

Conflict Potential and Violent Conflicts in the South Pacific

Options for a Civil Peace Service

A study for Service Overseas

Volker Böge

Working Paper

No. 1 / 2001

Universität Hamburg - IPW

Forschungsstelle Kriege,
Rüstung und Entwicklung

Research Unit of Wars,
Armament and Development

English version
Translated by Cynthia C. Lies

Addresses

Church Development Service (EED)/
Service Overseas (DÜ)
Asia II
Ulrich-von-Hassell-Str. 76
53123 Bonn

Universität Hamburg - IPW Forschungsstelle Kriege, Rüstung und Entwicklung Allende-Platz 1 D - 20146 Hamburg Telefon 040/42838-3689 Fax 040/42838-2460

ISSN 1432-8283

Contents

Introduction	1
1. Bougainville / Papua New Guinea	5
1.1 Summary, evaluation and recommendations	5
1.2 The background of the conflict, its causes and its history	5
1.3 The cease-fire and the peace process	7
1.4 Developments and problems at the “grassroots”	13
1.5. Potential areas of involvement for civil conflict resolution and a Civil Peace Service	18
1.6 Potential partners for co-operation with the Civil Peace Service	22
1.7 Conclusion	25
2. The Solomon Islands	26
2.1 Summary, evaluation and recommendations	26
2.2 The background of the conflict, its causes and its history	27
2.3 Political developments since the coup on June 5 th 2000	32
2.4 Consequences of the violent conflict and openings for reconstruction and peace building	37
2.5 Prerequisites for civil conflict resolution: the state of civil society and the situation of the NGOs	43
2.6 Potential fields of work for civil conflict resolution and the Civil Peace Service	45
2.7 Potential partners for co-operation with the Civil Peace Service	47
3. Fiji	50
3.1 Summary, evaluation and recommendations	50
3.2 The background of the conflict, its causes and its history	51
3.3 The Coup on May 19 th 2000 and its consequences	56
3.4 The mutiny on November 2 nd and the political situation at the beginning of 2001	60
3.5 The tasks: democratisation, reconstruction, and a sustainable stabilisation of society	62
3.6 Potential fields of work for civil conflict resolution and the Civil Peace Service	66
3.7 Potential partners for co-operation with the Civil Peace Service	68
4. VANUATU	71
4.1 Summary, evaluation and recommendations	71
4.2 Background and history of the present conflict constellation	72
4.3 The present constellation of conflict factors	77
4.4 The situation of civil society and opportunities for civil conflict resolution	81
4.5 Potential partners for co-operation with the Civil Peace Service	83
5. Final Comments	86

Introduction

In the year 2000, South Pacific island states briefly made the international headlines: an attempted coup and an uprising in Fiji; a coup and outbreaks of fighting on the Solomon Islands; and escalating violence in Indonesian-occupied West Papua/ Irian Jaya shattered the prevalent image of the “Pacific Ocean” as a region normally out of the public eye and on the fringe of international politics. The South Pacific is in danger of becoming another hotspot in the southern hemisphere, and so deplorably “normal”; in the same way large parts of Africa, Asia, and Latin America have been devastated for many years now by crises, coups, violent conflict and wars, and all the widespread human misery and suffering that go with them. The Hamburg Working Group on the Causes of War (AKUF) has been observing and analysing wars throughout the world since 1978. It has established that the main characteristics of modern warfare are that they are mainly internal wars (anti-government and secessionist wars) in the so-called Third World countries. Well above 95% of all wars since 1945 have occurred in the Third World. They are widely different in form from the classical international wars, which took place in the 19th and 20th centuries in the northern hemisphere. They are characterised to a large extent by a lack of clarity and focus, the wars often have no clear fronts or distinct political aims, nor can the motives for the escalation of the violence be clearly identified. People from outside often get an impression of total chaos: armed groups, which originally formed a single unit, split up during the war into different fractions fighting against each other; warlords, striving for personal gain and power, extend the wars interminably because of their interest in maintaining the war economy; state security forces are clearly not fully under the control of the civil government but wage war on their own account; governments misuse their security forces for criminal warfare - or the structure of government and public services disintegrate during the course of the war. In view of problems which exacerbate war, such as economic crises, social disintegration, progressive destruction of the environment and collapse of state structures in many countries of the South, and in view of the lack of global, regional and national structures to regulate and channel these problems and the conflicts arising from them in a non-violent way, there is a great danger that the number of such “chaotic” wars and violent conflicts will increase.

It would appear that the region of the South Pacific is increasingly affected by these factors that cause wars, and so by (the danger of) war itself – a region that so far has been spared any larger outbreaks of violence since the end of Second World War. However, almost entirely ignored by the world, a bitter jungle war has been raging since the 60s in *West Papua/Irian Jaya*, with greater or less intensity, between the Indonesian armed forces and various fractions of the OPM (Organisasi Papua Merdeka – Organisation Free Papua), fighting for the independence of West Papua. In 2000, under the influence of the events of the previous year in East Timor, this conflict has gained a new intensity and a new character: besides the OPM and also in support of independence, new figures have appeared on the scene, fighting for sovereignty for West Papua, using new methods and strategies and clearly with stronger support in the population at large. The reactions of the Indonesian government and the Indonesian armed forces to this movement so far have aroused anxiety that “East Timor” could be repeated on an even greater scale. At the end of the year 2000 there were violent confrontations between the Indonesian military and the supporters of independence, presenting an ominous sign for the future.

Whilst in the case of West Papua an escalation of violence is to be feared, it was possible to end the second long-drawn-out war in the region in 1998 and to move to a process of post-conflict peace building. On the island of Bougainville, still legally part of Papua New Guinea

(PNG), the secessionist Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA) and the governmental troops of Papua New Guinea have been at war for almost ten years, also almost ignored by the world at large and the international press. At present, work is going on to achieve reconciliation, reconstruction and a permanent peace settlement for Bougainville. But the danger of a renewed outbreak of violence is still there.

In 1999 the Solomon Islands and in 2000 Fiji appeared as areas of violent conflict on the map of the South Pacific. The war on the *Solomon Islands* between the Isatabu Freedom Movement (IFM) from Guadalcanal, Malaita Eagle Force (MEF) from Malaita, and the state security forces escalated massively after the coup in June 2000. It was possible to limit the conflict by signing a peace treaty in October of the same year, but at the beginning of 2001 it is still uncertain whether the peace can be consolidated successfully, or whether war will break out once more. In comparison with West Papua, Bougainville and the Solomons, *Fiji* has until now got off lightly, as far as the intensity and duration of violence and conflicts are concerned. Relatively few fatalities occurred as a result of the attempted coup in May 2000 and the uprising of an elite unit of the Fijian forces in November of the same year. However, they revealed deep rifts and conflicts in Fijian society that could easily lead to violence; a future escalation of even greater violence cannot be excluded. In the case of Fiji it is not just a case of post-conflict peace building after the coup and uprising, but of preventing violence in future.

Sceptical observers think that “Solomons 2000” and “Fiji 2000” are just a warning of future violent conflicts in other South Pacific island states. In various areas of the region there is similar potential for conflict and similar combinations of circumstances that make the outbreak of violent conflicts possible if not probable in the future. Vanuatu, Tonga, Samoa and also the French colonies in the South Pacific, especially New Caledonia/Kanaky must be mentioned in this context. However, we should not give way to fatalism and determinism; because these countries have enormous potential for violent conflict and similar combinations of circumstances, this does not necessarily mean that violent conflicts will flare up. What we must do is: firstly to recognise and analyse potentially violent conflicts, secondly identify the factors and people who (could) help to oppose and work against violent escalation of the conflict; thirdly to find ways of managing these conflicts and preventing violent crises. It is the task of politics and civil society to face these challenges.

It is necessary to differentiate between different aspects of crisis or conflict prevention. Peace and conflict research has identified several types and phases of prevention. The peace researcher Volker Matthies summarises it as follows: long-term effective *structural prevention*, which can also be called general prevention, is aimed at the structures in society which are the root cause of conflicts breaking out, seeking to change them in such a way that they no longer lead to violent conflict but enable peaceful conflict management to take place. It is a question of reducing the causes of crises and violence by global strategies, by a process of democratisation, the creation of social justice, economic prosperity and ecological sustainability, by enforcing human rights and the rule of law, by good governance, by the implementation of the mechanisms of civil conflict management and by promoting agents and structures of civil society.

Middle- and short-term *process-orientated prevention* – i.e. special preventative measures – aims to interrupt the processes causing violence to escalate, and so to influence those people with a propensity for violence that they choose non-violent methods of conflict resolution. The instruments of process-orientated prevention include: preventive diplomacy; mediation between parties in conflict; positive inducements and negative sanctions; support for local

peace alliances; protection for endangered groups of people; observers sent in to monitor elections and the election process. A distinction must be also made between *pre-conflict primary prevention* and *remedial post-conflict prevention*. Whereas the first is concerned with preventing conflicts from escalating violently in the first place (prevention in its narrowest or original meaning), the second is concerned with preventing new outbreaks of violence where conflicts already exist (prevention in its broader sense). In a post-war situation, “post-conflict peace building” is what is primarily needed, through a process of reconstruction, rehabilitation and reconciliation. This post-crisis management has many features of crisis prevention, as post-war situations are as a rule particularly fragile and can easily revert to violence. Post-conflict peace building, which tries to prevent this from happening, is in fact crisis-prevention. Crisis-prevention and post-conflict peace building are closely linked.

Primarily, of course, crisis prevention, avoidance of war, and civil conflict management are always the task of those directly involved in the conflicts. Peace cannot be brought about from outside. However, external support can be necessary and meaningful, and development policies and development co-operation are both called for in this context. The civil wars in the south have seriously affected the efforts to encourage sustainable development. All that has, with much effort, been achieved in times of peace is destroyed again in times of violent conflict. Whole economies collapse, social networks are torn apart, state administrations fall apart, nature and the environment are permanently damaged, and above all many of those people, whom development should primarily serve, are permanently injured both physically and mentally and may even be killed. Recently, the resources for development co-operation have had to be used more and more frequently to remedy the destruction and damage caused by wars and violent conflicts, instead of being used for the purpose they were intended for. Violent conflicts and wars have become the main obstacle to sustainable development. Development needs peace - and peace requires development.

In recognition of this fact, development policy and development co-operation have recently turned their attention increasingly to the task of civil conflict management and crisis prevention. Since violent conflicts form a major obstacle to sustainable development, development policy and development co-operation must be directed towards the prevention of violence and conflicts, and they *can* play a particular preventative role here. Central areas of development co-operation are: overcoming poverty, reducing social inequality, promoting social justice and preserving the basic natural essentials of life; thus they focus on overcoming the major causes of violence and war and are a part of long-term effective *structural prevention* of violence and crisis. As development processes are always a potential source of conflict, they can exacerbate the conflict and make additional *process-orientated prevention* measures necessary. As far as middle- and short-term *process-orientated prevention* is concerned, development policy and development co-operation can make a contribution, by promoting procedures of civil conflict management, projects on democracy and human rights, peace education and reconciliation work.

In future, when implementing development policy and development co-operation, it will be vital to keep firmly in mind both structural prevention and process-orientated prevention of violence and crises, and always to evaluate and assess projects from the point of view of their preventative effectiveness in complex conflict situations. It will also be important to recognise clearly the way that development measures can sometimes exacerbate violence or even cause it to escalate. Development co-operation should be more politically sensitive and should reflect more fully the socio-political parameters of development processes; it can in this way become a means of civil conflict management within the context of coherent politics as a whole. Beyond that, measures aimed at directly preventing violence and crises can also be

meaningful of course in acute or approaching crisis situations. Such a measure can be the sending of *peace workers* within the framework of the *Civil Peace Service*. However it must always be very well considered and justified; the “special areas“ must be identified where there really is no alternative form of external support for crisis prevention on the spot than by sending in peace workers from outside. Peace workers, and other outside help, can support local peace alliances and strengthen local capacities for peace. In situations of crisis in countries of the South, peace workers with a basic training in civil conflict management, specialized professional knowledge and experience, and specific additional qualifications either in peace education, reconciliation work, trauma counselling or youth work can accomplish certain things for which the necessary expertise is not available locally – provided that the partners concerned wish for this and request it.

This study investigates violent conflict potential in the South Pacific, analyses current and former violent conflicts, and processes of post-conflict peace building, examines possibilities and openings for civil conflict management and crisis prevention, and searches out possible opportunities for the deployment of peace workers within the framework of the Civil Peace Service. It is limited to the cases of Papua New Guinea/Bougainville, Solomon Islands, Fiji and Vanuatu. After the end of the longest and bloodiest violent conflict in the South Pacific region since the end of the Second World War, *Bougainville* is now in the phase of post-conflict peace building. This is proving to be a complicated and lengthy process, but seems promising so far. External support in the form of peace workers can stabilize the peace process and help prevent new violent outbreaks of the conflict. The *Solomons* are between a war and a post-war situation, here peace building measures, which would also have significance for preventing violence, are only just beginning. In *Fiji* it is a question of preventing violent conflicts on a greater scale in the acute crisis situation brought about by the coup and the uprising. Finally, in *Vanuatu* we are neither faced with an acute violent conflict nor an acute potentially violent crisis, nor with post-conflict peace building, but rather with a relatively stable situation, with potential for violence in the future; here it is a case of primary crisis prevention in the classic sense. Tonga or New Caledonia could equally well have been examined in this context in place of Vanuatu. That West Papua has not been included in the cases examined is purely on account of pragmatic reasons such as opportunities for travel and the amount of work involved. The necessity for West Papua especially to be also included in programmes for civil conflict management, crisis prevention and peace service must be emphasised explicitly at this point.

1. Bougainville / Papua New Guinea

1.1 Summary, evaluation and recommendations

In the case of Bougainville /Papua New Guinea what is required is sustainable peace building in a post conflict situation. Measures within the framework of a Civil Peace Service should help to stabilise the situation and prevent a new escalation of violent conflict. In this context, peace building on Bougainville also means crisis prevention. Considering that a workable cease-fire has held for several years and that it is the declared wish of all parties to achieve a peaceful settlement, the chances that civil conflict resolution will succeed are, on the one hand, quite good. On the other hand, unsolved problems on the political front, as well as on economic, social and psychosocial fronts, continue to make such civil conflict management necessary.

A priority area for civil conflict management in general is the reintegration of young ex-combatants, particularly if well-trained peace workers are to be sent out under the auspices of a Civil Peace Service. On the one hand these (former) young soldiers constitute a problem group with the potential seriously to disrupt the peace process, if not to destroy it altogether; on the other hand these young people need particular support in catching up with their schooling and vocational training and in developing perspectives for their future working lives.

Another important area is the psychological support of women who have become victims of war in various ways, whether through the loss of their husbands, children or other relatives, or because they themselves have suffered physical and mental violence and rape. Psychosocial support is particularly necessary for the huge number of women traumatised by the war.

A number of non-government organisations concerned with peace building are already working on Bougainville. They are certainly aware that young ex-combatants and war-traumatised women need special projects. However sufficient funds and expertise have so far been lacking. It therefore seems sensible to inform partner organisations of the opportunities a Civil Peace Service offers and to encourage them to ask for the services of skilled peace workers trained in the re-integration of young ex-combatants and in “trauma counselling”.

1.2 The background of the conflict, its causes and its history

The mountainous island of Bougainville, covered in tropical rainforest and situated in the South Pacific, belongs geographically to the Solomon Islands. Its 8,800 square kilometres (approximately the size of Cyprus) make it the largest island of this archipelago. Constitutionally however it belongs to Papua New Guinea (PNG). Together with the neighbouring island of Buka to the North and several small atolls it forms the “North Solomons Province“, one of the 19 provinces of the country. For ten years – from 1988 to 1998 – the 180,000 inhabitants of Bougainville suffered under jungle warfare, said to be the longest and most bloody conflict in the South Pacific since the end of the Second World War. 15,000 people are said to have died in the conflict. Essentially, the secessionist “Bougainville Revolutionary Army” on the one hand was fighting against the armed forces of Papua New

Guinea, the Papua New Guinea Defence Force, supported by local Bougainvillean auxiliary troops - the so-called Resistance Forces - on the other. The clash began at the end of the eighties with a conflict over the largest opencast mine in the world at that time, the Panguna Copper Mine. Since its opening in 1972 the mine had been run by the Australian mining company Conzinc Riotinto of Australia (CRA), at that time the daughter company of the British mining giant Riotinto Zinc (RTZ), now both merged into Rio Tinto. In the 70s and 80s this mine was the backbone of Papua New Guinea's economy. Over the years the mine caused considerable ecological destruction and endangered the material well being and the traditional way of life of the people in the area around the mine. After the mining company and the central government had rejected the demands of the local landowning clans for compensation for ecological destruction, and for conditions to be imposed on the mine to protect the environment – which was being worked without any environmental protection whatsoever – local young people brought the mine to a standstill by acts of sabotage beginning in 1988.

As the police were not able to cope with the activities of the protestors, the central government sent troops to the island in March 1989. Members of the clans in the area of the mine then founded the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA). In this way the mine conflict escalated into a war that started in Panguna in Central Bougainville and soon spread across the whole island. The BRA repeated calls for secession that had already been made in the 60s and 70 s and demanded political independence for Bougainville.

In the ten years that followed, a cruel jungle war was fought on the island, generally ignored by the world at large. The people who suffered most were the civilians - as in all wars nowadays. At times more than half the population was forced to leave their homes and had to find refuge either in the jungle or in so-called care centres (camps under the protection of government troops), while several thousand fled to the neighbouring Solomon Islands. The infrastructure, public administration and, in particular, the health and education services broke down entirely. In towns and larger centres the majority of the buildings were destroyed; whole villages were razed to the ground. The war was accompanied by massive violations of human rights; arbitrary arrests, torture, murder and “disappearances” were on the agenda together with evictions, massacres, rapes and other attacks on women and children.

To a certain extent it was the brutality of the government troops against the civilian population that enabled the BRA to win the support of so many of the islanders in the first phase of the war and to recruit more and more young men to their cause. Waging guerrilla warfare, the BRA made successful military strikes against the PNGDF, who were far better equipped both materially and in terms of personnel, had been equipped and trained by Australia and were even supported by Australian “military advisors” from time to time. In March 1990 the government troops were even compelled to withdraw entirely from the island after a cease-fire. The central government then ordered a total blockade of Bougainville that led to the death of thousands of islanders in the following years, mainly as a result of the collapse of the medical care system. As a reaction to the blockade, the BRA on their side proclaimed the independence of “The Republic of Bougainville” in May 1990 and established a government of their own, the Bougainville Interim Government (BIG).

Since 1992 the PNGDF, supported by local forces, the so-called Resistance Forces, has recaptured parts of the island, particularly the coastal areas and the few towns. The Resistance Forces had been formed out of village protection groups during the time of unrestrained rule by the BRA, as the BRA proved incapable of guaranteeing safety and law and order at all times and in all places; individual BRA units also lacked discipline and were themselves guilty of attacks on civilians and human rights abuse. Equipped and supported by the PNGDF

the Resistance Forces bore the brunt of the war against the BRA from now on, thereby partly changing its character. From being a war of “the” Bougainvilleans against “foreign” government troops, it became a war between Bougainvilleans themselves; this change has its origin in the fact that the island population is divided up into 18 ethno-linguistic groups. From now on, traditional conflicts between different tribes, who supported either the BRA or the Resistance, were also fought under the umbrella of the “great” war, which contributed to a “blurring” of the war’s boundaries. It was not unusual for individual BRA or Resistance units to change sides. The BRA were able to mainly retain their heartland in the centre of the island around the Panguna Mine and in the South, while the PNGDF and the Resistance Forces mainly controlled the north, the eastern coastal strip and the neighbouring island of Buka.

Between 1990 and 1997 several attempts to negotiate an end to the war failed. Nor was either side able to make a decisive military breakthrough. In summer 1996 the last massive offensive of the PNGDF collapsed after a few weeks. In spring 1997 the attempt of the reigning PNG Prime Minister, Chan, to regain control of the Panguna Mine and to destroy the BRA by enlisting British –South African mercenary troops from the firm of Sandline International and Executive Outcomes also failed. Huge demonstrations against the mercenaries in the capital city of Port Moresby, in which many soldiers from the PNGDF also took part, and the refusal of the leaders of the PNGDF to cooperate with the mercenaries, forced Chan to resign and the mercenaries to leave the country. Since then the war has dragged on but with less intensity. In June 1997, after the elections, the newly elected government of Prime Minister Bill Skate

saw no future in continuing the war and declared itself willing to negotiate. The change in the Australian position was most certainly a factor, for only Canberra’s massive military support for the PNGDF had enabled the central government to continue with the war so far. Now, however, they too recognised that a “military solution” to the conflict was impossible. Nor could the BRA be sure of a clear military victory. And after almost ten years of privation and bloodshed the population of Bougainville was war-weary and exhausted and there was a widespread desire for peace and a return to normality.

A stalemate had developed in which neither side believed there was anything to be gained by continuing the war; this created a “window of opportunity” to end the war in summer 1997.

1.3 The cease-fire and the peace process

1.3.1 Political developments leading up to the cease-fire in April 1998

In June 1997, thanks to the mediation of the New Zealand government, it was possible to arrange several meetings and rounds of negotiations between the conflicting parties, the BRA and the BIG on the one side and the central government, the Resistance Forces and the Bougainville Transitional Government (BTG) on the other. The BTG was the provincial government of Bougainville, which co-operated with the central government and had been established in 1995 with its base on Buka, the island controlled by the PNGDF. Representatives of other social groups on Bougainville also attended some of these meetings, forming as it were a third party reflecting the feelings of the “grassroots” that they were weary of the war and longed for peace. This “third party” consisted of representatives of modern civil society – non-governmental organisations, especially church groups and women’s groups – and of representatives of older traditional groupings – elders of the tribes and chiefs -, whose authority was recognised by the conflicting parties, or whose opinions could not be ignored if the negotiators were not to work in isolation from the people at the grassroots. The

fact that these representatives insisted on a peace process being set in motion was of great importance to the success of the talks. In October 1997 the negotiations resulted in a truce, the so-called “Burnham Truce” (called after Burnham, the place where it was negotiated, a New Zealand military base). This truce was limited to 90 days at first and was monitored by a group of neutral international observers. This “Truce Monitoring Group” (TMG) consisted of unarmed men and women, both civilian and military personnel, from New Zealand, Australia, Fiji and Vanuatu.

The “Burnham Truce” was not only signed by the top political and military representatives of the conflicting parties but also by representatives of civil society - church leaders, tribal elders and particularly the local commanders of the BRA and the Resistance Forces. This made it more binding and easier to implement. For in a situation where the war is somewhat “blurred at the edges”, meaning that the formal political and military leaders often have in fact no control over “their” units, agreements made only between the “top brass” are of doubtful value. By putting their signatures to the agreement the lower ranking commanders had more of a stake in it and felt a greater obligation to observe it, and, likewise, the representatives of both modern and traditional civil institutions in society took on a shared responsibility for keeping the truce and stabilising the situation.

