European Peace Research Association

EuPRA 2026 Conference

Book of Abstracts

Reclaiming Peace and Cultivating Hope Beyond the Crisis Narrative: Towards Accountability and Action

Sarajevo, Bosnia & Herzegovina · 4–6 November 2026



In partnership with
POST-CONFLICT RESEARCH CENTER
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Wednesday 4 November 2026

Session 1 · Decolonial and Critical Peace Studies

13:30–15:00 · Room 1

The Forms of Resistance & Practices of Hope (FoRE/HOPE) Project

Presenter: Bram J. De Smet & Angel Iglesias Ortiz (Tampere University)

What can everyday resistance and hope teach us about social change? In a global landscape marked by rising authoritarianism, structural violence, and social exclusion, FoRE/HOPE addresses the urgent need to understand how individuals and communities navigate oppressive structures in daily life. Through an interdisciplinary research design, the project brings together six case studies — spanning Finland, Palestine, Iran, and Mexico — to analyse and theorise the interrelation between forms of resistance and practices of hope, attending to temporality, spatiality, and positionality.

A central epistemic outcome is the development of a complementary conceptual framework positioning resistance and hope as analytically interdependent (Agyei & Iglesias Ortiz, 2025). Drawing on resistance studies, the politics of hope, and borderscape theory, this framework argues that hope — understood as a political orientation rather than passive optimism — is embedded in everyday acts of resistance, and that resistance is fundamentally grounded in hope, as both enable the possibility of becoming. Ethnographic work with migrants in Finland and along the Mexico–U.S. border demonstrates how individuals mobilise hope and resistance within landscapes shaped by border regimes and systemic exclusion, revealing how micro-level practices carry transformative political significance.

Looking ahead, the project will deepen inquiry into the affective infrastructures sustaining hope in marginalised communities and trace how dispersed acts of everyday resistance become collectively meaningful. Forthcoming outputs include a multilingual open-access repository, an edited book, a theatre play, and a public event featuring a photo exhibition and art performance.

I Am Coloniality: Embracing Discomfort in My Methodological Praxis

Presenter: Judith Jordà i Frias (University of Coimbra)

This article provides a decolonial reflexive exercise within an international context shaped by genocides. The underlying dilemma lies in how peace scholars can generate epistemic resistances while witnessing atrocities perpetuated by the structural entanglement of governmental, economic, legal and academic institutions. Researching liberation struggles, particularly those of populations living and dying under genocide, is as urgent as examining the colonial biases embedded in methodologies. Failure to address the existing disconnect between decolonial theory and methodological praxis perpetuates coloniality. In response to this gap, I propose an autoethnographic analysis that acknowledges the global coloniality underpinning International Relations and Peace and Conflict Studies, interrogates the epistemic assumptions informing methodologies, and engages in a self-critique of my own coloniality. Ultimately, this work contributes to debates on methodological decoloniality through individual responsibility and

territorially grounded collective practice, thereby advancing transformative and non-oppressive peace knowledge.

Rethinking Time and Temporality in Peace Education

Presenter: Melanie Hussak, Peace Institute, Protestant University of Applied Sciences, Freiburg, Daniela Lehner (Graz University)

Time and temporality are crucial yet frequently overlooked dimensions of peace education. Their importance is implicit in understandings of peace as a dynamic, ongoing process, for example. Nevertheless, time is rarely given explicit, systematic attention in peace education discourse, and there is a notable lack of theoretical and empirical research exploring time as a sociocultural, metatheoretical and dynamic factor in peace processes.

At the same time, peace education encompasses multiple temporal dimensions. It fosters intergenerational dialogue about experiences of violence and peace, creating spaces for reflection on the aftermath of violence and the reconciliation processes that unfold across different timescales. Temporality is integral to programs and curricula: learning, self-reflection, developing skills, and cultivating a culture of dialogue are all long-term, continuous processes. Research also examines how memory, historical narratives and future expectations influence conflict transformation and peace education.

In our paper presentation, we build on the phenomenological assumption that our thoughts, interpretations and experiences of peace depend on how we structure the world and understand our existence. This implies that time is not neutral or universal, but socially and culturally constructed. Thus, we question which temporal frameworks are privileged and which are marginalized, and how these dynamics shape peace (education) processes. Within a decolonial and pluriversal oriented framework it is essential to understand time not only as a chronological sequence, but also as a layered and dynamic concept integral to shaping and sustaining peace.

We first discuss time as a metatheoretical, ontological dimension that requires greater consideration, given its influence on how peace is understood and perceived, and implemented in peace education processes. Drawing on empirical research through semi-structured interviews with peace education researchers and facilitators, we further discuss how different temporalities influence the design, pace and framing of peace processes, as well as our understanding of and approach to conflict and bring greater depth to the understanding of peace education processes.

Agency under Siege: Writing Back as a Tool of Resistance

Presenter: Julia Jahn (Karl-Franzens-Universität Graz)

The siege of Sarajevo, the longest occupation of a European capital since World War II, affected 300,000 to 400,000 civilians trapped in the city. Today, Ukrainians living in one-fifth of the country's territory experience everyday life under Russian occupation following the war ongoing since 2014. Despite the destruction and transformation of their homes, writers in both contexts have demonstrated an unexpected level of agency.

This article focuses on the autobiographical genre of diary writing as a key site for the expression of agency under siege. An analysis will be conducted from a postcolonial perspective, based on the concept of "writing back" developed by Salman Rushdie, describing counter-discursive writing as a form of literary resistance by formerly colonized cultures.

Drawing on Dževad Karahasans "Dnevnik selidbe" (Diary of an Exodus), written during the siege of Sarajevo, and Volodymyr Vakulenkos "Я перетворююсь... Щоденник окупації. Вибрані вірші" (I Am Transforming… A Diary of Occupation. Selected Poetry) written under Russian occupation, this article argues that agency in diaries operates on two interconnected levels.

First, agency is evident in the act of writing itself, becoming a practice of documentation and testimony. Keeping a diary under conditions of occupation is a courageous act of reclaiming a sense of agency in a situation marked by powerlessness. Second, agency is present in the contents of the diaries: The need to document events "for the time after" opens a future-oriented perspective, promoting hope, resilience, and moral responsibility.

Session 2 · Nonviolence, Democracy and Social Movements

12:00–13:30 · Room 1

Navigating Uncertainty: Conducting Research in Rapidly Changing Political Contexts

Presenter: Margalita Japaridze (Tampere University)

As authoritarian and illiberal tendencies intensify across diverse political and geographical contexts, conducting research has become increasingly challenging. Shrinking political spaces and growing pressures on academic freedom constrain opportunities for knowledge production while raising concerns for the safety and well-being of researchers, participants, and other stakeholders.

This presentation examines the challenges of conducting research in rapidly changing political environments, where legal and political conditions can shift unexpectedly and previously acceptable activities, actions or statements may become politicized. What is legal and acceptable today may no longer be so tomorrow. Drawing on experiences from such contexts, it explores how researchers navigate uncertainty, assess risks, and adapt their research practices in response to evolving realities. The presentation discusses emerging ethical dilemmas, the limits of conventional research planning, and what it means to conduct ethical and meaningful research under conditions of uncertainty and political closure. .

Resistance, Transformation and Hope: Youth-Led Protests Reshaping Political Orders and Religious and Ethno-Nationalism in South Asia

Presenter: Janith Jayatilake Kankanamalage (University of Leeds)

In recent years, Sri Lanka (2022), Bangladesh (2024), and Nepal (2025) captured international attention as youth, alongside wider civil society, mobilised against authoritarianism, elitism, corruption, and systemic political and economic injustices. These movements were driven by demands for structural transformation, reflecting the aspirations of young people and students whose futures have long been

constrained by democratic backsliding, elite dominance, dynastic politics, and the pervasive influence of hegemonic religious and ethno-nationalist ideologies.

While existing scholarship has examined these protests through structural, mobilisation, and digital-activism frameworks, limited attention has been paid to the role of religious and ethno-nationalism before, during, and after these uprisings. As South Asian states with dominant mono-religious majorities–Buddhism in Sri Lanka, Islam in Bangladesh, and Hinduism in Nepal–religion remains deeply embedded in political and social life. Against this backdrop, this study seeks to foreground and interrogate how religious and ethno-nationalist discourses and symbols were mobilised in the lead-up to, during, and after the protests.

The analysis shows that each movement engaged with, appropriated, or deliberately distanced itself from religious and ethno-nationalist narratives in distinct ways. Religion persisted as an influential reference point, yet its political salience varied significantly across the three contexts and across the pre-protest, protest, and post-protest periods. The paper concludes by reflecting on what these movements reveal about the enduring currents of religious and ethno-nationalism that continue to shape struggles for justice, accountability, and democratic renewal in South Asia, with broader implications for the region's socio-political future.

The World Going Crazy. How to get it back on the right tract?

Presenter: Unto Vesa (Tampere University)

This paper discusses all trends in the global situation that are going to the wrong direction, especially the militarization of security, politics and thinking. The rise of military expenditures from the level of e.g. two per cent of the world global production to e.g. five per cent describe the huge rise of militarization, which is respectively reflected in the global economy and in the mental atmosphere. While during the cold war the recipes for improvement were explored in common – cooperative and comprehensive security thinking and the practical solutions along those lines, now all these have been abolished, and the reality is described in divisive, competitive and deterrence modes of behaviour.

The paper explores alternative ways of returning back to sustainable security, which is based on common, cooperative and comprehensive security. The rich history of peace research and the wide experience of practical peace diplomacy needed to overcome the cold war provide workable tools of saving the world: the GRIT model, the decades long history of arms control negotiations and regimes, the innovations of confidence building measures, the policies needed to eradicate enemy images, the construction of multilateral cooperation systems within the UN system and regional arrangements, and the wisdom of eminent statesmen and diplomats were all instrumental and vital for overcoming the cold war system. How these instruments could be revived and what is the potential role of peace researchers in that effort.

Session 3 · Youth, Education, and Peace Pedagogies

13:30–15:00 · Room 3

How Serbian Students Unexpectedly Contributed to Reconciliation

Presenter: Ilma Kitivojevic (University of Arts in Belgrade)

This paper explores the role of student protests in Serbia during 2025, that were fostering reconciliation between Bosniaks and Serbs in Serbia. After the nineties, Bosniaks in the Sandžak region have been marginalized and disconnected from the broader Serbian identity, often feeling alienated due to religious and cultural differences. The 2025 student protests, however, marked a significant turning point in this dynamic.

Students from State University of Novi Pazar took a bold step by participating in the protests, and one of the emerging scenes from the numerous protests were hijabi students draped in the Serbian flag, which was powerful symbol of unity that everyone needed after years of radicalization and marginalization. This act was groundbreaking, as the Serbian flag had previously been viewed as a symbol outside the Sandžak identity. The solidarity demonstrated by students from other cities, who visited Novi Pazar and embraced Bosniak students, challenged longstanding taboos and signalled a shift towards inclusivity and peace.

Through emotional images of Bosniak and Serbian students hugging and exchanging laughs and tears, the protests created a new narrative of shared identity and belonging. The student movement not only confronted corruption and injustice but also laid the groundwork for a more reconciled future, where Bosniaks feel Serbia as a real home country.

This paper will examine the impact of students protests on the broader social fabric of Serbia, analysing how youth activism and student solidarity can bridge ethnic and religious divides in post-conflict societies.

Facilitation of children's peaceful agency. Suggestions for the education system

Presenter: Claudio Baraldi (University of Modena and Reggio Emilia)

This presentation concerns a research project on facilitation of children's agency in producing narratives about problems of peace and proposals of peaceful activities, conducted between February and June 2025. The aim of the project was to provide teachers with a methodology allowing the inclusion of peace education in schools by empowering children's agency in practising peaceful relations. A facilitator met groups of children in three meetings in five multicultural primary and lower secondary schools and a public space attended by migrant-background children. All meetings lasted about two hours, they were videorecorded and the video-recordings were accurately transcribed. The analysis of the data shows a great variety of narratives regarding children's problems in classrooms, schools and their social context, as well as children's opinions and reflections about the wars in Ukraine and Gaza.

Specifically, this presentation concerns the ways in which children's narratives and proposals were facilitated in the different stages of the project, stressing the connection between facilitative actions and children's ways of producing narratives and proposals. On the one hand, the analysis shows successful facilitation of children's narratives of problems in achieving peacebuilding and narratives of conflicts. On the other hand it also outlines challenges in facilitating the production of children's proposals for peaceful relations and collaboration in schools and the city. However, at the end of the project several proposals

were anyway collected. Against this background, the presentation invites to reflect on facilitation of peaceful agency as a resource for the education system and provides some suggestions on improvement of the way of facilitating children's proposals about peaceful relations and collaboration.

Peace Studies as Disability Studies: Conceptualising Everyday Worldmaking in Informal Educational Spaces

Presenter: Philippa Mullins (University of Cambridge)

The EuPRA conference call, with its emphasis on living otherwise, collective worldmaking, and dignity and relationality, could well have been a call for a Disability Studies (DS) conference. Our concerns and vocabularies are often remarkably tightly linked. However, explicit interlinkages remain few. With notable exceptions concerning disablement and slow violence, works which explicitly draw together DS and Peace Studies (PS) often focus on disabled people's experiences of conflict. In contrast, this paper focuses on living otherwise in the everyday. It stands at the beginning of a new participatory ethnographic project which asks: how do disabled people build radical, hopeful alternatives in informal educational spaces in Armenia? While the ethnographic work for this project will be in progress at time of presentation, the paper aims to use fieldwork to date as a jumping-off point to pull together key concepts of relevance drawn from DS and PS. It highlights work around access intimacy (or the ease of having your access needs understood and met), interdependence, and meaning-making in peer relationships. The latter looks in particular at how sense is made around varying forms of communication and being as disabled people are interpellated by – and themselves interpellate – others. The presentation does so in order to conceptualise the radical work of building everyday alternatives of peace and interdependence across diverse body-minds, highlighting the productivity and tensions of bringing DS and PS into closer relationship. It also aims to build community around this new project, enriching it through exposure to the debates and critiques of PS.

Epistemic Regimes of Peace: Coloniality, Caste and Disciplinary Foreclosure in Indian PACS

Presenter: Zeus Mendez (University of Innsbruck)

This article interrogates the epistemic architecture of Peace and Conflict Studies (PCS) in India, arguing that the discipline operates through Eurocentric and Brahmanical regimes of intelligibility that foreclose subaltern epistemologies of peace. Drawing on two years of qualitative research, including the content analysis of two postgraduate PCS curricula, the outputs of major peace institutions in India, and the publications of 52 Indian scholars, it examines how disciplinary knowledge is regulated across pedagogical, institutional, and referential registers. Building on global critiques of Eurocentrism and coloniality in PCS (Sabaratnam 2013; Azarmandi 2023; Lazic & Stavrevska 2024) and its historical evolution in India (Tripathi & Roepstorff 2020), the article shows how modernist-universalist peace imaginaries reproduce colonial and caste hierarchies by privileging Euro-American canons, legitimizing statist developmentalism, and absenting caste, race, and gender as categories of analysis. The article argues that the interaction between Eurocentrism and Brahmanism produces a double erasure: delegitimizing counter-hegemonic knowledge beyond Western epistemology while marginalizing anti-caste, feminist, and indigenous traditions within India. In foregrounding this dual operation of exclusion,

the article conceptualizes PCS in India as a site of epistemic regulation that stabilizes peace as statist-casteist-colonial order. It concludes by calling for a reconfiguration of PCS through subaltern epistemologies that foreground refusal, relationality, and historical reparation, rather than additive inclusion within hegemonic frameworks.

