

International Collaboration to End Violence: “People’s Charter to Create a Nonviolent World”

By [Robert J. Burrowes](#)

Theme: [History](#)

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While much of the world is engulfed in violence of one sort or another (whether violence in the home or on the street, exploitation, ecological destruction or war), a global network of individuals and organizations is committed to ending this violence in all of its manifestations.

With individual signatories in 100 countries and organizational endorsements in 35 countries, each of these individuals and organizations works on one or more manifestations of violence in their locality and some of the organizations and networks have considerable national or even international reach. However, as you might understand, there is a great deal to be done and the Charter network continues to expand as more people and organizations are motivated to join this shared effort.

Here is an outline of what some of these individual signatories of [‘The People’s Charter to Create a Nonviolent World’](#) are doing. You are welcome to join them.



A native of Iran, **Professor Manijeh Navidnia** was born in Tehran where she attended school and university. She married in 1982 and had her first child in 1985. Her original research interests were in social science and sociology but after collaborating with the Islamic Azad University, she became interested in strategic studies and most of her research work and publications since then have focused on security. Her first book in 2009 was particularly focused on ‘societal security’ and her political engagements are designed to enhance international cooperation across cultures.

Mahad Wasuge is a key figure at the Heritage Institute for Policy Studies in Somalia. The Institute has recently published a shocking report on [‘Somalia’s Drought Induced Crises: Immediate Action and Change of Strategy Needed’](#) in response to the ongoing drought in Somalia which threatens millions of people.

‘The ongoing drought in Somalia – referred to in the Somali language as Sima, which means the leveler, ubiquitous or pervasive – has enveloped the entire country. If rain does not arrive by mid April, and if a massive humanitarian campaign is not mounted swiftly, the drought could morph into an insidious famine that could devastate the country’: hundreds of thousands of vulnerable men, women and children could starve to death. Sadly, while awareness of the ongoing suffering and the potential famine has been high, ‘the response of the international community and the mitigation strategy by Somalia has been wholly inadequate.’ Despite UN agencies raising over US\$300 million, the majority of the population across the country is not receiving basic necessities. ‘Many pastoral communities have also lost 80 percent of their livestock,

escalating their vulnerability to an alarming and perilous level.'

Ruth Phillips is the central figure in the initiative to create 'an ecological, co-housing village here on a fully restored, 17th century chateau estate in rural France. The property lies in the heart of 30 acres of parklands and forests in the midst of quiet, deep-green nature, surrounded by hills and mountains, forests and lakes. It is set in the eastern Dordogne, one of most unspoilt regions of France'. They have permission to create a permaculture village around the chateau for residential and/or holiday use, with 23 houses blended into the natural and historic landscape. Plans include the chateau 'hub' offering education, leisure and cultural activities for residents and visitors; a small restaurant; a multi-functional workshop space; the swimming pool; a sauna and communal space, as well as large individual garden plots and access to acres of forest and fields on the property. The site aims to be a showcase for permaculture and sustainable living. Too good to be true? Check out the [Ecochateau](#) website and email Ruth if you want to go there to stay for a while and help make their vision a more complete reality.

Burmese scholar and activist, **Dr Maung Zarni** has been indefatigable in his efforts to raise awareness of the Burmese government's genocidal assault on the Rohingya Muslim population in Burma. He has also not shied away from drawing attention to democracy icon **Aung San Suu Kyi's** complicity in this genocidal assault. While he has written many articles on the subject, this two-minute video will give you a clearer sense of Zarni, the compassionate scholar/activist. '[Multiple Denials of Myanmar's Atrocity Crimes against Rohingyas prevent a peaceful resolution](#)' For more, check out Zarni's [website](#).

In one of her [public talks](#), **Kathleen Macferran** posed the question

'Are we really safer when we put those who harm others behind bars and forget about them?'

She explores the idea of 'turning our prisons into houses of healing and creating connections that lead to greater safety' by having incarcerated men and women return to our communities as peacemakers.

Greg Kleven is a 68 year-old American living and teaching English in Viet Nam. He was 18 years old when he went to Viet Nam as a soldier in 1967 'and thought that what I was doing was right. But after a few months in country I realized that I had made a huge mistake. The war was wrong and I should never have participated.' After going home he had a hard time adjusting back into society. 'I couldn't get the war out of my mind.' In 1988 he went back to Viet Nam as a tourist and realized he had a chance 'to make up for what I had done'. For the next two years he helped organize 'return trips for veterans who wanted to go back and see Viet Nam as a country, not a war'. In 1990 he started teaching English in Ho Chi Minh City and he has been doing it ever since. Greg shares the passion to 'some day put an end to all wars and violence in the world'.

Professor of Mathematical Analysis, **Tarcisio Praciano-Pereira**, reports from Brazil that he is personally well but that living in Brazil is

'very bad! I am 73 years old and I have suffered the dictatorship of 1964 when I was forced into exile. So I have a very clear picture of what is going on here

and this doesn't make me well because I know clearly the dangers we are facing. My life has changed entirely, my intellectual production has dropped down because I am all the time in the fight. I am seriously afraid! And I am not a young boy anymore as I was in 1964.'

He advised the death of a judge of the Supreme Court, who was overseeing a massive corruption investigation into the state oil company, Petrobras, against the will of the 'putsch owners' and conservative media outlet 'Globo'. It is clear that the possibility of crime in this death cannot be dismissed. Now they are trying to replace the dead judge with the Justice Secretary 'who is nothing but a criminal. Please take a stand against this if you can. Afraid is the right picture, friend! Yes, Fora Temer! Fora Temer, o traira!'

Ending human violence requires courage, not to mention toughness and determination, often in extraordinarily difficult circumstances.

For that reason, you might be sceptical about the prospects of achieving it.

But if you wish to join the people above in working to create a world in which peace, justice and ecological sustainability ultimately prevail for all life on Earth, you can do so by signing the online pledge of '[The People's Charter to Create a Nonviolent World](#)' and participating in '[The Flame Tree Project to Save Life on Earth](#)'.

Can we do it? If we do not try, we will never know. And one day, fairly soon now according to some climate scientists (and assuming we can avert nuclear war in the meantime), homo sapiens sapiens will enter Earth's fossil record without even making a concerted effort to prevent it.

Robert J. Burrowes has a lifetime commitment to understanding and ending human violence. He has done extensive research since 1966 in an effort to understand why human beings are violent and has been a nonviolent activist since 1981. He is the author of '[Why Violence?](#)' His email address is flametree@riseup.net and his website is [here](#).

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