Following the Burnham Truce, local reconciliation and peace ceremonies between warring sides were held in many places on Bougainville; in a peace awareness campaign the participants of the Burnham Truce talks and the members of the Truce Monitoring Group went into the villages and explained the results of the negotiations to the people. In some places local peace committees were set up. The blockade of the BRA controlled areas, which had lasted years, was – as agreed in Burnham – removed. Theoretically the whole population of the island now had unlimited freedom of movement. Many of the approximately 50,000 people then living in care centres began to return to their homes. All sides upheld the Truce.

In January 1998 the conflicting parties negotiated and signed the “Lincoln Agreement on Peace, Security and Development on Bougainville” in Lincoln University in Christchurch, New Zealand. It lays down the basis for the continuing peace process. The agreement provided for the truce to be transformed into a permanent, formal cease-fire, which would be monitored by an international peacekeeping force, taking over from the TMG. The PNGDF was to be withdrawn from the island in stages and replaced by a Bougainville Police Force under civilian control; in parallel, the BRA and the Resistance were to surrender their weapons, demobilize their soldiers and be partially integrated into the new police force being set up. The United Nations would send observers to Bougainville and within one year free elections would take place on the island so that a “Government of Reconciliation” could replace the BIG and the BTG. In the first half of 1998 a further round of negotiations was to take place to discuss the future political status of the island. This delicate question had been excluded from the Lincoln University talks, as had the question of the future of the Panguna Mine, both of them the decisive obstacles to a permanent peaceful solution of the conflict. It was only because these central issues had been excluded for the time being that the talks had been able to conclude successfully with an agreement. The importance of this for the future is that all sides agreed in principle to demilitarise the conflict (cease-fire, withdrawal or demobilisation of the armed forces, and (re) establishment of a police force under civilian control), and furthermore they agreed upon a procedure for the further political resolution of the conflict: negotiations; democratic elections; and the forming of a reconciliation government. Although this ambitious peace programme could not yet be fully implemented, the Lincoln agreement pointed the way to the next stage of post-conflict peace building.

As agreed at Lincoln University the truce became an official cease-fire on 30th April 1998. The agreement, which was signed at a solemn ceremony on that day, declared a “permanent and irrevocable” cease-fire. It set up a Peace Process Consultative Committee (PPCC), to which all contracting parties belong. This committee was responsible for putting the cease-fire into practice and for the continuation of the peace process, and above all it had the delicate task of working out plans for disarming and demobilising the conflicting parties and for the withdrawal of the PNGDF. The TMG was replaced by a Peace Monitoring Group (PMG) to watch over the cease-fire. It was put together in exactly the same way as the TMG but the leadership was transferred from New Zealand to Australia. In addition to the PMG a UN observer mission was invited to Bougainville. This small (5-person) mission took up its work in the island capital of Arawa in August 1998.

During the cease-fire ceremony on 30th April 1998, the then military leader of the BRA, Sam Kauona, declared: “the war is over”. And in fact the cease-fire agreed on that day has held until now (2001). Therefore one can justifiably speak of the 30th April 1998 as the end of the Bougainville War. However the developments on Bougainville since then show once more that the end of a war does not necessarily mean peace. Even today Bougainville is still in a process of peace building or of ending the war; it can be understood as a complex and lengthy process of transition from war to peace. The danger of a violent rekindling of the conflict is still not banished. The efforts being made to consolidate the peace are therefore also efforts to avoid crises and prevent war.

1.3.2 *Progress and problems at the political level*

The proclamation of a “permanent and irrevocable cease-fire” opened the way for a peaceful solution to the conflict. Nevertheless developments since then reflect clearly that the road to peace is strewn with much friction and many delays.

The people of Bougainville, for their part, embarked on important unification procedures in 1998/1999. As they had not succeeded in forming a “Government of Reconciliation“ by the end of 1998 – as had been agreed in the Lincoln Agreement - the BIG/BRA, BTG and others decided at the end of December to create a “Bougainville Constituent Assembly” (BCA) for a transitional period, whose main task would be to prepare the elections for a “Government of Reconciliation.” On account of reservations and non-participation by various groups (see below), valid elections throughout Bougainville were not possible in the end. However, at the end of May 1999 the Bougainville People’s Congress was constituted, which is most probably representative of the majority of the population of Bougainville. It comprises firstly the representatives elected in various regions of the island (elected), secondly those selected by the village elders (selected), and finally those appointed by the various groupings and social groups (appointed). The BRA/BIG on the one side and the BTG/ Resistance Forces on the other side came together at last in the Bougainville People’s Congress, so overcoming the most painful division of wartime. There are also representatives of churches and women’s groups and other NGO’s in the BPC. Joseph Kabui, the political leader of the BRA and the former vice-President of the BIG, was elected as President by 77 votes out of 87. He took into the 29-member strong “Congressional Executive Council” (CEC), the governing body of the BPC, representatives of all the regions, social groupings and political affiliations. Kabui and the CEC were then authorised to negotiate with the central government of Papua New Guinea for a political solution to the Bougainville conflict. The BPC took as terms of reference for these talks: the greatest possible autonomy as an interim solution; and independence as the final goal.

However, some relevant parties and groups did not participate in the BPC. On the secessionist side an intransigent faction had not taken part in the peace process from the beginning, and is still not part of it. It is led by Francis Ona, an important personality in the Bougainville independence movement. It was he who, at the end of the 80's, initiated the opposition to the Panguna Mine and founded the BRA. When in May 1990 the one-sided declaration of the "Republic of Bougainville" was made, Ona was declared President. He continues to enjoy a high standing with a large part of Bougainville's population. Ona and his followers have neither participated in the negotiations described above, nor those that have taken place since, nor have they signed the cease-fire agreement. They are of the opinion that there is nothing more to negotiate since the declaration of independence in 1990, that the PNG just has to recognise this independence and withdraw its occupying forces. Ona is supported by a group of experienced guerrilla fighters, who call themselves the Mekamui Defence Force (Mekamui is a local name for Bougainville). This group continues to have control over the Panguna Mine and the area surrounding it in central Bougainville. Ona and his followers have so far tolerated the peace process without making any comments and they have kept the cease-fire. However they have continued to refuse to take an active part in the process in spite of many requests to do so both by their former comrades in the BIG and BRA and by the central government. Their territory continues to be inaccessible to the PMG and the UN observers and to representatives of the central government or outside NGOs (with very few exceptions). The future behaviour of the Ona faction will depend on the results of the peace process and the mood of the population on Bougainville.

Other important groups for the peace process also remained on the sidelines at first. The first of these is John Momis, the Member for Bougainville in the national parliament, one of the "grand old men" of PNG politics and leader of the Melanesian Alliance Party. Since 1975 he has been elected again and again as the representative of Bougainville in the national parliament (and also in the last election in 1997), which says a lot about the support he has in the population as a whole. Momis was one of the leaders of the Opposition in Parliament at the time when the peace process began. Although Prime Minister Bill Skate made attempts to involve Momis in the process, as he belonged neither to the BIG/BRA nor to the BTG/Resistance, he and his followers were to a certain extent excluded. In order to become a player in the "game" Momis joined forces with the "Leitana Council of Elders"(LCOE); a group representing the Buka population, with traditionally close links to the central government. They rejected the BIG/BRA's attempts to obtain independence as, being the smaller island, they were afraid of being dominated by the Bougainvilleans in an independent Bougainville. Momis also took legal steps to get himself reinstated in his function as Governor of Bougainville. According to the Papua New Guinea constitution, the provincial Member of Parliament is automatically Governor and leader of the provincial government. This arrangement had however been temporarily suspended in favour of the BTG because of the special circumstances on Bougainville. When the temporary suspension ran out at the end of 1998 Momis wanted to become the Governor of a regular provincial government, which, although in accordance with the Papua New Guinea constitution, was not in line with the agreements made in Burnham and Lincoln. Prime Minister Bill Skate therefore used his power to extend the mandate of the BTG, upon which Momis took him to court. After a lengthy court case, he won the case in November 1999 and was named Governor in December 1999. In this way he had well and truly become a "player" again and all the other forces on Bougainville had to seek agreement with him. At the end of December 1999 such an agreement was achieved. Kabui and Momis agreed to the following arrangement: Momis was accepted as Governor and could form a provincial government as laid down in the Papua New Guinea constitution, but the BPC remained in existence and led the negotiations with the

central government; a “Consultative Committee” was formed to serve as a link between the two institutions. This arrangement proved itself: a new split was prevented and from now on the people of Bougainville spoke to the central government with a single voice.

In the meantime the government had changed: in mid-July 1999, after a vote of no confidence, a new government under Sir Mekere Morauta replaced Bill Skate’s government. The new government needed time to get to grips with the task, and this delayed the continuation of the peace process. In August, Sir Michael Somare, formerly the PNG’s very first Prime Minister after independence, was named Minister for Bougainville Affairs and so put in charge of the peace process on behalf of the central government. At the beginning of October he offered the Bougainvilleans, “far-reaching autonomy”, asking them for concrete suggestions as to the form this could take; these could then be used as the basis for negotiations with the central government. In December 1999 Kabui/Momis presented their joint position: the highest form of autonomy for Bougainville and a referendum on the political future of the island.

Not until March 2000 could further progress be made in the negotiations between the central government and the Bougainvilleans. In the so-called Loloata Understanding of the 23rd March they agreed on autonomy for Bougainville within the framework of the Papua New Guinean constitution, and the establishment of a Bougainville Interim Provincial Government until such time as an elected autonomous government could be formed. On the question of a referendum, the Understanding stated that the central government had taken note of the desire of the Bougainville delegation for such a referendum to be held, and further negotiations on the matter would take place; however, the date of the referendum might be postponed until after the autonomous government was in place and its effectiveness suitably evaluated.

The new interim provincial government and an interim provincial administration were already established and began work on March 30th 2000. The chief of the Bougainville Interim Provincial Government (BIPG) is John Momis, his deputy is Gerald Sinato (former chief of the BTG, and also member of the BPC). An “informal arrangement” was made with the BPC along the lines of the agreement made in December 1999: Momis, as head of the BIPG, and Kabui, as President of the continued BPC, have since co-operated closely and negotiated together for the Bougainville side in the negotiations with the central government.

These negotiations hardly made any progress in the following months. The question of a referendum proved again and again to be the decisive point of conflict. While the Bougainvilleans insisted on being allowed to carry out a referendum on the political independence of their island within a relatively short period of time, the central government argued firstly that referendums were not envisaged in the Papua New Guinea constitution, and secondly that an autonomous government for Bougainville had first of all to be set up, which could take up to “several years”. When Somare then spoke of a referendum being conceivable in perhaps 15 years, there was furious outcry from Bougainville.

Renewed, substantial negotiations only got going again in September 2000. These concluded with the Rabaul Agreement. This agreed that laws should be passed to make an autonomous status for Bougainville with its own constitution possible: the island should be given extensive competence to administer its own affairs and extensive rights to its own financial resources. It was also promised that the Papua New Guinea constitution would be changed to make referendums in general and in particular a referendum on the future political status of the island constitutionally possible. Further rounds of talks would take place to work out the precise form autonomy should take, exactly how jurisdiction and resources should be divided

between the central government and a Bougainville autonomous government, and the exact procedures governing a referendum. Both the central government and the Bougainvilleans celebrated this agreement as a further breakthrough and a historic milestone on the way to peace.

However, the following months showed that both parties were miles apart in their views on the precise form an autonomous government should take, and on what the referendum should contain, and when it should take place. As a result, the talks dragged on painfully. The Bougainville side complained frequently about the apparent delaying tactics of the central government while they for their part insisted on a thorough and so necessarily time-consuming consideration of all the important issues. At the end of the day, the central government was quite clearly not willing to really accept the comprehensive demands for autonomy made by the Bougainvilleans. They wanted all areas of political decision-making other than foreign policy and defence policy, but including the police force, the judiciary, financial and tax systems to be in the hands of the autonomous government. They also insisted on the referendum being carried out within five years at the latest, while the central government spoke again of ten or fifteen years' time. Several times the negotiations were almost broken off. On November 19th 2000 the BRA delegates withdrew from the negotiating process, stating in their declaration that they no longer trusted the empty promises of autonomy and referendum. The other Bougainvillean representatives also withdrew for a while on the 23rd November, but returned again to the negotiating table. On December 9th 2000 however, the negotiations were again interrupted. The central government spoke of a "postponement" until the New Year, the Bougainville delegation of a "breakdown". The crunch of the matter was the form that autonomy should take and the question of a referendum. In a joint communiqué in the middle of December Kabui and Momis warned against a breakdown of the peace process. They pointed out that the BRA were losing their trust in the peace process and in the political leadership, and that there could be no disarming without the assurance of a referendum. A referendum was "the key to peace", and promises to hold one must be given before the end of the year. They appealed to Australia and New Zealand to help overcome the difficult crisis in the negotiating process. Finally a new round of talks was scheduled for December 27th 2000. However, just a few days before Christmas, Prime Minister Morauta dismissed the Minister for Bougainville Affairs, Sir Michael Somare. This led to further considerable delay, as Sir Michael had been well acquainted with the Bougainville problem for many years and as Minister for Bougainville Affairs had invested a lot of time and energy in working on a solution. The new Minister, Moi Avei, had to start again from scratch to get familiar with the task. First of all he had set a date in January 2001 for "informal talks" between the delegations from the central government and Bougainville. At the beginning of 2001, peace in Bougainville was more threatened than ever since the beginning of the peace process in 1997.

(addendum June 2001: At the end of January 2001, the conflict parties met again and agreed on the so-called Kokopo understanding, which foresees a referendum on Bougainville independence in 10 to 15 years' time. A further round of negotiations in Townsville, Australia, in mid-February 2001 failed to produce results, mainly because of disagreement on the issue of weapons disposal. However, at the beginning of May 2001 commanders of the BRA and the Resistance Forces met again in Togorau, Central Bougainville, and reached agreement on a „phased implementation“ of a weapons disposal plan (Rotokas Record). This paved the way for successful negotiations on the political level about Bougainvillean autonomy. After weeks of talks in Port Moresby a final settlement was reached in mid-June 2001, settling such controversial issues as the presence of the PNGDF, the make-up of the police force and double entrenchment. This political settlement provides for far-reaching autonomy within the PNG constitution and a referendum on independence.)

1.4 Developments and problems at the “grassroots”

1.4.1 *Reconstruction*

The people of Bougainville had high expectations of the truce and the peace process. And although they have been somewhat disappointed by the way the political negotiations have dragged on, and even more so in the way the “peace dividend” has actually been realised at the grassroots level, nevertheless the great majority of the population in the villages of Bougainville itself is still in favour of the peace process and willing to get actively involved in making it work. After ten years of bloodshed there is great longing for “a return to normality”. Through peace building they expect a return to “normal” economic and social circumstances, or at least the re-establishment of the standards they had before the war.

Before the war Bougainville was the most highly developed province in Papua New Guinea. The population was able – independently of the Panguna mine – to plant and market their cash crops, especially coconuts/copra and cocoa, and so earn money to supplement their income from subsistence agriculture. There were several large plantations on Bougainville from German and Australian colonial times, but also a predominance of so-called smallholders who planted coconut palms and cocoa plants. The combination of subsistence agriculture and cash crop production had given the island a relatively solid economic basis. There was no hunger and no material poverty on Bougainville. The school system was well developed and Bougainville had the highest educational standards in Papua New Guinea. The health service and other social services as well as the provincial government and public administration services all functioned better than in other parts of Papua New Guinea.

During the war all this collapsed. The non-Bougainvillean plantation owners and workers fled, and the plantations fell into disrepair. The smallholders were no longer able to export their products; there was no new supply of seeds or seedlings. The medical services could not be kept going; most people who died during the war did not die from the fighting but from lack of medicines and medical care. The schools had to be closed; a whole generation of young Bougainvilleans remained without any formal school education. Public administration, police and court services, post and banking services collapsed. Public servants fled from the island or joined the BRA. The infrastructure was badly damaged. Roads, bridges, public buildings, schools, hospitals, docks, airstrips etc. were either destroyed during the fighting or intentionally made unusable by one or the other of the warring factions.

In the BRA area, totally cut off from the outside world by the blockade of the government troops, attempts were made to secure certain social services by reverting to reliance on their own local resources. There was for example a renaissance of traditional herb medicines. The water that was abundantly available was used to produce energy using small and very small hydroelectric plants. Vehicles were powered by fuel made from coconut oil. In the BRA camps, schooling and practical training were organised for the children and young people. Traditional authorities such as the councils of elders took over the functions of keeping order and the administration of justice. However, even if in the BRA territory, the so-called “Free Bougainville”, there were these impressive successful examples of self-reliance of necessity, much remained fragmentary and makeshift.

In the areas controlled by the PNGDF, especially on Buka, an administration and a school system of sorts were established, and as these areas were not affected by the blockade it was possible to re-establish certain outside contacts. However in many parts of Bougainville that were neither clearly BRA or PNGDF territory, but rather contested territory, even minimal structures of supply and administration were lacking.

What the people expect above all from the peace process is: the re-opening of schools and health centres, the reconstruction of the infrastructure and of links and contacts to the outside world, access to markets and consequent opportunities to earn money and buy goods.

However the central government is continuing to neglect the reconstruction of Bougainville. The monies promised to the island by the Treasury are only arriving after considerable delay and in much lower amounts than promised. The BTG has always suffered from this situation and John Momis' interim provincial government continues to do so. The BPC on the other hand has no public funds available to them. Under these circumstances, funds coming in from outside, which are considerably higher than those made available by the Papua New Guinea government so far, are of particular significance. A whole group of external protagonists are already present with reconstruction programmes on the island, or have given promises of financial support. Australia is the major donor among them. Within the framework of a 5-year plan they have promised 136 million Australian dollars for rebuilding and reconstruction—despite some cuts recently announced for 2001. The EU has promised 5 Million ECU (20 Million Kina) for re-building the infrastructure (road building and improvement, docks and airstrips) and for small credit programmes for smallholders and women (within the STABEX framework). UNDP has promised 2 Million US Dollars for a one and a half year programme of rehabilitation and reconstruction, and New Zealand 600,000 Dollars for rebuilding the school system. Other foreign organisations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross are also present with financial aid and personnel, but at the moment no one seems to have an accurate and comprehensive overview of all the aid programmes.

With Australian aid a new hospital has been built on Buka to replace the central island hospital in the capital Arawa. Before the war this was considered one of the best hospitals in the whole of Papua New Guinea, but reconstruction has only just begun after its destruction in the war. Many health centres have also been re-opened and in many places schools have also re-opened, having been reconstructed or newly established with outside financial aid and active involvement of the local village communities. This means that there are now 31 primary schools again on Bougainville, nine high schools and four vocational centres, with a total of 14,000 pupils and 500 teachers. The only road along the east coast of the island linking Buka and the north with the south-west has been improved and reconstructed with the help of EU funds, generally improving the traffic situation between the various parts of the islands; this road had for many years been impassable or extremely difficult to traverse because many bridges had been destroyed during the war and there had been a general lack of maintenance. Many airstrips which had fallen into disrepair during the war have been repaired again, making it possible for island regions that are only accessible by air to regain contact with the outside world. A local airline, Air Sankamap, and a local ferry service serving the coastal region, MV Sankamap, have both started up again. The production and marketing of cash crops has got going again. Cocoa seedlings are being distributed on a large scale, and copra can again be exported via Buka, and since June 2000 via Kieta harbour on Bougainville, which has been rebuilt entirely with aid from the EU after being totally destroyed in the war. There has been a great upswing in copra production since the end of the war. However, the present extremely low copra prices are having a markedly negative effect on economic recuperation – with possibly grave social consequences that could prove a threat to peace. Money from the sale of copra is the only source of income for many families, who urgently need it for school fees for their children. If they cannot raise the school fees and many children (including a number of former combatants) are unable as a result to attend school any more, this could cause a return to violent behaviour on a large scale, according to people knowledgeable about the situation.

In any case, reconstruction measures do not meet people's expectations and are inadequate. In many places people comment bitterly that their village school or health centre has not yet been re-opened, that the road to the next sizeable market town is not yet repaired, or that there are hardly any opportunities to earn money etc. The people at the grassroots are slowly becoming impatient and are demanding with increasing vehemence their "peace dividend".

There can still be no talk of a full school system having been re-established throughout the islands. There is still a shortage of school buildings and of equipment such as desks and chairs, books, exercise books, pens and pencils. And finally there are not enough teachers. Many teachers left the island during the war and have been slow to return, because they are not sure that it is safe to do so, they know what bad conditions await them and they still cannot count on being paid regularly. Nevertheless many teachers are setting about their work with energy and idealism.

Nor is there yet a comprehensive network of health centres, and those that do exist often lack medicines, equipment and personnel. What holds true of teachers also holds true of doctors and nurses: many of them left the island during the war and have not (yet) returned. The personnel available do not all have sufficient training. A comprehensive network of health centres is urgently required and a vaccination programme must be carried out as a first priority. Support is particularly needed for those wounded both physically and psychologically by the war (especially for war-traumatized women and children).

Reconstruction of the infrastructure is also still inadequate. In particular, the feeder roads from the mountainous interior of the island down to the east coast still remain in a dreadful condition. But they are of great importance for the population in providing access to the markets and outside contacts, as the interior is still badly supplied with the necessities of life, be it services like post or simple articles like nails and soap. The telephone network is not yet functioning again, except on Buka, and these problems of infrastructure greatly limit opportunities for marketing and exporting copra and cocoa. The large plantations are not being worked (neglect during the war, unclear ownership, lack of workers); and the small industries – workshops and garages, building and transport companies, shops and businesses – are only slowly getting going again. Demand is low, ready money hardly available, and many small businesses still consider the security situation to be too uncertain.

At the same time there is a feeling of optimism in economic life. The business people who have rebuilt their businesses since the end of the fighting are an important stabilizing factor; they have no wish to risk losing all they have achieved, should there be a return to war. The people want to get on with things and to rebuild, and they have faith in their own strength and capabilities. External support could provide encouragement, for example with small credit programmes. In such programmes priority should be given to the women, who as the "owners" of the land in the matrilineal traditional communities, play a very important role in economic life. It is they who are mainly responsible for the subsistence garden economy, which even in the present situation after the war ensures that the population has enough to eat. Hunger and lack of food are not problems confronting Bougainville (apart from temporary individual emergencies as a result of exceptional drought, as recently in Siwai).

The public administration is only functioning in a rudimentary fashion at the moment. The BIPG and Governor Momis complain frequently that promised finances arrive late and not in full. Only a proportion of the 30 Million Kina promised to the BIPG in the budget for 2000, has been handed over, and a ten per cent cut in the budget has been resolved for 2001. The public servants paid by the state of Papua New Guinea only receive their salaries in part and

with delay. The BPC has no budget of its own and cannot build up the administration. In many places the local Council of Elders and chiefs have taken on the function of local administration (and also the judiciary). In view of the law and order problems on the island it is painfully obvious that the rebuilding and setting up of the police force and the judiciary are only making very slow progress. While the conflicting parties both agreed to the setting up of a new police force, both in the Lincoln Agreement and the contracts that followed, opinions differ about its structure and make up, so that so far only about a hundred (unarmed) policemen - so-called Community Police Officers (CPOs) - could be trained, very few of them women. This has been done within the framework of the Bougainville Community Policing Project, financed and carried out by Australia and New Zealand, but the area they cover is limited mainly to Buka, Arawa, Bana and Buin and they are not particularly effective.