Panel 1 · Decolonial and Critical Peace Studies

13:30–15:00 · Room 4

Panel: Embodied Geographies of Peace: Rethinking the Body as a Site of Vulnerability and Repair

Panellists: Juulia Niiniranta (Tampere University); Maria Kulikovska (De Montfort University)

Bodies are forced to war, marked by war, and used in wars. Bodies violate and are violated, yet bodies also enact peace. Agentic bodies produce knowledge, expose themselves to politics, challenge dominant discourses, and re-embody abstract political narratives of peace.

This panel proposes an alternative to abstract peace/war narratives stemming from militarization and politics of war. Instead, we take the human body as a starting point for studying peace. Peace as well as war is experienced in sensing, feeling, and thinking body – living entity situated in time and place, and in relation to other bodies. From this perspective, we understand human body as an intersection of personal and political, actions and omissions, injuries and capabilities, history and imagination – entangled in temporal spectrums. Bodies become agents, making individuals and collectives able to resistance and recovery.

The panel brings together people from academia and art, thereby approaching the theme from different methodological perspectives, and inviting the audience to take part in the discussion.

Maria Kulikovska is a multimedia artist, architect, activist-performer, researcher, and lecturer. During 2010-2024 Kulikovska has organized and performed a dozen political performances and actions, and participated in the various exhibitions and events of reputable cultural institutions, venues and art collections in different countries. Currently she is invited to undertake PhD research in drama, performance, gender studies and displacement in De Montfort University, Leicester, UK.

Juulia Niiniranta is doing her PhD in Tampere Peace Research Institute TAPRI. Her research on peace/war narratives explores peace as an experience and everyday embodiment. Using photography as the primary method in her research, Niiniranta aims to capture the invisible aspects of hidden and silent peace narratives.

Anush Petrosyan is a doctoral researcher at Tampere Peace Research Institute (TAPRI) at Tampere University in Finland. Her doctoral research is titled “Reconstructing Life in Exile: Sensory Ethnography of Memory and the Search for Belonging among Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh” while as a member of the Re-(E)MBody Research Project she investigates the issue of enforced disappearances in the context of the Armenian – Azerbaijani conflict.

Panel 2 · Dialogues, Mediation and Local Peace

13:30–15:00 · Auditorium

Panel: Religions in practice: Reconciliation and Nonviolence as tools for a peaceful coexistence

Panellists: Marta Lombardi (University of Rome La Sapienza); Arianna Innocenzi (Fondazione Antonio Emanuele Augurusa); Giuseppina Scala (University of Pisa); Luigi Mariano Guzzo (University of Pisa); Fabio Franceschi (University of Rome La Sapienza)

In light of contemporary political, social, and legal global challenges, religions can play a leading role in fostering social cohesion. National and international coercive frameworks are often insufficient to guarantee lasting peace. This symposium aims to demonstrate how religions, when integrated into institutional arenas, offer effective tools for building positive peace. It focuses on religious normative systems and alternative conflict management rooted in the principles of nonviolence and reconciliation.

Using an interdisciplinary methodology intersecting Canon law, Law and religion, and Peace studies, the panel analyzes how religious traditions contribute to re-evaluating secular norms by prioritizing nonviolent relationality over punitive and exclusionary intent. The reflection stems from the capacity of religious traditions to create spaces for encounter – both physical and symbolic – where active nonviolence and inter-religious dialogue become the preliminary conditions for true reconciliation.

The objective of this research is to rediscover the value of often-forgotten communal practices implemented by various religious communities to repair the fragmented social fabric. By interpreting these religious experiences as paradigms of nonviolence, the panel suggests the adoption of relational models within civil legal systems, moving away from the punitive and individualistic logic of law toward a more restorative and peaceful approach.

This inquiry argues that sustainable coexistence cannot be achieved by marginalizing the spiritual and religious dimensions of human experience. By incorporating the nonviolent wisdom of religious traditions into the secular legal framework, the panel advocates for a transformative shift from state-centric, punitive justice toward a truly inclusive and intercultural legal pluralism, capable of healing the fractures of contemporary global challenges.

Individual contributions

Chair: Pierluigi Consorti

Giuseppina Scala, Spiritual Shared Spaces as a Tool for Interreligious Reconciliation

Through the lens of spiritual shared spaces, the author explores new possibilities for conflict pacification. These spaces—now emerging across the globe—highlight the significant presence of religion within public life and frame individual identity as a foundation for norms of peaceful coexistence rooted in respect and attentive listening. This research examines how encounters with the “other” within purposefully designed physical environments can facilitate the deconstruction of conflict narratives and open pathways toward reconciliation. In this way, spiritual shared spaces function as laboratories of peace, where the proximity of believers and non believers alike helps cultivate practices essential for the creation of reconciled and resilient communities.

Luigi Mariano Guzzo, From the Right to Defense to the Duty of Disarmament: The Evolution of the Catholic Magisterium on Nonviolence

This contribution analyzes the paradigmatic shift in the Catholic Church's Magisterium regarding war and peace, tracing a trajectory that moves from the affirmation of a "right to legitimate defense" toward the assertion of a moral "duty of disarmament." While traditional doctrine provided a framework for the use of force within the limits of the "Just War" theory, contemporary Papal teaching has increasingly challenged the effectiveness and morality of military solutions in the modern era. The study highlights how the Church now posits that true security cannot be achieved through the logic of deterrence or the balance of power. Instead, it argues that the preservation of peace requires a proactive commitment to integral disarmament and nonviolence. Consequently, the Magisterium redefines the ethical horizon for Christians and political leaders: shifting the focus from the conditions that justify war to the imperative responsibility of preventing it through justice and the rejection of the arms race.

Marta Lombardi, Restorative Practices in Canon law as Models for Conflict Management

This study analyzes the divergence between the punitive logic inherent in secular criminal systems and the relational framework of Canon Law. Within the canonical order, the "crime-sin" is not necessarily followed by a repressive response; instead, a paradigm rooted in active nonviolence and reconciliation emerges, prioritizing the healing of the bond between the community and the victim.

By examining specific restorative practices within this religious tradition, the contribution demonstrates how Canon Law offers alternative, non-coercive models for conflict management. The objective is twofold: first, to provide mechanisms for the formal resolution of legal disputes, and second, to promote the restoration of social relationships through a nonviolent pedagogical approach. These perspectives ultimately point toward a form of peace-oriented justice capable of transcending the retributive framework that dominates secular legal orders.

Fabio Franceschi, The Catholic Church’s commitment to the human right to peace

The recent tragic return of the use of force and war on the international scenario as a means of resolving conflicts has brought the debate on the role of the right to peace in fundamental human rights back to the forefront of international discourse. In recent decades, there has been a significant but largely unsuccessful effort to move from the abstract affirmation of peace to the construction of a genuine right to peace for individuals and peoples, culminating in the 2016 UN Declaration on the Right to Peace. This essay aims to analyse the contribution of recent Ecclesiastical Magisterium to the implementation of the right to peace as a fundamental human right, to be recognised and protected at the supranational level through human rights instruments. Indeed, peace is not only at the heart of the Christian message of evangelisation but has also been constantly and forcefully reiterated in the teachings of recent Roman Pontiffs, in particular Pope Francis. He has repeatedly included the principles of international law in his discourse on salvation, in the awareness that there can be no peace between peoples and nations without law. Peace must in fact be integrated into the political order through the instruments provided by international law. Pope Leo seems to be following the same path, having placed peace at the centre of his Magisterium since the beginning of his pontificate, with his call for “unarmed and disarming peace”. In this perspective, it would probably be useful and appropriate to better formalise the right to peace within canon law also, as a duty to be built upon that arises from the observance of justice and the divine order, particularly in relation to respect for the fundamental rights of the human person (the right to life, dignity and religious freedom).

Panel 3 · Decolonial and Critical Peace Studies

15:30–17:00 · Auditorium

Panel: Remembering Peace Otherwise: Memory, Repair, and Lived Practices of Peace

Panellists: Dilara Özel (Middle East Technical University); Samira Hasanzade (University of Glasgow)

This panel explores peace as a relational and embodied process that unfolds through memory across personal, cultural, and geopolitical contexts. Rather than treating memory as a static archive of past violence, the panel approaches memory as a living, relational, and contested practice through which peace is enacted, resisted, and reimagined.

The panel brings together three perspectives: an exploration of peace and memory at the individual level, emphasizing embodiment, affect, and personal narrative, with reflections from Türkiye; a perspective from Critical Heritage Studies and participatory practices in Scotland that examines memory work as a form of peace and public care; and a reflection on experiences of art-based peace education work in Azerbaijan, focusing how memory is shaped, negotiated, and mobilized within constrained social and political conditions.

Across these contexts, the panel asks: How do everyday acts of remembering become sites of repair, refusal, or quiet resistance? Rather than framing memory solely as trauma or loss, the panel considers memory as a site of possibility where repair, refusal, accountability, and hope can emerge. By weaving together embodied, and intercultural perspectives, the panel contributes to reimagining peace as a practice of living together otherwise.

Session 4 · Feminist Peace Research

15:30–17:00 · Room 1

Shared Gender Trauma: Militarized Masculinity and the Perpetuation of Gendered Violence

Presenter: Sara Arias Saiz (Arqus European University Alliance)

This paper examines how militarized conceptions of masculinity, often integrated with nationalist ideologies, shape both war and post-war societies in ways that undermine sustainable peace. Employing feminist peace research, the study critiques traditional security frameworks that praise aggression and control as inherently masculine traits, arguing that these norms fail to promote inclusive and socially cohesive peacebuilding. Through illustrative examples from the post-Yugoslav wars, the USA engagements in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, the paper highlights how armed conflicts produce post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among soldiers. Such trauma frequently manifests as emotional repression and the perpetuation of gendered violence, extending war into civilian life. The paper situates these dynamics within the feminist analysis of militarism and emphasizes the limitations of conventional peacebuilding strategies that neglect the gendered and psychological legacies of conflict. The study uses a qualitative methodology grounded in feminist peace research to explore connections between militarized masculinity, trauma related to war, and gender violence. Thus, understanding war's impact through a feminist lens provides critical insight into the structural

reproduction of violence that negatively affects both men and women, and its obstacles to achieving productive peace.

Archives as Method in Peace Research: Finnish Socialist Feminist Internationalism in the Late Cold War

Presenter: Vilja Myllyviita (Tampere University)

This paper investigates the transnational dimensions of socialist feminist peace activism during the late Cold War by analysing Finnish actors in leadership roles within the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF). The WIDF was the largest women's organisation of the Cold War era and constituted a key organisational hub for socialist feminist agendas, combining peace campaigns, anti-imperialist struggles, and solidarity initiatives across continents.

The archival research focuses on Hertta Kuusinen (1904–1974) and Mirjam Vire-Tuominen (1919–2011). Kuusinen, a well-known communist politician, served as President of the WIDF from 1969 to 1974. Vire-Tuominen was a prominent figure in Finnish and international peace networks, serving as Secretary General of the Finnish Peace Committee (1949–1975), a Member of Parliament (1970–1975), and later as Secretary General of the WIDF from 1978 to 1985, which forms the primary focus here. The analysis engages speeches, correspondence, and internal reports found in their personal archives as well as in the archives of the Democratic Women's League of Finland at the People's Archive (Helsinki). These materials reveal how peace, solidarity, and anti-fascism were framed, negotiated, and contested within transnational socialist feminist networks.

This case study contributes to efforts to produce nuanced analyses of feminist and women's rights organisations focusing on peace and solidarity in the Cold War era. It highlights the transnational circulation of ideas and solidarities, as well as the silences and exclusions that shaped socialist feminist internationalism during this period. The study proposes that engaging critically with archival traces is not merely a historical exercise but a methodological intervention in peace research.

"Into Which Narrative Was I Born?" Inherited Histories and the Possibility of Peace

Presenter: Mirna Jancic Doyle (Independent researcher)

This artistic research project examines the vulnerability of learning and historical memory formation in childhood as an entry point for dialogue in contexts of conflict and polarisation, and as a practice of peace beyond inherited crisis narratives. The research investigates how early encounters with historical knowledge shape the concepts of "us" and "others," and how later shifts in thinking can enable the questioning and undoing of internalised bias.

The artistic project originated in personal reflections on navigating officially prescribed histories in Bosnia and Herzegovina. These reflections first took material form in Into Which Narrative Was I Born?, a series of paper collages made from school History textbooks, exhibited at the History Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2023 and as part of the Why Remember? conference organised by the Peace and Conflict Culture Network. This initial artistic inquiry subsequently became both a research question and a methodological entry point for engaging with conflict through lived experiences of learning history.

Between April 2024 and November 2025, the research expanded into five case studies conducted with participants from several countries. Focusing on experiences of early historical learning and later shifts in perspective, the project followed a decolonial, participant-led methodology that foregrounded agency and consent in the production and dissemination of published results.

The outcomes are presented as audio artworks composed from recorded interviews, edited into condensed sound-collages and published at IntoWhichNarrativeWasIBorn.com . Through overlapping voices and deliberate variations in pitch and tone, the audio works challenge habitual modes of listening and interpretation, foregrounding mindful listening as an ethical and peace practice. The conference contribution includes the presentation of the artistic research process and an audio exhibition of four works (5, 8, 9, and 21 minutes).

Session 5 · Youth, Education, and Peace Pedagogies

15:30–17:00 · Room 2

Between Greek Myth and bell hooks: a didactic workshop on interpersonal conflicts and marginality

Presenters: Altomare Distaso (University of Rome La Sapienza), Ilaria Santilli (University of Rome La Sapienza)

This paper presents an interdisciplinary didactic workshop on interpersonal conflicts and dynamics of marginality, bringing into dialogue the Greek myth of Philoctetes – both in the classical tradition and in Imago 17 of Philostratus the Younger – with the pedagogical thought of bell hooks and nonviolent conflict transformation practices developed within

Peace Studies, particularly the TRANSCEND method. Marginality is approached not only as the outcome of exclusion and structural violence, but also as a critical space of awareness, resistance, and relational possibility. In the myth, Philoctetes emerges as a liminal figure:

wounded and abandoned by the community, yet at the same time the bearer of a truth indispensable to the completion of the collective enterprise. His exclusion reveals dynamics of fear, utilitarianism, and the breakdown of communal bonds, configuring an unresolved conflict. In Philostratus' ekphrasis, this condition is translated into image and narrative: the wounded body and the voice of the excluded become the focal point of representation, prompting the viewer-reader to engage in an exercise of attention, listening, and empathy.

