencies. Alert, like other peacebuilding organisations, continued to search for its niche and role in an increasingly violent and warring world.

A strong effort to increase and stabilise funding enabled Alert to secure major grants and increase income six-fold during this period. With improved funds, Alert began to push the boundaries of peacebuilding work. While new organisations had emerged throughout the world with a focus on conflict-related issues, Alert remained a pioneer, continuing to raise awareness of issues surrounding violent conflict – and encouraging others to take part.

Pushing regional boundaries

As a direct response to the increasing number of violent internal conflicts affecting many African societies, International Alert expanded its engagement on the continent, including the Great Lakes region of Africa, Sierra Leone and Liberia.

A high-profile international conference in Ethiopia in 1994 discussed challenges ahead for Africa and how organisations such as Alert could help to address some of these problems.

In 1995 Alert was invited by Ambassador Ould Abdallah, the UN Secretary General’s Special Representative to Burundi, to bring together influential and senior figures from the highest levels on both sides of the divide. At the same time, Alert started a programme to stimulate more equal participation by Burundian women in civil society. Alert realised a peaceful society was only possible by working at both a high level as well as the ground level – and linking the two together. The capacity-building work with women’s groups in Burundi sparked further interest in Rwanda in 2001, where Alert was asked to train female judges to participate in the traditional Gacaca justice tribunals. The programmes in the Great Lakes region continue today.

Alert’s work in West Africa started in 1993. While working on the problems occasioned by armed conflict in Liberia, Alert realised that there could be no viable solution to that protracted conflict without taking into account what was

happening in the country’s neighbourhood. In Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Ivory Coast, fighting often would overflow state borders, engulfing other communities and states. This focus then expanded to include the war in Sierra Leone.

Alert’s engagement in Sierra Leone was based on a multi-track approach involving facilitation of peace negotiations, assisting a national peace constituency and building an international support group. During this period, Alert helped to encourage dialogue that enabled hostages held by the rebels to be freed. Subsequently, its interventions focused increasingly on the peace negotiations of 1996. Alert was involved in the pre-negotiations and the formal negotiations, which saw changes in the government and led, finally, to the signing of the historic Abidjan Accord in November 1996.

Although Alert played an important role in the different events and processes leading up to the peace agreement, it became tangled in the politics of the country and received a number of serious criticisms of its involvement. During the following period, Alert reflected on these criticisms, learned from its experiences, and sought to correct the various misunderstandings of its decisions and actions.

High level advocacy and training

With 10 years of history and experience, International Alert started a more high-profile advocacy strategy. Alert staff attended meetings and spoke at conferences to call for support and adoption of preventive diplomacy measures at the highest policy levels. In addition there was increasing collaboration at every level with bodies such as the OAU, the EU and the UN to achieve policy changes and bring about better co-ordination of peacebuilding efforts.

Around this time, Alert began to design its own conflict resolution training programmes. The training was originally created to strengthen theory and practice of conflict resolution and support emerging civil societies within Russia and other areas of the former Soviet Union. In the years to follow, Alert’s training expanded, reaching peacebuilders in the North Caucasus; Lebanon; the Basque region of Spain; the former Yugoslavia; Kenya; and Zimbabwe. To meet the need for training materials specific to violent social and political conflicts, Alert developed a substantial *Resource Pack for Conflict Transformation* in 1996; a tool which is still used widely today.

Almost half of post-conflict countries relapse into war within a few years.



‘Peace does not mean the absence of conflict, but only the absence of the violent manifestation of conflict’.

RESOURCE PACK FOR CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

1994	■ Alert supports a major peace conference in Sri Lanka , launching a national peace movement and a peoples’ peace council.	■ A seminar with Colombian bishops leads to more regional meetings to develop their role as mediators, and work with peace advocates in the country.	■ Missions to Mozambique to assess its transition to a post-conflict society, and to Cambodia to lay foundations for negotiations with Vietnam.	1995	■ Colloquium in London on the role of the international community in Burundi paves the way to Alert’s programme in the Great Lakes.	■ Mission to Albania to analyse the link between development and conflict prevention.	1996	■ Alert co-organises a workshop with the Latin American Episcopal Conference (CELAM) in Guatemala .	■ Dagestan programme begins to look at growing tensions on the Dagestan/Azerbaijan border.	■ Confidence-building workshops with individuals from Georgia and the break-away republics of Abkhazia .	■ Alert, with 12 other organisations, creates FEWER to develop coherent indicators of conflict risk and early warning reports.	1997	■ Media workshop in Liberia encourages responsible reporting of the elections.
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Reflections from Burundi

Two senior staff members share highlights from our long-standing programme in the African Great Lakes

From international excursions...