1.4.2 Reconciliation

Permanent post-conflict peace building requires not only material reconstruction; the psychosocial and spiritual dimensions are just as important. Without reconciliation and healing of the many psychological wounds from the war, there will be no peace. A particularly problematic aspect of the war was the enmity between groups who split along many different dividing lines. The war was in certain respects highly personalised. The parties at war with each other were no anonymous massed armies but rather small units whose members all too often knew each other personally, as members of a particular clan or family. The course of the war followed the logic of 'pay back': revenge had to be taken for their own losses by violent attacks on the tribe or the family of the person who had attacked them. A vicious circle of violence followed. Women were particular victims of pay back, for example in the form of "pack rapes".

In this way the war has badly traumatized many people - women and children, but also combatants. During the war there were attempts to stem the climate of violence and bring about reconciliation, and since the end of the war a main element of the peace process has been a striving for reconciliation. Both traditional and modern protagonists are working for reconciliation, using both traditional and modern methods. For the war itself was not just a modern secessionist war between the central government and the secessionists, but rather a complex mixture of a modern war and, at certain times and to a certain extent, traditional mini-wars between clans and ethno-linguistic groups. These were waged partly according to traditional rules. Therefore they had to be ended and reconciliation between the former warring parties brought about also according to both traditional and modern rules. In the context of ending the war, negotiations and agreement between the political and military leaders were not sufficient; those at the grassroots had also to meet, and will have to meet again in order to achieve reconciliation. For this there are traditional rules and rituals, used and practised in many places during the transition process from war to peace, and still of importance today. Accepting responsibility and paying compensation to the damaged community can break down the mindset of payback. This involves a complicated and often long process of negotiation, in which authorised leaders of the parties involved (big men) lay down the conditions for the peace agreement and the form and amount of compensation. Such a process is then finalised by holding a formal peace ceremony. Since the end of the war many such peace processes and peace ceremonies have taken place between enemy villages and clans in many places, and they have substantially helped to stabilise the cease-fire. They were also supported and strengthened by including Christian elements in them. The great majority of the population of Bougainville are strict believers; most of them are Catholics, but Seven-Day Adventists and United Church members are also well represented. The churches

have been of great importance for the process of reconciliation and will continue to be so. In many cases peace processes were set in motion by the particularly active involvement of church people. Church groups play an important role in reconciliation work (see below).

However in spite of such successes we cannot yet speak of a lasting reconciliation. Many groups are still not involved, and there are still a number of regions where neither local peace nor reconciliation processes have got going yet. Francis Ona and his followers are not yet part of the process; nor are people who fled to the Solomons or to other parts of Papua New Guinea; nor ex combatants, who joined the “wrong” side during the war and who now have to live far away from their communities and do not (yet) dare to go home. Justice has not yet been restored. However, peace and justice are inseparable. The question of how to deal with serious abuses of human rights and crimes committed during the war has not yet been clarified (torture, murder, rape, “disappearances” etc.) Legal processes, compensation between victims and perpetrators, and the purpose of and necessity for a Truth Commission have all still to be debated. In the end, permanent peace and reconciliation can only come about if all sides get the feeling that injustice will be atoned for and justice re-established, and when spiritual and psychological wounds inflicted by the war are dealt with conclusively.

1.4.3 Demobilisation and re-integration

The demobilisation and reintegration of the (ex)- combatants is a particular problem. In principle the Lincoln Agreement specifies a phased withdrawal of the PNGDF forces from the island in parallel with the disarming of the BRA and the Resistance forces, but this has not yet been realised. The discussions on demobilisation are making extremely slow progress. The UN Observer Mission has taken the initiative several times and put forward proposals to this end, but so far the opposing parties have shied away from actually giving up their arms or withdrawing their armed forces from the island. Real progress will only be possible within the framework of a political solution. However, there is a problem here as views differ widely as to how political solutions and disarmament should be linked together. The central government insists that “weapons disposal” must take place before the autonomous government for Bougainville can take power, and before decisions about the referendum can be taken. The BRA on the other hand has declared that they will not surrender their arms until Bougainville has gained its autonomy, and a decision about the referendum has been taken.

(addendum June 2001: At the beginning of May 2001 the commanders of the BRA and the Resistance Force agreed to the so-called Rotakas Record, which provides for a „phased implementation“ of a weapons disposal plan and „secure containment“ of weapons. The “ final state of the weapons“ is to be decided after the PNG Parliament has endorsed amendments to PNG’s constitution allowing for Bougainville autonomy and a referendum, and before elections to an autonomy government).

The unsolved question of demilitarisation is causing grave problems for the ordinary people of Bougainville. The maintenance of “law and order” continues to be precarious, and the armed (ex) members of the various military groups are mainly to blame for this. Young ex-combatants are turning to so-called “rascal activities”, such as robbery, theft, gangs disturbing the public order, and various other forms of violent behaviour. These young men and boys have often fought with the BRA or the Resistance, are still in possession of their weapons and have years of experience in using them. During the war they did not go to school, they have no vocational training, no jobs, and at present only gloomy prospects for the future. The traditional authorities (parents, village elders, clan chiefs) have often as little influence and control over them as their (former) political and military leaders. There is no effective police force or judiciary (yet) to restrain them. Their ethical and moral values were destroyed during the war. Many of them have a big problem with alcohol; they consume “home brew” or “JJ”

(jungle juice, self-distilled liquor) in great amounts. Violent acts occur every day under the influence of alcohol and it seems as though alcohol consumption has increased dramatically just recently. People who know the situation well fear a social catastrophe if no effective counter-measures are taken.

1.5. Potential areas of involvement for civil conflict resolution and a Civil Peace Service

1.5.1 Reintegration of ex-combatants

The young ex-combatants have no money and no jobs, only weapons and a lot of time on their hands, and so they succumb to alcohol and “rascalism”. They can become a serious threat to peace building. Those elements dissatisfied with the peace process and wanting to sabotage it, find a potential group here, both willing and able to use violence, that could condemn all peace building efforts to failure.

Demilitarisation and demobilisation could greatly help to counteract this threat to the peace process, if they occur in conjunction with the development of civil alternatives, with promises and programmes of reintegration. It is not just a question of taking away people’s weapons, but above all of removing the motives and opportunities to use them. The use of weapons must be made unattractive and be morally discredited. In the meantime it is a pressing question, for the longer the young people and young men, who had dropped out of “normal life” for many years during the war, hang around now in the transition period between war and peace, the greater the danger will be that they can never be re-integrated. Recent reports indicate that the problem is now intensifying.

Circumstances on Bougainville are partly favourable and partly unfavourable for reintegration. Favourable factors are the traditional structures in the countryside which are generally intact: communal (tribal) possession of land and subsistence agriculture guarantee a solid economic basis, so that extended families and clans still largely function as social units. The ex-combatants can in principle return to their communities. On the other hand, their future prospects in a modern economy and society are not good. Most of them have not finished school or a vocational training and have therefore little opportunity of finding a job and earning money.

In order to re-integrate them, it would be sensible to introduce programmes of schooling, training, and vocational training specially geared and suited to the situation of the ex combatants. At present, for example, we have a situation where a 20-year-old former BRA fighter, who had no schooling in the past few years, has to sit in a class with school beginners in order to learn reading, writing and arithmetic. This situation is pleasant neither for the BRA member nor for the teacher nor the children, and inevitably leads to tensions and problems. As there neither are nor can be special school courses on offer to teenagers and young adults, there is a great danger that this group will soon reject school in disappointment, and return to rascalism in gangs. Special training courses must be offered to this problem group and to other young adults who are too old for normal school, and yet have missed out on a lot because there was no school during the war. The rebuilding of the vocational school system is therefore urgently required. At present there are only a few vocational training centres on Bougainville, including one, which is being built with aid from the ÖED in Koromira in Central Bougainville, with places for 50 former BRA soldiers. Vocational training for ex

combatants is of great importance for peace building in Bougainville; therefore support in this field would be a valid job of work for a Civil Peace Service.

It can also be a good idea to involve ex-combatants in cash-for-work-programmes, rebuilding the destroyed infrastructure (road building etc.). And should disarmament finally come about, those soldiers who surrender their arms could be offered material incentives, not just in the form of money but particularly in the form of start-up aid for economic activity (small credits, tools etc.), which would also benefit the village communities.

1.5.2 Working with wartime experiences and reconciliation –“healing of memories”, trauma counselling

Women’s groups made a decisive contribution to the ending of the war on Bougainville. On account of the matrilineal organisation of most of the traditional communities on Bougainville women have a strong social position, at least in the local context of a village or clan, which stems mainly from their control of the central resource, “land”. The war was man’s business, just as present official “big” politics of a modern nature are man’s business on Bougainville. Nevertheless, women’s involvement was decisive in the ending of the war and is decisive for the process of peace building. They were the victims of the war. Their social position has suffered in and through the war, for war mongering is men’s domain (there have never been women soldiers either in the traditional Melanesian communities or in the modern armed forces, whether BRA, Resistance or PNGDF). Women were the victims of rape, they saw their children die from curable sicknesses; they had to ensure their families’ survival in the bush whilst the men were away at war. They therefore had a deep-rooted interest in ending the war and are now the main pillars of the efforts at reconciliation. The women are mainly active at a local level or in the background. Yet even during the war itself, women’s groups met occasionally across the borders of the conflicting parties to try and work out possible ways to peace; at times when communication had broken down between the parties at the male-dominated official level, it was above all these contacts between the women which made new attempts to end the war possible. A women’s conference lasting several days, the so-called Women’s Peace Forum, was held at the end of August 1996; more than 700 women from all sides took part, and it proved of decisive importance for the initiation of the present peace process. The male political and military leaders of the conflicting parties found themselves compelled to welcome and support this initiative. And representatives of women’s NGOs took part in and made their influence felt in all the various conferences and negotiations leading up to the present state of the peace process.

It was the Bougainville Inter-Church Women’s Forum (BICWF, founded in July 1995), a joint initiative of women particularly concerned for peace from all the relevant churches on Bougainville (Catholics, United Church, SDA), which sent out the invitations to the large women’s conference in 1996. This forum had often played a decisive role in starting local peace processes. The women often went into the bush, risking life and limb, in order to persuade young soldiers to return to their villages and their families and to persuade them to take part in reconciliation processes. They carried out so-called “Healing of Memories” seminars, bringing together members of enemy groups and running courses for them resulting in mutual forgiveness and reconciliation. Other women’s groups also worked in this way, the Bougainville Women’s Forum, the Bougainville Women for Peace and Freedom (in BIG/BRA controlled territory) and the Foundation for Community Development on Bougainville (which was run by women).

Even today the women bear the main burden of psychological post-war care, and yet they seem to be increasingly victims of violence within the family. People who know the situation well, speak of a marked increase in domestic violence in post-war times. They attribute this to the brutalisation of the men during the war and the terrifying increase in alcohol consumption. On the other hand there are hardly any special programmes for women, to deal with their special wartime experiences (rape, loss of family members, homelessness) or their special needs either in education or business (small credits) or politics (empowerment). Many women who lost their husbands or their children or other family members during the war are heavily traumatized, but receive no psychological care. In this field, outside support would be extremely meaningful. Traditional methods are not enough here as it is a question of dealing with modern wartime experiences, which require modern methods of treatment.

Already some of the NGOs active on Bougainville offer training courses in peace education, conflict mediation, counselling etc., providing a modern backup for the traditional ways of coping with the aftermath of war. However there are no trauma –counselling programmes specifically for women. At present the only people offering trauma counselling on Bougainville are the Marists, with extremely limited means (see below). The work of the Trauma Counselling Institute and the Leitana Nehan Women’s Development Agency is limited to Buka. The Melanesian Peace Foundation (Peace) must also be mentioned; its staff travelled through the island, even during the war, offering conflict-resolution training courses to the population of interested villages. At grassroots level they made an important contribution to reconciliation, by showing people how civil conflict management could be a valuable addition to their own traditional methods of conflict resolution. At present Peace is offering courses in People Skills, Community Development, Restorative Justice and Conflict Management. However these courses are neither specifically for women nor specially directed towards trauma counselling. (Just recently the Trauma Counselling Institute is said to have provided training in trauma counselling for the trainers and mediators of Peace but as yet its effect for existing courses is not known.)

Finally it is important to know that at the present stage of the peace process in Bougainville these activities need support, for so far only fragmentary reconciliation has come about, and there is so little spiritual-psychological rehabilitation available; this too is a valid area of development for a Civil Peace Service. The psychosocial rehabilitation of women in particular, as well as the strengthening of the position of women (NGOs) in society, and in political and economic life, is essential for peace building.

1.5.3 *Rebuilding the administration, the judiciary and the Police Force*

The reintegration of ex-combatants and the reconciliation process must go alongside the rebuilding of a functioning administration, judiciary and police force. On Bougainville there is a considerable “law and order” problem, as is usual in post-war situations. The reasons for this are the social disintegration of society as a result of the war, the easy availability of weapons and the lowering of psychological barriers and cultural taboos about the use of violence in wartime. The state monopoly on the use of force broke down during the war. It must be re-established under civil control and the rule of law, so that people recover their feeling of security and regain trust in the ability of the state to function and protect them. This is just as important for the rebuilding and reflation of economic life as the reconstruction of civil structures of society. Although all conflicting parties are willing in principle to participate in rebuilding the police and the judiciary, so far few concrete measures have been taken. Yet they are essential for a permanent consolidation of peace. We shall have to see

whether, with the establishment of political autonomy for Bougainville, progress can at last be made in this field. If political agreement were reached on the future structures of the police and the judiciary on Bougainville, external support would be of use in enabling the appropriate steps to be taken. This could make a major contribution to civil conflict management, particularly if - as planned- former soldiers of the BRA and the Resistance are also accepted into the new security forces. The rebuilding of these forces could then also be seen as one aspect of the re-integration of ex combatants. Support in setting up a police force, based on the rule of law and under civil control is a valid task for a Civil Peace Service to undertake in a post-war situation such as the one on Bougainville.

The same applies to the rebuilding of the public administration in general, and in particular to creating workable links to re-establish trust between the administration and civil society. So far the population of Bougainville has no great faith in the - admittedly badly functioning - public service. The - not unfounded - opinion that the officials are incompetent, corrupt and only out for their own advantage (and that of their relatives), has a negative effect on the relationship between the state and its citizens. The loyalty of the citizens to the administration is just as low as the willingness of the administration to function genuinely in the service of the citizens. This is extremely detrimental as far as peace building is concerned. The setting up of an efficient and transparent administration that is close to the people would have a direct effect on stabilizing the peace, especially if this administration were to recognise the contribution civil society and the NGOs make to the rebuilding process and attempt to support them in it. This again would increase the willingness of the NGOs to cooperate with the administration in certain areas. Reciprocal support for the activities of the state and the NGOs would help significantly to stabilise the peace process. Helping the administration to understand the role of the NGOs and supporting the creation of strong links between them and civil society is therefore fundamentally a valid field of work for a Civil Peace Service. However the preconditions for deploying peace workers meaningfully are lacking at the moment as far as the administration on Bougainville is concerned.

1.5.4 Political solutions for the future status of Bougainville

All efforts at reconstruction, reconciliation and rehabilitation will fail in the end to ensure peace, if no political solutions acceptable to all sides can be found to the problems underlying the war. Similarly, political solutions without reconstruction and reconciliation at the grassroots will not work in the long run. Over the past few years - slowly but surely - such political solutions have come closer. The words autonomy and referendum are at the heart of these. Now it is a question of filling these words with actual content. As far as autonomy is concerned it appears possible, in spite of recent delaying tactics. It is now a question of agreeing the powers of the central government on the one hand and the Bougainville autonomous government on the other, and agreeing on the distribution of resources. To achieve the greatest possible autonomy short of independence seems to be the common aim of all groups on Bougainville. That could mean that the autonomous government takes over the right to levy taxes and has full political jurisdiction, except in the areas of foreign policy, currency and foreign economic policy, security and defence policy. It remains to be seen whether the central government has a similar understanding of "the greatest possible autonomy", but it should in any case be negotiable. The constitution and the laws of Papua New Guinea will have to be changed or amended so that such autonomy can be implemented in a legally watertight way. An autonomous government will have to be elected democratically.

The question of the referendum is more difficult to solve. The vast majority of the parties on Bougainville seem to want a referendum on the question of political independence for Bougainville in the near future – in five years or so. However, the central government continues to uphold the principle that Bougainville should remain in future an integral part of the state of Papua New Guinea. Willingness to change the constitution, in order to make referendums on important political issues possible in future, is (still) very uncertain. Besides which the central government seems to be playing for time, arguing that the question of a referendum should only be considered more carefully when the autonomous government has been in power for a while and can be judged appropriately. In this context, they seem to be thinking more of decades than of months, whereas the Bougainvilleans have a quite different concept of time. For the parties concerned on Bougainville the autonomy agreement is merely a transitional solution until such time as a referendum can be carried out, which – they are certain – will come out clearly for political independence. The conflict therefore seems to focus on the question of a referendum. In order to solve this problem without violence the parties must agree on several central questions. What should the referendum be on? How binding should the outcome of the referendum be? Who should be eligible to vote in the referendum? When should the referendum take place? Should there be one referendum or more than one? What form should the run up to the referendum take? How will the ballot be monitored? How will minority rights be guaranteed? Should it be possible to “go back on” the decision? Etc.etc. In spite of its complexity, progress will have to be made in the referendum question before long, for large numbers of the Bougainville population are growing impatient and beginning to feel they are being stalled. If a permanent peace is to be built, a political solution must be found to the two problems of autonomy and referendum. Solutions must be sought that are acceptable to the largest possible number of people, a “win-win” solution, which produces neither winners nor losers. And here too, external support might be helpful, if the conflicting parties desire it. Support could comprise legal expertise on the complexities of autonomy and referendum, or it could take the form of providing information about other countries’ experiences of autonomy arrangements and referendums. Finally sending international observers – if this is desired - to the elections for the autonomous government and to the referendum itself could validate the outcome of each ballot and so contribute decisively to peace building. Sending election and referendum observers in post-war situations is a valid task for a Civil Peace Service.

(addendum June 2001: In the meantime, the parties have taken decisive steps to sort out the problems regarding autonomy and a referendum. The Kokopo understanding of January 26 2001 and the political settlement of mid-June 2001 provide for far-reaching autonomy within the PNG constitution and a referendum, to be held no more than 15 years and no less than 10 years after the establishment of the autonomous Bougainville government, which is expected to come into existence in the year 2002.)

1.6 Potential partners for co-operation with the Civil Peace Service

In the meantime there are many foreign and international aid organisations working on Bougainville with programmes, and /or personnel. They are giving aid to rebuild the infrastructure, the economy, and the education and health services. Australia is most active with a five-year programme of reconstruction worth 136 Million Australian Dollars. The Australian state organisation for cooperation and development, AusAid, has a whole list of projects on Bougainville, ranging from “cocoa rehabilitation” (distribution of 20 Million cocoa seedlings, together with UNDP) to a Community Development Programme. The EU is involved with 5 million ECU, and other larger aid donors and project sponsors are New Zealand, the UNDP and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

In contrast to the Austrian Development Service, who are represented by two projects on Bougainville, the German organisations for cooperation and development are not yet involved there, or only in a very small way (Misereor supports the Peace Foundation Melanesia and the Marist brothers; Bread for the World supports the Bougainville Inter-Church Women's Forum).

However, externally supported projects and programmes for civil conflict management are still scarce. The training courses of the Peace Foundation Melanesia mentioned above come into this category, particularly the courses in conflict resolution and restorative justice; Peace receives support for these from AusAid, Caritas and the Princess Diana Fund. Autochthonous Bougainville activities in this field have been carried out by church groups and women's groups, especially by the Bougainville Inter-Church Women's Forum and the Foundation for Community Development, the Bougainville Women for Peace and Freedom, the Trauma Counselling Institute (Buka), the Leitana Nehan Women's Development Agency (also Buka), the Marists and KumGie, with very little or no outside help. Their continued existence is often threatened by lack of finance or personnel, for example the Foundation for Community Development has recently had to stop their work on Bougainville. So too, the work of the so-called Human Rights Desk in Arawa, which was to collect and evaluate claims of human rights abuses during the war and was sponsored jointly by the Bougainville Inter-Church Women's Forum and the Bougainville Women for Peace and Freedom (Genevieve Pisi), has come to a halt for a while because of lack of funds.

Two areas can be identified where peace workers could give support to local Bougainville initiatives for peace building and civil conflict management: *the reintegration of ex combatants* and *care of women traumatized by the war*. A further area, over a much shorter period of time, might be to work as observers during the elections and the lead up to the elections of an autonomous government, and during the preparation and carrying out of a referendum.

On Bougainville there is still a lack of plans and sponsors for re-integration programmes for the large group of young ex-combatants. German development services have gained a wealth of experience in this field in African and Latin American countries, and could make a meaningful contribution to peace building on Bougainville in this respect; they could offer the services of trained peace workers within the framework of the Civil Peace Service. The peace workers could draw up plans, co-ordinate and carry out special programmes for basic schooling and vocational training and promote jobs and employment for ex-combatants. Such peace workers could be attached to KumGie in their branch office on Buka (Lukis Romaso). *KumGie* is a charitable NGO with experience in finance, administration, management, organisation, project planning, monitoring and evaluation, business training and counselling for people wanting to found new businesses, that works closely with the German Development Service (GDS). The peace workers could and should also work together with the Austrian Development Service, which is at present building a vocational school centre in Koromira in Central Bougainville, a BRA stronghold, and has many years' experience of working on Bougainville (Reinhard Lorenz). Also the *Marists*, who run a vocational training centre in Marbiri near Arawa (Brother Ken McDonald, Brother Bernard McGrath) and *The Peace Foundation Melanesia / Bougainville Branch* (Joe Barenke) could be partners. Care must be taken to see that the centre and the south of Bougainville also benefit from the measures taken, for so far Buka and the north have been relatively privileged, with one vocational school on Buka (Burunotui) and two in north Bougainville (Tinputz and Tarlena). Educational provision is also generally better in these areas, which again stems from the fact that even today the more "loyal" north and Buka are generally more privileged as far as

development and reconstruction go than the more “rebel” south and central Bougainville. However the problem is also that the south and the centre still have insufficient infrastructure (there is still no electricity or telephone in Arawa), which causes great organisational difficulties. It would therefore seem appropriate to build up a Buka – Arawa axis (organised through KumGie in Buka), with measures carried out in the centre or the south, possibly in cooperation with “Peace” Bougainville.