Ekphrasis thus functions as a space of symbolic mediation, in which conflict becomes observable and thinkable.

This perspective is reread in light of bell hooks' engaged pedagogy, which conceives the margin as a site of knowledge production and relational openness. Within this framework, the picture book Skin Again is introduced as an educational tool to deconstruct prejudice and promote practices of nonviolent dialogue. On these foundations, an experimental workshop is developed for fourth- and fifth-grade primary school classes, aimed at recognizing dynamics of exclusion, fostering mutual listening, and guiding students in the construction of collaborative solutions through the TRANSCEND method.

30 years in the making: mapping youth in Balkan peacebuilding documents

Presenter: João Dutra (PLANAPP)

Past three decades after peacebuilding initiatives started in the former Yugoslavia Republics, including Kosovo, the youth still remain a social group who lacks voice in political agenda in the region. This paper examines how international public policy institutions have conceptualized youth within peacebuilding efforts in two Balkan countries, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo, from the post-war period (1995/1999) to the present. Through systematic content analysis of policy documents, program reports, and institutional evaluations, we will trace the evolving discourse around "youth" and "young people" in peacebuilding contexts.

Given the extended timeframe and the evolution of programs and personnel, written records capture diverse methodological approaches and stakeholder voices: from quantitative assessments to participatory evaluations centred on young people's own testimonials and perceptions, we have a wide sample of documents to extract from texts.

Our findings reveal how international institutions have framed youth as both subjects and agents of peacebuilding, illustrating how this social group in post-conflict settings can be summoned depending on higher political structures and currents that were emerging in the field of the international peacebuilding interventions throughout these years. Therefore, this analysis can provide to the field both the longitudinal and semantic evolution of the interventions on the young people.

When Peace Is Disputed: Peace Education, Consensus, and Relational Ontologies in South Africa

Presenter: Anna Di Franco (University of Coimbra)

Post-apartheid South Africa is often narrated as a paradigmatic case of peace achieved through reconciliation and national consensus. From this perspective, Peace Education is commonly operationalised as a vehicle for transmitting shared democratic values and fostering social cohesion. This article challenges this stabilising framing by examining how consensus-oriented imaginaries of peace shape the pedagogical objectives, curricular content, and institutional practices of Peace Education in schools.

Drawing on a critical discourse analysis of policy documents, curriculum guidelines, and public educational narratives, the article investigates how reconciliation becomes institutionalised as a dominant grammar of peace within democratic governance. It argues that this grammar tends to neutralise conflict, dissent, and political disagreement, framing them as threats to unity rather than as constitutive dimensions of democratic life. Adopting agonistic peace as an analytical lens, the article interprets these tensions not as shortcomings of reconciliation but as political struggles over which forms of conflict may be taught, recognised, or rendered invisible within educational spaces.

In dialogue with Ubuntu, understood as a situated relational ontology emerging from anti-apartheid struggles rather than as a harmonising ethic, the analysis foregrounds relationality and plurality as central pedagogical concerns. Peace Education is thus reframed as a contested pedagogical and political space in which consensus is actively produced and where alternative relational imaginaries of justice,

responsibility, and coexistence remain at stake. By situating educational practice within broader struggles over peace and democracy, the article contributes to reimagining peace pedagogies beyond stabilisation and toward accountable forms of collective worldmaking.

Myth busting in Peace studies classroom

Presenter: Slađana Lazić (University of Innsbruck)

The paper reflects upon the experiences of myth busting around nonviolence in a peace studies classroom and argues for an open critical, affective, materially situated and political engagement with teaching (about) peace. Drawing on anticolonial and anarchist pedagogies and praxes, and critiques of nonviolent politics, the paper interrogates how dominant narratives portray nonviolence as morally superior, apolitical technique, and universally accessible tool, while obscuring structural violence, global racial hierarchies, coercive pacification, and geopolitically uneven risks of "being nonviolent." Using self-reflective vignettes from MA program peace studies teaching, it explores classroom moments in which students encountered discomfort, resistance, and ambivalence when nonviolence was framed not as a normative ideal but as a contested, historically situated practice. The analysis traces how collectively problematizing nonviolence—through discussion of failure, complicity, and privilege—enabled students to question depoliticized peace education and to recognize how calls for nonviolence can reproduce racialized, colonial, and gendered inequalities. The paper argues that myth busting around nonviolence, can transform the peace studies classroom into a site of embodied praxis where students experiment with more accountable, context-sensitive understandings of peace, conflict, and resistance, rather than simply internalizing pre-packaged doctrines of "peaceful" and pacified behavior.

Workshop 1 · Dialogues, Mediation and Local Peace

15:30–17:00 · Room 3

Workshop: SKY Online Peace School: From peace research to everyday peace

Organiser: Oona Muje (Suomen Kulttuurienvälinen Yhteisö, SKY)

The SKY online peace school workshop will present an educational programme aimed at bringing peace research to community level. SKY online peace school is an intercultural and dialogue-based programme, where 25 participants will learn about peace research and peace work through a diverse set of lecturers from various fields, including feminist peace research, environmental aspects of peace work and inclusion in communities. During the online peace school the participants will engage in dialogue with lecturers and each other to discuss how peace work can be incorporated in one's everyday life and community. In addition, after graduating the SKY peace schools the alumni can join the alumni network, which includes guest lectures aimed to create a long-term community engagement and a space to meet other like-minded individuals.

During the workshop we will present the SKY peace school project and build an inclusive grassroots peace initiative and have a dialogue with all the participants on building educational peace initiatives in one's own community. We will discuss themes including how peace initiatives can facilitate intercultural discussion, how peace research can be applied to one's own community, and what are the benefits and

challenges of grassroots peace initiatives in today's world. We will invite all the participants to join the discussion on the topics, and share the insights on peace work.

Session 6 · Security, Power and Contemporary Challenges to Peace

15:30–17:00 · Room 4

Analysing the Analogous Movements of Refugees and Live Animal Exports Across the Mediterranean: Breaking Down Anthropocentric Power Structures

Presenter: Maria Rossi (Tampere University)

In my master's thesis I argue that since refugees are equated to nonhuman animals, the disregard for both of their security is constituted by the same anthropocentric power structures. To emancipate refugees from the violence they face, it is not enough to just include them to the human class, then the basis of the violence would go unquestioned. I assert that ethical and sustainable security and peace is only possible if Western anthropocentricism is abolished.

Over 65 thousand people departed from Libya to EU in 2025. The Central Mediterranean route remains the busiest, but immensely dangerous migration route. This is a widely known security issue, but the tragedies continue to be allowed to happen. While the so-called refugee crisis has garnered massive attention, an analogous movement of live nonhuman animals has widely been overlooked. EU countries export hundreds of thousands of nonhuman animals to Libya. Both these routes entail the same security issues, such as drowning, diseases, and violence.

By using dispositif as a research method, I intend to explore, reveal, and challenge the power structures constituting the current situation - asking how these tragedies at the Mediterranean Sea are justified and allowed to happen. I will use emancipatory realism as a guiding theory, but I intend to destabilise its anthropocentric ontology. I expand to consider alternative ontologies, including non-human animals and the environment as ontological referents. Joining the move of challenging the single Western reality doctrine, I study alternative worldviews: exploring both European animal activists' worldviews, and Islamic philosophy.

Exploring the ethics of priorities in National policies of preparedness

Presenter: Kristoffer Lidén (Peace Research Institute Oslo, PRIO)

In a dramatically shifting security landscape, European countries are preparing for war. Meanwhile, they also prepare for climate change, global pandemics, technological disruptions, terrorist attacks, financial crises and other major risks to society. The list is long, and there is no shortage of potential measures for addressing them. While some of these measures harmonise well, others collide. And states do not have the resources needed for pursuing them all at the same time. This forces politicians to prioritise. Between long-term and short-term risks, national and international concerns, civil and military responses and private and public solutions. These priorities have to do with funding, but also with trade-offs between moral values like state sovereignty, personal safety, individual liberty, social equality, animal welfare and biodiversity. Costs and benefits of preparedness are also distributed between rich and poor, men and women, young and old, citizens and foreigners. How are these priorities currently set at a national level,

and how ought they to be set in a comprehensive manner? This paper addresses this question by reviewing relevant theoretical perspectives in descriptive and normative literatures on the subject.

From Liberal Interventionism to Neoconservative doctrine: the ideological shift in the justification for military interventions

Presenter: Leonardo Scacchi (University for Foreigners in Perugia)

This study examines the historical and ideological evolution of military interventionism through a comparative approach, contrasting the Italian intellectual justifications for joining the great war with contemporary formulations of American neoconservatism. Its aim is to understand how the idea of armed intervention in support of exporting democracy, originally an ideological conception associated with liberal, secular and progressive politics, gradually developed within the conservative sphere, often associated with Christian conceptions of just war or at least with strong correlations with evangelical circles.

In the Italian context of the First World War, interventionism was supported by a significant segment of liberal-democratic and reformist intellectuals. Figures such as Benedetto Croce and Gaetano

Salvemini interpreted participation in the conflict not as an expression of aggressive nationalism, but as a historical and moral necessity aimed at defending political liberty and completing the process of

European democratization. Military intervention was therefore conceived as an instrument of political progress and the emancipation of peoples. American neoconservatism conversely developed its own interventionist doctrine grounded in the global promotion of democracy and in the legitimacy of using force to reshape international political orders. The paper will thus compare the language, quoted sources, interviews and pamphlets as well as press articles published during the early phases of the great war, chiefly in Italy, with the media landscape and ideological frameworks employed in more recent cases such as the Iraq War and the contemporary Western debate surrounding military assistance to Ukraine, with the aim to highlight both conceptual continuities and profound cultural discontinuities.

The study ultimately seeks to clarify the semantic and political transformations of interventionism, showing how seemingly stable ideological categories may shift along the left–right spectrum in response to changing historical and geopolitical contexts.

Thursday 5 November 2026

Roundtable

10:00–11:30 · Auditorium

Collective Nonviolent Resistance: From Acknowledging Struggles to Assuming Responsibilities within Academia

Speakers:

- Micheline Mwendike, Lutte pour le Changement
- Muhamed Kafedžić, Visual artist
- Maria Kulikovska, De Montfort University

Moderator: Judith Jordà i Frias, University of Coimbra

Time and space dedicated to approaching peace differently. In this roundtable discussion, we will first immerse ourselves in the experiences and knowledge of activists, artists, scholars and policymakers working on nonviolent resistance in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ukraine, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. We will then identify collective learnings emerging from here. Finally, we will open the discussion to all participants to diversify voices while dealing also with potential challenges.

This dialogical session aims to foster reflexivity, a necessary and urgent exercise to articulate strategies of recognition within academia in the face of an international order characterised by widespread and extreme forms of violence. Ultimately, it seeks to move towards accountability and action, the overarching call of EuPRA 2026.

Session 7 · Climate, Ecology, and Peace

13:30–15:00 · Room 2

Ethnographic Research on Indigenous Youth Climate Activism In India

Presenter: Pragati Parihar (Tampere University)

Climate change has caused loss and harm to both natural and human systems, with a disproportionate share of the burden being felt on the vulnerable population. This project examines the motivations of indigenous youth climate activists in India, exploring how motivations are shaped by colonial, capitalist, and extractive tendencies that are a result of social difference, including gender, race, caste, & class. I will use intersectionality theory to highlight how combinations of oppressions result in climate action. India has been chosen as it has been home to many environmental movements & has seen an active involvement of youth in climate change movements while facing the worst atrocities of climate change. The case study for this project is based in central Indian state of Chhattisgarh, a forest & mineral rich state that has seen decades of protest against mining, deforestation, & displacement. Studying the stories of young people coming into climate activism in the face of social, environmental, and cultural injustices, will help better understand the dynamics that shape mobilizations. I will conduct ethnographic research involving semi-structured interviews and participant observation with participants aged

18–35. I aim to shift the conversation away from examining vulnerabilities of youth to how social injustices result in resilience. The objective is to highlight how systematic power dynamics result in resilience among youth.

Climate Change – A New Threat to Peace

Presenter: Jelica Gordanić (Institute of International Politics and Economics)

War, terrorism, border disputes, aggression, and new weapons have been traditionally considered threats to peace. In recent decades, it is noticeable that climate change has a significant capacity to threaten water and food security, the allocation of resources, and coastal populations. Climate change is an existential threat to certain island states and may result in the emergence of so-called climate refugees. For more than two decades, the United Nations Security Council has been considering climate change as a potential threat to international peace and security. At the same time, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development emphasizes the strong interdependence between climate action, sustainability, and peace. Climate change acts as a risk multiplier for conflict, directly hindering the achievement of the 2030 Agenda by destabilizing resources, displacing populations, and reversing development gains.

The paper asks whether climate change should be formally recognized as a core component of international peace and security, requiring a redefinition of institutional mandates within the UN peace architecture. It explores the necessity of integrating climate risks into sectoral policies and responses, as well as the potential for enhancing regional cooperation around climate change issues. Enhanced cooperation on climate change, at both global and regional levels, is an investment in peacebuilding and conflict prevention.

The paper concludes that climate change, along with food, water, and resource stability, should be understood as an integral element of international peace and security. Broadening the concept of peace would enable a wider range of international bodies to engage more effectively with climate change as a core component of international peace and conflict prevention.

Ecological Care and Decolonial Peace in the face of Commodity Frontiers' expansion and Socio-ecological ruins

Presenter: Violeta Gutiérrez Zamora (Tampere University)
Co-author: Marjaana Jauhola (Tampere University)

The continuous expansion of commodity frontiers has historically generated diverse processes of violence in socio-ecological relations for the sake of extractive accumulation of capital. Both political ecology and conflict and peace studies have demonstrated that the production of ecological and social devastation and ruin is maintained and strengthened through dispossession, militarisation, and onto-epistemic erasure. The current acceleration of commodity frontier expansion, driven by plantation economies, digital infrastructures and increasing consumer demands, forces us to ask whether ecological care and decolonial approaches to peace can emerge in these scenarios of depletion and, if so, how they endure over time and across spaces. Drawing on feminist political ecology and decolonial approaches to peace,

this manuscript discusses the theoretical and methodological challenges of studying how care and peace are practised, felt, and thought in relation to human and more-than-human life. It also addresses the question of how these practices can shed light on the necessary reordering of the onto-epistemic, temporal, and spatial configurations that govern human and more-than-human life and death. In this manuscript, we argue that theorising the diversity of material and affective practices of ecological care is a necessary condition for advancing our understanding of decolonial peace, particularly as the expansion of commodity frontiers permanently opens new opportunities for capital accumulation and produces new sites of socio-ecological violence and ruin.

Modern Imperialism: The Eco Revolution and the Climate Crisis as Neocolonial tools of Violent Peace

Presenter: Anaya Milind Gadkari (Leiden University)

The Eco Revolution in the developed world has led to a stark contrast in the way in which the climate crisis is playing out in parts of our planet.