Bill Yates, Senior Advisor to the Great Lakes programme

“ When International Alert began to work in Burundi in 1995, the situation across the country was increasingly volatile. Strikes and riots happened weekly; assassinations were carried out in broad daylight in the centre of town; in Bujumbura, ethnic cleansing of Hutus from the universities and elsewhere was common.

The UN Secretary General's Special Representative asked Alert to take a group of Burundi's senior politicians, officials and army officers on a two-week tour of South Africa. He had mixed motives. Partly, he wanted a few of the most extreme political troublemakers out of town for a while, but he also hoped that the group might learn something from the way the South African peace process was unfolding at that critical time. With tremendous help from a South African peacebuilding organisation, ACCORD, the trip – including a long meeting with Nelson Mandela – was a great success. Not only were the immediate objectives achieved, but, to our surprise, the shared experience outside their own environment kick-started a confidence-building dynamic between key members of the group. After their return to Burundi these erstwhile, inveterate enemies decided to keep on meeting.

The result was a sustained process of high level dialogue on the tough divisive issues of the Burundian conflict. Because of the South Africa tour, Alert was invited to provide guidance and support. After three or four years, Alert identified three key changes in attitudes which this work helped bring about:

Firstly, Burundi's obsessive fixation on history and its acrimonious culture of blame for the horrors of the past seemed to be loosening. Instead, there was a new willingness to look to

the future. Secondly, a widening of the centre ground was taking place, and with it an increase in the strength of moderate voices. Thirdly, there was a considerable change for the better in the style and tone of public discourse. Death lists were no longer printed in newspapers; ethnic enemies could appear together at a public meeting; and the word 'negotiations' could be uttered without eliciting a spate of death threats.

Such changes rarely occur for a single reason, and there was a range of other peacebuilding interventions that made a difference at that time. For us, though, it is enough to know that the work assisted by Alert had made a significant contribution to Burundi's peace process. ”

... to community networks

Ndeye Sow, Senior Advisor to the Great Lakes programme

“ When International Alert first engaged with the conflict in Burundi, our high level involvement with politicians and military officials meant that we initially didn't pay much attention to the potential role of women in the peace process. However, it soon became clear that women's groups were already playing a crucial role in building peace in the country. It was women in particular, after all, who were displaying the courage and determination to cross over the political and ethnic divide; and there were already well-established, ethnically mixed groups of women who were providing a powerful example of ethnic co-operation to the rest of the country.

Realising the powerful peacebuilding message that women's groups possessed, Alert partnered with various organisations to support them in making a positive impact on the peace process in

Burundi. One key objective was to enable women's views to be fully represented at a policy-making level, in order to ensure that peace negotiations took gender issues fully into account.

One group which we started to support in 1995 was CAFOB – a small network of women's organisations. When we first started meeting, CAFOB was severely under resourced, with no office or paid staff. Our first discussions were held in classrooms after school hours, with only candles for lighting once the sun had gone down.

Since our partnership began just over 10 years ago, CAFOB has experienced a dramatic growth rate. It now has a permanent office fitted with computers, employs six full time staff and has secured reliable funding from other sources. With over 50 member organisations and an excellent resource centre on gender

issues, it is now widely perceived as one of the leading women's associations in Burundi.

Most exciting has been the successful advocacy role which CAFOB has played to ensure that gender issues and provisions are both considered and incorporated into Burundi's peace process. CAFOB played a key role in ensuring that women's views were represented during the Arusha Peace Process by, for example, successfully lobbying for provisions in the new constitution that would protect women's inclusion. Thanks to the work of CAFOB and other groups, women are now guaranteed a share of at least 30 percent of the seats in the Burundian parliament.

Our work with CAFOB and other Burundian women's organisations has since been replicated across the region, in both Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. ”



Gathering of a women's community group in Burundi.

Consolidation

1984 1985 1986 1987 1988 1989 1990 1991 1992

1993 1994 1995 1996 1997 1998 1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006

By the late 1990s new organisations focused on conflict-related issues started to emerge, further pushing the issues of internal conflict on to the international political agenda. After a period of reflection upon profound events, Alert would go through a process of evaluation and learning that was in keeping with the growing scale of its ambitions and funding. Alert re-launched itself and created the groundbreaking *Code of Conduct* to provide principles which would guide the organisation in the pursuit of its future objectives.