Women traumatized by the war find insufficient support on Bougainville at present. Important areas of their trauma (rape) are socially taboo and can hardly be discussed. It is therefore necessary to supplement traditional ways of dealing with this problem with psychological support from outside. However this is an extremely sensitive field demanding of a potential peace worker - who could only be female - outstanding psychological capabilities, equally strong ethnological knowledge and a great personal Christian spiritual commitment. Such a peace worker could be attached to the *Bougainville Inter-Church Women’s Forum* (Sister Lorraine Garasu) or be part of a new psychological counselling unit, which could be created jointly by the Bougainville Inter-Church Women’s Forum, *the Marists* (Brother Ken) who are already active in trauma counselling, and perhaps also the *Melanesian Peace Foundation* (Joe Barenke in Arawa) and *KumGie* (Lukis Romaso).

At present however there are still certain problems. Firstly, the Inter-Church Women’s Forum is stretched to full capacity at present with two larger projects, - a Small Business Development Project financed by AusAid, and a Literacy Project financed by several donors including Bread for the World and GDS; in addition, their organisational structure is inadequate (this should change in the next few months as with support from GDS (Ulla Kroog) and KumGie, the church women plan to extend their programme and their organisational capacities). Secondly the Marists only have one person (Brother Ken from Marbiri), who has a psychological qualification and does trauma counselling. And thirdly, Peace Foundation Melanesia has certain problems with those in charge in Port Moresby, and the Bougainville branch of “Peace” is thinking of cutting itself loose from the central office and working independently in future (which the GDS also considers a good idea and would be willing to support). If these three forces joined together to offer trauma counselling for war-traumatized women, KumGie would be prepared and able to offer support in terms of accounting and organisation. An outside peace worker could be meaningfully integrated and employed in such a structure. This would then strengthen the work being done by Brother Ken, which is recognised by all sides but necessarily limited in its scope (since it is concentrated locally on Arawa and Marbiri), and could give the efforts of the church women (healing of memories – seminars etc.) a new dimension. Cooperation with Misereor would be desirable as they already support the Marists on Bougainville and are clearly willing to get more involved.

In principle the *Leitana Nehan Women’s Development Agency* (LNWDA- Helen Hakena) and the *Trauma Counselling Institute* could also be possible partners. LNWDA offers courses on “Violence against Women”, financed by AusAid and also offers “counselling services to victims of rape, domestic violence, sexual harassment and child abuse”. In my opinion they have the disadvantage however that they are limited mainly to Buka (and eventually North Bougainville) or at least come from there. However, the Counselling Institute has already worked together with “Peace” so there are existing links here.

Finally, should elections for an autonomous government and a referendum come about and international observers be requested, a task for peace workers could be *to follow and support the election process and to be election and referendum observers*. These would however only

be short-term assignments (a few weeks before and after the election/referendum) whereas the previously mentioned areas of work would require at least two-year contracts (and longer if possible). Those who know the situation reckon that peace workers need at least one year to acclimatise and learn about the situation; they also emphasise that really only several years deployment can lead to a sustainable success.

Finally a warning: the projects supported from outside are often not sufficiently coordinated with each other and are not always transparent and comprehensible for the local population. However it is this very participation by the local population that is of crucial importance if well-intended projects are really to have an effect in consolidating the peace. One of the causes of the war on Bougainville was the behaviour of the “foreigners” towards the people of Bougainville (for example the “white” management, or the “redskin” workers from New Guinea in the Panguna Mine, or the bureaucrats from the capital Port Moresby), which gave the people of Bougainville the impression that they were being exploited, oppressed and despised by those from outside. There is still great mistrust of “foreigners” on Bougainville, even if they seem to come with the best intentions. Participation, transparency and ownership are therefore indispensable if the country is to be rebuilt, civil conflict resolved and peace consolidated.

1.7 Conclusion

So far the patience of the vast majority of the population of Bougainville, their desire for peace, reconstruction and reconciliation, and the political skill of their representatives, has made the case of Bougainville a “success story” as far as post-war peace building is concerned. Two things that have been decisive are the linking of the “peace process from above” with “peace processes from below” and the combination of traditional and modern styles and methods of civil conflict resolution. The message from Bougainville that is applicable to other cases is just this: not to underestimate the importance of traditional methods of resolving modern conflicts, especially since conflicts in the transitional societies of the “Third World” often only appear to be modern or are only partly modern, while traditional factors often still play a large role. However, this emphasis on the autochthonous traditional skills in managing conflicts does not mean that outside modern protagonists cannot also make their contribution to peace building, or are not obliged to do so. However, all outside protagonists must always be aware that they are merely guests on the island and that through the war and the post-war period especially the people of Bougainville have developed a strong self-confidence, have learnt to trust their own strength and are both willing and capable in the end of taking care of their own affairs. For Bougainville the principle applies to a very high degree that outside help can and should only be help towards self-help, even in the case of peace building. If understood in this way, support given by outside peace workers to civil conflict management can definitely make a modest contribution and help to ensure that the Bougainville “success story” can have a happy end.

2. *The Solomon Islands*

2.1 Summary, evaluation and recommendations

At present the Solomons are in a transitional phase between violent conflict and a post-conflict situation. Violent clashes could return at any time. In contrast to Bougainville the situation is still very precarious and unstable and peace building is only just beginning. While civil conflict management is urgently required it is also very difficult to put into practice. The conflicting parties have agreed to a cease-fire and a peace agreement, yet both are still tenuous. All relevant protagonists declare that they support a peaceful solution to the conflict yet there is little proof that these declarations are serious or sustainable. In effect, armed groups are still in control of the main island Guadalcanal and the capital Honiara. The government and the state apparatus are weak and the judicially legitimised state monopoly of power has not yet been re-established.

Civil society forces – especially church-affiliated NGO's - exist who wish to work towards a consolidation of the peace and who could form a counterbalance to the armed protagonists. However, they are still too weak and are hardly able to assert themselves. Outside support could be very helpful to them, both materially and also morally and psychologically. However, with the present political conditions and the present state of security such support would be difficult to provide. Non-government organisations are under pressure from the armed groups, their members are being intimidated and harassed; international and foreign NGOs who had withdrawn their personnel (entirely or in part) and stopped or limited their work, have only very recently started to return. Because of the present precarious situation I cannot recommend sending civil peace workers at this point of time to be attached to local partner organisations within the framework of a Civil Peace Service. (I only refer here to the deployment of peace workers in the context of management of the Guadalcanal- Malaitan conflict; co operational development measures in other regions of the Solomons are in no way called into question).

However, assuming that the process of peace building will make concrete progress in the near future and that a certain amount of time is anyway required to prepare for the deployment of peace workers, then we can begin to prepare now for future missions for the Civil Peace Service. There are definitely jobs of work for them to do there and potential partner organisations. As in the case of Bougainville the complex task of reintegrating the – mainly young – ex-combatants should most definitely be considered, and also that of providing “trauma –counselling” for those who have been victims of violence, in particular war-traumatized women. Furthermore we should consider supporting the establishment of a civil police force, constituted under the rule of law, with an ethnically balanced membership so as to make it generally acceptable to the people at large. Finally, we should consider giving general support to rebuilding and strengthening the NGOs who, as civil protagonists, can – and indeed must - make an important contribution to consolidation of the peace.

2.2 The background of the conflict, its causes and its history

Since the second half of 1998 violent conflict has been growing in the Solomons between the population of the main island Guadalcanal and immigrants from the neighbouring island of Malaita. First of all the “Guadalcanal Liberation Army” was formed (later renamed Isatabu Freedom Fighters or Isatabu Freedom Movement – IFM), and started to use weapons against the government police force. It also systematically carried out attacks on Malaitans living there with the intention of driving them off Guadalcanal. In 1999 several dozen people were victims of the attacks and of the armed struggle, and even more “disappeared”. More than 20,000 Malaitans had to flee from Guadalcanal back to their home island. In 1999 several attempts at solving the conflict peacefully failed. At the beginning of 2000 some Malaitans formed the “Malaita Eagle Force” (MEF), an armed faction, which fought against the IFM and for their part now started to harass the Guadalcanal people. On 5th June 2000 the MEF and sections of the police force took over power in the capital Honiara in a so-called “joint operation”. They took control of all the arsenals and of the Police Force (the Solomons do not have an army), forced Prime Minister Ulufa’alu to resign, put him under house arrest and occupied all strategically important positions in the city.

Then the fighting escalated between the MEF and the IFM. At the end of June, a new government was formed which succeeded in negotiating a cease-fire at the beginning of August. In October peace negotiations took place in Townsville, Australia, which culminated in the “Townsville Peace Agreement” (TPA). However, the situation on Guadalcanal and particularly in the capital Honiara, as well as on Malaita, remains insecure and the outcome of the efforts to re-establish peace and security is uncertain.

A complex set of factors lies behind the present violent conflict and there is a long history leading up to it.

The Solomons were given independence from the British Empire in 1978. The South Pacific group of islands consists of several relatively large islands, of which Guadalcanal with 5358 square kilometres and Malaita with 4225 square kilometres are the largest, and 915 small islands of which only 100 are inhabited. The population of around 440,000 is 95% Melanesian and made up of about 120 ethno-linguistic groups who differ considerably from each other at a socio-cultural level. Three quarters of the population live from subsistence agriculture, supplemented by the cultivation of cash crops, especially coconuts/copra. Population growth (estimated 1998) is a high at 3.24%. Over 50% of the people live on the two largest islands Guadalcanal and Malaita (26%). The capital city Honiara on Guadalcanal, as the only larger town (with around 50,000 inhabitants), became a magnet for the rural population, the vast majority of whom live in small villages. In particular, many people emigrated from the most highly populated neighbouring island of Malaita during the Second World War, when the US forces set up a huge military base on Guadalcanal for their fight against the Japanese; the same happened again after independence as there were not enough job openings on their home island. They settled in Honiara and its surroundings until eventually almost 60,000 Malaitans were living on Guadalcanal. They sought employment in the modern sector; on the plantations, in the fishing industry (Tuna fish), in the only goldmine of the country (Gold Ridge Mine, owned from 1996 first by the Australian mining Company Ross Mining and then by the Australian company Delta Gold), in trade and above all in the public service. This meant that the Malaitans were over-represented in the administration and in the police force of the Solomons. Malaitan personalities also play an important role in national politics.

Sections of the indigenous population of Guadalcanal felt themselves disadvantaged by the influx of Malaitans. Special problems were connected with the land, which the immigrants required and demanded to settle on, particularly close to Honiara. More than 85% of the land on the Solomons is even today still in communal possession of the clans/extended families. In Solomon Island society is still mainly based on subsistence farming; as in general on Bougainville and in Melanesia the land is not only of great economic and social importance, but also of cultural and spiritual importance. Land conflicts are therefore extremely explosive and can very easily escalate. The land situation on Guadalcanal was aggravated by the Malaitan immigration; in and around Honiara large “squatter settlements“ grew up. The legal position of this land takeover by the Malaitans was often unclear. Land was occupied without any legal basis; it was also purchased or left to the use of others. The already complicated situation of land rights was made even worse by the fact that on Guadalcanal land “possession” and the right to assign land is organised matrilinearly, whereas on Malaita it is organised patrilinearly. Men from Malaita who were interested in land on Guadalcanal got in touch with men from Guadalcanal (who according to Guadalcanal traditions had no authority over land transfer whatsoever) and ignored the women who really had the jurisdiction. (This was also one of the reasons behind the conflict on Bougainville: in the 60s and 70s the men from the Australian mining companies and the Australian colonial government negotiated with the men of the local clans for use of the land for the Panguna Mine, and excluded the women, who actually had the rights of possession in the matrilineal society.) A growing number of mixed marriages between Malaitans and people from Guadalcanal further complicated the land rights issue. In addition, population growth meant that further land was required and in some places environmental damage was caused by mining and the extensive over-exploitation of the valuable high-grade and hardwood trees. Thus the land used for subsistence farming was put under increasing pressure.

On the other hand the people of Guadalcanal hardly profited at all from the projects in the modern sector of the economy. The largest company in the Solomons for instance, Solomon Islands Plantation Limited (SIPL), which made up 20% of the gross national product of the Solomons before the war, has its plantations in the plains of Guadalcanal. However, the indigenous land owners own a mere 2% of SIPL while the British Commonwealth Development Corporation owns 68% and the central government 30%. Besides this, the annual income from the lease of the land was minimal and the SIPL employed far more people from other islands (mainly Malaitans – 60%) than from Guadalcanal. It is not surprising therefore that the Guadalcanalese got the impression that by putting their land at the disposal of SIPL they themselves profited far too little from the company.

Over the past few years the situation - already problematic - was aggravated by the serious consequences of certain political decisions. The foreign debt of the Solomons increased dramatically. By the end of 1997 they had accumulated 1,2 billion SI Dollars (240 million US\$) in foreign debt, more than twice the total national budget. As a result of this and on account of the Structural Adjustment Programme imposed on them by the IMF and the World Bank, the Prime Minister of the ruling government since August 1997, Bartholomew Ulufa'alu (a Malaitan), felt obliged to take economic measures. Job openings and opportunities to earn money in the modern sector consequently diminished; in the public services, the largest employer in the country, a pay freeze and staff cuts were effected. Competition sharpened for the relatively few jobs in the official sector (only about a fifth of the population which is able to work actually has a job in the formal sector, and half of these people work in the capital); people who lost their jobs were forced to return to subsistence farming, which increased the land problems.

Under these circumstances the feeling developed among large sections of the population of Guadalcanal that they were particularly disadvantaged by the adverse social processes, while the Malaitans, on account of their positions and their connections in business, the state and the administration, knew how to protect themselves and to push the burden of the changes onto the population of Guadalcanal. To add insult to injury, these immigrants had settled firmly on Guadalcanal land, when often their legal rights to this land were not at all clear. This led to an increasing mood of anti-Malaitan resentment, which because of single incidents (claimed or genuine acts of violence of Malaitans against people from Guadalcanal) was so aggravated, that an activist militant movement started up among the indigenous population of Guadalcanal. This movement then took over the long-standing, smouldering dispute over land and demanded as a "solution" that the Malaitans should return to their own island.

From October 1998 onwards organised gangs of Guadalcanalese attacked the homes of Malaitans in Honiara and surrounding areas. The Royal Solomon Islands Police - dominated by the Malaitans and around 900 strong - was called in to protect the Malaitans; it reacted extremely harshly and so contributed to the escalation of the situation. The "Guadalcanal Liberation Army" (also known as the "Guadalcanal Revolutionary Army") was formed out of these gangs of Guadalcanalese, who later called themselves "Isatabu Freedom Fighters" or "Isatabu Freedom Movement" (IFM). Isatabu is a local name for Guadalcanal. Several hundred combatants joined the IFM (the highest estimates speak of around 2000); they included very many young men and even children. They were recruited mainly from the inaccessible, outlying parts of the south coast of Guadalcanal, the so-called "Weather Coast". The government sent the "Police Field Force" and the "Rapid Response Unit", paramilitary special units of the police, against the IFM fighters. They referred to these as "militants" or "criminal elements". Several deaths occurred during the fighting. The Police attacked villages where they believed IFM fighters were hiding out and quite obviously attacked the wrong people, whom they suspected of being "sympathisers". For their part the IFM fighters harassed the Malaitans, burned several hundred houses down, took hostages, and caused people to "disappear". They demanded the compulsory return of all Malaitans to their home island, compensation, reorganisation of the police force in order to limit the Malaitan influence on it, and greater political autonomy for Guadalcanal.

Many Malaitans fled into the capital Honiara where they were looked after in Red Cross camps. At times, the IFM fighters advanced into the outskirts of the town, which were again defended by Malaitans who set up barricades and control points on the roads leading out of the town. Some of the Malaitans organised themselves into self-defence groups, which now for their part hunted down people whom they suspected of belonging to the IFM or sympathising with them, particularly in Honiara. Plantations, the gold mine, and other companies that mainly employed Malaitans (and other immigrants) had to close down at least for a time on account of the unrest; schools were also closed.

In June 1999, the violent clashes came to a head for the first time; in mid-June Ulufa'alu's government declared a state of emergency and limited drastically the freedom of the press and information, among other things, making reporting on the conflict extremely difficult; at the same time the powers of the police were extended. This led to a mass exodus of Malaitans; 20-30,000 of them are said to have left Guadalcanal and returned to their home island by the end of 1999. There they found themselves in a difficult situation. Neither the infrastructure nor the supply situation was geared to cope with such an influx of people. Australia, UN aid organisations, and the International Red Cross gave assistance i.e. food and medical care etc both to the refugees on Malaita and to those who had fled to the capital Honiara.

The central government tried to defuse the conflict and find a peaceful solution to the underlying problems, well knowing that a “military solution” had no chance of success because a significant number of Guadalcanal citizens supported the IFM and almost ideal conditions for guerrilla warfare existed on the island. They therefore requested the Commonwealth Secretary’s Office to mediate. They appointed the former Fijian Prime Minister Sitiveni L. Rabuka as Special Ambassador of the Commonwealth, with the remit to bring about a peaceful solution. Rabuka talked to all the relevant protagonists on Guadalcanal, and after several days of negotiations a peace agreement, the so-called “Honiara Peace Accord”, was worked out, all sides agreeing to cease hostilities and to work together with the Special Ambassador for a permanent peaceful solution.

In this agreement, the causes of the crisis were identified as: the demand that land taken from Guadalcanalese landowners for the development of the capital and the settlement of Malaitans be returned; the demand for compensation for the murders of Guadalcanalese by Malaitans; the demand for a “state government” for Guadalcanal with authority to control immigration to the island. To resolve the conflict the following measures were agreed on: the setting up of a reconciliation fund of 2.5 million Solomon Dollars, administered by the Provincial Government of Guadalcanal, “in recognition of the social costs incurred by the indigenous population of Guadalcanal as a result of Honiara being the capital city”; a review of the land laws, an investigation into land that might have been settled on illegally, the aim being to return it to its rightful owner or pay compensation; stricter laws against “squatters” i.e. illegal settlers; political measures to prevent migration from the country to the town, especially by pushing through the development of the infrastructure in the rural areas, especially on Malaita; a review of the existing federal system of provinces and provincial government (the Solomons are divided administratively into nine provinces and the capital city); policies aimed at “an equal and fair representation of all provinces in the national administration and the police”. It was agreed in addition that all armed groups were to be disbanded immediately and all weapons handed over at agreed hand-over centres. An amnesty, as demanded by individual IFM leaders was explicitly excluded from the agreement.

The flaw in this agreement was that the IFM itself was neither one of the negotiating partners nor a signatory; the only person to sign was the Prime Minister of the provincial government of Guadalcanal, Ezekiel Alebua, who is said to have certain connections with the IFM, and who signed in their name. The problem was that while Alebua and Rabuka had come to an understanding with individual IFM leaders, and had got their agreement to the “Honiara Peace Accord”, these leaders were not authorised to speak for all IFM units. Even later only individual IFM leaders signed the document.

The IFM is not one single unified organisation with clear structures of command and control; it consists rather of several local groups acting independently of one another to a large extent. A “Command East Coast” and a “Command West Coast” are two particular groups. The IFM is united neither ideologically nor in its aims. The groups fall into at least two different main categories: first, a traditional fundamentalist group that has existed for a long time, with its base in the structurally underdeveloped and neglected south coast of Guadalcanal. It is connected to the Moro cult or the Moro Movement, so called after their leader Pelise Moro, a respected chief from Komuvaolu on the south coast. The supporters of this movement are anti-European, and anti-modern, they fought against the British colonial administration in the past and even today reject the influences of the modern state and the West on principal; second, a clearly political group made up of educated younger people, based in the towns, who have a mastery of modern political discourse. They argue for self-determination for the population of Guadalcanal and demand greater autonomy (“state government”) for their

island. Finally some more or less criminal elements, who have attached themselves to the movement in order to enrich themselves through arson, robbery and taking of hostages.

It very quickly became apparent that the Honiara Accord had not achieved a breakthrough on the way to a peaceful solution; even in July and August 1999 clashes with fatal casualties occurred. On 12th August 1999, a further document, the so-called Panatina Agreement, was therefore signed to regulate the implementation of the Honiara Accord. In the Panatina Agreement it was also agreed that the police should visibly reduce their activities and their presence, in exchange for which the IFM fighters would return to their home villages and begin handing over their weapons; the government would lift the state of emergency “within an acceptable period of time”. This agreement was also not signed by IFM representatives.

In the following weeks and months it proved difficult to explain the contents of the two agreements to the grassroots in the villages and to the local units of the IFM. Therefore progress in implementing the agreements was very slow. Only in the north and west of Guadalcanal did the situation become less tense, while in the east and south incidents continued to occur. The disarming of the IFM was delayed again and again; the dates set for the “militants” to surrender their weapons had to be extended several times as most of the weapons were simply not handed in. (Apart from which it is relatively easy to acquire small arms at any time on the Solomons. A large part of the IFM’s equipment was and is reactivated equipment from the Second World War, of which huge amounts are still available on the Solomons, for here was one of the main theatres of the Pacific war between Japan and the Allies).

At the end of September 1999 as a sign of their good will the government dismissed the former Commander-in-Chief of the Police and replaced him by a New Zealander – a neutral police officer- who was also a Maori, an indigenous New Zealander. Furthermore, in the middle of October they really did lift the state of emergency and withdrew their paramilitary units out of those regions that were thought to be IFM strongholds. At the same time they invited an international peace-monitoring group to come to Guadalcanal to monitor the implementation of the peace agreement. This “Peace Monitoring Group” consisted of 20 (unarmed) police officers from Fiji and Vanuatu and was financed by Australia and Great Britain. They commenced work at the beginning of November, their main task being to control the handover of weapons by the IFM. However they had almost no success.

At the beginning of 2000 the conflict acquired a new dimension with the formation of an armed group on the Malaitan side, the “Malaita Eagle Force”, (MEF, named after a popular Malaitan football club), who recruited their members, soon several hundred fighters, mainly from Malaitan families who had been forced to flee. The MEF acquired their weapons by holding up police depots (although there is a suspicion that these “attacks” were only faked and that Malaitan police officers sympathising with the MEF were more deeply involved). Threatening violence, the MEF now demanded compensation for the murder and expulsion of Malaitans and the destruction of Malaitan property; they also demanded the right of the Malaitans to return. Since then there have been three parties in conflict with each other: the central government and its police force, the IFM and the MEF -we can presume that the provincial governments of Guadalcanal and Malaita sympathise more or less strongly with “their own” people in the IFM or MEF. By the beginning of 2000 the government had succeeded neither in mediating between the two rival militant groups, nor in restoring the authority of the state by force. The clashes between MEF and IFM increased in number and severity during this time and there were also many attacks on innocent civilians who became victims of torture, “payback killings”, hostage-taking, rape and other serious violations of

human rights. A final attempt to reach a solution through negotiation by Ulufa'alu's government failed in May 2000. At the beginning of May, only representatives of the central government and the provincial government of Guadalcanal turned up in Buala, the capital of the province of Isabel for the arranged peace negotiations, but no representatives of the provincial government of Malaita, the MEF or the IFM. And at the peace negotiations in Auki, the provincial capital of Malaita, in the middle of May 2000 only the central government and the provincial government of Malaita turned up.