While the developed world continues to adopt “sustainable” practices and reduce the direct impact of emissions, production residue and waste dumping, the developing world stands criticised for prioritising its development over environmental peace and well being. But this reality is a direct result of the export of the Global North’s problems to the Global South, in the form of outsourcing production and waste dumping, increased dangerous mining practices in the favour of sustaining the Global North’s demand for “clean” energy, along with Western banks’ continued funding of coal and other industries in the global South.

The practices of the Global South are heavily criticised, and yet, it can be demonstrated with research that these are a direct impact of choices made by people and organisations in power in the Global North.

For the purpose of this research, this paper will use data from maps of financial flow such as the Global Coal Exit List, Western financial entanglements in coal markets in the Global South and in the Eastern Bloc, records of waste dumping in South East Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe, and Latin America , data from the OECD regarding pollution offshoring, and specific case studies regarding mining and industries in South Asia and Africa.

Peace and Sustainability: Striking a Balance in the Niger Delta

Presenter: Colins Imoh (University of Bradford)

This paper examines the conflict in the Niger Delta (ND) and the people's plight within the context of environmental sustainability and peace. This is a case of social injustice leading to violence in the area. The survival of the people was marred by controversy over the pollution of the land by the oil-producing companies, the lack of a duty of care for the environment by responsible government officials and the inability of the Government to provide for the people. The above situation has led to violence and a lack of sustainable peace in the region. The people lack amid the colossal wealth that is exploited in the area. The concept of sustainable development calls for the provision of the need of the present generation and future generations. However, this paper articulates that it is the living that can talk about

sustainability; therefore, efforts should be made to clean up the area's environment, restoring the people's livelihood and leading to a better life. This will remove the incentive that motivates people to violence, building sustainable peace in the region. This peace will lead to preserving the environment and providing for future generations.

The paper affirms the environmental ethics of the Niger Delta that is all-inclusive, both human and nonhuman creatures, for the Niger Delta belongs to all, and we are all interdependent within a complex chain. The environmental issues of the ND can be viewed with a minimalist concept in a cosmopolitan political philosophy. The paper concludes with a call for an enforceable intervention not driven by a sense of pity and humanitarianism. The people of the Niger Delta need affirmative action as a forward-looking tool to be able to participate actively in the country. The companies that do business in the area should apply the precautionary principle in their operations when in doubt. All those that pollute should be made to pay and ensure that government officials follow and enforce the regulations. A robust environmental justice movement will be needed to pressure the stakeholders to do right thing.

Session 8 · Dialogues, Mediation and Local Peace

12:00–13:30 · Room 2

The Political Culture of Peace: Values, Symbols, and Options in the 40-Year History of Italian Local Authorities

Presenter: Tancredi Marini (University of Rome La Sapienza)

In an era defined by overlapping crises and the increasing militarisation of Europe, this paper examines the Italian local dimension as a strategic political and cultural laboratory for the implementation of peace and human rights principles. By analysing the four-decade trajectory of the National Coordination of Local Authorities for Peace and Human Rights (CNELPDU), the research moves beyond dominant crisis narratives to investigate how local institutions serve as “norm entrepreneurs” that challenge the state’s monopoly on international relations. This analysis is structured through the sociological framework of Santambrogio (2006), which categorises political culture into the three interconnected dimensions of values, symbols, and options. The values underpinning this culture are rooted in Galtung’s concept of “positive peace” (1969), which prioritises social justice, equality, and the recognition that international human rights instruments apply directly to city inhabitants. These values are given life through powerful historical symbols, specifically the “peace as refusal” found in the nuclear-free municipalities movement of the 1980s and the enduring legacy of the Perugia-Assisi March for Peace and Fraternity. These symbols have allowed local authorities to construct a collective identity that rejects the exclusion of local voices from global security debates. By examining how grassroots activism has been translated into formal administrative acts, the paper demonstrates that the political culture of peace is not a static ideal but a daily practice of local democracy and shared responsibility. The Italian case study provides a compelling model of “collective worldmaking,” illustrating how institutionalised local action can foster a more just international order through city diplomacy networks.

Post-War Recovery of Ukraine: Building Blocks for a Shared Future – A Flemish Perspective

Presenter: Merel Selleslach (Flemish Peace Institute)

After four years of full-scale war in Ukraine, the country remains heavily dependent on external support, not only for its defence but also for its survival and recovery. Dominant narratives tend to foreground the role of major powers and national governments, emphasizing high-level diplomacy, security, and large-scale reconstruction efforts. Across Europe, however, citizens, regions, and cities have mobilised in solidarity with Ukraine, particularly in relation to recovery and reconstruction efforts.

This paper moves beyond state-centred and top-down approaches to peacemaking in Ukraine by arguing that meaningful support also emerges from below. Using the Flemish response to Ukraine's recovery as a case study, the paper adopts a relational understanding of peace. Rather than viewing peace as a fixed or unitary outcome it conceptualises peace as a process that takes shape through the construction of relationships across local contexts and among diverse actors, including substate and non-state entities.

The paper examines how a range of actors in Flanders, such as cities and municipalities, civil society, and businesses, can contribute to Ukraine's recovery despite operating with limited financial resources compared to major international donors. By analysing these practices, it offers insights into the potential and limitations of substate and non-state engagement in post-war recovery. In doing so, the paper aims to inform and inspire other actors facing similar constraints in an increasingly turbulent international environment. It contributes to debates on post-war reconstruction and recovery in Ukraine by highlighting alternative pathways that complement, and at times challenge, prevailing top-down frameworks dominated by security and strategic considerations.

Arts in the Service of Reconciliation and Peace: Successes and Failures of Turning Violent Past into Creative Energy in Mostar and Brno

Presenter: Samuel Raus (Independent Activist)

This study takes stock of the successes and failures of community organising and local peace-building taking place at the Abrašević centre in Mostar, BiH and the formed prison-turned-community centre called 'Káznice' in Brno, Czechia. Both sites are run by civil society organisations with a set goal to use arts as a means of nurturing cooperation and bringing about reconciliation in a segregated society (in Mostar between Croats and Bosniaks and in Czechia between the majority population and the Roma). I conceive of these sites as islands of resistance and radical imagination which broaden the horizon of possibilities beyond what was previously imaginable in those cities, and give rise to alternative ways of living together in societies that are otherwise characterised by nationalist socialisation through school textbooks and the media which often reproduce ethnic/racial hierarchies and ethno-centric views1.

These organisations have functioned for many years and have put immense amount of work into their activities — organising concerts, film screenings, art exhibitions, various workshops, as well as providing studios for artists to rehearse their craft without pressures of ethnic affiliation. Yet, despite their dedication, segregation still runs deep in both cities. Many young people from either side of Mostar do not know much about the other side, and in Brno, Roma youth do not attend most of the events organised in Káznice. Using semi-structured interviews with leading figures in Abrašević and Káznice, I try to assess

the degree to which these two organisations have managed to push back against the nationalist status quo and contribute to neutralising demarcating lines between people.

Sacred Legitimacy in Secular Crisis: Religious Leaders and Peace Mediation in Transitional Central African Republic

Presenter: Jutta Martens (Tampere University)

Until recently, research in the field of conflict resolution largely overlooked the role of religion in peacemaking and the qualities and strengths of faith-based actors in mediation. This delayed focus on religion can be attributed to the fact that secular, rational problem-solving approaches and the methodological and epistemological frameworks developed by conflict resolution scholars tended to view religion either as a source of conflict or dismissed it entirely, as religious issues in conflicts could not be addressed through empirical or positivist methods.

The paper proposal contributes to Jutta Martens' phd dissertation by examining the roles of religious leaders have as inside mediators and influential actors in peace mediation processes. In the paper Central African Republic is used as a case. The dissertation aims to answer research questions on how do religious leaders make sense of peace mediation processes and how they mitigate the challenges faced during peace mediation.

The paper draws from the previously published academic literature on traditional peace mediation, local and religious peace building as well as reports produced by think thanks and practitioner organizations. Additionally, the firsthand data collected during a field visit to Bangui in 2025 will be used.

Practitioner reports suggest that religious leaders can play crucial roles in formal peace processes during political transitions. These leaders are often trusted figures, holding legitimacy within their communities, which grants them significant influence not only over local populations but also on public opinion at large. In CAR, religious leaders seem to hold considerable influence, having successfully facilitated dialogue between armed groups and elected officials in the past. They are often regarded as impartial brokers (though not solely so). Therefore, CAR serves as an excellent case country for academic research also as the previous research on the country in general is limited.

Session 9 · Mobility, Borders, and Geographies of Peace

12:00–13:30 · Room 3

The Intersection of the Transnational Historical Novel and Peace Education: A Place of Hope and Critical Enquiry

Presenter: Lejla Mulalic (University of Sarajevo)

In our fast-changing 21st century world, conflicts are constantly reinvented, taking myriad forms and inhabiting all spheres of our existence. Accordingly, peace education has to transcend disciplinary and epistemological boundaries in order to challenge the new grand narrative of war which is threatening to reduce the inherent plurality of the world to hierarchies of crude binaries, while clearly stifling all attempts to think outside the binaries.

Using the example of Aleksandar Hemon's The World and All That it Holds (2023), this paper argues that the transnational historical novel has enormous pedagogical potential within the field of peace education because it can successfully engage students in critical examination of the concepts such as identity and nation. It does so by foregrounding the concept of the transnational and expanding it to include relationality which is, while being central to the ethics of care (Noddings 2002, 2012; Held 2026), also crucial to peace pedagogy and peace education.

Hemon's The World and All That it Holds (2023) features migrating subalterns whose solidarity and mutual love challenge the barriers of language, national borders, as well as political and historical grand narratives of the turbulent, war-ridden first half of the 20th century.

Finally, the paper examines how rethinking the relationship between history and fiction sensitizes students to the fragmentary and contested nature of the historical truth and encourages a mode of enquiry instead of uncritical consuming of knowledge, while prioritising everyday acts of care and survival.

Postmigrant Futures And Imaginaries: Rethinking Belonging With Racialized Young Adults In Times Of Rising Anti-Immigration Sentiments

Presenter: Barış Yüksel (Tampere University)

This paper introduces theoretical and methodological reflections and observations drawn from interviews from my research project on the experiences of present and future belonging among racialized young adults in Finland and Germany amid times of rising anti-immigration sentiments. Examining migration research through a postmigrant lens challenges dominant narratives that separate migration from society. While migration studies have expanded in theoretical and methodological scope, they can still reproduce racialized divisions. Drawing on postmigrant theory, my research argues for a paradigm shift: instead of framing migration as an external force disrupting a national order, we must recognize its socio-transformative potential which underlines the necessity to formulate (post)migrant futures.

For this, I employ a two-tiered qualitative methodology, combining biographical-narrative interviews with sensual futuring techniques. While the former allows participants to recount past and present experiences of belonging, the latter encourages them to imagine alternative, self-defined futures. Inspired by Critical Futures Studies, this approach highlights how dominant societal narratives constrain postmigrant imaginaries while enabling creative counter-narratives of hope and resistance. My paper calls for a postmigrant futurism that moves beyond descriptions of past and present realities to actively engage in shaping more equitable futures by utilizing postmigrant imagination and advocating for the inclusion of postmigrant perspectives in societal self-understanding.

Observations from the interviews include examination on how participants contrast past and present experiences of fear and racial trauma due to the rising threat of far-right ideology and violence with affective alternative futures. In this paper, I am particularly interested in fear as a restrictive element for everyday life as a form of double erasure and how future narratives pose a vital form of resistance for marginalized young people.

Workshop 2 · Feminist Peace Research

12:00–13:30 · Room 4

Workshop: "Daydreaming" Alternatives: A Collective Inquiry to Unsettle Crisis Narratives

Organisers: Sina Jasmin Krämer (Tampere University); Meeri Tiensuu (Tampere University)

This workshop offers an intervention into dominant crisis-driven peace discourses by engaging in feminist methodologies to reimagine how we might live together otherwise. Crisis and insecurity narratives rooted in 'un-ness' (uncertainty, unknowable, unmanageable…) (Aradau, 2014) restrain our imagination. It is deeply political who imagines, longs for, and builds alternatives. It is political whose stories are heard and validated, and who has the time, resources and conditions to create alternatives (SUPERR and Future Probes, 2025).

Against this background, we invite conference participants to this workshop, to imagine alternatives and to engage in a collective inquiry that unsettles inherited assumptions about power, care, and future. The first part of the workshop will centre in feminist vision(ing) that names the violences embedded in current arrangements and formulates demands for structural transformation. During the second part of the workshop, we will ask ourselves the following: Can we find present realities or spaces where (parts of) the visions are experienced and/or strived for? Can (we make) our vision reality for some?

By centering collective world-building, the workshop aims to challenge the crisis and insecurity narratives and opens space for radical imagination. Especially in current times when imagination of alternatives feels impossible, engaging with peers and creating spaces for envisioning futures is deeply political.

We acknowledge our privileged positions to participate in the EuPRA 2026 conference and to have the time and space here for this kind of collective "daydreaming". Therefore, we must recognize that conducting this workshop within the conference limits our imagining to those voices, opinions and experiences present. Therefore, we insist that such imagining cannot remain confined to those with academic freedom. We hope that such envisioning could extend beyond the conference.

Session 10 · Youth, Education, and Peace Pedagogies

12:00–13:30 · Auditorium

Building Future: Peacebuilding Education for young BiH Leaders

Presenter: Alenka Verbole (Schiller International University)

Co-authored with Igor D. Gaon

Bosnia and Herzegovina, a young democracy marked by ethnic conflicts, continues to face significant challenges as a multi-ethnic society. Young people are leaving the country in alarming numbers increasingly facing a sense of hopelessness. Politicians are resorting to populist, divisive ethno-nationalist discourses that are further deepening the already existing divisions in society, crippling the political system and slowing down the much-needed reforms in the country. At the same time, however, there are young men and women in BiH with the will, the knowledge and the desire to bring a different approach to how Bosnians might live together although they sometimes feel left out.

"Building the future" implies shaping a destiny through actions – such as formal and informal peacebuilding education – and building capacities for leadership. This contribution will focus on analysing various initiatives and diverse approaches applied in Bosnia and Herzegovina, N. Macedonia and Kosovo aiming to build capacities of young leaders for resolving conflict, promoting social justice, and building trust and peaceful societies. Further, it will also explore young leaders' agency – their capacity to act independently and make their own free choices, shaping their lives and society, contrasted with social structure in which they live. Thus, the paper will provide basis for a discussion on how the young generations see the future and how they can through the peacebuilding education build capacities for building the future they deserve through an open dialogue and cooperation using lessons learnt from the Western Balkans.