‘[Alert’s] increasing involvement with conflict prevention and resolution must be seen as part of a wider process whereby such activities have become an important and rapidly expanding area for aid agencies’, wrote the Christian Michelsen Institute in its first donor evaluation of a conflict prevention NGO in 1997. ‘It has largely inspired the entry of NGOs into this area of work’. The report provided some tough criticism of Alert’s recent work in Sierra Leone, as well as praise for its work in the Great Lakes.

Under the new leadership of Kevin Clements, who joined the organisation in early 1999, Alert strove to deepen its understanding of how it could best contribute to the peacebuilding sector. This increased professionalism also helped ensure legitimacy and accountability in a growing field of conflict resolution. To that end, the organisation created its *Code of Conduct* in 1998, providing an ethical framework for those involved in conflict transformation work.

Business and security

The new world order created new questions for international policy-makers, which encouraged Alert to deepen the synergy between its policy and peacebuilding work on the ground. Its advocacy and thematic programmes looked at the inclusion of women in peacebuilding, the role of humanitarian agencies and the EU in addressing conflict, preventative diplomacy and early warning, as well as conflict resolution training. In addition, two initiatives focused on the role of business in conflict and the issue of small arms.

A new area for Alert concentrated on the economic dimension of internal conflict and how businesses could contribute to conflict prevention rather than escalation. Started in 1999, the programme explored the accountability, responsibility, and peacebuilding capacity of multinational companies, in particular those involved in oil, gas and mining. The programme quickly grew a sound expertise, expanding to different regions

across the globe, including Azerbaijan, the Philippines and Sri Lanka. It would later expand its focus to include local business initiatives as well. In 2000 the programme co-published *The Business of Peace*, a report which followed extensive research and consultation with the business community, governments and NGOs, and drew upon Alert’s field experience in Azerbaijan.

Another programme focusing on security issues provided high level advocacy to the UN. By this time Alert had become one of the leading organisations working for control of small arms and light weapons. It not only started the well-known umbrella organisation IANSA (the International Action Network on Small Arms), but it had significant involvement in the development of *Biting the Bullet*, a partnership of organisations to monitor the implementation of the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons. This programme grew to examine privatisation of security and security sector

reform, conducting a multi-country mapping and assessment throughout many regions of the world. In 2002, Alert published a study, *Security Sector Reform; The Challenges and Opportunities of the Privatisation of Security*.

Investing in regional programmes

At the turn of the century, Alert continued to strengthen its areas of existing work in the Great Lakes region of Africa, Sri Lanka, West Africa and the Caucasus. In Sri Lanka, the programme shifted focus to achieve its objectives through a low profile, facilitating role with effective local partners. The ‘Cost of War’ project helped to increase awareness of not only the economic cost of the Sri Lankan conflict but also the human and social cost. Another important milestone was Alert’s facilitation of a visit from a Sri Lankan cross-party group to Northern Ireland and the Philippines, which enabled discussions about developing a common negotiating strategy.

The West Africa regional programme was formalised in 1997 and continued to work with religious leaders and the Liberian media around the elections. Alert contributed to the development of a peacebuilding constituency in the Mano River area involving civil society groups.

It also supported ECOWAS (The Economic Community of West African States) which included regional initiatives to prevent violent conflict as a key aim alongside its original mandate of economic integration.

Alert’s work in the former Soviet Union continued in 1999, with the bulk of its work in Georgia and Abkhazia. By bringing various group to the table through the Caucasus NGO Forum, it

was possible to open a space for dialogue where none existed before.

Through this period of consolidation, Alert’s resolve and willingness to change fuelled a quiet and managed growth. A more certain organisation would emerge, well-positioned to continue leading the way in peacebuilding. Yet there would be even more challenges for Alert as the global context changed once again following 9/11.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT:	
Primacy of People	Conflict transformation requires the participation and involvement of those most affected by the conflict.
Humanitarian Concern	Our actions seek to alleviate the human suffering of those at risk from violent conflict.
Human Rights Principles	We are committed to the principles of human rights and humanitarian law in areas of violent conflict.
Respect for Gender and Diversity	We believe in respecting the dignity and cultural diversity of all peoples through non-discriminatory actions.
Impartiality	We do not take sides, operating inclusively and seeking access to the relevant parties to a conflict.
Independence	We are an independent organisation, free to operate in accordance with our aims and principles.
Accountability	We are responsible to those we assist, bound by UK Charity Law, and accountable to those with whom we work and our donors.
Confidentiality	We maintain confidentiality in situations where the effectiveness of our work or the security of our staff and partners may be at risk.
Partnerships	We work in collaboration with individuals, organisations, governments and other institutions.
Institutional Learning	We are committed to developing and sharing our collective pool of knowledge, institutional memory and experience.