2.3 Political developments since the coup on June 5th 2000

The government's weakness was fully revealed when the MEF and sections of the Malaitan dominated police force joined forces and took over power in a so-called "joint operation" on 5th June. Ulufa'alu had to admit his weakness and hand in his resignation as demanded by the rebels, who accused him of having failed to solve the conflict. The international mediators and the international police force also declared their missions to have been a failure and withdrew. In the days after the coup, Australian troops were just employed to evacuate Australian citizens and other foreigners out of Honiara and the surrounding area.

The coup was so successful because a large number of the police stationed on Guadalcanal joined up with the MEF. This again is not surprising as the police force was made up of over 75% Malaitans, and the officers in charge were also Malaitans (as against only 30 police officers from Guadalcanal). Policemen who did not join the "joint operation" were disarmed and driven out or fled the capital for their own safety, leaving the capital then completely under the control of the MEF. As a result there were massive attacks against Guadalcanalese in Honiara and surroundings and many were driven from their homes.

The MEF declared "total war" on the IFM. By taking over the weapons, vehicles and other equipment of the paramilitary police units and in particular the modern well-equipped patrol boats of the police, they now quite clearly had military superiority over their enemy. On the other hand, the IFM fighters controlled the rural areas of Guadalcanal and took over the Gold Ridge Mine (and the dynamite supplies there). On June 8th the mine had to close down and the management and workers were forced to flee.

After the coup in June and July 2000 the clashes between the MEF and the IFM were of a severity unknown until now. They concentrated on the area around Honiara, the suburbs of the town and the only international airport of the country. The IFM suffered considerable casualties and lost considerable ground around Honiara. The MEF fighters comported themselves as though they were the new masters in the capital. As the Honiara prison had been opened by the MEF during the coup and the prisoners set free (the prison was officially closed on 18th June) many criminal elements now jumped on the bandwagon and profited from the chaotic situation in Honiara. Criminals, but also members of the MEF plundered businesses, "confiscated" private cars and burnt down houses. Guadalcanalese and also all other non-Malaitans were fair game; many people fled from the capital and the areas under MEF control. Now it was the turn of the Guadalcanalese to share the fate of the Malaitans before them, as refugees driven from their homes (numbers vary from between 3,000 and 10,000 people).

At the end of June as a result of pressure from the MEF leadership a new government was formed. Even the deposed Ulufa'alu declared that although he had been driven out by force he

was nevertheless willing to accept a new government in the interests of the country and in order to re-establish peace. After repeated delays, the majority of the members of parliament finally gathered in Honiara on 30th June and elected Manasseh Sogavare from the island of Choiseul as their new Prime Minister. He received 23 votes while his opponent Leslie Boseto from the camp of the former Ulufa'alu government received 21. However, a whole group of members of parliament had refused to come to a Honiara under MEF control, as they were not prepared to carry out their parliamentary work under pressure from an illegal armed force. Indeed the MEF had threatened to shoot down the plane with these members on board, all of them supporters of Ulufa'alu, should they attempt to land at Henderson Airport.

The MEF welcomed the election of Sogavares and declared themselves willing to work together with the new government. However, the IFM did not recognise the Sogavare Government at first as it had come to power through force and by undemocratic means.

In the following period Sogavare succeeded in integrating some members of the former Ulufa'alu government into his "Coalition Government of National Unity, Reconciliation and Peace" and in being tolerated by the parliamentary opposition now led by Ulufa'alu, and the provincial governments. The new government was also relatively quickly recognised by Australia and the other neighbouring states.

Sogavare's main aim was to bring about a cease-fire between the MEF and the IFM as soon as possible. However, these efforts suffered a setback on 3rd July when members of the MEF murdered wounded IFM fighters in the Honiara hospital in cold blood. As a means of getting the process of rapprochement moving in spite of this setback the Sogavare government decided to offer compensation payments. On 7th July, the Australian warship Tobruk, which had been used to evacuate Australians and other foreigners in June and had since anchored off the coast of Honiara, had an important function. On board this ship a first compensation payment of 3 million Solomon Island Dollars was handed over to the Guadalcanalese and 6.8 million to the Malaitans in a solemn ceremony. Further compensation payments and promises of such were handed over to Guadalcanal and Malaita, (including 70,000 SI-dollars for the two IFM members murdered in hospital). At the same time churches and NGOs were working on individual fighters and the leaders of the MEF and the IFM to move towards a peaceful solution; of particular significance in this context were the efforts of the SICA (Solomon Islands Christians Association) and the Melanesian Brotherhood

The Deputy Prime Minister, Allan Kemakeza, as government representative for the cease-fire, held separate talks with the MEF and the IFM and also with the provincial governments of Guadalcanal and Malaita. After having achieved a climate of (reasonably) good will, on the 21st July it was possible to start cease-fire negotiations on board the Tobruk between representatives of the MEF and the IFM. While the MEF insisted on the presence of all IFM commanders, a number of IFM commanders from West Guadalcanal refused to take part. At the end of July, after several failed attempts to get the missing commanders onto the Tobruk, the MEF broke off the negotiations and there were new clashes on the outskirts of Honiara. On 2nd and 3rd August however the breakthrough was achieved. On 2nd August, the MEF commanders signed a cease-fire agreement on the Tobruk, which was then taken to Aruligo in West Guadalcanal to be signed a day later by the IFM commanders. The agreement came into force on August 5th.

This agreement laid down so-called "Areas of Influence" for both the MEF and IFM, where they were in control but which they were not allowed to leave. The "Area of Influence" of the MEF was essentially Honiara with certain additional areas directly east and west of the town.

The “Area of Influence” of the IFM was the rest of Guadalcanal with the exception of the area of Marau in the east. According to this agreement the responsibility for maintaining law and order in Honiara was handed back to the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force. MEF and IFM were to “lay down their weapons”- there was no talk of surrendering their weapons. The cease-fire was to be controlled by the “Cease-Fire Monitoring Council”, consisting of eight members agreed upon by the government, the IFM and the MEF.

The central government, provincial governments, churches and NGOs welcomed the cease-fire unanimously. Basically it held, although it was broken in individual cases by both the MEF and the IFM. But the “Cease-Fire Monitoring Council” was able to intervene successfully in each case and calm the situation down. Both MEF and IFM declared that they felt themselves bound to the cease-fire agreement in spite of the incidents, and combatants from MEF and IFM returned to their villages in large numbers.

However, even after the cease-fire agreement Guadalcanal was still a long way from security, order and peace. The IFM continued to control the rural areas of the island, the MEF Honiara and surroundings. Guadalcanalese did not dare enter MEF controlled territory any more than Malaitans IFM controlled territory. In Honiara especially there could be no claim that law and order had been restored. The MEF did not hand back power to the police, in spite of agreements to that end written into the cease-fire agreement. They argued that the police were still too weak to take over, but this argument was hardly fair as their weakness derived from the fact that the MEF had disarmed them. This meant that the inhabitants of Honiara continued to suffer under the arbitrary rule of undisciplined MEF fighters and criminal gangs, who plundered shops and businesses, stole private vehicles, burnt down houses and threatened, robbed and drove out non-Malaitans.

The security situation also worsened continually on Malaita itself. The MEF also took over power there and undisciplined MEF fighters attacked their “own people” regularly. More and more weapons found their way onto the island, and the men in possession of these weapons threatened civilians, robbed business people, frightened women and settled personal scores. On Malaita, existing land conflicts began to come to a head; feuds and disputes between families and villages, sometimes even within families and villages resulted increasingly in violence. Women and children lived in fear of the armed and war-traumatized men. The situation was particularly precarious for Guadalcanalese wives of Malaitans, who having followed their husbands to Malaita now found themselves forced to cope in a foreign environment hostile towards them (often without their husbands, who had returned to Honiara as MEF fighters). But even Malaitans returning from Honiara did not always receive a friendly welcome from the established inhabitants of Malaita. For this flood of refugees put pressure on the land, the basis for feeding everyone, and the infrastructure and institutions (not enough houses, schools, aid-posts, nor enough job opportunities for such a massive increase in the population).

The established local landowners often prevented the new-arrivals from having access to land and water and refused to allow their children to attend the schools. The law and order situation on Malaita worsened drastically; here as on Bougainville the consumption of home-brewed alcohol (kwaso) and the escapades of young unemployed “rascals” had a very negative effect. The police were powerless, having been disarmed by the MEF –or had themselves become part of the MEF. This uncertain situation had still not improved at the beginning of 2001.

From the end of August 2000 the government made efforts to bring about peace negotiations. On 7th September, after several “postponements”, preliminary talks for such negotiations began on the New Zealand warship *Te Kaha*, lying off the coast of Honiara. They were so complicated as it was very difficult to actually get all the protagonists involved. However, they managed to make enough progress that official peace negotiations could finally begin. Australia declared its willingness to arrange a neutral place and all the logistics necessary for a meeting. In the middle of October 2000 the peace talks began on the Garbutt Air Force Base in Townsville, Queensland. The 130 persons taking part were delegates from the IFM, MEF and the government. They were brought to the conference venue in Australian and New Zealand military aircraft, and New Zealand and Australia sent observers to the talks, as did the Commonwealth Secretariat.

On October 15th, after six days negotiations arrived at the so-called “Townsville Peace Agreement (TPA)”. Among other things, it provided for the setting up of demilitarised zones, the surrender of weapons by the militias within 30 days, the return of the soldiers to their home provinces and the integration of former combatants in public programmes of work. The Ceasefire Monitoring Council, now known as the Peace Monitoring Council was to monitor the disarmament and the general keeping of the agreement in co-operation with Australian and New Zealand soldiers and police. Following the example of the PMG on Bougainville they were to be unarmed. Within 30 days of the agreement being signed they were to be stationed on the Solomons and remain there for two years. This International Peace Monitoring Team (IPMT) was to take all the weapons and ammunition of the MEF and the IFM under their control. In exchange for their weapons the soldiers of both enemy militias were promised an amnesty (the relevant Amnesty Law was passed by the Solomon Islands Parliament on 18th December 2000). However, whoever did not surrender his weapons within the thirty days did not come under the amnesty. Lastly agreement was reached on a detailed examination of the land conflicts on Guadalcanal and negotiations between the central government and the provincial governments of Malaita and Guadalcanal concerning aid and development projects for both provinces. The rights of self-administration were also to be extended to all provinces.

After his return from Townsville, the leader of the MEF, Andrew Nori, declared that the war was over, that the MEF would give up their positions and camps within days or at the most weeks, and that the MEF fighters would leave Honiara. However, in the weeks that followed nothing happened. The situation in the capital calmed down somewhat, but the MEF remained the only power factor there. The police remained unable to assert themselves, as their weapons and equipment were not returned to them. At the beginning of November, the date by which the combatants were supposed to have handed over their weapons was extended by four weeks – from November 15th to December 15th. The members of the IPMT arrived in Honiara and on Malaita in the middle of November, and Australia delivered containers for storing the weapons that had been surrendered; yet the handing over of the weapons only began very slowly indeed. The situation was made even more complicated when in November conflict broke out openly within the MEF in Honiara. Members of the MEF who were dissatisfied with their leaders, claimed that they had not received the money payments promised to them, initiated armed violent demonstrations in Honiara and burnt down the building in which the MEF leader, Nori, had his office. Only a few days later Nori’s followers murdered two of the people suspected of having laid the fire. This demonstrates clearly that the MEF is divided. Armed clashes between rival factions of the MEF cannot be ruled out in future.

By the middle of December it was apparent that only a small number of weapons had been handed over by the MEF and the IFM, although the - already extended - deadline for weapons disposal had expired on December 15th. The Chairman of the Peace Monitoring Council had to admit that after the deadline had expired they had certain knowledge that there were still "several hundred" weapons that had not been handed over. The small unarmed IPMT (39 men) is dependent on the good will and co-operation of the commanders of the armed groups; they are as little able to enforce the weapons disposal as the police. Presumably the majority of the weapons have not been handed over and will not be handed over; these weapons have either been hidden in rural areas in Guadalcanal and Malaita or have been taken into areas that do not come under the Townsville Peace Agreement (particularly the Western Province). In Honiara there is still a state of lawlessness; armed MEF members or simply criminal elements with weapons in their hands take what they want from private individuals and business people.

The security situation on Malaita is also precarious; the flood of weapons has led to a militarisation of local conflicts and an increase in acts of violence (see above); even at the beginning of the year 2001 the provincial capital Auki was still in the hands of the MEF; undisciplined MEF members harassed civilians and robbed them. Divisions within the MEF and between them and Malaitans critical of the MEF also pose a threat for the use of violence in future.

In rural Guadalcanal however the situation appears to have calmed down; many IFM fighters have returned to their villages and if they have not given up their weapons they have at least put them aside or given them to their commanders. But not all groups within the IFM have agreed to join the peace process. A particularly intransigent group from the south west coast under the leadership of Harold Keke and very willing to use violence, has split off from the IFM and formed the GRA (Guadalcanal Revolutionary Army).

(addendum June 2001: In March and April 2001 clashes occurred between Keke's group and the Police Field Force, which was assisted by former IFM fighters. On June 1, 2001, Kekes group tried to assassinate Ezekiel Alebua, the Premier of Guadalcanal province. Alebua was seriously wounded.)

What is still totally in the dark is the so-called Marau question. The coastal strip around Marau in the east of Guadalcanal, only 30 minutes by boat away from the south coast of Malaita, is still controlled by the Marau Eagle Force, an armed group built up by the MEF and allied to them, who also fought against the IFM. They consider themselves defence troops for the Ara-Ara speaking population of the area, a language group related to the Malaitans, who are involved in a difficult land conflict with the neighbouring Guadalcanalese inhabitants (the Birau people). The Ara-Ara people wish to have their settlement area taken out of the unit of the Province of Guadalcanal and in future be directly under the control of the central government, but the provincial government is not willing to permit this. The Marau question was excluded from the Townsville Peace Agreement and separate negotiations were reserved for it. These took place in November 2000 but did not lead to any results. Australia and New Zealand then declared themselves willing to arrange new negotiations in a neutral place and to pay for them. After several delays further negotiations took place in Port Vila, the capital city of Vanuatu. Around 50 people took part in these negotiations, from Marau, the IFM, the Guadalcanal provincial government and the central government. At the beginning of 2001 there were still no results available. The Marau Eagle Force had not yet disbanded nor had they surrendered their weapons.

(addendum June 2001): On February 7 2001 the so-called Marau Peace Accord was signed. Among other things it provides for the establishment of a „Marau Constituency“ in the framework of the province/state of Guadalcanal and a „Marau Constituency Development Committee“.)

To summarize, the disarmament and disbanding of the armed groups, which is generally considered to be essential for the re-establishment of peace, security and order has not been completed by any means by the beginning of 2001.

2.4 Consequences of the violent conflict and openings for reconstruction and peace building

The Solomons are at present almost in the same position as Bougainville in October 1997 after the Burnham Truce as far as the conflict situation is concerned. At best, they are entering the difficult phase of “post-conflict peace building”. The tasks of this period are reconstruction, reconciliation, and the rebuilding of democratic structures and conditions within society and state. This will take a long time, as starting conditions are by no means good. For the small Solomon Islands, the coup and the war have put an enormous burden on social stability and the future chances of development for the islands, even if there has been a relatively low loss of life in comparison to other global theatres of war.

The political cohesion of the Solomons is endangered. Not only Guadalcanal is demanding greater autonomy, but other provinces are also increasingly making such demands, clearly unnerved by the Guadalcanalese-Malaitan conflict. There is talk of changing from provincial government to state government, meaning greater areas of power and competence for the nine provinces. Among these new competences should be the right to control internal migration so as to limit the number of people immigrating from other provinces (which would be incompatible with the right to freedom of movement anchored in the constitution). Separatist movements are re-awakening in the Western Province. On July 7th 2000 they renamed themselves the “State of Western Solomons”. The eastern province Temotu (25,000 inhabitants) followed on August 8th and declared themselves a “state “ in “free association” with the Solomons. Other provinces have also taken steps in the same direction. The Townsville Peace Agreement had to take this into account and agreed to negotiate on the future federal state structure of the Solomons and the changes to the constitution that it would require. Since then talks have been held on the transition from a provincial system to a system of state government. The protagonists are in agreement on principle but the form the new system should take is not yet clear. Nor is the danger of secessionist movements yet banned. At the end of 2000 the provinces of Temotu, Makira-Ulawa, Renell-Bellona and Western were still threatening to split off. While small provinces such as Temotu have hardly the resources to be able to survive as a state on their own, it is a different case for the Western Province. As both the government and the population of the Western Province are generally dissatisfied with the Townsville Peace Agreement and the most recent developments it is quite possible that potential is building up for a new (violent) conflict. The geographic proximity to Bougainville, and existing family ties play an additional role in this case, and for certain secessionist forces both in Western Province and on Bougainville it could seem attractive to go together. There is real danger that the Solomons state as a unit may disintegrate, especially as there is hardly a national sense of “Solomons” identity anyhow. Rather the war can be seen as an expression of the failure of nation-building on the Solomons so far. People knowledgeable about the political situation doubt whether a restructuring of the state system can solve this problem, as it is not really a question of the “system of government” but rather of the quality of political leadership – and that is a big problem on the Solomons as in other Pacific island states. The present government of the Solomons has hardly any authority; it came to power in an undemocratic way (see above) and is in the end still dependent on the MEF. (Critics from among the NGOs even go so far as to claim that the

government is controlled by the MEF, and that Andrew Nori, the leader of the MEF, has the final word on things). Elections could at least solve the problem of legitimation; normally it would be time for new elections in 2001, but there is already talk of postponing them in order to allow the situation to calm down further... However, postponement would help the stabilisation of the peace process just as little as “elections whatever the cost” (quite probably under pressure from armed paramilitary groups) just in order to have a legitimate pro forma government, which seems to be the option favoured by Australia.

The conflict has also severely damaged businesses and social institutions in the country. Not only has the goldmine had to shut down, but also the two other large companies in the country, the Solomon Islands Plantation Company, and Solomon Taiyo, the largest fishing company of the Solomons (each employing around 2000 people). The Malaysian timber firms have withdrawn their personnel and their activities entirely. Business life in Honiara came to a complete standstill and is only recovering very slowly. There is no tourism anymore. At least 8000 jobs have been lost as a result of the war. The gross national product has dropped by around 40%. Exports have sunk by more than 40%, and fish production by more than 75%. In October 2000, David Sitai, the representative of the Solomon Islands at the EU-ACP Meeting, declared that it would take at least ten years for the Solomon Islands economy to regain its pre-war level.

The schools on Guadalcanal have been closed for months, and only schools in Honiara have re-opened. The health service has been devastated. Tens of thousands of people are still living as refugees and displaced persons in camps, in the jungle or with friends and relatives. If at first it was mainly the Malaitans who had to suffer being driven from their homes, after the coup several thousand Guadalcanalese were also driven from their homes and some of them even had to seek refuge on other islands. According to one source there is a Guadalcanalese refugee camp in the Western Province, while other sources claim that in the meantime – the end of 2000 – the refugees have returned home. Finally, people from other provinces were forced to flee from the despotic rule of the MEF in Honiara and the surrounding areas, and this in turn led to Malaitans being driven out of the Western Province for example. The Red Cross, the churches and World Vision made great efforts to provide emergency services and basic provisions for the displaced persons.

Large amounts of money will be necessary for the reconstruction of houses and infrastructure, and for the re-settlement and re-integration of displaced persons and refugees etc. However, the war has of course decimated the state budget of the Solomon Islands and the government coffers are more or less empty. The public service no longer functions, the salaries of the public servants can only be paid out very irregularly.

In order to stabilise the situation and commence with reconstruction and reconciliation work, a broadly accepted political basis must be achieved, which offers a way of dealing with the existing conflicts and problems without violence in future. This will require political agreements that go beyond the ones achieved in Townsville. A comprehensive peace settlement will have to deal with a whole parcel of questions. It will have to consider compensation payments for the damage done both by the Malaitans and the Guadalcanalese. But it will also have to give fundamental consideration to the question of how people can live together on Guadalcanal and particularly in Honiara, and how to re-integrate the MEF and IFM soldiers into civilian life. Not less important will be the make up of the government, the administration, and the police, and finally the structure of the Solomon Islands state (see above). The Townsville Peace Agreement only mentions these subjects in a very general way entirely open to interpretation. Critics of the Townsville Peace Agreement admit that while in

the short term it was useful to bring about the end of the war (and that in this sense there had been no alternative to it), in the middle and long term it could not function and would prove to be rather counter-productive because of the way important issues had been left unclear and open to interpretation. It promised all kinds of things to all kinds of interest groups (and was on account of this, contradictory in itself) without showing any ways in which these promises could be realised. This could only lead to disappointment and frustration in the future and produce new conflicts.

Experience in Bougainville does in fact show that a very long negotiating phase is necessary in order to solve such problems, perhaps even lasting many years. It must be very clear to all those participating, that the process of post-conflict peace building requires a great deal of staying power. This is the case as far as working out viable solutions at a political level is concerned, as well as instigating peace-building processes at the grassroots level. However, without peace-building at the grassroots level there is no back up for solutions found at the political level, nor any way of helping people recognise them as being meaningful and sensible. It is therefore necessary to include an element of the “grassroots” in the negotiation process. This is the main criticism of the Townsville Peace Agreement from civil society groups: neither NGOs, churches or women’s groups were included in the negotiations in Townsville (as neither the MEF nor the Australians wanted them), the Townsville Peace Agreement was merely presented to them afterwards and they were expected to nod their heads to it. Furthermore the agreement had been whipped together in totally inappropriate haste (the Australians had originally only planned three days for it, in the end it took six), a much longer period of time would have been necessary in order to achieve a result viable in the long term. The deficits in the way it was put together will now take their own toll. This criticism has already contributed to demands that the Townsville Peace Agreement be re-negotiated, perhaps within the framework of a National Peace Conference, with the social and political forces of all provinces participating so that the results would then be binding for the whole of the Solomon Islands (not just for Guadalcanal and Malaita as with the Townsville Peace Agreement). Whatever the case, quick solutions as raised by the peace agreement in Townsville have proved deceptive and can therefore easily lead to disappointment.

Lack of trust in the power of the Townsville Peace Agreement to hold and in the peace process in general is having a negative effect on the rebuilding of the economy. The economic life of the country must be reflat again. Business people in Honiara must have a guarantee that they can reopen their businesses, shops and offices without having to be afraid of theft, robbery and plundering. The smallholders must be able to reach markets again to sell their produce; therefore the transport infrastructure must be put in order. The large companies, the most important employers and earners of foreign exchange, SIPL, Gold Ridge Mine, Solomon Taiyo, must open up and start working again. At present they are only talking about it. The operators of the goldmine see themselves confronted with demands for new negotiations about compensation payments, additional royalties for the land owners and an increase in their shares in the mining company, as well as further development projects for the region. The landowners from the mining area and from the lower reaches of the rivers polluted by the mine are only prepared to allow the mine to re-open if their demands are considered. However Delta Gold is not prepared to negotiate. It can therefore take some time before the mine can begin production again, especially as during the troubles the machine park and the plant were more or less destroyed or stolen – which did not prevent the local IFM unit from demanding 120,000 Solomon Islands-Dollars from the mining company in November 2000, as compensation for their having “protected” the mine during the war! At the end of the year foreign employees of the mine, who had returned after the signing of the Townsville Peace Agreement, were withdrawn from the Solomons again after they had been threatened. New

investors from overseas, who are in principle interested in investing, will do nothing of the kind as long as the present conditions prevail on the Solomons.