Local Capacities for Peace in Higher Education: Rethinking Peace Education through Dialogue Centers

Presenter: Marije Luitjens &Miranda van Holland (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam)

This article examines the role of university-based dialogue centres in advancing peace education, using the 3D Dialogue Centre at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam as a case study (VU, 2026). It argues that such centres represent significant yet underexplored local capacities for peace within higher education institutions. Drawing on the Peace System Analysis (PSA) framework (Luitjens, 2026), the article analyses how the 3D Dialogue Centre contributes to peace by fostering dialogue, critical reflection, and the building of social connections and relationships among students in contexts marked by polarisation and social tension. In line with critical peace studies, the PSA is used to identify the contextual meaning of peace, the obstacles to its realisation, and, most importantly, the local capacities for peace embedded within the centre's practices. This approach emphasizes the importance of strengthening endogenous, spontaneous, and organic initiatives rather than relying on externally imposed interventions (Luitjens 2026; Lederach, 1997; Mac Ginty, 2014).

Building on this analysis, the article positions dialogue centres as key actors in contemporary peace education at universities. It conceptualises peace education as a transformative and dialogical process that extends beyond formal curricula, aligning with recent scholarship that foregrounds critical pedagogy, reflexivity, and student agency in higher education (Bajaj, 2021; Nicoson, Teixeira, & Mårtensson, 2024). From a youth pedagogical perspective, the 3D Dialogue Centre functions as a space in which young people can engage meaningfully with difference, conflict, and power, reflecting emerging research on youth-led and everyday peacebuilding practices (Biesta, 2011; Pinkeviciute et al., 2025; Nesterova & Anderson, 2025).

Grounded in peace education theory, youth pedagogies, and critical peace studies, this article contributes to debates on universities as sites of peacebuilding. It concludes that dialogue centres such as 3D cultivate vital peace capacities among students and should be recognised as integral components of peace education strategies within higher education institutions

When Peace Education Disappoints: Structural Limits of a Youth Peace Action Program in Poland

Presenter: Vanessa Tinker (Civitas University)

Youth peace education initiatives are often described as empowering pathways that enable participants to translate learning into sustained peace action. Yet the realities of facilitating such programs are less examined. This article offers a reflective practitioner account of implementing a 14-week transnational youth peace education program in Poland, developed as part of the Peace Education and Action for Impact (PEAI) initiative led by World BEYOND War in collaboration with the Rotary Action Group for Peace. The program combined six weeks of thematic instruction with an eight-week participant-led peace action project. While participants demonstrated enthusiasm and completed their projects, tensions emerged between the program's aspirations and the realities of implementation.

Drawing primarily on facilitator field notes, informed by participant reflections and program materials, we examine four structural challenges: (1) the gap between participant "ownership" as envisioned in the program design and the sustained coordinator intervention required in practice; (2) the greater-than-expected time and coordination demands placed on facilitators; (3) the expectation to launch projects before participants had fully absorbed the theoretical foundations; and (4) the unrealistic assumption that short-term projects would sustain themselves beyond the program's formal structure.

Rather than dismissing youth peace education, we argue that its transformative potential depends on realistic pacing, meaningful institutional support, and a clearer alignment between program expectations and the conditions in which participants and facilitators operate. By reflecting on the structural limits encountered in practice, this article contributes to a more grounded understanding of peace action and calls for a more honest approach to sustainability in transnational youth programs.

Peace education and unaccompanied children with migratory backgrounds in Italy

Presenter: Filippo Iapadre (University of Rome La Sapienza)

The aim of this research is to explore dialogical spaces for peace education—both formal and non-formal—within all the reception and integration centers for unaccompanied children with migratory backgrounds in a medium-sized city in Northern Italy with a long history of migration flows, which intensified in 2023 and slowed down over the past two years. Bringing social systems theory (Lumhann, 1990, 2002), critical pedagogy (Freire, 2014; Pirozzi & Rossi-Doria, 2011) and educational peace studies (Kester, 2008; Herrero Rico, 2018; Gürsel-Bilgin, 2020) into a productive dialogue, I investigate how educational interactional communication systems are produced in the daily lives of unaccompanied children, stressing systems potential for change and expansion through horizontal dialogical activities.

I conducted 30 semi-structured interviews with child educators, Italian teachers, linguistic and cultural mediators, and individuals holding political and administrative roles, as well as 9 co-designed dialogical activities with three different groups of children (one for each housing center). In these interactions, I used facilitation as a tool to empower children's agency, enhance their epistemic authority, and build community across social differences.

The interviews were analyzed through narrative and thematic software-assisted analysis. The analysis of the video-recorded activities was also supported by conversational analysis (CA) techniques. CA allowed me to carefully observe how facilitation could enhance turn-taking processes and children's epistemic authority (Baraldi 2022, 2024), fostering more responsible, free, and fluid communication in which mainstream metanarratives can be subverted and deconstructed, and small cultures and possible communities are co-constructed (Amadasi & Holliday, 2018; Tramma, 2019).

Session 11 · Nonviolence, Democracy and Social Movements

15:00–16:30 · Room 1

Who's the real martyr? From competitive victimhood to political mistrust in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Presenter: Amy Kokalari (College of Europe)

Nearly three decades after the Dayton Peace Agreement, a pervasive sense of collective victimhood continues to structure political identities in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This paper argues that victimhood not only preserves memory of past violence but actively shapes current mistrust and resistance to alternative political imaginaries.

Drawing on competitive victimhood theory and affective polarisation theory, the paper examines how narratives of collective suffering generate a defensive political orientation in which security and recognition take precedence over reform. Competitive victimhood explains how groups construct their suffering as individual and incomparable. In Bosnia, this translates into alternative political projects being perceived as risks rather than opportunities. Affective polarisation further explains how these narratives generate emotional distrust, as alternative parties are seen not as legitimate competitors but as threats to group survival.

This configuration produces two outcomes. First, voters become sceptical of reformist projects, framed as externally imposed or hostile to collective memory. Second, the figure of the enemy expands inward. Political actors mobilise narratives of existential threat not only against other ethnonational groups but also against domestic "traitors", opposition parties, independent media, and civil society actors accused of undermining collective suffering. The result is a climate of mistrust in which citizens doubt that any actor can genuinely pursue the common good.

Methodologically, the paper conducts a focused literature review of empirical studies on post-war Bosnia, electoral behaviour, and political trust, combined with secondary analysis of party discourse and commemorative narratives. It argues that transforming victimhood into democratic agency requires shifting from recognition of collective pain to shared responsibility for repair.

Between Humanity and Cruelty: Civil Resistance and the Moral Dynamics of Liberal Societies

Presenter: Michael Schulz (University of Gothenburg)
Co-author: Mikael Baez (University of Gothenburg)

How do societies move toward greater humanity – or toward the normalization of cruelty? While peace research has extensively examined violence and nonviolent resistance, less attention has been paid to how broader societal moral contexts evolve over time. This paper introduces a multi-level framework for analyzing "moral context" as a structurally and normatively produced societal condition, and explores civil resistance as a mechanism of moral reactivation.

Drawing on political sociology (Bauman), social psychology (Staub; Waller), intergroup research (Allport; Hewstone), and civil resistance scholarship (Chenoweth & Stephan), the paper conceptualizes societies as moving along a continuum between contexts of humanity and cruelty. These trajectories emerge through the interaction of structural conditions (e.g., authoritarian governance, inequality), normative environments (public narratives, legitimacy of dissent), psychological processes (habituation to harm, moral courage), and civic practice.

Empirically, the paper presents the development of the Context of Humanity Index (CHI), an exploratory instrument enabling cross-national and longitudinal comparison of societal moral climates through structural, normative, and psychological indicators.

Using comparative insights from civil resistance under occupation and authoritarian rule, the paper argues that nonviolent collective action should be understood not only instrumentally but as a moral practice capable of interrupting processes of moral erosion, while also acknowledging its limits under prolonged domination.

By reframing moral degradation and resistance as dynamic societal processes, the paper contributes to debates on democratic backsliding, normalization of violence, and the fragility of liberal civil society.

Conceptualising a Model of Youth Engagement in Contemporary Peace Efforts: Conditions for Flourishing and the Role of Pedagogy through the 5As × 5Rs × 5Ps

Presenter: Janith Jayatilake Kankanamalage (University of Leeds), Amjad Mohamed-Saleem (Centre for Conflict and Humanitarian Studies, Doha)

This paper reinterprets how young people exercise leadership and proposes a new model for youth engagement in contemporary peace efforts. It examines the societal and institutional conditions that enable such engagement to thrive, as well as the pedagogical principles that can sustain it. Drawing on the researchers' practitioner scholar perspectives–including empirical insights, theory, lived experience, prior research, and over three decades of combined practitioner experience–it reimagines Chankvetadze's (2025) Multidimensional Reflective Practice (MRP) to develop a model of youth peace leadership and identifies the critical infrastructure needed for its development.

Instead of viewing youth leadership as aspirational or future-focused, the inquiry highlights present observable roles enacted across diverse liberal, local/indigenous, everyday, and hybrid peacebuilding settings. It introduces the concept of the 5As of modern youth engagement: Agents of Change, demonstrating self-originating agency; Architects, shaping systems, spaces, and narratives; Anchors, offering stability during crises; Advocates, challenging injustice; and Amplifiers, elevating marginalised voices.

Findings suggest that these roles succeed only when societal and institutional environments redistribute power, legitimise youth voices, build trust, and uphold dignity. Such enabling conditions for trust emerge

through the 5Rs: Respect for lived experience as valued knowledge; Relationship, grounded in reciprocity and resilience; Responsibility, where adults and institutions protect youth dignity, safety, and legitimacy; Reflection, allowing institutions to examine their positionalities; and Renewal, fostering structural changes that share power with youth.

The study also suggests pedagogical principles vital for nurturing youth peace leadership in line with these conditions–the 5Ps: Pedagogies of Conscientisation, Resistance, Partnership, Engagement, and Experience, each promoting critical awareness, agency, collaboration, relational trust, and meaningful participation in peacebuilding.

In doing so, the paper offers a theoretically grounded and practice-oriented framework to guide research, policy, and institutional reform in support of youth-led peacebuilding.

Session 12 · Dialogues, Mediation and Local Peace

15:00–16:30 · Room 2

Recognition Without Return, Return Without Recognition: Dual Desires and the Limits of Closure in Protracted Conflict in Kashmir

Presenter: Kartikeya Kumar (O.P. Jindal Global University)

Peace processes and conflict resolution frameworks often assume that political grievances can be addressed through institutional recognition, legal reform, or territorial settlement. Yet in protracted conflicts marked by displacement and complex, nested forms of belonging, such interventions may not produce durable conditions for reconciliation. In this paper, I argue that these failures stem from a misfit between a top-down approach to conflict resolution and people on the ground who are structured by conditions of prolonged conflict.

Drawing on long-term ethnographic research with displaced Kashmiri Pandits, the paper introduces the concept of dual desires- recognition and return- of Kashmiri Pandits that emerge from what I conceptualise as persistent hurt sentiment produced through displacement, misrecognition, and narrative erasure. Recognition refers to demands for truth, acknowledgement, and moral legitimacy in the face of denial. Return refers not only to physical relocation but to the restoration of meaningful belonging, security, and cultural continuity.

The central claim is that recognition and return are mutually dependent yet tension-ridden. Recognition without the possibility of return risks feeling symbolic and hollow; return without recognition risks being unsafe and morally illegitimate. When peace frameworks address one in isolation, as the Indian state sought to do through its Return and Rehabilitation package of 2008, they inadvertently reproduced the very harm they seek to resolve- the further fragmentation of the two religious communities, the displaced Hindus and the marginalised Muslims of the Kashmir Valley.

By foregrounding dual desires as affective-political formations rather than ideological positions, the paper challenges instrumentalist models of conflict resolution. It suggests that durable peace in protracted conflicts cannot be achieved through sequential or top-down remedies alone, but requires relational processes through which recognition and return are co-imagined. In doing so, the paper contributes to debates in peace research on affect, belonging, and the limits of institutional redress.

The Anatomy of Instability: Multiple Crises, Latent Socio-Political Conflict, and International Pressures in Lebanon—Pathways Toward Stability

Presenter: Antea Enna (Ca' Foscari University of Venice)

The 2024 Israel-Hezbollah conflict led to a wide array of effects within Lebanon. The nation was left with substantial internal divisions, a leadership incapable to address the country needs, and persistent international pressures, all while contending with an ongoing severe socio-economic downturn and a governmental legitimacy crisis since the 2019 thawra. Within this intricate context, the vague terms of the ceasefire to end the hostilities permitted Israel to continue aggressive and violent operations against Lebanon, including targeted assassinations, psychological warfare tactics, and sustained diplomatic coercion.

This study adopts a qualitative approach, combining document analysis and interviews with Lebanese citizens and key informants, to examine transformations in Lebanon's complex post-conflict socio-political landscape. It explores how overlapping crises, governance failures, and foreign interferences impact citizens life and perpetuate political and social instability. By identifying drivers of social conflict including distrust, fragmentation, and weakened public engagement, the study underscores the role of stakeholder dialogue and legitimacy-building practices in reaching political and social stability. The findings of this research advance theoretical debates on socio-political stability and the challenges of governance in times of multiple crises, while offering actionable insights for policymakers and practitioners working to strengthen social cohesion and support sustainable reconciliation processes.

Peace from Below: Exploring People's Perspectives on Peace and Security during the War in Sudan

Presenter: Amira Osman (Abu-Alafya Foundation for Peace and Reconciliation, AFOPER)

The current war in Sudan, which started on 15th April 2023 has led to the world's worst humanitarian crisis. More than 12 million people have been internally displaced and more than 3 million have sought refuge in Neighbouring countries.

In the midst of this devastating conflict, where the international community often focuses on top-down peace strategies and negotiations, the voices of local communities remain crucial yet underrepresented. This paper explores how grassroots communities in Sudan, especially those directly impacted by the war, perceive, experience, and actively shape peace and security in their daily lives. By examining the local, often invisible, efforts to build peace from below, this research offers a unique perspective on the dynamics of conflict and the potential for sustainable peace in Sudan.

I argue that a sustainable peace in Sudan will not be achieved through formal treaties alone but through the recognition and promoting of grassroots peace efforts that are already taking place on the ground.

In this research I applied a mixed research approach that includes review of relevant literature and semi-structured interviews with local people including women, youth, and the displaced.

In conclusion, the paper calls for greater inclusion of grassroots voices in formal peace processes and highlights the significance of understanding peace from the perspective of those living through conflict.

By examining local narratives of peace and security, the paper contributes to a broader, more inclusive vision of peacebuilding that is essential for long-term stability in Sudan.

Session 13 · War, Genocide, and Everyday Violence

15:00–16:30 · Room 3

Between Vulnerability and Agency: Exploring Experiences Among Military-Age Ukrainian Men Who Flee the Full-Scale War

Presenter: Sofie Rose (University of Southern Denmark)

Since the beginning of Russia's full-scale invasion, Ukraine has implemented a travel ban prohibiting most men aged 18-60 from leaving the country. In addition, a new mobilization law of May 2024, expands recruitment mandates and imposes significantly stricter penalties on those who fail to comply. Despite these measures, draft evasion has emerged as a growing issue, and nearly 1 million men have fled to the EU alone. While public discourse has predominantly focused on the military problems posed by this exodus, little attention has been given to the individual experiences and challenges faced by the men who chose to leave their homeland to avoid conscription, often by using illegal and dangerous methods. Drawing on extensive ethnographic fieldwork and in-dept interviews with 59 Ukrainian men who fled Ukraine, most of them illegally, this study explores how these men navigate societal expectations, civic responsibilities, and the everyday survival of themselves and their families during full-scale war.