■ International Alert publishes its *Code of Conduct*, the first of its kind in the peacebuilding sector.

■ ‘Women Building Peace’ campaign launches to highlight women’s contribution to peacebuilding.

■ The Caucasus NGO Forum is created to build confidence between the sides of the Georgia/Abkhazia conflict.

■ Kevin Clements becomes Secretary General.

■ IANSA, the International Action Network on Small Arms, is formed by Alert.

■ Alert, Saferworld and BASIC develop the ‘*Biting the Bullet*’ project to influence the outcome of the UN Conference on Small Arms.

■ UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security is passed unanimously.

■ Alert starts its work in the Democratic Republic of Congo with a focus on the Kivu provinces in the east of the country.

■ Alert helps to create EPLO, the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office, an umbrella group of NGOs concerned with peacebuilding issues.

■ UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its Aspects is passed.

1998

1999

2000

2001



Developing Thematic Expertise

International Alert has a unique role in the peacebuilding sector, working both on the ground with people affected by violent conflict, as well as at a policy level nationally and internationally. In this dual role, we have been able to work on issues and with actors not usually recognised as having a relationship to conflict or role in building peace. Today, in addition to looking at the security sector, small arms and light weapons and post-conflict reconstruction, our thematic work explores the role of businesses and women in building peace, as well as the complex impact of development aid on conflict-torn countries.

Alert's campaign to highlight the role of women in peacebuilding, and our work to understand and influence how businesses operate in conflict regions, have both done much to enhance the organisation's reputation. Both programmes have celebrated important achievements and continue to generate cutting edge work today.

Giving a voice to women peacebuilders

In situations of violent conflict, women are at risk from multiple forms of violence and are often deliberate targets. At the same time, they have played a significant role in peacebuilding efforts that for too long has been underappreciated or ignored – particularly at the high policy level.

The 'Women Building Peace' campaign was launched in 1999 by 100 NGOs – International Alert among them – to address gen-

der exclusion and inequality in conflict situations. As a result of intensive lobbying, UN Security Council Resolution 1325 was passed in October 2000 – a watershed agreement to explicitly recognise and strengthen women's contribution to peacebuilding.

Alert has continued its efforts in this area by focusing on the implementation of 1325 and advocating for a tailored approach to peacebuilding that takes into account the inter-relationship between men, women and children in situations of conflict. A large part of this work entails bridging the gap between policy and practice in this area by ensuring voices from the ground are heard at the highest policy levels. In 2004 for example, Alert accompanied a Congolese partner to address the UN Security Council. This event enabled decision-makers to hear first-hand accounts of gender-based violence in the African Great Lakes – accounts that influenced their policies to better protect women and girls in the region.

Business in conflict situations

Businesses often find themselves on the front line of conflict. From Angola, Burma and Colombia to Indonesia, Niger and elsewhere, the experience of businesses has demonstrated that there are a range of conflict risks posed by investing in unstable states. International Alert was among the first to make the linkage between the role of the private sector and conflict, especially with regard to oil, gas and mining projects which can inadvertently trigger or sustain violence, or become the focus of resentment.

'...[T]here should be an independent international inquiry to identify in a precise manner those responsible, individually and collectively, for sexual violence against women during the war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo'.

AGATHE RWANKUBA, FROM ALERT PARTNER ORGANISATION IN THE DRC, ADDRESSING THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL OPEN DEBATE, 28 OCTOBER 2004

Alert's work with the private sector set out to draw from the practical experience of our field programmes, including the South Caucasus, West Africa, Latin America and Asia. This in-depth understanding of the role of business in conflict led us, in 2005, to develop resource tools for businesses to use when planning and carrying out work in conflict-prone zones. As a result, Alert has established an international reputation as a specialist in conflict-sensitive business practices and the work is now being expanded to include other industries.