Aid posts and hospitals must begin to function consistently again. And above all the schools on Guadalcanal which have been closed for months now, must be re-opened so that whole years of pupils do not remain without formal education, as happened on Bougainville. According to a questionnaire carried out by the YWCA in December 2000, in central Guadalcanal alone there were around 6000 pupils who had fled into the bush with their parents and were not yet able to attend school again. On Malaita the schools are hopelessly overcrowded on account of the flood of refugees from Guadalcanal and many refugee children are not able to go to school at all. School fees are also becoming increasingly a problem, as many families are not able to earn money at present and therefore cannot pay them. Lesson material is lacking everywhere and many teachers have not yet returned to their places of work. Here the problem arises –as with other public servants – of how to achieve regular salary payments. The public administration broke down during the war and many public servants fled to their home villages or were sent on unpaid leave.

There are special problems in (re-) building in the much neglected regions of Guadalcanal and Malaita. The IFM particularly has a lot of support on the so-called Weather Coast of Guadalcanal, an inaccessible, undeveloped region in the southwest. In future special development efforts should be directed to this area. On Malaita the flood of thousands of Malaitan refugees returning from Guadalcanal has heightened the already precarious economic and social situation. It was not without reason that so many people left their home island to settle elsewhere; population growth, shortage of land and lack of occupational opportunities had forced them to do so. If in future a new large-scale wave of emigration from Malaita is to be prevented, and a large number of those who have returned from Guadalcanal are to be (re-) integrated permanently on Malaita, it will require special efforts to create jobs in the modern sector, as the traditional subsistence economy will not be adequate to absorb the growing population. While the Townsville Peace Agreement promises various development programmes for Guadalcanal and Malaita, it is absolutely unclear how these should be financed or implemented.

Any such special development measures for Guadalcanal and Malaita could lead to jealousy and envy in the other provinces, and lay the foundation for new violent conflicts. The remote provinces of Temotu and Renell and Bellona for example have also been affected by the war, as people from these provinces have fled back to their homes as a result of the situation on Guadalcanal. Now there are growing problems, for example with the water supply, because of the increased number of inhabitants. The other provinces are already very dissatisfied with the preferential treatment they claim Guadalcanal and Malaita have received so far in development matters, it looks to them as though they were being rewarded for having thrust the country into the deepest crisis in its history.

A further special problem for post-war reconstruction is the return and re-integration of displaced persons and refugees. Malaitans driven out of Guadalcanal will wish to return, particularly those with a Guadalcanalese wife. The children of such “mixed” marriages will have particular problems of identity and integration. And the Guadalcanalese who were driven out of their home villages, or fled from them, will also wish to return there. Both groups will require initial aid to rebuild their destroyed property and burnt down houses, and to acquire household equipment, tools and other property, as well as assistance to enable them to take up agricultural production again (seeds, tools etc.). It will be very important that this support is seen to be distributed justly and in a transparent manner, so that dissatisfaction and

envy do not lead to new conflicts. Women require special support measures (small loans, employment and income-generating projects).

Reconciliation must go along with reconstruction, as has been graphically demonstrated in Bougainville. This is however only just beginning. Traditional forms of conflict management and reconciliation, which gained great importance on Bougainville, also exist on the Solomon Islands and they can also contribute to conflict resolution there. However, in recent times they have been massively perverted on the Solomons and have therefore been discredited. This is especially the case with the “kastom” of compensation: in the traditional context compensation was negotiated between the two parties directly involved in the conflict and handed over by these two parties, in order to settle the conflict and reconcile the conflicting parties. However, in the case of the Malaitan-Guadalcanalese conflict the central government, as a third party, has now already paid out “compensation” to both parties. This is a grave hindrance to the parties accepting the binding nature of the conflict regulation, and a hindrance to actual reconciliation between them. “Compensation” in this case meant simply payments of money to the members and leaders of the armed groups. For example, the MEF and the IFM members each received 1000 Solomon Islands-Dollars as “travel money” to return to their villages, many of the soldiers even cashing in several times. In the end, the government tried in this way –with Australian support – to pay the combatants to keep quiet (and in this way they rewarded the MEF for having brought the government to power in the first place). Representatives of the churches and peace groups also justly criticise that in this way the combatants were rewarded for their – illegal and inhuman – actions; this had nothing more to do with compensation in the traditional sense. Cynics formulated it this way: the only branch of business flourishing on the Solomons at present is the compensation-business. “Genuine” compensation ceremonies and peace ceremonies according to traditional customs have in contrast hardly taken place anywhere yet.

As on Bougainville, in addition to traditional forms of reconciliation, there is also a place for modern forms of reconciliation. Here, as on Bougainville, the churches play an important role being able to appeal to the mutual Christian faith of the protagonists. Praying together and reading the Bible together were important grassroots activities for the women who worked to achieve a cease-fire and peace (see below). Peace education, working with war traumata, victim- perpetrator compensation measures, and the setting up of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission could contribute towards reconciliation.

The question of an amnesty for crimes committed during the war is problematic. So far murder, torture and other serious abuses of human rights committed by all sides (MEF, IFM, Police Force) have neither been investigated nor expiated, nor has the fate of many people who “disappeared” been established. Nonetheless the armed groups demand an (almost) unconditional amnesty: immunity from prosecution in return for handing over their weapons - that is what was agreed on in Townsville. This can lead to even the most serious crimes and human rights abuses not being expiated. And that can permanently damage the relationship between perpetrators and victims (or their relatives) and even possibly be a source of new (revengeful) acts of violence. It must be considered whether it is possible as a counter measure to reintroduce traditional forms of compensation between perpetrator and victim and /or to link the amnesty to the activities of a Truth and Reconciliation Committee (based on the South African model). Amnesty International is entirely opposed to a complete amnesty and demands that war crimes, crimes against humanity and torture be excluded from it. AI has therefore protested strongly against the Amnesty Law from December 2000, as it is a “blanket amnesty law for virtually all crimes and human rights abuses”. AI warns that this “may encourage future political torturers and killers to expect to get away with atrocities” (press

statement from 19th December 2000), and stresses that peace and reconciliation cannot last if murderers and torturers are not punished. Even most of the NGOs on the Solomon Islands criticise the amnesty approach of the Townsville Peace Agreement as an attempt to buy peace at the cost of justice; but there can only be a lasting peace when it is based on justice. An amnesty might be applied at most to the illegal acquisition of weapons and their use within the framework of combat activities; it cannot however be applied to crimes and human rights abuses perpetrated during the war. In these cases it is far more essential that justice is seen to be done and the law is applied (one of the formulations used again and again by the representatives of the NGOs is that the “full force of the law” must be reinstated), or the perpetrator must submit to regular proceedings before a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, at the end of which he could then be granted amnesty. Only when the truth about crimes and human rights abuses are revealed and the perpetrators confess to what they have done, is it possible for forgiveness and reconciliation to follow.

The case of Bougainville also teaches us how difficult it is to demobilise and re-integrate the ex-combatants, and how necessary it is for the consolidation of peace. However, it appears that a complete and permanent disarmament is neither possible nor necessarily a matter of priority – in spite of the Townsville agreement (which it must be said only applies to Guadalcanal and Malaita, weapons and armed groups in other provinces e.g. Western Province are not mentioned at all). On the Solomons, as one of the main theatres of the Pacific war between the Allies and Japan, even today weapons and ammunition from that time can still be reactivated with no effort, and during the war huge amounts of modern weapons appear to have been smuggled in (whereby the “Bougainville-connection” appears to have played a certain role). The rules laid down in the Townsville Peace Agreement concerning the handing over of weapons are insufficient (see above); the collecting of weapons under the supervision of the IPMT and their storage in containers has hardly more than symbolic significance. It must be a case of taking away the incentives to use weapons, making their use morally discredited and threatening in such cases with criminal sanctions that can be enforced. The main problem here as on Bougainville are the young ex-combatants “hanging around” in Honiara or in their villages with nothing to do, consuming vast amounts of alcohol and other drugs and presenting a huge “law and order” problem as they are mainly responsible for the growing number of robberies, rapes and other violent offences. It is quite possible that the problem on the Solomons is even greater than on Bougainville, for it is said that more than half of the soldiers were unemployed youths, and that there were many child soldiers, especially in the ranks of the IFM. It is also claimed that young people were forced to join the “Militants”. These young men and youths must be helped to overcome their war trauma and gain a perspective in civilian life. This means first and foremost opportunities for training and employment; and that again is extremely difficult in view of the fact that more than half the population of the Solomons are under 25 years of age, and that even before the war around 8000 school leavers competed annually for around 600 jobs available in the modern sector. Youth unemployment is generally seen as a ticking “time-bomb” (according to the SICA President Eric Takila).

The government and the leadership of the IFM and MEF seem to see one option for solving the problem in taking a large number of ex-combatants into the police force, which is to be totally restructured. It is not unproblematic as during the war many civilians had bad experiences with these fighters and understandably mistrust them deeply. What is absolutely clear is that the Solomon Islands Police Force must be renewed and restructured from the bottom up, and that this will be decisive for the success or failure of the peace building process. The Solomons Police failed in the crisis situation and has been more or less disbanded. The majority of the policemen joined the MEF, an illegal armed faction, and it is

not yet clear what is to be done with these disloyal public servants. In view of the balance of power the majority of them will most probably have to be taken on again. That is also what is written into the Townsville Peace Agreement, although it also envisages a police force for the future made up of members from all regions and all ethnic groups. How this is to be achieved remains a mystery. The police leadership is still firmly in the hands of the Malaitans. How police officers who remained loyal and police officers who joined the MEF are to work together and trust each other in future is difficult to imagine, particularly as those policemen who joined the MEF profited in various ways from the war (among other things from the “compensation” payments made to them by the government) while those officers who remained loyal to the force had nothing but disadvantages. The reintegration of the policemen who deserted will certainly prove a great burden for the future.

There are voices within the NGOs that call for the old Solomon Islands Police Force to be disbanded altogether, to call in an international police force for an interim period and with outside aid rebuild a new police force from scratch, primarily making sure from the beginning that there is an ethnical balance in the way it is made up. Whatever the case the new police force will also require a thorough basic training in questions of peaceful conflict management, mediation and human rights work.

This applies in a similar way to the justice and prison services, which have also broken down entirely.

2.5 Prerequisites for civil conflict resolution: the state of civil society and the situation of the NGOs

As the conflict escalated all the forces trying to manage it peacefully, either using traditional community methods or those of modern civil society were pushed further and further into the defensive. Their opportunities for action were drastically limited, especially after the coup on June 5th 2000. Unarmed protagonists committed to non-violence had a hard time when the weapons spoke, when power emanated from the barrel of a gun and there was no protection to be had from a secure power monopoly under the rule of law. They appeared helpless faced with dominating groups ready for violence, and they were indeed victims of intimidation and violent attack, particularly in the MEF’s phase of tyranny in Honiara. The protagonists of violence were determined to discredit those offering civil alternatives to solve the conflict, and to make life impossible for them. NGOs were therefore often compelled to limit their activities, if not give them up altogether, and particularly prominent representatives of the NGOs had to leave Honiara, Guadalcanal or even the country for their own protection. Most of the international and foreign NGOs had withdrawn their personnel after the coup for security reasons.

Yet even during the worst phases of the conflict, individual members of civil society attempted to mediate between the parties and to alleviate the suffering of the victims. Here the work of the churches and the church-related NGOs must be particularly emphasised. The Melanesian Brotherhood of the Church of Melanesia was constantly in action. Members of the Melanesian Brotherhood frequently put themselves in danger in order to mediate truces at a local level, to arbitrate in local disputes and above all to save and care for victims of violence. On several occasions they were able to get hostages or prisoners released from the power of the armed groups. And after the cease-fire and the peace agreement had been signed they played an outstanding role in supervising their realisation at grassroots level.

The most significant contribution to resolving the violent conflict was a three-day National Peace Conference, organised by the Solomon Islands Christian Association (SICA) or rather the Peace Office of the SICA, which took place from 25th –27th August 2000 on board the New Zealand frigate *Te Kaha* off the coast of Honiara. 150 people from all the Solomon Islands provinces and Honiara took part, delegates from churches, women's and youth organisations as well as the business world and traditional authorities such as village elders and chiefs. The aim of the National Peace Conference was to initiate a comprehensive and inclusive peace process. Many suggestions were made in this direction and many also about the fundamental principles for a sustainable peace agreement and post-conflict peace building: demilitarisation under international control, a new clarification of the relationship between the central government and the provinces, complete restructuring of the police force, a conditional amnesty, the setting up of a Truth and Reconciliation Committee, compensation, rehabilitation, reconciliation etc. With this conference civil society laid a very direct claim to be involved as active partners in all efforts to achieve peace, which met with opposition and reservations on the part of the various armed groups. In October 2000 representatives of civil society were not allowed to attend the peace negotiations in Townsville, particularly on account of the MEF's disapproval, bowed to by the government and the Australian hosts. It remains to be seen what this will mean for the sustainability and consolidation of the peace. Bougainville has shown that very active involvement of protagonists from civil society had an extremely positive effect on the peace process. This opportunity has so far not been made use of enough on the Solomon Islands. Nevertheless the NGOs are doing their best to get into the game and play a more important role. Besides SICA, Melanesian Brotherhood and other church groupings, the Solomon Islands Development Trust (SIDT) and the Development Services Exchange (DSE) must be mentioned here. For even during the hottest phase of the conflict they were working hard to end it and to achieve civil conflict resolution. DSE as the umbrella organisation of the development-orientated NGOs had even established a peace committee before the coup, in order to bundle the initiatives and approaches in this direction.

And not least, just as on Bougainville, it was the women and the women's organisations that were decisive in making efforts to end the war and in working towards peaceful conflict resolution and reconciliation. Often at great personal risk they went to the "front", put themselves between the conflicting parties and tried to persuade the combatants to return to their home villages and to lay down their weapons. This "going-between" of women in fights between men (in a literal sense) is a method of traditional conflict resolution in the Solomons.

It was also the women who spoke out through their own women's conferences and made public declarations. Before the coup, on May 19th 2000, they had already held a conference attended by over a hundred women from Honiara and all the provinces. Here demands were made that were later taken up by the National Peace Conference in August, for example the reorganisation of the police force. The women also raised subjects and concerns that were particularly close to their hearts, as mothers affected by the war. They demanded that the armed groups send the child-soldiers and young men under 18 back home immediately, that young people be involved in communal development projects and that schools and aid posts be reopened.

After the coup in Honiara, a women's group was constituted calling itself the "Women for Peace Group" and building on the women's conference from May 19th was made up of women from various provinces in the Solomons resident in Honiara and representatives of various women's organisations (National Council of Women, YWCA, SIWNET etc.). They saw their task in working to restore peace and in persuading the armed groups to lay down

their weapons. In fact “Women for Peace” succeeded in arranging talks with representatives of the government, the police, the MEF and the IFM. They presented a “Women’s Plea for Peace” to the public, and they organised various activities at grassroots level; they visited the MEF and the IFM fighters in their military camps, and the refugees in refugee camps; and they held prayers for peace regularly every week. The catholic nuns in the group organised an exchange system between the women in Honiara and the women in the surrounding areas (exchange of baskets). The women from Honiara brought things like rice, tinned fish, matches, soap, salt and sugar in their baskets, i.e. goods for daily life which were no longer available in the rural areas of Guadalcanal because of the war; and the women of Guadalcanal exchanged them for food from their gardens such as potatoes, vegetables and fruit which the women in the town could no longer get. In this way they began a lively exchange across the “borders”.

2.6 Potential fields of work for civil conflict resolution and the Civil Peace Service

Concrete peace building projects are still rare and are only just getting going. Two examples: in September 2000 fifty three students, whose degree courses at the University of the South Pacific in Fiji were no longer able to be financed by the government, absolved a course on peace and development politics to enable them to support development projects at a community level within the coming months, and so to assist in resolving social conflicts. As these students are still in the field there is no information available yet as to success or failure of this initiative. In December 2000 the Catholic Church in Honiara carried out a two-week „Critical Incident Stress Management Course“ with women and ex-combatants; the person in charge was Father Makario from Fiji (Father Makario is very well known on Fiji and recognised for his trauma counselling of the victims of the coup and the uprising in Fiji). However, these are select occurrences and are still uncoordinated at present. DSE, the umbrella organisation for all the development NGOs on the Solomons, has worked out an ambitious coherent programme over several years for consolidation of the peace, reconstruction and reconciliation (the Non Governmental Organisation Peace and Development Support Programme August 2000 – 2006), but it is absolutely unclear how this should be financed and implemented.

External support is only coming very slowly. The EU suspended several aid programmes during the war. New programmes were not able to commence on account of the security situation (the implementation of the 1998 Stabex FMO; additional structural adjustment aid). On the other hand the EU has accepted several projects, which should directly help peace building: a micro-project-programme for the resettlement of displaced persons (3 Million Euro), a project to support the media and the NGOs in the peace process (0.7 Million Euro), and a rehabilitation programme (0.5 Million Euro). Furthermore they intend to support a programme “Weapons for peace” with 0.7 Million Euro: exchanging weapons for tools and equipment.

The WHO, World Vision and the ICRC have concrete emergency aid programmes running on the spot (however these programmes are all in the process of coming to an end). UNDP, AusAid, the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the IMF, the EU and Japan all gave more or less direct promises for relatively comprehensive reconstruction aid at a conference with representatives from the Solomons and potential donor organisations in Brisbane, Australia in October 2000. UNDP and the ILO intend to work together on an “Overall

Framework of Action” to coordinate the reconstruction measures of the various UN agencies. At the end of December the Asian Development Bank approved a loan of 20 Million Australian Dollars for a “Post-Conflict Emergency Rehabilitation Project”, to be used to finance the reconstruction of government buildings, roads, bridges, schools etc. However there are hardly any outside organisations and institutions present who are able to give direct support as far as civil conflict resolution and post-conflict peace building are concerned. Save the Children Australia took up work with unemployed youth in Honiara in September 2000 within the framework of their “Youth Outreach Programme in Solomon Islands”, and from the beginning of 2001 they plan to extend the programme in Guadalcanal, Malaita, Western and Rennell and Bellona, and to explicitly include activities to further peace and reconciliation. UNDP has also begun a “youth mobilisation project”.

AusAid is establishing its own structures for post-conflict peace building in the framework of its „Solomon Islands Community Peace Restoration Fund“. Local NGO’s are sceptical about this approach. They feel sidelined by foreigners not familiar with the situation on the ground.

External aid for peace building and post-conflict prevention work is primarily meaningful in the following areas:

Demobilisation and reintegration of ex-combatants: here – in a similar way as on Bougainville – consideration must be given to special educational training programmes for the young ex combatants, which both make it possible for them to catch up on the schooling they have missed and also qualify them for an occupation in civil society. However, peace education and trauma counselling must also be a part of it, for in the past months these young soldiers have been embroiled in a terrible culture of violence, which has done serious spiritual damage to them and brought out moral ethical defects in their behaviour. It will be necessary to work with them on these problems, if these ex-soldiers are to be successfully reintegrated into civilian life on a permanent basis. At the same time it is important that cash-for-work programmes are set up as soon as possible, in order to get the young men off the street or rather out of the bush, to occupy them, and to offer them opportunities to earn some money legally – and in order to keep them in their villages. For at present it can be observed that many young ex-combatants who have returned to their villages are getting bored there and being drawn back to Honiara. UNDP, together with other UN agencies and the Solomon Islands government, intend to establish a Joint UN Programme Unit for Demobilization, Disarmament and Reintegration, it remains to be seen what actually comes of it. The South Sea Evangelical Church (SSEC) is at present preparing a survey among the (ex) combatants to find out what school and vocational training they already have and what their interests, needs and ideas for the future etc. are. (Responsible: George Saemane from the peace committee of the SSEC, at the same time DSE-Peace Office.) They intend then to design their youth programmes on the basis of this survey. As the SSEC is especially strong on Malaita, there are a particularly large number of SSEC members among the MEF soldiers. – However, some NGO representatives have asked that it be considered that special programmes for young ex combatants would mean these being additionally “rewarded” yet again. The programmes should therefore be open to all young people on principle, perhaps with special emphasis on the group of the ex-combatants.

Dealing with war experiences and reconciliation work: Measures have to be taken to make psychosocial care available, particularly for the child soldiers. Trauma work with perpetrators and victims is just as important as training courses in non-violent conflict resolution. The SSEC has recently prepared a “Trauma Counselling Proposal” and presented it to the SICA, which proposes to engage professional “trauma counselling” trainers in order to train church people as counsellors.

Reintegration of refugees and displaced persons: without the successful reintegration of refugees and displaced persons there can be no peace building, for they would present a new source of violent conflict potential. Those returning home do not only need assistance with the reconstruction of their houses and households and to make a new start economically, but they must also be supported in achieving social reintegration, as they will often be returning to a social environment that is not necessarily friendly towards them. This is particularly the case for those people in mixed marriages between Guadalcanalese and Malaitans. Guadalcanalese women who (have to) remain on Malaita with their husbands have a hard time there, as also Malaitan men who (wish to) return to Guadalcanal with their Guadalcanalese wives.

Establishing a Truth Commission: to investigate what happened during the war and particularly to disclose crimes and human rights' abuse, as a contribution towards sustainable reconciliation. A National Human Rights Commission should be established for the future, or a person officially seconded as responsible for human rights.

Rebuilding the police force in a new way and training the police in mediation, conflict management and human rights work (see above).

Supervision of the election process and election observation should new elections be decided on.

2.7 Potential partners for co-operation with the Civil Peace Service

Even if at present the sending of civil peace workers cannot yet be recommended in view of the continuing uncertain security situation, nevertheless for the near future, presuming that the security situation increases consistently, such a mission can most certainly be considered. Peace workers could then be employed in the following areas:

Trauma counselling or training for the same;

Vocational training programmes for young ex-combatants;

Training of the police force in mediation, conflict resolution, civil rights (however only under the condition that a serious new beginning and new constellation of the police force takes place);

Supervision of the election process and election observation, perhaps also as assistance in explaining the election procedure to the people;

Capacity-building and networking between the NGOs. The NGOs have suffered severely during the war. They are however absolutely essential for sustainable peace building. They must therefore be strengthened in order to be able to carry out their role. Support and supervision from outside can be of great moral and psychological significance under these circumstances. Their presence of outsiders can have a protective function and can intensify contacts with the outside world. On the other hand civil peace workers, who document the rebuilding of the NGOs and their peace work, will eventually be able to learn useful lessons that can be applied in similar constellations, which they can "take home with them" and pass on to others.