The analysis is structured around the men's journey of fleeing, from their decision to leave, through the act of crossing the border, to the complex experiences that followed. Throughout these stages, the study traces how experiences of agency and vulnerability intersect in narratives of survival, resistance, guilt, and choice. The participants are aged between 18 and 55 and represent diverse geographical locations and socioeconomic backgrounds. Their stories reveal how gender and class play central roles not only in shaping individual perceptions of duties and mobilization, but also the practical circumstances influencing the men's decisions to flee and the specific vulnerabilities they face as a result. By offering unique empirical insights into contemporary experiences of draft evasion during large-scale modern warfare, this study contributes with new understandings of how the war, militarization and mobilization policies (re)shape masculine identities and social hierarchies in Ukraine, and what this means for the lives and social status of civilian men who chose not to fight.

Understanding Medicalized Violence: Predicting and Preventing Genocidal Violence

Presenter: Ashten Vassar-Cain (Pennhurst Memorial & Preservation Alliance)

Atrocity crimes are largely regarded in the mind of the public as "unspeakable" and "unthinkable." For genocide studies scholars, survivors, and the perpetrators of such heinous crimes, the harsh realities of destruction are intimately familiar. The once unimaginable becomes grotesquely human, in both their aftermath and inception. The word genocide entered the legal and public sphere following the devastation of the Holocaust. Like the word itself, much of the understanding we glean from mass atrocities comes in their wake. However, focusing on the end leads to an incomplete analysis of these evils which does little to prevent their repetition. Risk assessment tools and early warning systems have

been developed to analyze the likelihood of a conflict escalating to genocide or of a state enacting genocidal campaigns.

Genocide hinges on the creation and dehumanization of the "other," a deep social fragmentation and corresponding instability and inequality. This dehumanized other is then subjected to extreme cruelties with the aim of erasure. This is not unlike the goals of eugenics campaigns that seek to eliminate disability and Disabled. Because the definition of genocide is limited to atrocities committed on the basis of race, ethnicity, religious identity, or national origin, people with disabilities are often left as an afterthought, or rather "the writing on the wall." Additionally, because Disabled people have historically been denied political agency, they have been done a great disservice in retroactive analysis of political violence.

Having observed the dehumanization done to People with Disabilities (PWDs) in my research focused on state institutions and the rise of eugenic and medicalized violence, I was struck by the way that eugenic pseudoscience had inspired architects of genocide and given them an excuse to pose their prejudice as "scientific." The arguments that had been used to justify violence, forced institutionalization, sterilization, and torture of disabled people were applied to other identity categories and supplemented genocidal rhetoric. There has been discussion in Disability Studies circles about the unique challenges that people with disabilities face during and after mass atrocity crimes, yet this remains reflective rather than oriented toward prevention and continued anti-eugenic education. Much of the literature and investigative reports by nongovernmental organizations such as Disability Rights International regarding dehumanizing conditions in deeply divided and post-conflict societies have not directly addressed genocide or mass atrocity crimes in their investigation. The mutual gap in both genocide studies and disability studies scholarship speaks to a dangerous and pervasive erasure of people with disabilities, their political identities, and the conditions that precede violent and genocidal conflict. This paper examines several case studies focusing on how normalizing the dehumanization of people with disabilities might prime a society for genocide.

The Role of Sacralization of the Female Body in the Instrumentalization of Rape as a Weapon of War during the Bosnia and Herzegovina War (1992–1995)

Presenter: Sanja Cokolic (Association for Development of Free Society Pozitiva)

Sacralization of the female body molds women's social roles as the foundation of the nuclear family, and, for war rape victims, the act of rape subverts these roles. The subject of this research is the mass rape that took place in the Bosnian and Herzegovinian war during the 1990s. Methodological (Case study, Document, and Content analysis) and theoretical (Game theory, Sacralization theory, and Goffman's theory of social stigma) triangulation are employed to analyze documented cases and elaborate on the underreported instances of rape in conflict zones. War rape exposes the patriarchal struggle for control over women's bodies in its most extreme form. The sacralization of the female body, as a construct grounded in religious ideologies, entrenches social norms that define women primarily through the imperatives of virginity, marriage, and motherhood. This construct acts as a mechanism of symbolic violence against women, undermining their self-realization and sexual autonomy by compelling them toward socially acceptable choices that sustain patriarchal domination.

The results show how sacralization of the female body contributes to the legitimization of the stigmatization and social exclusion of war rape victims. The presence of the victim's co-responsibility

narrative serves as a significant motivation for utilizing rape as a weapon of war, as it capacitates the transgenerational stigmatization. The construct of the sacralization of the female body adds a better understanding of how religious ideologies perpetuate rape as a highly effective weapon of war.

Transformation of Everyday Life and Spatial Resilience in the Time of Siege of Sarajevo

Presenter: Belkıs Sena Top (TED University)

The city of Sarajevo remained under siege for 1425 days during the Bosnian War between 1992 - 1996 which occurred with the aim of segregating the city and the country along ethnic lines. The city was surrounded, any kind of entry and exit was obstructed. During the siege, the civilians, their life and their daily life activities were the target of the siege Army. Unstopped attacks with shelling and snipers caused almost 11,500 people to lose their lives and even more than three times of people were wounded due to these attacks. Within this context, this study tries to demonstrate an example of collective resistance against collective violence. It aims to investigate how daily life spaces became part of resilience and changed in the city of Sarajevo during the siege. In this respect, the study consists of examination of everyday life in urban spaces and everyday life in interior spaces during the 1425 days. They include movements of people in urban spaces, changes of use in narrow streets and boulevards, urban signs, changes of use in residential spaces and building parts. Memories, oral histories, photographs from the period and plan drawing of a random Sarajevo house by Zoran Doršner were used as a source to analyze how daily life was sustained despite the ongoing violence. This study ends up with ways of transforming ordinary spaces into survival spaces when faced a struggle. I argue with this study that people seek a way to survive, change and transform the regular means of space according to their new needs under harsh conditions. Additionally, this study contributes to literature as evidence of Sarajevo people's struggle in inhuman conditions for years with their resistance against ethnically motivated conflict.

Workshop 3 · Arts, Media and Digital Peace Practices

15:00–16:30 · Auditorium

Workshop: Images of Violence, Hopes for Peace: Using Visual Media for Addressing Sensitive Topics in the Classroom

Organisers: Larisa Kasumagić Kafedžić (University of Sarajevo); Muhamed Kafedžić (Visual artist)

This workshop investigates the role of the arts in peace education, specifically addressing the navigation of controversial and sensitive themes within language and culture education contexts. The workshop is structured into two interconnected focal points: artist-led illustration of his painting exhibition documenting the expansion of gun culture and firearm violence in today's world, and applied linguistic and education framework for image-based pedagogical strategies in language and culture classrooms, focussing on developing students' peacebuilding competences and intercultural dialogue. The workshop highlights how visual media assists students in deciphering complex content by evaluating the efficacy and transformative power of using education and arts-integrated materials in language and culture teaching. Additionally, it acknowledges the challenges of recognizing, naming and managing heightened emotionality in the classroom when introducing such topics particularly in conflict-affected education environments. By combining these two focal points, the workshop provides teachers and educators with

empirical insights and practical tools to introduce discussions and critical reflections about violence and peacebuilding in our classrooms while refining instructional materials and methods and selecting peace pedagogies aimed at cultivating new hopes and reclaiming humanity and global peace in education and beyond.

Session 14 · Feminist Peace Research

15:00–16:30 · Room 4

The Triangle of Trust: Relational Dynamics in Interpreter-Assisted Interviews on Sensitive Topics

Presenter: Marta Pitino (Uppsala University); Ana Gvozdić (Uppsala University)

Scholarship in peace and conflict research has increasingly examined multiple aspects of qualitative research practice, including researcher positionality, trauma-sensitive approaches, and the role of research brokers in the (co-)production of knowledge. Yet, despite the centrality of interpreters in cross-language research, limited attention has been paid to the relational dynamics that unfold in the interview space, where trust among researcher, interpreter, and interviewee is negotiated in real time—particularly in discussions of civilian victimization and wartime experiences. Hence, we ask: how is trust produced, negotiated, and experienced in cross-language interviews on sensitive topics? Existing literature has largely conceptualized trust instrumentally, emphasizing it moves towards interpreters as a criterion in the hiring process to mainly ensure data integrity. Moving beyond this, we conceptualize trust as a relational, ever-volving, and tri-lateral dynamic permeating the interview and data collection process. Drawing on the concept of the "triangle of trust," we capture trust as it is woven into the triadic relationship between researcher, interpreter, and interviewee, highlighting the ethical responsibilities these interactions entail for researchers in the room. This paper draws on self-reflective data and impressions collected during fieldwork in Bosnia Herzegovina between 2025 and 2026, conducted for a project on religion and social consequences of wartime sexual violence. Grounded on this data, we explore how trust is produced, strained, and negotiated through both verbal and non-verbal communication. We argue that interpreters are active participants, not neutral conduits, whose trust must be considered and whose presence reshapes ethical responsibilities, affective dynamics, and epistemological outcomes. By foregrounding trust as a shared and unevenly distributed risk across all three actors, this article contributes to debates on trauma-sensitive research, ethics of care, and reflexive fieldwork, concluding with practical reflections on how to engage with cross-language research in contexts of violence and vulnerability in a mindful and ethically grounded way.

Reclaiming Everyday Peace: Women's NGOs and Feminist Peace Work during the 2001 Conflict in North Macedonia

Presenter: Daniela Antonovska (EKVALITIKO, North Macedonia)

During the 2001 armed conflict in North Macedonia, women's and civil society organizations engaged in community organizing that sustained social relations, mitigated harm, and challenged militarized security logics. Although excluded from formal negotiations and post-conflict institutionalization, these efforts created fragile yet meaningful infrastructures of coexistence.

Using qualitative methods, including initial and critical analysis, and drawing on feminist peace research, the paper examines local women-led organizations—as sites of everyday peace during active conflict. It explores how practices of care, dialogue facilitation, psycho-social support, humanitarian assistance, and cross-community trust-building constituted feminist peace work grounded in relationality rather than elite mediation or security governance. Women's organizations should be approached as collective political actors navigating tensions such as ethnicisation, emergency governance, donor conditionality, and depoliticisation.

The Ohrid Framework Agreement put an end to the conflict and adopted a narrow ethno-political and institutional conception of peace. It lacked a gender perspective and failed to recognize women as political subjects or to address the gendered dimensions of violence. The paper situates women's peace practices as preceding the national Women, Peace and Security framework under UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and critically reflects on how these practices were later translated into National Action Plans.

By centring everyday peace and feminist critiques of peace agreements and WPS implementation, it argues for reclaiming peace beyond crisis narratives and formal settlements, recognizing community organizing as a vital yet contested foundation of feminist peace.

Undocumented bodies and territories of war: feminist perspectives on the continuum between violence and peace

Presenter: Anna Micol Tropeano (University of Rome La Sapienza); Daniela Susarenco (University of Rome La Sapienza)

This paper is within the framework of Feminist Peace Research by adopting a decolonial perspective to analyze violence and peace from the centrality of the body. Moving from the idea that peace and violence are co-constituted along a temporal and spatial continuum, integrating the perspective proposed by Rita Segato (2016) where the body is read as a territory of conquest and a site for transmitting messages of power: war is understood as an embodied experience whose traces - memories, wounds and silences - create a furrow of the wound that tends to be repeated in subjects. Embodied experience that requires, as a cure to trauma, the use of a holistic approach that rejects the reduction of suffering to the clinical category of PTSD alone, challenging the processes of pathologizing and depoliticizing pain. At the heart of the analysis will be the concept of "corporeal peacebuilding" (Väyrynen, 2019; Brett et al., 2024), integrated with the notion of "embodied everyday peace" (Berents, 2015,Väyrynen et al., 2021) , where peace emerges through bodily encounters and ordinary practices of care. Such dynamics allow "undocile bodies" to produce "surplus histories" (Beneduce, 2010; Pitzalis, 2024) that resist techniques of institutional governance and imposed regimes of truth. Finally, the work engages in dialogue with postmemory studies and transgenerational trauma, showing how the reappropriation of the body is a fundamental ground for political claim and reconstruction of the social fabric. The question that led us to elaborate the proposal of this contribution, is: how does the conception of war as an embodied experience allow us to rethink peace not as a condition opposed to violence, but as an everyday bodily practice capable of interrupting the reproduction of the wound furrow? The contribution will mainly use a conceptual theoretical approach with a look at the possible applications in the research the proponents

are dealing with, from the case of women ex-combatants in Colombia, to women victims of violence in conflicts who arrive in Italy trafficked, proposing a reformulation in bodily key.

Bosnia and Herzegovina as a normative laboratory: the case of children born of wartime rape

Presenter: Lucie Fayoux (Sciences Po Lille)

This article proposes to explore Bosnia and Herzegovina as a site of legal and symbolic innovation in the field of post-conflict justice. In 2022 and 2023, two entities of BiH – Brcko district and the FBiH, became the first in the world to explicitly recognize children born of wartime rape as civilian victims of war. While these laws responded primarily to domestic advocacy, they have since gained international attention and have been referenced as examples of good practice by actors such as the UN Secretary General and the Prosecutor of the

International Criminal Court.

This paper examines how Bosnia and Herzegovina transitioned from a site of international norm reception to a source of normative production. It argues that Bosnia now functions as a normative laboratory, where global principles around victimhood, gendered harms, and symbolic recognition have been reinterpreted, redefined and reassembled into innovative legal frameworks. Our research then traces how these Bosnian-born norms are circulating transnationally and analyses their reception in different contexts. Rather than a simple model to replicate, the Bosnian experience acts as a flexible template, whose diffusion depends on political, legal, and social conditions elsewhere.

Ultimately, this paper contributes to a rethinking of transitional justice as a polycentric field, where previously peripheral States can emerge as norm shapers, proposing new answers to unresolved global questions about reparations, visibility, and the rights of children born of wartime rape.

Friday 6 November 2026

Panel 4 · Youth, Education, and Peace Pedagogies

11:00–12:30 · Room 1

Panel: Practices of Peace Education: field-based experiences and reflections

Panellists: Milady Cordero Ulloa (University of Rome La Sapienza); Tatjana Milovanović (Post-Conflict Research Center, PCRC); Chiara Marucci (University of Rome La Sapienza)

"Peace in the 21st century is challenged by unprecedented and interdependent global threats. It requires applying all the tools of peacebuilding, diplomacy, and conflict transformation available to us" (UNESCO, 2024). The role of education is crucial to address this global challenge, as an emerging scholarly consensus suggests that education has a general pacifying effect and can significantly reduce the risk of political violence (Østby et al., 2018). To cultivate a culture of peace and social cohesion, it is necessary to promote a pedagogical 'reflection-action' capable of co-designing new community paradigms (Palmieri, 2022).