Another different but equally important aspect of our work with the private sector is the role of local businesses in resolving conflict in their communities. After much experience of working with business activists across our regional programmes, Alert published a report, *Local Business, Local Peace*, in 2006, highlighting the much overlooked role of local businesses in peacebuilding through case studies from around the world. This book is the first attempt to systematically document and explore this most under-estimated of peacebuilding actors.

This work is continuing to evolve to encompass a range of economic issues, from foreign aid and investment and macro-economic reform to shadow economies and stimulating economic opportunities. As always, Alert's aim is to apply a 'conflict lens', shedding light on the complex ways in which a spectrum of issues and actors can drive conflict or alternatively contribute to peace. ■

'Businesses operate in conflict zones and conflict-prone countries around the world... But if they make the right decisions, they can help a country turn its back on conflict, and move towards lasting peace'.

KOFI ANNAN, UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY GENERAL, FORWARD, *CONFLICT-SENSITIVE BUSINESS PRACTICE*

Diamond workers sifting gravel in Guinea.

Growth and Expansion

1986 1987 1988 1989 1990 1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 1996 1997 1998 1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006

The tragic events of 11th September, 2001 completely altered the geo-political landscape. While much of Alert’s programming was not shifted by the attack on the Twin Towers, these events reinforced the need to address the underlying causes of violence. Terrorism played more greatly than ever before and engaging in a debate about the ‘war on terror’ now became a requirement. The new language labelled many insurgent groups as terrorists, contributing to a hardening of positions and making it more difficult to bring sides together and achieve negotiated settlements.



A Nepali police officer monitors a peaceful demonstration in Kathmandu.

Nine-eleven was a reminder that there are no absolutely secure states. It also remained clear that the dynamics of internal conflict are complex, embedded in history and incredibly destructive. There are no simple, quick-fix solutions to the resolution of violent conflict. The need for an organisation like International Alert, committed to keeping conflict prevention firmly on the international agenda, remained strong.

Under the leadership of its new Secretary General, Dan Smith, Alert underwent a strategic review to reflect on its approach to new and continuing tasks, to strengthen its work, and to further improve its effectiveness. This series of discussions and cumulative decisions led Alert to a period of growth and expansion. By the end of 2005, it had more than 40 projects with over 170 partner organisations in 20 countries, reflecting, in part, an increased demand for the skills and experience found in Alert staff and partners.

New work in Nepal; growth in Sri Lanka

In Nepal, the royal takeover in February 2005 marked a new phase in the gradual deterioration

of the political and security situation since the escalation of the civil war in 2001 and the dismissal of elected government in late 2002. International Alert started its Nepal programme in 2001. It consulted with individuals and organisations on the costs and benefits of the Maoist conflict, as well as analysed the role of the private sector and women in peacebuilding. This work led to the formation of Friends for Peace, a peace research centre based in Kathmandu to help address factors that led to the failure of previous negotiations between the government and the Maoists. In 2005 Alert also started its ‘Rethinking Aid’ project aimed at helping the international community create a careful and more coordinated response to the growing crisis in Nepal.

Alert’s original, founding programme in Sri Lanka went through a shift between the late 1990s and early 2000s. Where historically much of its work had been focused on encouraging the formation of citizens’ advocacy groups, it re-concentrated its efforts on local business leaders to contribute to conflict transformation and economic,

social and political stability. By helping to establish the Business for Peace Alliance, Alert concentrated on increasing the peacebuilding capacity of the private sector. It also helped recovery efforts for the devastation left by the tsunami that hit Sri Lankan shores at the end of 2004.

In the Caucasus, Alert built on established programmes in the region, taking the lead in a consortium of international NGOs to address the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorny Karabakh. The project focused on generating trust between significant civil society leaders. Alert also began encouraging and facilitating dialogue between the private sector and NGOs. With partners in Azerbaijan, Alert helped to establish the Business Development Alliance, a group of oil companies, local businesses, NGOs and international actors to help combat the potential negative impacts of the oil industry.

Expanding on global issues

While its regional programmes continued to deepen and expand, International Alert’s thematic programmes also took off, and sharpened their ability to produce quality training materials and conduct thorough conflict analyses. One area that forged new paths was the work with development and humanitarian aid organisations.