The cooperation partners in question are mainly churches and church-orientated NGOs. For the churches have the most comprehensive and best functioning organisational network at the grassroots level, which reaches the people even in isolated villages, and the churches are the institution with the greatest acceptance both from the population, the government and the military groups. SICA and the YWCA should particularly be considered as cooperation partners.

SICA staff and members kept in contact with the “militants” during the war, went into the bush and tried to exert influence on them. *SICA* – with the support of AusAid and DanChurchAid - has carried out emergency measures for refugees (distribution of tents and household equipment etc.) and taken over the coordination of the assistance from member churches. The Peace Office of the *SICA* performed valuable services during the war (see above), at present it is not able to function – mainly on account of lack of finance. With adequate support it could become a central integration point for NGO activities for peace building, especially if a National Peace Conference were to actually come about in the near future. Such a conference should establish a permanent Peace Office or Peace Committee of Civil Society; the *SICA* Peace Office – or a committee stemming from it -could take over this function. The people mainly responsible for the work done by the *SICA* Peace Office during the war – Matthew Wale, Bob Pollard, and indirectly George Saemane from the peace committee of the SSEC – are all highly motivated and competent. However, they all have the problem that on account of their activities they are extremely unpopular with the MEF (they have all suffered massive threats from the MEF, their houses have been burnt down, and periodically they have had to leave Honiara for reasons of safety), on the other hand they are also to a certain extent considered “an embarrassment” in church circles as they have personally taken a very prominent stand and demanded continually that the *SICA* and the churches do much more for the realisation of peace, and take a much clearer stand against the “militants”.

Should it prove possible to revive the *SICA* Peace Office, then a peace worker could be employed very meaningfully in the *SICA* context, either in the fields of capacity-building, trauma counselling, or youth work. There will be good opportunities especially for the latter as from January 2001 a worker supported by the Council of World Mission, Rev. Gideon Tuke, will be employed to do youth work for the *SICA* and among other things to set up a “drop-in centre” for young people (ex-combatants). A Christian background, as well as training in psychology and social-education and some organisational experience would be prerequisites for a peace worker in the *SICA* context. The person to speak to concerning the possibility of an opening for the Civil Peace Service here would be Charles Kelly, the person in charge of the *SICA* Ecumenical Desk.

The *YWCA* was very much involved in the women’s activities for peace during the war. The General Secretary of the *YWCA*, Sophia Chottu was a driving force in the Women for Peace group. At present the *YWCA* is caring for women still suffering from the consequences of the war, particularly on Guadalcanal. Many of these women are still living in the bush, do not dare to return to their destroyed villages (or to the market in Honiara) and are fighting for the survival of their families under almost impossible conditions. They have not only been wounded and destroyed materially and physically by the war, but also psychologically and spiritually. And the post-war situation is also difficult for them: domestic violence has increased considerably, as also cases of rape, sexually transmitted diseases and teenage pregnancies. Many marriages have broken up, as the men joined the armed groups, were away from home for a long time and in many cases took up with other women (this is particularly the case for the men from Malaita who went to Guadalcanal to fight). The children of these women suffer from a lack of medical care, and most of them are still not able to attend school. According to the *YWCA* these women need above all psychological support, besides urgently needed material assistance. There is a great demand for trauma counselling here, as on Bougainville, yet there is no one trained to do it. This could be a field of work for peace workers in the Civil Peace Service. The *YWCA* wishes to have trained workers from outside who can then train local people, who know the situation of the women and the situation of village life, in trauma counselling. Psychological and/or psychiatric knowledge and Christian

commitment would be expected from these people, as well as a willingness to get involved in the difficult situation on the Solomons for several years. The YWCA has an organisational structure in which peace workers could be integrated. In view of the organisation's weak financial situation, the local contribution would present a problem. The people to speak to about measures with the YWCA within the framework of the Civil Peace Service are the General Secretary Sophia Chottu and the project manager Moses S. Bariri.

3. Fiji

3.1 Summary, evaluation and recommendations

In Fiji there is a serious crisis in state and society. Internal conflicts have escalated violently during the year 2000 and climaxed in the coup against the Chaudry government on 19th May 2000, and the uprising of an elite unit of the Fijian armed forces on 2nd November 2000. At the same time, following the coup, there were violent attacks on members of the population of Indian origin in many places. The violence in Fiji (in relation to the violence in Bougainville and the Solomon Islands) has cost relatively few lives so far and wreaked relatively little physical and psychological devastation. However, as the conflicts behind the violence have not been taken up, let alone solved so far, new eruptions of violence cannot be ruled out in future. In Fiji, it is a case of peace building after the coup and the uprising, and also of preventing new - possibly even more wide-ranging – eruptions of violence.

In the short term, democracy and the rule of law must be re-established, in order to consolidate peace and prevent further crises. At present, political power is in the hands of institutions with no democratic legitimation, mainly the military, an interim administration installed and dependent on them, and the Great Council of Chiefs. As with the present balance of power it is not realistic to think of reinstating the Chaudry government, NGOs working for democracy and human rights plead for the formation of an (interim) Government of National Unity, new elections as soon as possible, and the reinstatement of the 1997 constitution. Only in this way can the majority of citizens regain their faith in the institutions of the state, the economy, so badly effected by the coup and its consequences, be reflatd, and the country regain a “normal” position in the international system.

In the middle and long term, the citizens of Fiji face the task of changing the structure of their society. The indigenous Fijian population will have to find ways of linking traditional societal forms – the close ties to the land, the village community, subsistence agriculture, and the “chiefly system”, for example – and modern social structures such as urbanisation, individualisation, (un)employment in the modern business sector, and political democracy. Such a society in transition from the traditional to the modern presents particular difficulties and orientation problems for the younger generation, who are just beginning to break free from traditional ties. It is therefore not surprising that here – as in Papua New Guinea and on the Solomons – unemployed male youths are a particularly problematic social group, who can easily be led into violence and misused by forces only interested in using the problems of transition to further their own political and economic power.

In addition, Fiji’s special situation demands a change, at last, in the relations between the indigenous Fijian population and the Fijian population of Indian origin –almost equally strong in numbers. Ways must be found to enable them to live together as one multicultural society instead of living side by side, sometimes even side against side, in the same country, as it is at present. It is not only a case of finding a sustainable solution to the difficult problem of relations between indigenous landowners and Indian leaseholders, but also of tackling the questions of intercultural and inter-religious understanding, and overcoming racial prejudice on both sides.

Civil society and the NGOs have an important role to play, both in tackling the short-term political problems and also in changing the structure of society in the middle and long-term. NGOs concerned with human rights, democracy and civil conflict management are relatively strong in Fiji, (stronger than on Bougainville or in the Solomons and also stronger than at the time of the coups in 1987). They are so strong that those in political power have to take them seriously; on the one hand by trying to repress them while on the other hand offering talks. However they are not yet strong enough to prevent occurrences such as the coup on 19th May or its consequences. The institutions of civil society must be strengthened and supported in order to bring Fiji sustainably towards democracy, human rights and the rule of law, and to bring about a social balance between the different groups of the population. Then they will be able to work to consolidate the peace and prevent further crises, for example by concentrating their work on social groups with a propensity for violence – especially rural and urban unemployed male youths –, and also on promoting understanding and reconciliation between the different sections of the population. There would therefore be opportunities for peace workers within the framework of a Civil Peace Service particularly in the fields of peace education, youth work, intercultural and inter-religious understanding and also in strengthening human rights organisations and peace organisations and their “campaign abilities”.

3.2 The background of the conflict, its causes and its history

On 19th May, a handful of armed men under the leadership of George Speight, a bankrupt businessman, stormed the parliament building in Fiji’s capital Suva and took 45 members of parliament and members of the government hostage, among them the Prime Minister Mahendra Chaudhry. The rebels demanded that the government, elected the year before, be dismissed from office and the constitution, valid since 1997, be repealed. They also demanded special privileges for the indigenous Fijians over the Fijians of Indian origin. Following the coup there were a large number of violent attacks on Fijians of Indian origin and their property. On 29th May, the military took power, established an interim government and entered into long difficult negotiations with the rebels. Considerable concessions were made to them, including the suspension of the 1997 constitution. On 9th July an agreement was signed with the rebels (Muanikau Accord) as a result of which the last hostages were set free. The rebels, who had originally been promised immunity from prosecution, were later taken into custody after all, accused of having broken the Muanikau Accord (not having completely surrendered their weapons). Nevertheless the former Chaudry government remained dismissed and the constitution repealed. On 2nd November, there was an uprising by an elite unit of the Fijian Army, who had been involved in the coup. The mutiny was put down by loyal troops.

The coup on 19th May and the following occurrences have plunged both the state and society in Fiji into a serious crisis, which has still not yet been overcome. The coup revealed not only the contradictions and conflicts existing between Fijians of Indian origin and indigenous Fijians, but also between various social and political groups of the latter, and it sharpened these conflicts dramatically. There are historical reasons behind what happened in the year 2000, to be found in the history and social structure of the country.

Fiji, situated in the middle of the South Pacific, consists of 332 islands of which 109 are inhabited. Its total land area is around 18,000 square kilometres. The three largest islands Viti Levu (around 10,000 sq. km.), Vanua Levu (5500 sq.km.) and Taveuni (435 sq. km.) cover

around 90% of this area. The four largest towns are on the main island Viti Levu; the capital Suva with around 160,000 inhabitants, Lautoka (30,000), Nadi (8000) and Ba (7000). Of the 830,000 total inhabitants, 86% live on the three large islands, 70% on Viti Levu alone. Just under two thirds of the population live in rural areas, but moving into the towns has become a characteristic of recent times and has brought about many structural changes. Fiji is much more urbanised than the other Pacific island states. Another special feature of Fijian society is its multiethnicity. 51% of the population are indigenous Melanesian Fijians, 44% are of Indian origin, and the remaining 5% are Europeans, Chinese and Islanders from other regions in the Pacific.

The Fijians of Indian origin are descendants of the 60,000 Indian workers brought to the island by the British colonial rulers between 1879 and 1916 – Fiji was a British colony – to work in the sugar cane plantations. Of these, around 40,000 remained on Fiji after their ten-year limited contracts had run out. At first they were mainly sugar-cane farmers, then they became active in business or in the administration, finance, school or health systems etc. This has led to the situation today, where the business elite and the educational elite in Fiji are mainly Indo-Fijians and the average income of Fijians of Indian origin is higher than that of indigenous Fijians. There has hardly been any mixing between the Indians and their descendants on the one hand and the indigenous Melanesian Fijians on the other. Differences in culture, language and religion (the Indians are mainly Hindus, with some Muslims, while the indigenous Fijians are Christians) spoke against this, as much as the British colonial policy of “Divide and Rule” which saw to it that the two groups were kept separate from each other. These circumstances offer a favourable breeding ground for racial prejudice on both sides.

The planting and processing of sugar-cane occupies most of the working populace on Fiji; sugar is the most important export. The sugar cane farms of the Fijians of Indian origin are almost exclusively on land leased from the indigenous Fijians. In Fiji – as in Papua New Guinea and in the Solomons – the majority of the land is in communal possession of the families and the clans (over 80%). The rest is in the possession of the government or freehold land. About 25% of the clan land is leased for use by the state or to private individuals, especially the sugar cane farmers of Indian origin. The land rents are administered through a trust company, the Native Land Trust Board (NLTB) according to a special law, the Agricultural Landlord and Tenants Act (ALTA). Only this institution, created in 1940, has the right to regulate all questions relating to licences and leases. It is entirely in the hands of indigenous Fijians and administers around 25,000 leases, the majority of which are leases for land used for agricultural purposes, i.e. mainly sugar-cane plantations belonging to Fijians of Indian origin. However, there are also leases for residential areas, industrial plants and establishments and institutions for tourism and trade.

Relationships between indigenous Fijians and those of Indian origin are determined by conflicts about the amount of rent to be paid. These conflicts have increased considerably in recent times as, at present or in the near future, many leases are going to expire and must be renewed. The leaseholders of Indian origin, often working the leased land in the third or fourth generation, depend on the renewal of such leases in order to feed their families and earn money. This provides a welcome opportunity for the indigenous landowners to put pressure on their tenants of Indian origin, to threaten not to renew the leases and to demand higher rents. In many places these demands have been reinforced by illegal attacks such as the use of physical violence, blackmail, theft and arson, spreading a climate of fear and intimidation among the Indo-Fijian sugar-cane farmers.

These problems intensified dramatically following the coup, and have not yet been solved.

However, the land problems are by no means a purely “Indian” - Fijian conflict. Rather the radical social changes taking place within the indigenous land-owning communities and conflicts within the indigenous community increase the pressure on the farmers of Indian origin.

The traditional communities in Fiji are essentially structured through their relationship to the land – as in Papua New Guinea and on the Solomons. Land – “vanua” in the Fijian language – does not only mean the soil and ground as an exploitable resource, but also the socio-cultural *lebensraum* of the traditional community, to which the souls and spirits of the ancestors, also present in this *lebensraum*, belong. Land is therefore not only of material importance but also of great spiritual importance. The people are part of the land; the land does not belong to the people but the people to the land. On the other hand the individual is only linked to the land as a member of the traditional community, of the “tribe”, - again “vanua” in the Fijian language. Land and “tribe” are one. Without land there can be no “tribe”, no traditional community; on the other hand, land only exists or is of importance as the *lebensraum* of traditional communities. It is useless without people; the people are nothing without land, which guarantees their material, social and spiritual security.

But since the beginning of British colonial rule this traditional land system has been co-existing with the modern western capitalist concept, which envisages private ownership of land and the possibility of buying and selling or rather leasing it. It is the leasing system in particular that has led to the erosion of the traditional system. A large part of indigenous land has been leased out, as shown. Even if the indigenous Fijian land system has absolute precedence and such land possession claims are firmly anchored in society and politics, nevertheless the co-existence of both systems inevitably leads to tension. This in turn leads to conflicts, not only between the traditional landowners and the modern tenants (mainly of Indian origin), but also to conflicts within the traditional communities. For example on questions such as: who decides which land will be leased under what conditions, and how is the income from the lease to be distributed and used? This latter conflict is gaining more and more importance as the manifold effects of modernisation are slowly eroding the traditional social structure and organisation.

The traditional social structure is strictly hierarchical. It consists of a “chiefly system“ with generally elected chiefs. They preside over social units on several hierarchical levels. The basis is formed by the extended families (toka toka); several toka tokas form together a mataqali (sub-clan or lineage). Nowadays the mataqalis are the social units that own land. Their land cannot be sold or bought – but (through the mediation of the NLTB) can be leased or rented out. The mataqalis on their part belong to javusas (clans) and these are grouped together in “vanuas” (tribes). Vanuas can form matanitus (states or kingdoms), which again can form unstable “confederations”, only stabilised by dominant strong “paramount chiefs”. The present administration of Fiji in four “divisions” goes back to the four traditional matanitus, which the British colonial administration used as their basis when dividing Fiji into districts.

The Chiefs have great authority in the traditional structure, and enjoy respect and loyalty from their subjects. They demand obedience from them and in return are obliged to take care of them in all manner of ways. However, this patrimonial system of commitments and duties on each side is under increasing pressure to modernise. On the one hand the chiefs no longer only limit themselves to their role in the traditional community but are also active in the

modern sector – as businessmen, politicians etc. – and there they behave according to modern rules, seeking for example personal enrichment and lining their own pockets instead of sharing it with their subjects. This leads to role conflicts and dissatisfaction on the part of the subjects, who can no longer rely absolutely on their chiefs. On the other hand the subjects – especially members of the younger generation – are increasingly withdrawing from their duties in the traditional community and looking for training and opportunities for earning money and taking up careers outside their villages. This again undermines the authority of the chiefs, whose achievements and style of leadership dissatisfy the younger generation. These young people, often better educated than the old chiefs who frequently lack a formal modern education, are no longer willing to fit unquestioningly into the traditional hierarchies and fulfil the many duties that go with them. The rift is continually increasing between the values and expectations of the young and the old. In short, there are noticeably more and more conflicts within the traditional communities, particularly between the generations, and they are eroding the traditional system.

This erosion of traditional social structures has progressed at a different pace in different places, leading to conflicts that can easily aggravate the existing traditional inconsistencies between the regions. In former times the various clans, mataqalis and vanuvas did not only live in harmony with each other, there were always conflicts, determined by local or regional loyalties. Even today, loyalty to one's own province still primarily determines people's actions: the old traditional "kingdoms" and their rivalries live on in the 14 provinces today, while special mention must be given to the rivalry between east and west. Since colonial days, the east and its chiefs have dominated politics, while the economic centre has been in the west. The nationalist racist "hardliners" among the indigenous political forces still come primarily from the east, while the west is represented rather by "pragmatists" – and that although, or perhaps because, the main plantation areas for sugar-cane, and therefore the majority of the land tenants of Indian origin are to be found in the dry western part of Viti Levu. These conflicts – between the provinces, between the coast and the inland regions, between the west and the east etc. – still affect the conflict constellations and the conflicts that occur today.

Finally, the chiefly system is problematic as its influence reaches far into Fiji's modern political constitution, although it is only responsible for half of the Fijian population. The Great Council of Chiefs (GCC) is anchored in the constitution and has accordingly considerable rights and huge influence on what happens politically – as the most recent crisis once again demonstrates (see below); the chiefs play a very important role on the stage of national politics, without really considering the "nation" as such at all. They follow far more their own personal agenda, or rather that of their local or regional community. The present conflict cannot be understood, either in the way it has developed or in the attempts being made to resolve it, without taking into consideration the chiefly system (and the erosive tendencies affecting it), the role of the chiefs and the regional rivalries between the various "kingdoms" or "chiefdoms".

Fiji became independent in 1970. The indigenous Fijian Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, a chief from an influential family belonging to the Lau group in the southeast, was elected Prime Minister in the first elections after independence. He also led the government after the elections in 1977 and 1982. In 1985, the Fiji Labour Party (FLP) was founded, which grew out of the trade union movement and was dominated by Fijians of Indian origin. In the 1987 elections the FLP was just as successful as the "Indian" National Federation Party (NFP), so that for the first time, under the leadership of the Labour Party, Timoci Bavadra, a commoner (not a chief) from the west of Viti Levu, was appointed Prime Minister and formed a

government in which the “Indians” occupied important department ministries and had considerable political influence. This provoked increasing anti “Indian” resentment among parts of the indigenous population, who already found the strong position of the “Indians” in business and public life a thorn in their flesh. The right-wing nationalist Taukei-Movement became the organ of this trend and was behind the first military coup in the history of Fiji and the South Pacific. On 14th May 1987, only one month after the formation of the Bavadra government, the armed forces, dominated by indigenous Fijians and led by the then lieutenant colonel Sitiveni Rabuka, dismissed the “Indian” dominated government and installed a Government of National Unity. However, when preparations for new elections were being made, which could have led to a weakening of the position of Rabuka and his followers, he took power again by a military coup on 25th September 1987, named himself as head of state and installed a new government under Ratu Mara. As a result of the coups, Fiji was expelled from the Commonwealth and declared itself a republic.

Mara’s interim government was in office until April 1992. A new constitution was then commissioned that took effect in 1990, firmly establishing the supremacy of the indigenous Fijians and correspondingly discriminating against non-indigenous people, especially against the groups of Indian origin in the population. It laid down that indigenous Fijians should have the majority of seats in both chambers of parliament: the House of Representatives (37 to 27) and the Senate (24 to 10). This expressed the idea that had also been behind the coups; that the indigenous Fijians had the “natural” right to rule over Fiji, while other ethnic groups were merely “guests” in the country. Multicultural concepts were rejected and democratic procedures only tolerated as long as they did not endanger the supremacy of the indigenous Fijians. As a result of the coup and this racial discrimination around 15,000 Fijians of Indian origin left their homeland, most of them highly qualified in their fields of work.

The elections in 1992, and the early elections held in 1994, both produced an almost purely indigenous Fijian coalition government. The former rebel Rabuka was Prime Minister and Leader of the SVT party, the nationalistic Taukei-Movement that had now been turned into a political party. However, they had to make concessions to the strong opposition, made up of the Indo-Fijian dominated parties FLP and NFP, especially in the question of changes to the racially discriminating constitution. This problem was dealt with in an extremely dilatory way however. In the end, faced with economic problems and political tensions, the decisive forces of the indigenous-Fijian establishment became convinced that there could be no sustainable development for Fijian society unless the population of Indian origin was included in it without discrimination. After tough negotiations with the government and the great Council of Chiefs therefore, the House of Representatives, the Senate and the GCC accepted unanimously the suggestion of an independent constitutional commission - against the opposition of a strong minority among the political forces of the indigenous Fijians. However, eight of the fourteen provinces voted against the draft constitution.

While the new constitution realised equal rights for the population of Indian origin, it also respected the traditional privileges of the indigenous Melanesian population. For example, the constitution lays down that the land rights passed down to the indigenous Fijians are sacrosanct, that the Great Council of Chiefs and the – indigenous Fijian dominated – Senate quasi have the right of veto in all questions concerning traditional indigenous rights, particularly land rights, and that the NLTB remain entirely under the control of indigenous Fijians while the Great Council of Chiefs appoint the head of state, the President. This constitution took effect on 1st July 1997. Fiji was taken back into the Commonwealth in 1998. Because the indigenous Fijian parties were hopelessly divided among themselves, the People’s Coalition, under the leadership of the FLP, won the elections held in spring 1999;

with 37 seats they won the absolute majority, while SVT and Fijian Ultra Nationalists had to accept an overwhelming election defeat. For the first time in Fijian history the results of the elections led to a Fijian of Indian origin, the leader of the FLP Mahendra Chaudhry, becoming Prime Minister. His government, the People's Coalition Government, tried to orientate their government policies towards decisions in the interest of the socially weaker sections of the population: land reform, the fight against corruption and poverty, the introduction of minimum wages, an increase in social benefits. These policies met with bitter opposition particularly in business circles and among the nationalist forces of the indigenous Fijian population. The former opposed the government's intervention in the "free market economy" and "free enterprise". The latter found that the whole direction did not suit them; they couldn't cope with the fact that an "Indian" was ruling Fiji and claimed that the new constitution and the new government were cutting back the rights of the indigenous population and calling into question traditional land rights of the indigenous Fijians. Their cause benefited from the fact that in 1997 those in favour of the new constitution had neglected to see that the actual content of the constitution was explained and popularised among broad sections of the population.

They were therefore relatively easy game for the nationalist forces with their anti "Indian" propaganda, insisting on the "right to self determination" for the indigenous Fijians, especially as most of the media were on their side. They charged with racist content the frustration and dissatisfaction of large sections of the indigenous population, whose economic and social problems were worsening, and directed them against the "Indian" government and the "Indian" sections of the population. Thus a coalition was formed between sections of the indigenous Fijian establishment and underprivileged indigenous groups at the bottom end of society; on the one hand indigenous Fijians from rural areas threatened with impoverishment, on the other hand unemployed youths marginalized in the towns. Unemployment, especially among young people, is a huge and steadily growing social problem. The Fijian population is young, more than two thirds are under 30 years old. The expansion of the service sector, the extension of public administration and the tourism boom, as well as attempts to build up export-orientated work-intensive processing industries (textile industry, fish processing) have so far not been able to absorb young school-leavers to a sufficient extent. They are increasingly leaving the countryside and are seeking occupation in the towns, where slum settlements have grown up on the outskirts due to the lack of housing. On average only 1500 new jobs are created annually for the 10,000 new people seeking work.