This panel creates a space for practice-based dialogue between educators and practitioners from the Western Balkans and Italy, foregrounding concrete educational experiences and methods used within formal and non-formal settings. By bringing together initiatives from post-conflict and non-post-conflict environments, we aim to foster an exchange, exploring how peace education practices respond to specific social, historical, and political conditions — and how they can mutually inspire and enrich each other.

Through moderated conversation and audience engagement, the panel seeks to move beyond crisis narratives and abstract theorizing. It emphasizes comparative reflection, peer learning, and action-oriented practice, aiming to become a source of situated knowledge where schools and educational spaces serve as laboratories for democratic citizenship (Palmieri, 2022).

Developing nonviolent coexistence competencies: The experimental PeaceLab project in secondary schools in Pisa

Presenter: Milady Cordero Ulloa (University of Rome La Sapienza)

PeaceLab: Training for everyday peace is an experimental project currently underway in three Italian upper secondary schools in the city of Pisa. This contribution presents the practical experience of the project as an intervention in education for peace developed within a contemporary school context. The project aims to foster a critical understanding of conflict by distinguishing it from violence (Galtung, 1996) and reframing it as a potential opportunity for individual and collective growth. Peace is understood not as the mere absence of conflict, but as the presence of justice (Galtung, 1996), empathy, and relational responsibility. PeaceLab supports students in developing emotional awareness and management, with attention to the relationship between emotions, language, and behavior. The project also promotes "bridge-building" communicative practices grounded in Nonviolent Communication (NVC) (Rosenberg), strengthening personal responsibility and positioning students as active agents capable of transforming everyday tensions within their school environment.

The intervention adopts a maieutic-experiential methodology rooted in the Italian maieutic tradition (Dolci; Novara). It is articulated through four workshops employing participatory methods, including symbolic expression through visual arts, embodied learning through role-playing for de-escalation and constructive conflict management, and a World Café session to foster collaborative dialogue and horizontal peer learning.

As an ongoing experimental initiative, PeaceLab aims to create structured participatory spaces in which adolescents can actively engage with and "inhabit" their conflicts. This contribution presents the intervention framework and preliminary observations emerging from the project's ongoing development.

"Holocaust & Peace": Inclusive Peace Education in Post-Conflict Bosnia and Herzegovina

Presenter: Tatjana Milovanović (Post-Conflict Research Center, PCRC)

This presentation introduces the development, impact, and future vision of the pedagogical manual "Holocaust & Peace – Lessons from the Past for the Future", a collaborative peace education practice designed to support inclusive, fact-based teaching of difficult histories in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). Emerging from a seven-year process involving educators, civil society organizations, and regional and international experts, the manual is a concrete response to the challenges of exclusive narratives, segregated schooling, and politicized memory that continue to affect BiH's post-war society.

Comprising four interdisciplinary modules, history, human rights, culture of remembrance, and language, literature and arts, the manual equips teachers with practical tools and methodologies to engage students in critical reflection on the causes and consequences of mass atrocities, including the Holocaust, while drawing connections to the 1990s wars in the Balkans. It promotes multi-perspectivity, empathy, and civic responsibility in classrooms still shaped by division and historical denial.

The presentation reflects on the pedagogical strategies employed, both direct and indirect engagement with controversial issues, and highlights the pilot phase, teacher feedback, and eventual institutionalization of the manual into the Sarajevo Canton and Goražde Canton curriculums starting in the 2023/2024. It also outlines the next steps: scaling the practice to other Cantons, Brčko District, and Republika Srpska, with the goal of making peace education an integral part of BiH's formal education system.

In a context where memory remains a battleground and students often grow up within biased narratives, Holocaust & Peace offers a model for constructive dialogue, inclusive memorialization, and education that empowers youth to build a more just and peaceful society.

Schools for Peace: The third sector and attempts to bring peace to schools

Presenter: Chiara Marucci (University of Rome La Sapienza)

Over the last decade, the Italian school system has undergone profound and contradictory changes. While the introduction of civic education in 2016 seemed to open the way to greater attention to the citizenship education, since 2022 this teaching has been progressively subjected to stricter control of content and methodologies, reflecting the relationship between knowledge and power analyzed by Michel Foucault (1975).

In this context, peace education—understood as a transformative practice—has found space mainly through projects promoted by local organizations and associations. The project "Schools for Peace" is promoted by a third-sector organization based in Rome, working in schools with the aim of providing critical and educational tools for building a culture of peace.

The approach adopted is inspired by a conception of education as an emancipatory practice (Freire, 1970), based on dialogue, the problematization of reality, and the active participation of students. In this sense, peace education is a space for the development of agency (Giddens, 2006), understood as the ability to act consciously on the social context and to promote forms of active and responsible citizenship.

Through thematic modules dedicated to geopolitics, human rights, migration processes, and disarmament, and through a participatory methodology, processes of deconstruction of stereotypes and ethnic prejudices emerge, together with the experimentation of more equitable and contextualized information practices.

Finally, the project represents an observatory for reflecting on the role of associations as educational actors and on the potential to build stable networks of collaboration with educational institutions.

Session 15 · War, Genocide, and Everyday Violence

11:00–12:30 · Room 2

"Someone has to start" – small steps towards peace

Presenter: Alexandra Bohm (The Open University)

This paper considers some implications of the crisis narrative within international peace and security law and arguments over 'humanitarian' military intervention (HMI), drawing on the work of Hilary Charlesworth and Anne Orford. It then explores some more grass-roots peace initiatives to highlight an alternative conception of violence and peace within the situations where HMI is often invoked by powerful actors. This part of the paper uses the work of scholar activists such as John Paul Lederach as well as Alfred Adler's philosophical, psychological approach to healing.

Some of the nonviolent initiatives explored include groups operating within the Israel-Palestine conflict, Bosnia-Hercegovina and Burundi. These groups focus on healing intra-personal as well as inter-personal trauma and conflict, developing trust and empathy in order to build connections and a sense of community that disrupts and transcends conflict-fuelling identities. The paper considers limitations of these initiatives as well as how they fit within a wider context that involves powerful external actors, whether the UN or specific states and their peacebuilding programs. Concluding thoughts are offered on the importance of individuals and personal change.

Western Sahara: story of a resistance suspended between occupation and the right to self-determination of peoples

Presenter: Giorgia Beninati (University of Rome La Sapienza)

This paper aims to shed light on the case of Western Sahara that has been described as "one of the most neglected crises in the world" by United Nations. Western Sahara has had to struggle for its freedom,

initially, from Spanish colonial domination and, currently, from Moroccan occupation. This study intends to focus on the right of the Sahrawis to self-determination, intended as the right of peoples to freely determine their own political status and pursue their own economic, social and cultural development. For this purpose, the UN has been trying for years to organise a referendum but this has not still taken place due to failure to reach agreement between Morocco and Frente Polisario. Therefore, although recognised by the UN and the International Court of Justice, the right of the Sahrawis to self-determination remains unfulfilled and the situation unresolved since 1976. Morocco, taking advantage of this stalemate, has consolidated its control over the territory as demonstrated by the construction of the Berm, a wall that divides the portion of land illegally occupied by Morocco from that under the control of the Frente Polisario. This barrier, in addition to being guarded by thousands of soldiers, is surrounded by numerous landmines. The mine clearance operations and the educational and advocacy activities on this issue carried out by the Sahrawi population transform this wall into a space for creating new forms of resistance, awaiting the realisation of the right to self-determination.

This paper, through an international law perspective, intends to demonstrate not only how general disregard consolidates injustices, but also how impasses do not stop the resistance of oppressed peoples who, instead, find new ways to practise it.

Social Connection After Atrocity: Transformational Resilience in the Balkans

Presenter: Keanna Smigliani (Northeastern University)

This project explores the impacts of traumatic stress and how it changes capacities for connection. It explores whether the mental health deterioration that is seen when the “entire fabric of a society has been frayed,” (Kunovich 2004) allows for capacities for relationships across groups to transform into strengthened, peaceful post-conflict societies that practice an active peace, rather than the absence of violence.

Amongst ethnic conflict, social capital is a negative factor; those one would normally seek to connect with may be a perpetrator of violence and cause of mental distress. Understanding both dark and light sides of social capital and social connection are related to mental distress in the aftermath of violence is an urgent task.

Existing literature on conflict resilience argues that social capital has a complicated relationship with mental health due to demolished inter-group relations, but does not address the role of social connection. This project aims to address this gap with the introduction of the Transformation Resilience Model for understanding long-term traumatic stress recovery which involves three essential aspects: establishment of safety, engagement with narrative processing, and reintegration into social webs. Resilience literature’s missing cornerstone with the potential to heal both social division and traumatic stress is that of individual and collective narrative creation.

This theoretical model provides a framework for understanding post-traumatic growth, and building positive aspects of bonding social capital in the aftermath of ethnic conflict. It is rooted in data from reported healing journeys from those recovering from war-related violence in the Balkans.

Schools as Geopolitical Spaces: A Case Study of the Bosnian War (1992–1995)

Presenter: Allyson Bachta (University of Massachusetts Boston, Center for Peace, Democracy, and Development - CPDD)

Transitional justice efforts often overlook how violence against schools helps construct the geographies of war and the spatial foundations of post-war divisions. Drawing on an original dataset of 592 schools that existed during the war, this study examines how these everyday spaces were transformed during the conflict in ways that have likely had generational impacts.

Using GIS analysis combined with demographic and conflict markers, the study maps conflict dynamics and illuminates the geographies of violence. Schools in contested or strategically significant areas, and in municipalities with ethnically mixed populations, were disproportionately damaged, occupied, or repurposed. Some schools were used defensively within local communities, while others were militarized or targeted in ways that reinforced territorial control and intersected with broader campaigns of genocide. These patterns demonstrate that attacks on schools were deliberate, structured, and closely aligned with broader political and strategic objectives.

The project makes three key contributions: it introduces a unique, disaggregated dataset for future research on education and conflict; it provides evidence that school-targeted violence during the Bosnian War was intentional and strategically applied; and it highlights critical gaps in international humanitarian law, where schools remain only conditionally protected.

The findings underscore the importance of accountability and transitional justice. Recognizing attacks on schools as distinct harms, and addressing their symbolic legacies, is essential for rebuilding geographies of peace, restoring community cohesion, and preventing the reproduction of violence in post-conflict landscapes. The Bosnian case illustrates how spatially patterned violence against everyday sites shapes post-war recovery and demonstrates the urgent need to treat schools as protected spaces with enduring social and political significance.

Session 16 · Decolonial and Critical Peace Studies

11:00–12:30 · Room 3

Neutrality as Governance: Economic Knowledge, Crisis Narratives, and the Conditions of Peace

Presenter: Adna Husagic (University of Copenhagen)

Across contemporary contexts of crisis, including ecological collapse, militarisation, and deepening global inequalities, economic forms of knowledge play a central yet often unexamined role in shaping how responsibility, legitimacy, and appropriate action are understood. This contribution examines how claims of value-neutrality in economics function not only as methodological ideals, but as epistemic conditions that structure crisis governance and delimit what forms of peace can be imagined.

Rather than advancing a normative critique of economic indicators, the paper focuses on an internal methodological tension in economic reasoning: the translation of abstract notions of value into

measurable economic quantities. It examines how economic theory operationalises value through processes of aggregation and measurement, and how monetary indicators come to function as proxies for value despite their acknowledged limitations. In doing so, the paper shows how neutrality becomes operational through measurement practices, rather than remaining a purely technical assumption.

Drawing on economic methodology, critical political economy, and analyses of governmentality, the paper conceptualises neutrality as a governing epistemology that renders its own normative and political effects analytically invisible. From this perspective, crisis narratives are not simply responses to external shocks, but are co-produced through knowledge systems that prioritise urgency and efficiency while narrowing the space for accountability, repair, and alternative ways of living together.

The paper contributes to critical peace research by showing how economic epistemologies shape the conditions under which peace is imagined, not only as the absence of violence, but as justice, accountability, and relational repair.

Semiotics of Peace, Cultural Symbols and Minority Recognition

Presenter: Renato Ongania (Cattedra della Pace)

This paper investigates peace as a semiotic and cultural process, emphasizing the role of cultural, media-based, and digitally mediated symbols, narratives, and communicative practices in shaping inclusive and non-violent social imaginaries. Drawing on semiotic theory and peace studies, it argues that peace is not only a political or institutional outcome, but also a symbolic construction mediated through shared meanings, representations, and communicative codes circulating in public and digital spaces.

The contribution focuses in particular on minority contexts, where symbolic misrecognition and distorted narratives are often reproduced through media representations and cultural platforms, reinforcing exclusion, marginalization, and forms of structural violence. Through selected case studies and comparative analysis, the paper examines how cultural symbols—such as flags, rituals, public narratives, and participatory digital and artistic practices—operate as active agents in processes of identity formation, recognition, and conflict transformation.

By bridging semiotics and peace research, the study proposes an interpretative framework that highlights the importance of symbolic and media literacy in peacebuilding practices. It concludes that fostering inclusive semiotic environments across cultural and digital domains is a crucial condition for sustainable peace, understood as a dynamic cultural practice rather than a static political condition.

Keeping Looted Art Objects in Museums

Presenter: Melisa Dzananovic (Maastricht University)

This paper critically examines debates around looted art and restitution, questioning whether museums can function as sites of accountability, repair, and education when holding contested objects. By engaging with cases of Nazi-looted art, the paper explores tensions between justice, ownership, cultural memory, and institutional power within post-conflict heritage practices .

Doing emotions, doing peace? Peacebuilding practices, agency and creativity

Presenter: Maéva Clément (Osnabrück University)

Critical, feminist and decolonial research has increasingly unsettled the liberal peace project, drawing our attention, in its stead, to visions of small, slow, agonistic peace(s). Yet, there has been much less discussion on how such visions draw on emotional representations and affective imaginations. This contribution builds on a forthcoming forum on embodied and emotional methodologies in the study of political transitions and peace edited by Maéva Clément and Katrin Travouillon. The forum foregrounds the following question: What do we make visible and what do we miss, reify, or obscure when writing about peace(building) and others' emotion expressions, representations, and experiences? As the forum discusses the challenges and opportunities of recovering alternative visions of peace, it complicates the relationship between emotions and peace(building). To illustrate the issues debated in the forum, the proposed paper will discuss the editors' own explorations of peacebuilding practices in the contexts of political transition and community reconciliation. Recognising the importance of maintaining a focus on local actors' agency while keeping the fluid and undefined force of creativity that emerges from everyday encounters transparent, we turn to practice theory. Taking a practice-theoretical approach to emotions means exploring how emotions are 'done' in the wake of conflict. This, in turn, allows us to recover how concrete people, through their daily struggles and interactions, change how peace – in all its emotional fragility and contingency – is practiced and experienced by communities.