Alert continued its programme to help partner NGOs, governments, bilateral agencies and inter-governmental organisations adopt conflict-sensitive approaches to all their activities – by

addressing real policy and operational dilemmas. To this end, Alert contributed to research, the development of tools, skills transfer, and advocacy and lobbying work. In 2004, a resource pack was launched to provide operational guidelines for conflict-sensitive approaches to humanitarian assistance and development. This work proved to have an impact, with conflict prevention and ‘sensitivity’ to conflict issues now being mainstreamed into the thinking of decision-makers all over the world.

In this area, Alert also provided assistance to new EU presidencies. Understanding that the EU as a positive force for peacebuilding had yet to be fully realised, Alert provided advice and lobbied EU decision-makers with specific policy recommendations. This work, which began in the early 1990s, would have a significant impact on EU policy. In the years to come, the European Commission’s 2001 Communication on Conflict Prevention (their guiding legislation) drew heavily on Alert’s work, as did the Development Council’s conclusion on countries in conflict, which was adopted in 2002.

For Alert and its work, the external environment kept changing, marked by a growing preoccupation with terrorism and reaching close to home with the July 2005 bombings in London. Alert continued to evolve and adapt, re-affirming its commitments. These efforts have become essential to ensuring that the 21st century is less violent than the 20th.

Children fight in nearly 75 percent of modern armed conflicts.



■ Alert begins a programme aimed at promoting women’s involvement in the justice tribunals in **Rwanda**.

■ The second Waging Peace conference is held in the **Philippines**.

■ The Consortium Initiative is started to address the **Nagorny Karabakh** conflict.

■ Alert distributes the first in a series of annual publications to **EU presidencies**, providing recommendations on the prevention of violent conflict.

■ **Dan Smith** is appointed as Secretary General.

■ Alert launches toolkit on **conflict sensitivity** in development work, along with www.conflictsensitivity.org.

■ Alert begins a programme in **Sao Tome and Principe** to help prepare for forthcoming oil revenues and help avoid conflict.

■ Alert accompanies a Congolese partner to present to the **UN Security Council** on sexual violence in the DRC.

■ Alert and US-based organisation Women Waging Peace produce **Inclusive Security, Sustainable Peace: A Toolkit for Advocacy and Action**.

■ Alert launches a **new identity** with a new logo and strapline.

2002

2003

2004

2005



What is Peacebuilding?

Since International Alert’s founding 20 years ago, the need for working in countries that are experiencing armed conflict, facing the threat of it, or trying to deal with its aftermath has remained strong. From our origins in the work of human rights defenders, through our early promotion of the concepts of conflict prevention and transformation, Alert has been at the forefront of defining the work that is known today as peacebuilding.

This approach acknowledges that lasting peace for countries that have been experiencing decades of war does not come ready-made at the signing of a peace agreement. Instead, peace

is built from on-going processes that encourage the attitudes, the behaviour and the structural conditions in society that lay the foundations for peaceful, stable and ultimately prosperous social and economic development.

Peacebuilding is the art of encouraging and facilitating this process, either during violent conflict, once the fighting is over, or in order to prevent it from erupting. While peace cannot be made on behalf of people, work can be done to equip them with the knowledge and skills that will radically improve their chances of avoiding violence. ■

METHODOLOGY

Peacebuilding requires a tailored approach rather than an off-the-shelf technique or standard template. We work in a number of ways, using one or more of the methods below, depending on what is most appropriate for the situation:

Accompaniment – providing continuous support and assistance to those involved in peacebuilding processes and peace negotiations.

Enabling Dialogue – bringing together decision-makers and civil society from conflict zones for dialogue so that diverse perspectives are fed into decisions then effectively communicated to all those who are affected.

Capacity-Building – practical training, advice and support for civil society (NGOs, journalists, academics) and businesses in conflict zones to help them contribute to building peace.

Research and Analysis – a mutual process with local partners that is often conducted through dialogue and is the basis of Alert’s role in policy development.

Public Education – targeted outreach to key groups both in conflict countries and in the UK on peacebuilding, how it works and its importance, both as a general issue and with reference to specific processes that could benefit from public support.

Our Strategic Peacebuilding Approach

Our strategic peacebuilding approach recognises that sustainable peace is dependent upon, and must take into account, the linkages between: equitable social and economic development; accountable and transparent government; the physical security of citizens; impartial justice; and genuine reconciliation.

This holistic approach is rooted in an understanding of the conflict dynamics and the perspectives of a diverse range of actors at the local, national, regional and international levels, including individuals, communities, civil society, business, government, and the broader international and donor community. Because armed conflict affects different groups – including men, women and children – in different ways, our peacebuilding approach is tailored accordingly.

Peacebuilding is a transformative process



Today and Tomorrow

1988 1989 1990 1991 1992 1993 1994

1995 1996 1997 1998 1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008

Twenty years have come and gone with a succession of new challenges. There will surely be more to come. Violent conflict will not disappear but will instead take new forms as the global context changes and problems within and between differing societies continue to build.

Economic globalisation, increased pressure on the world's natural resources, and social marginalisation amid population growth are creating rapid social and economic changes and tension – especially within poorer countries. If affluent nations respond to this tension with force, problems will only worsen and the direct human price will increase. It is therefore essential that these cycles of violence are broken rather than fed.

International Alert has made a modest, but effective, contribution to addressing some of the gravest armed conflicts on the planet. Now we need to build on our strengths: our people, our activities and our approach. Our work would not be possible without the knowledge, expertise and dedication of our staff and partners. And this work would not be as effective if our activities and approach were not rooted in a dual focus on policy and local efforts. Over the coming years, we will continue to deepen our understanding of peacebuilding issues by creating stronger links between our field programmes and our advocacy work. This is what Alert was founded on, what has seen us prosper and what makes us unique.

New areas, new challenges

Like other NGOs, International Alert requires sustainable funds and a solid business plan to meet the needs of project and programme activities, as well as core costs. To this end, we will continue to improve our financial management and budget discipline. We also will continue to strengthen our institutional fundraising capacity and develop a more active outreach programme.

Our future success is dependent on success in the wider peacebuilding sector as well, particularly its effectiveness and credibility. The sector needs to be more proficient in both gauging and explaining the impact of peacebuilding. For Alert, this means increasing public awareness of the issues involved in peacebuilding and of the work of peacebuilding organisations. Alert will aim to do this among key groups that influence opinion and policy.

A larger preoccupation will be balancing our geographical presence and scale: how best does one organisation impact the wide-scale problem of violent conflict? Often, funding constraints and other factors have meant operating on too small a scale and in the margins of the key issues. Alert will need to ensure

that we are working on a scale that is commensurate with the problems we address. We also expect to see a greater field presence relative to our London-based staff to better assist local efforts for peace.

To remain a vibrant organisation, to contribute to strengthening the peacebuilding sector, and to remain abreast of the evolving international agenda, Alert needs to continue embracing new challenges. To carry out new work, Alert can both mobilise existing capacities and develop new ones as necessary. We must look at engaging in new countries and regions, including: Central Asia, the Middle East, Sudan and Latin America.

What is certain for the future is that Alert must remain prepared and able to change and innovate, as it has done in the past. The road to a peaceful world is a long one, and the organisation must build its strength increasingly on its ability to communicate effectively. The field of peacebuilding is becoming more recognised and respected. Alert will continue to help strengthen the sector, sharing the learning of the last 20 years and helping to find new ways of making peace possible.

Our work over the past two decades has taught us that peacebuilding should meet seven criteria to be effective. These requirements represent standards that Alert aspires to fulfil in our own work and to which we encourage others to aspire through our work on international peacebuilding policies. They are:

Tailored – to fit the needs of the situation, requiring a broad palette of adaptable methods rather than an off-the-shelf technique or standard template;

Holistic – to address the full range of peace and conflict issues, the long-term causes as well as the immediate symptoms;

Inclusive – to engage and benefit the whole of society, since limiting the engagement and benefits to only some sectors will entrench the conflict problems;

Participatory – to involve people not merely as beneficiaries but as active participants;

Respectful – of the qualities of leadership and courage required for peacebuilding and with willingness to learn from ordinary people's knowledge and understanding of their own society;

Sustained – so that the process of building peace is supported for as long as is necessary, rather than being subject to arbitrary political or bureaucratic timetables;

Knowledge-based – because peacebuilding has much greater prospects of success if its based on research and strengthened by continued monitoring and assessment.

We will continue to integrate lessons learned and successes into future work, building upon our strategic peacebuilding approaches through continued planning, assessment and evaluation. We will continue our aim to make a difference – to enhance the prospect of a better life for people now living under the daily threat of violence.



Acknowledgements

International Alert owes the achievement of the past 20 years primarily to our dedicated staff members who have worked tirelessly to achieve our mission and aims. Staff have gone on to establish their own organisations, contribute further to the peacebuilding community and pursue various personal objectives. We thank them all for their involvement.

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Early Supporters
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