Workshop 4 · Feminist Peace Research

11:00–12:30 · Room 4

Workshop: Experimental Workshop on Practices of Embodied, Relational Peace

Organisers: Stine Rasmussen (Tampere University); Maria Mäensivu (Tampere Peace Network); Maria Rossi (Tampere University)

In this 90-minute workshop, we will share our practical experiences with embodied methods in community work and invite participants to take part in exercises in the pursuit of co-creating embodied knowledge. Our work is guided by embodied and relational practices and approaches within feminist peace research, informed by our own community work started in 2026 in Tampere, Finland, and inspired by other embodied methodologies, such as social circus.

To share our experiences and continue the co-creation of knowledge within embodied and relational peace practices, we propose a 90-minute experimental workshop on embodied practices in peace-work. The workshop is structured in three parts, starting with a short introduction to our theoretical approaches and experiences from the past year. Afterwards, we invite participants to take part in three different exercises, suitable for all mobility levels. Finally, we will end with a collective debrief, encouraging participants to reflect on their bodily, relational, and affective experience during the exercises.

Throughout the workshop we will be engaging in experiential knowledge production alongside the participants. While the workshop and the knowledge created within it might be unconventional and experimental, it can unlock new ways of understanding our roles as scholars, professionals, and students of peace. With this experience, we hope to develop an interest in and create new ideas for embodied

practices in local peace initiatives, as well as contribute to feminist approaches to embodied and relational peace with practical knowledge. This workshop will be organized by Maria Mäensivu, Katri Mäkelä, Stine Rasmussen, and Maria Rossi.

Session 17 · War, Genocide, and Everyday Violence

14:00–15:30 · Room 1

What significance did the conspiracy theories prevalent in Serbia under Milošević's authoritarian regime have for the genocides and massacres in the former Yugoslavia?

Presenter: Gentiana Bexheti (Free University Berlin)

This paper examines how conspiracy narratives operated as political technologies of crisis governance under Slobodan Milošević and answers the question of what significance the conspiracy theories prevalent in Serbia under his authoritarian regime had for the genocides and massacres in the former Yugoslavia, with particular attention to Bosnia and Kosovo. Instead of treating conspiracy beliefs as irrational by-products of upheaval, it argues that conspiracy claims were strategically mobilised to stabilise authoritarian power, externalise responsibility, and make ethnicised violence appear necessary and defensible.

Drawing on Douglas et al.'s approach to conspiracy theories as socially and politically consequential narratives and linking it to Jagers & Walgrave's work on populist "people versus enemies" mobilisation, the paper shows how conspiratorial meaning-making produces to date durable enemy images and moral polarisation.

The study uses qualitative content analysis following Mayring to synthesise and code key scholarly accounts of Milošević-era nationalism, propaganda, and institutional actors. The analysis traces how conspiracy narratives travelled across state-aligned media, nationalist intellectual circles, and religious authorities, where repetition and moral endorsement translated elite strategy into everyday sense-making normalising exclusion and repression and facilitating escalation toward organised mass violence, including genocide in Bosnia and massacres in Kosovo. It reads conspiracy-driven crisis narratives as a discursive infrastructure that obscures perpetration and marginalises other ways of knowing and resisting still ongoing violence. In doing so, it opens space to foreground silenced experiences and struggles - such as community organising, survival practices, and forms of everyday care - as crucial resources for reimagining peace beyond crisis narratives.

Big Tech's complicity in the Gaza genocide: from awareness to action

Presenter: Federico Oliveri (University of Pisa)

This intervention analyses the role of technology corporations—including Microsoft, Amazon, and Palantir—in the Gaza genocide and proposes strategies to hold them accountable and end their support for the Israeli military. First, I will recognise the crucial role of tech workers in exposing their employers' complicity with apartheid and genocide in Palestine. Second, I will map the spectrum of "algorithmic violence" deployed in Gaza, encompassing mass surveillance, AI-powered targeting systems reliant on cloud infrastructure and data fusion, platform-enabled censorship of activists, suppression of Palestinian

narratives, and the dissemination of AI-generated disinformation. Third, I will present a model for attributing legal responsibility to technology corporations for complicity in international crimes, addressing challenges such as “diffuse liability” within complex tech stacks and the “plausible deniability” of dual-use technologies. Fourth, I will outline strategies for raising public awareness of the technological dimension of future genocides and the emerging “military-digital complex,” while promoting individual and collective action against it. In conclusion, I will argue that a radical reimagining of communities founded on nonviolent digital technologies is a fundamental prerequisite for peaceful societies.

Exercising as a Practice of Sumud and ‘Pessoptimistic’ Hope

Presenter: Stine Mark Rasmussen (Tampere University)

In this presentation, I will share my research with the Right to Movement (RTM) community in Bethlehem, Palestine. It will examine how resistance and hope emerge within the informal exercise community RTM. It draws on my MA thesis, which explored the lived experience of RTM participants as they move and exercise in a militarised, settler-colonial context, as well as a forthcoming article that develops a more focused analysis of how hope and resistance manifest through their movement practices.

RTM consists of several local groups across historical Palestine, each navigating distinct settler-colonial conditions that shape everyday life. While exercise is conditioned by these realities, it can also become a means of disrupting and resisting them. In Bethlehem, RTM organises weekly strength-training sessions and outdoor running or walking in the few remaining natural spaces—areas already encircled by settlements, walls, and checkpoints, and shadowed by the threat of further dispossession.

Drawing on interview data, I will explore how participants conceptualise resistance and hope, showing how exercise fosters agency, solidarity, empowerment, and bodily freedom in a setting that seeks to constrain and eliminate Palestinian bodies. At the same time, it cautions against romanticising or depoliticising Palestinian resistance when detached from the broader structures of violence, emphasising the need to situate these practices within a decolonial struggle against Israeli settler colonialism.

Methodologically, the work employs reflexive thematic analysis within a feminist and decolonial framework that treats embodied experience as knowledge. By centring informal exercise communities, it highlights how everyday movement practices generate hope, resilience, and agency within—and against—settler-colonial power.

Workshop 5 · Arts, Media and Digital Peace Practices

14:00–15:30 · Auditorium

Workshop: Peace Communication Lab – Co-designing media and art-based responses for dialogue and reconciliation

Organisers: Valentina Baú (HADRI, Western Sydney University; UNESCO Chair Cultural Diversity & Social Justice); Ilaria Tucci (Tampere University)

Peace communication is often discussed in abstract terms, yet its effectiveness depends on how communication practices are designed, enacted, and negotiated in concrete contexts of conflict and

inequality. This session proposes an interactive Communication for Peace Lab, designed as a 90-minute participatory workshop that invites conference participants to collaboratively design dialogic media interventions for peacebuilding challenges.

Rather than presenting research findings in a conventional lecture format, the session positions participants as co-creators of knowledge. Drawing on participatory communication theory, dialogic peacebuilding, and critical media studies, the lab creates a space for collective analysis, debate, and design. Participants will work in small groups to engage with short, scenario-based communication challenges drawn from real or plausible peace and conflict contexts (e.g. divided communities, refugee–host tensions, youth exclusion, post-conflict reconciliation).

Each group will critically examine existing communication practices in their assigned scenario, identifying where these practices fail to enable dialogue, reinforce power asymmetries, or silence particular voices. Groups will then collaboratively design a low-tech, participatory communication intervention—such as a community media format, listening-based dialogue process, storytelling exchange, or community-based artistic productions—that foregrounds participation, ethical engagement, and feedback loops.

The session emphasises communication not as message transmission, but as a relational practice embedded in power relations and contested knowledge frameworks. A facilitated plenary discussion will surface tensions, disagreements, and trade-offs encountered during the design process, encouraging reflexivity about the normative and political dimensions of communication for peace.

By engaging participants in hands-on design and critical reflection, this lab challenges hierarchical models of academic knowledge production and aligns with peace research's commitment to dialogue, transformation, and praxis. The session offers participants conceptual tools and practical insights that can be adapted to research, teaching, and applied peacebuilding work, while modelling participatory communication (including art forms) as a peace practice in itself.

Workshop 6 · Feminist Peace Research

14:00–15:30 · Room 2

Workshop: Emotional Labour, Care and Solidarity in Peace Research: a participatory workshop

Organiser: Ioana Popescu (University of Edinburgh)

This workshop addresses the often-overlooked emotional and psychological challenges faced by researchers in peace and conflict studies. While the field demands rigorous analysis, the realities of violence, trauma, and injustice that researchers encounter can evoke profound emotional responses, from moral distress to vicarious trauma. Yet traditional research paradigms prioritise objectivity, leaving little space for acknowledging or processing these experiences.

Drawing on postcolonial and feminist theory, Freirean pedagogy, and Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed (ToO) methodology, this session offers a participatory space for researchers to explore strategies for self-care, mutual support, and grounded hope. The first half will feature a presentation on recognising and managing emotional labour, navigating uncertainty, and fostering supportive research environments. The second half will use Boal's ToO exercises, enabling participants to critically reflect on

their personal and professional struggles, identify patterns of oppression, and collectively imagine pathways for positive change.

By centring emotional well-being as both a personal and political act, this workshop challenges the myth of the detached researcher. It invites participants to rethink their research journey as a practice of care, solidarity, and resistance, and encourages them to (co)create more just and sustainable approaches to peace research.

Panel 5 · Feminist Peace Research

14:00–15:30 · Room 3

Panel: Peace (im)possible? Creative and Critical Dialogues in Feminist Peace Research

Panellists: Maria-Adriana Deiana (Queen's University Belfast); Rebecca O'Keeffe (Queen's University Belfast); Mhairi Claire Lynch (Queen's University Belfast)

We live in dangerous times marked by escalating militarism and increasingly overt forms of gendered and racialized violence, intertwined with long standing histories of injustice and dispossession. This panel insists that feminist peace research can offer means for navigating oppressive environments through "core practices that build community, resistance and more loving ways of living" (Gumbs, 2020). Bringing together feminist scholars working on different contexts, the panel foregrounds possibilities for peace engendered through liberation movements, community organising, artistic, cultural and embodied practices, and everyday acts of care and survival.

Paper 1: Dancing through the trouble(s): Feminist sonic knowledges, embodied peace and radical hope.

Maria-Adriana Deiana, Queen's University Belfast

What can sonic knowledge and the embodied experience of listening bring to feminist peace research? How can we mobilise dancing, being enveloped in and moved by sound, as a heuristic device that can recalibrate feminist critiques of war and militarised violence? This paper starts from the premise that sound, music and dance can offer rich empirical grounding to feminist inquiry into the enduring forces of militarism and martial politics, and the micro-possibilities for peace in their midst (Åhäll 2016, Deiana, 2019). Connecting feminist peace research with ethnographies of dance culture (Garcia-Mispireta, 2023, Warren, 2023 James, 2021) and recent feminist writings on sonic knowledge (Revell and Shein, 2024) this paper develops a conceptual framework to re-examine narratives of armed conflict, mediated through the sound and aesthetic of club culture and electronic music. This lens brings into focus unique multisensorial and affective experiences, as well as creative practices and solidarity networks, of communities touched by war and its afterlives. More broadly, the paper explores music, alongside its various sonic orders and practices of listening, singing and dancing, as fertile grounding for feminist peace imaginaries and radical hope in the face of enduring violence.

Paper 2: Remembrance as Resistance: Transformative justice through feminist artivism and memory-activism in Lebanon

Rebecca O'Keeffe, Queen's University Belfast

Using an interdisciplinary feminist framework, this paper addresses gaps in understanding the symbolic and cultural aspects of transitional justice as part of sustainable peacebuilding practices. Adopting a qualitative approach, the research explores how feminist commemorative arts and grassroots memory-activism can challenge historic injustices while at the same time mobilising for transformative gender justice. Too often, in formal or state-sponsored approaches to commemoration, gender is overlooked or presented in stereotypical constructions of masculinity and nationhood where women are maternal, passive, and in need of protection (Gilmartin, 2018). These inadequate efforts can oftentimes become literal and figurative sites for feminist activism and counter-memory. Gendered narratives and memorialisation, in the form of artistic or cultural interventions, prove to be powerful sites of defiance and mobilisation because, using the memory of past injustices to fuel present-day struggles, they tackle interconnected systems of oppression (Boesten and Scanlon, 2021). Based on qualitative research from the Arab region, this paper explores how feminist movements are at the forefront of such transformative justice practices through creative and embodied methods. These alternative expressions usually come from 'below' through grassroots, community-level activism and often manifest as art, music, theatre, literature, and more. Connecting memorial arts, healing, decolonisation and gender justice mobilisation in this way highlights the importance of feminist-led approaches, the need for more nuanced versions of justice-seeking, and recognises the importance of these spaces for resistance and activism (Aboueldahab, 2024; Atallah and Masud, 2021).

Paper 3: Feminist Creative Methodologies in Post-Conflict Northern Ireland

Mhairi Claire Lynch, Queen's University Belfast

Conflict research within International Studies has historically privileged textual, state-centred, and objective forms of knowledge, often marginalising the everyday, affective, and embodied experiences through which violence is lived and understood. Feminist scholarship has long challenged these hierarchies of knowledge production, arguing that what counts as evidence is politically constructed and that alternative epistemologies are necessary for apprehending the full realities of conflict. Building on this tradition, this paper argues that creative and artistic practices should be understood not simply as illustrative tools but as forms of knowledge in their own right. Drawing on participatory research with women in Northern Ireland, I examine how engagement with visual and material practices generates forms of knowledge that exceed conventional research frameworks. These encounters show how artistic objects and creative processes can function as modes of thinking, remembering, and interpreting violence, enabling forms of articulation that may remain inaccessible through conventional textual or verbal methods. Feminist approaches to knowledge production illuminate how such practices redistribute power, foreground lived experience, and challenge the goal posts of whose knowledge is recognised as legitimate.

By positioning creative methodologies as epistemological interventions rather than supplementary techniques, this paper contributes to feminist peace research debates on knowledge, method, and power. It argues that recognising artistic practice as knowledge expands the conceptual boundaries of conflict research and opens new ways of understanding memory, lived experience, and resistance in post-conflict contexts.

Paper 4: Folklore and Fairy Tales

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This paper disrupts traditional accounts of political violence by focusing on how folklore acts as a mechanism through which ordinary people live through, and ultimately die from, state violence. Looking at the Irish Famine (1845-1852), which was the forced starvation of an entire island, this paper details how those worst affected relied on folklore and a belief in capricious and vengeful fairies as a way to fathom the horrors that many tried, and failed, to survive.

The paper recounts the few remaining stories of the fairy trees which were planted atop the mass graves of children that had starved to death. Standing alone in the middle of farmland, the trees were planted in the full belief that a fairy tree, and thus the grave, would never be disturbed by future generations.

Using this folk tale, the paper presents how people, often the poorest of society, used their belief in folklore and fairy tales, to try to make present a future that was lost to colonialism, oppression, and political violence. Therefore, whilst widely dismissed as cautionary tales told from mothers to children, folklore allows us to see how everyday people tried to navigate, understand, and ultimately live through political violence. Although quite literally a fairy story, the legends associated with this tree reveal how generations subjected to the worst excesses of state violence have tried to imagine a different, and hope for a better, future.