The rebels around George Speight recruited their foot soldiers from among the groups of rural and urban (mostly unemployed and young) indigenous members of the lower class.

3.3 The Coup on May 19th 2000 and its consequences

Violent anti-"Indian" demonstrations led by Taukei preceded the hostage-taking on 19th May 2000. Even the coup itself developed out of a protest march of around 5000 Taukei supporters. During the demonstration a handful of heavily armed masked men stormed the parliament building, where a celebration to mark the first anniversary of the Chaudhry government was taking place, and took cabinet ministers and members of parliament prisoner.

When this news spread through Suva an enraged mob began to plunder "Indian" shops and businesses and set them on fire. The leaders of the hostage-takers were George Speight, until then a relatively unknown businessman, and the retired Major Ilisoni Ligairi, former trainer of

the “Counter Revolutionary Warfare Unit”, the elite troop of the Fijian Army. They demanded the resignation of President Kamisese Mara and an amnesty for the rebels, declared the 1997 constitution to be suspended, and parliamentary democracy according to the Western (“Westminster”) model to be generally abolished. They claimed to be acting and speaking in the name of the indigenous Fijian population and for their rights, and threatened not to set the hostages free until all their demands had been met.

While the trade unions, NGOs and interest groups of the Indo-Fijians condemned the coup in the same way as the international community and the international public, the indigenous Fijian establishment reacted in an extremely ambivalent way. The majority disapproved of the coup, but had a certain amount of sympathy for the demands made by the rebels. The armed forces immediately declared their loyalty to the constitution and the President but did not undertake anything, in order not to forestall the decisions of the Great Council of Chiefs. The GCC met from 23rd to 25th May, debated all the demands made by the rebels and presented a 10-point declaration in which almost all the demands were accepted. However, they confirmed the President in his office and called upon him to form an interim government (which according to the constitution he had absolutely no right to do).

The rebels rejected the declaration as being insufficient. In the next few days further violent conflicts broke out, in which an unarmed policeman was killed. The Chief of Staff of the armed forces, Frank Bainamarama, then called upon the President to resign, suspended the 1997 constitution and declared martial law (29th May). Mara, the President, complied with the demand, but not without first declaring the elected government (whose members at this time were still hostages in the power of the rebels) to be dismissed from office. There followed weeks of negotiations between the military and the rebels. During this time supporters of the rebels made many violent attacks in different places: they set up road blocks, occupied police stations and barracks, attacked farmers of Indian origin, set fire to their homes and drove them off their property. Officers and soldiers who supported Speight took over the Labasa barracks on Vanua Levu and occupied the towns of Korovou and Levuka. Loyal members of the forces were very hesitant to do anything against these illegal actions. Within the Melanesian leadership class deep differences of opinion became apparent; several of the chiefs supported the rebels more or less openly, and in the end their demands were accepted to a great extent. On 9th July, Bainimarama and Speight signed an agreement – the Muanikau Agreement-, which established among other things: amnesty for the rebels; freeing of all hostages; the naming of a President and a Vice-President by the Great Council of Chiefs from among their own ranks; the installation of an interim government and a constitutional commission by the new President; repeal of the 1997 constitution; and surrender of all weapons that had been removed from military bases. After the agreement had been signed, the last hostages were actually set free (in the meantime individual hostages had been set free one by one); Speight and his followers left the parliament building on 20th July, but gathered together with a few hundred supporters in a school on the outskirts of the town, in order to retain their influence on the situation. On 26th July, Speight and a group of supporters were taken captive at a military roadblock, accused of breaking the agreement of 9th July as they were still armed. The next day, the armed forces stormed the school occupied by Speight’s followers, using guns and tear gas (one person died), and took all of the people gathered there – around 400 people- into custody, including Major Ligairi. The leaders of the rebellion were then held captive in a tourist resort on the island of Nukulau off the coast of Suva, where they have since remained, leading a – very comfortable – life as prisoners. Nukulau was declared a prohibited area. The other Speight followers were set free after a short time – they face charges for breaking the law in various ways. The leaders of the coup are to be tried for high

treason as they themselves had made the amnesty first promised them null and void by breaking the Muanikau Agreement.

After Speight had been taken into custody and his followers' camp forcibly closed down, there were individual actions by rebel supporters in certain places but no greater attempts at rebellion. However, Speight's supporters occupied the town of Labasa for a short time, shops were plundered, and businessmen of Indian origin were threatened and beaten up. An airstrip on Vanua Levu was occupied for a short time and 50 plantation workers of Indian origin were abducted from the largest sugar-cane plantation on the island. The military and the police hunted down Speight's scattered supporters, some of whom fled into the difficult terrain in the inland of Viti Levu, while others sought refuge with their clans. Some of Speight's armed supporters still roam free.

Making the rebels harmless however, did not mean a return to the constitutional situation as it was before the 19th May 2000. On the contrary, the Great Council of Chiefs really did appoint a new President, Josefa Iloilo (an over 80 year-old Chief, suffering from Parkinson Disease and quite obviously not capable of carrying out the duties of his office). Ratu Jope Seniloli, who had openly supported the coup, was appointed Vice-President. The new President appointed a new interim government, whose Prime Minister was the banker Laisenia Qarase. On 28th July, the 32 members of the new interim government took up office, only one of who was of Indian origin. The 1997 Constitution remained suspended, the Chaudhry government removed from office. The new interim government promised new elections within two years and instituted a Constitutional Review Commission (CRC) to work out a new constitution. The CRC consists almost entirely of indigenous Fijians, and representatives of the Indo-Fijian organisations have refused to participate (the four members of the CRC of Indian origin have no support whatsoever in their communities).

Even if there are no people in the interim government who openly support the rebels, there are several who sympathise with them. There are also several personalities whose role during the coup and in the period immediately after it was extremely dubious, for example, two politicians of the nationalist SVT party defeated in the elections. In the Constitutional Review Commission there are even people who openly supported Speight during the coup and whose names were on a list of his candidates for a new government; the Chairman of the commission, Asesela Ravuvu is one of the architects of the racist 1990 constitution and even today still a confessed racist.

It is an open secret that there is sympathy for the rebels in the indigenous establishment. While rejecting the "method" it is widespread in these circles to support the "cause". In business circles there was considerable opposition to Chaudhry's social-democratic led government, whose policies were orientated towards the interests of the lower classes, while politicians defeated in the 1999 elections saw in the coup and its aftermath their opportunity to return to power. Rumours are widespread that Speight is merely a puppet pushed to the forefront, while politicians of a quite different calibre and substantial economic and power-political interests are behind him. The developing indigenous bourgeoisie in particular, now feared to lose benefits and power after the Chaudhry Government's announcement of the partial reversal of certain measures taken under Rabuka after the 1987 coups. They had profited enormously from the large-scale privatisation of state-owned enterprises and the affirmative actions policies for special economic aid for indigenous Fijians. These circles allied themselves to extreme nationalist forces, who called for the overthrow of the Chaudhry government; thus to a certain extent neo-liberalism and racist ultra nationalism entered into an unholy alliance. Speight symbolised this connection in his own person, for he had close ties to

several leading indigenous business bosses and politicians and was himself in danger of being convicted for corruption within the framework of a government investigation.

There is also a theory that disagreements about the exploitation of the mahogany forests are behind the coup in Fiji. Fiji has the greatest stock of mahogany in the world, and as in other parts of the world (especially Brazil) excessive deforestation has led to bottlenecks in supplies for the European and North American markets, several different foreign timber companies have recently set their sights on Fiji's stock. Since 1998 there has been considerable wrangling in Fiji about which foreign company should be allowed to cut down and exploit the Fijian mahogany. The two main antagonists were the English Commonwealth Development Corporation (CDC) and the US American Timber Resource Management (TRM) with whom George Speight was connected. Implications and indications of bribery and corruption were coming to a head..... Finally the Chaudhry government decided for CDC. But then came the coup, and at present the mahogany question is once again open....

The competition for Fiji's natural resources - not only timber but also oil, gas and gold - is a factor not to be neglected in the inner-Fijian conflicts. The political Fijian establishment, administration and leadership of the government are influenced by corruption, bribery and nepotism in no small measure. Often the chiefs are the ones involved in this; traditional authorities now trying to use the power they have in the traditional context to their own advantage (and that of their clientele) in the modern sector. The result - in a similar way as in Papua New Guinea and on the Solomons - is "bad governance".

Regional and local ties play an important political role under these circumstances. Political support for Speight and his followers still comes mainly from the eastern provinces (Bau, Naitasiri etc.). In contrast, the western provinces distanced themselves clearly from the rebels and here there were even protest demonstrations by indigenous Fijians against the coup. There were also far fewer attacks on Indo-Fijians here than in the eastern provinces, where in many rural areas farmers of Indian origin were hunted down, and excesses were committed by hot-headed young indigenous Fijians. In the western provinces they had long felt themselves discriminated against and neglected by the politicians and the chiefs from the east (here they have not forgotten that the coup against Bavadra in 1987 was also against a personality from the west, who had successfully broken into a political domain until then traditionally dominated by chiefs from the east). The coup therefore offered an opportunity to think more about their own political course, about greater autonomy and even about a government of their own.

To summarise, it must be said that not only "Indian"- indigenous conflicts are behind the coup, but also (or rather, above all) internal Fijian conflicts. The "unity" of the indigenous Fijians conjured up by the rebels is pure myth in face of a history marked by conflicts, and the contradictions and contrasts in Fijian society today. The anti-"Indian" racist propaganda is still being used to cover up inner-Fijian power struggles and to divert attention from the continually growing social inequalities within the indigenous community.

3.4 The mutiny on November 2nd and the political situation at the beginning of 2001

On 2nd November 2000, the Counter-revolutionary Warfare Unit (CRW) of the Fijian Army mutinied. This elite unit, modelled on the British SAS, had been built up by Rabuka after the coups in 1987 and was considered the best fighting unit of the Fijian armed forces. It was made up entirely of indigenous Fijians. Many of its officers and members had been involved in the coup on 19th May. On account of this they had been suspended from service for a short time, but then re-integrated into the army. They showed their “thanks” by mutinying. The aim was apparently to murder the Chief of Staff in command of the Armed Forces, Commodore Voreqe (Frank) Bainimarama, to take political power, free the rebels and carry out all their demands. The mutineers attacked the main headquarters of the Fijian Army in the Queen Elisabeth II Barracks in a suburb of Suva, murdered three unarmed comrades in cold blood, took hostages and tried to get Bainimarama in their power. However he managed to flee, and after much shooting loyal soldiers were able to overcome the mutineers. Five of them were killed – but apparently not during the battle. They were beaten to death after having been taken prisoner. Fleeing mutineers were pursued and captured during the following days. 50 (from 80) members of the CRW are said to have taken part in the uprising. At the beginning of 2001, 38 of them are still in prison awaiting trial. The CRW is to be abolished.

Just as in the case of the coup, it is unclear who the men behind the uprising were. However Sitiveni Rabuka, the leader of the Great Council of Chiefs (GCC), played a very dubious role. On 2nd November he was amazingly quick on the scene, in order to “mediate”, as he later stated. So far neither the background to the uprising nor the background to the coup have been clarified. The uprising brought about a state of shock in the indigenous Fijian community, for it revealed openly the deep divisions within this community. Until then it had been possible to go on believing that the crisis was about the differences between indigenous and “Indian“ Fijians. But this was no longer possible. Until then it had been considered unthinkable that in Fiji troops could shoot at their own troops. Now “comrades” had massacred each other, with equal brutality on both sides.

The faction of the armed forces loyal to Bainimarama gained strength and power by the way they put down the uprising. Since then, political power in the country has been transferred entirely to the barracks. While the armed forces are very unpopular, because they are - quite rightly - considered to be brutal and ruthless, at the same time many people consider them to be the only guarantee for law and order under the given circumstances (again probably quite rightly so).

Compared to the military leadership, the (old and infirm) President, the interim government and even the Great Council of Chiefs have to be satisfied with subordinate roles. General opinion in Fiji believes at present that the military leadership has the power to dictate to the interim administration and all other protagonists which political course they are to follow. However so far they have not made use of this; Bainimarama is considered a good soldier, but with neither political ambitions nor abilities. Politics in Fiji has therefore come to a standstill. The interim government, while making efforts to repair Fiji’s ruined international standing, has so far only made very half-hearted attempts to restore democratic conditions and the rule of law. The military and the interim government continue to maintain that they must have a new constitution, yet they let the CRC go on as before. Since November 2000 they have been holding hearings where all forces in society are asked to state clearly their wishes for a new constitution. However, the members of the community of Indian origin and also the

enlightened and democratic forces among the indigenous Fijians are boycotting the CRC. The only voices being recorded there are the reactionary, racist and ultra-nationalist tendencies from around Taukei. The NGOs working for democracy and human rights criticise these hearings as a farce and a waste of money – and quite rightly so.

At present, the scope of action of these NGOs is clearly limited. They are under obvious observation by both the military and the police and are being warned unmistakably to keep a low profile. “Security reasons” are always given as a pretext when, as at the end of November 2000, the demonstration for peace, democracy and human rights was forbidden. The Fiji Women’s Crisis centre wanted to hold this demonstration under the motto “We need Rainbows not Rambos”. The military and the interim administration argue that they are the only forces still perhaps able to hold back the discontentment in the country and prevent it erupting into new violence, particularly in the rural areas; therefore the NGOs should keep a low profile and not demand too much. At the same time they most certainly take NGOs, such as the Citizens Constitutional Forum (CCF), women’s groups and church groups seriously, and consider them serious partners to talk to.

These groups are now relying primarily on legal action. On 15th November 2000, a few days after the uprising had been put down, a High Court Judge, Anthony Gates ruled that the 1997 constitution was still in effect and the dismissal of the President Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara and the Chaudhry Government was illegal, meaning that the interim administration was also illegal. The interim administration and the conservative forces of the indigenous community are not willing to accept this judge’s ruling. The interim administration has appealed, and in February 2001 the Court of Appeal is to make a final decision on the ruling made by Judge Anthony Gates on 15th November 2000. All those wishing to return to the 1997 constitution and democratic conditions under the rule of law have set their hopes on this decision; among them the old government coalition. Since their release from captivity (as hostages) Chaudhry and other representatives of the “People’s Coalition Government” have insisted that their government is still the only legitimate government of Fiji and must be reinstated with all its rights. However, in view of the actual balance of power and the facts created by the coup, such a legalistic standpoint appears to be increasingly impossible to achieve in real political terms, and therefore in circles of the former government (parties) the idea of a “Government of National Unity”, representing all relevant political tendencies and parties, has been taken up. Protagonists from civil society such as the PCRC originally launched this idea. In the weeks and months since his release Chaudhry himself has tried to enlist international support for his position (and person), especially on trips abroad. While he has been successful in this to a certain extent, (in the Commonwealth committees, in India and the European Union for example), it has necessarily meant neglecting efforts to persuade people in his own country. As in many circles, including his own, he is considered “arrogant” and his style of government somewhat high-handed, his position in the country has not exactly been strengthened in this way. In contrast, the vice Prime Minister, Tupeni Baba, has watched unceasingly over the interests of the People’s Coalition Government, which has earned him widespread recognition and respect.

To summarise: at the beginning of 2001, the situation in Fiji has led to an impasse. As a result of the coup, the chances have deteriorated for peaceful coexistence of the various groups in the population and democratic development in Fiji. Relations between the sections of the population of Indian origin and the indigenous Fijian population are tense. Many Indo-Fijians live in fear; a clear indication of this being that many “Indian” women still do not dare leave their houses. Future outbreaks of violence are still possible. Great challenges are facing the state and society, the political elite and the population of the country in view of the

wounds inflicted by the coup and its consequences. It is uncertain whether these challenges can be met conform to the demands of human rights and democratic standards under the rule of law. Civil conflict management is most urgently required in various areas of society and at various levels of action. Civil society and the NGOs can and must play a very important role here.

(addendum June 2001: On March 1, 2001, the Court of Appeal confirmed the ruling of Justice Gates of November 15, 2000. The parties of the People's Coalition government as well as NGO's and the international community were highly satisfied. However, that ruling did not lead to the re-installation of the democratically elected government and the resumption of Parliament. Instead the military, the GCC and the Qarase regime resorted to new tricks. On March 13, the GCC admitted that the 1997 constitution was still valid but at the same time reinstated Iloilo as president. Iloilo dissolved parliament, fired Chaudhry and appointed Qarase as head of a „caretaker“ government. That caretaker government is exactly the same as the interim government. The democratic forces won the legal battle, but again lost politically because their adversaries proved to be stronger in terms of power politics. The caretaker government has scheduled national elections to take place between August 25 and September 1, 2001.)

3.5 The tasks: democratisation, reconstruction, and a sustainable stabilisation of society

Even if the post-conflict situation in Fiji cannot be compared to that on Bougainville, where they have to cope with the results of an almost ten-year long war, nor with the situation in the Solomon Islands, where a bitter conflict of violent expulsion raged for almost two years, nevertheless civil conflict management also has an important role here, even if there are neither thousands of violent deaths to mourn - as on Bougainville - nor only hundreds as in the Solomons. Even the number of those driven from their homes is limited compared to the Solomons, and generally there is much less destruction of material goods, fewer psychological wounds, and less suffering to complain about than in the other two cases. Yet there are many victims of the conflict in Fiji; displaced persons, traumatised persons, people who have been robbed of their possessions, have been injured in body and soul, and whose rights and chances in life have been reduced. And there are also many people who have themselves committed or condoned violence. Fiji therefore also needs reconstruction, reconciliation and rehabilitation. More than in the cases of Bougainville and the Solomon Islands, - which basically require post-conflict peace building, in Fiji it is a classic case of crisis prevention and violence prevention to ensure that the conflict does not break out again more violently in future than during the time of the coup. There are enough people ready and willing for violence, as demonstrated by the coup and the violent acts committed in its wake, as well as by the uprising on 2nd November. The ground must be swept from under their feet by instigating appropriate measures of civil conflict resolution at various levels.

At a political level, it is a case of returning to constitutional, democratic circumstances under the rule of law and to an appropriate government.

The caretaker government in office at present cannot be considered as having come to power legally or as being democratically legitimate. And yet, in spite of its “interim” status, it has taken far-reaching decisions (appointing the CRC, and making substantial changes to the laws). The worst-case development for Fiji would be if the interim administration remained in office and allowed a racist constitution to be worked out, such as the one from 1990; as a result skilled workers of Indian origin emigrated in large numbers, and harsh sanctions were laid on Fiji from abroad resulting in a complete economic and social crisis. This must be prevented at all costs. It does not seem realistic that the People's Coalition Government can return to power, and such a return would most likely call forth considerable violent resistance

from large sections of the indigenous establishment and the indigenous population. The solution would therefore seem to be: the establishment of an interim Government of National Unity in which all relevant political forces are represented, especially members of parliament of the parties of the former coalition government and the indigenous parties of the opposition. Their most urgent task would be to prepare for new elections as soon as possible. Any examination of the 1997 constitution must remain within the framework of that constitution; certain changes may be conceivable, however substantial steps backwards in equal rights for the population of Indian origin, and as far as democracy, justice, equality and the rule of law are concerned are not acceptable. There can be no going back to the racist discrimination of the 1990 constitution. Only democratically elected and legitimate institutions should carry out the examination of the constitution and possible additions or changes to it. The CRC is not legitimate and should be abolished (a demand made by the parties of the former coalition government and many NGOs). Care must be taken to widely popularise the constitution (adapted, if necessary) throughout the country. Anti-“Indian” resentment could only be mobilised and instrumentalised by the rebels and the ultra nationalists because the indigenous Fijians “out in the country” were given far too little information about what the 1997 constitution really said. It would be worthwhile considering whether there should be a referendum on the acceptance of the constitution, in order to increase its legitimacy and acceptance. It would also be worth considering whether the extremely complicated election system for parliamentary elections (AV-Alternative Vote), should not be revised and made more transparent as it is very difficult for the average man or woman in the country to understand.

The coup and the uprising revealed spectacular deficits in the armed forces, the police, the justice system, and the administration. They revealed that these institutions (and also the institutions of the traditional community including the Great Council of Chiefs) are deeply divided and that there is a lack of loyalty towards the democratically elected government; everywhere there were greater or lesser numbers of people ready more or less openly to support the rebels. The military and the police were very reserved, even conciliatory in their behaviour towards them; an open confrontation was prevented in the end because they considered the rebels somehow to be “their own people” and their cause “essentially” to be quite justified. The Chief of Police was quite obviously on the side of the rebels; and yet, after an “investigation” into his role during the coup in November 2000, he was reinstated in office, in spite of an outcry from democratic members of the public. Divisions in the police cannot be overcome nor a reform of police structures expected under the leadership of this discredited figure. The uprising also revealed that the armed forces, more than 90% of whom are indigenous Fijians, are also divided; their loyalty to certain superiors and their home regions is clearly stronger than their loyalty to the state and the government. Even if only a few units took part in the coup and the actions surrounding it in 2000 and not, as in 1987, the armed forces as a whole, they are still far from being prepared to subordinate themselves unquestioningly to democratic control by civilians. There are many personalities in the top ranks of the judiciary whose loyalty to the constitution is extremely doubtful, too. In the public administration work ethos and loyalty are equally unsatisfactory and nepotism and corruption no exception. Such an apparatus of state can hardly deliver good governance.

The problematic nature of divisions and disloyalty in the apparatus of state is demonstrated in exemplary manner in the treatment of the rebels and mutineers so far. Legally the coup has hardly been dealt with at all. Not even all the rebels or their supporters, who committed criminal acts during the coup, have been arrested or brought to court. Many of them, even some of Speight’s closest supporters, have in the meantime been set free again. Those soldiers who joined the rebels were not prosecuted and were even taken back into the army. The

mutiny on 2nd November was how they showed their “thanks” for this. It remains to be seen whether at least against Speight and his closest followers are brought to justice, and whether any serious efforts are made to reveal the background and the men behind the coup. This is absolutely necessary if the population is to believe that the judiciary, the police, the armed forces, and the apparatus of state are capable of functioning properly and impartially again.

It is equally necessary that the rule of law be re-established for all citizens throughout the country. Even months after the coup there were still anti-“Indian” incidents in some parts of Viti Levu and Vanua Levu. In many cases the police looked on or looked away and did nothing. Families of Indian origin still live in fear in many rural areas. They are frequently threatened or robbed. “Gifts” or “goodwill money” is extorted from farmers of Indian origin with the promise, or rather the threat, that their leases will only be renewed if they pay up.

These leases are the central means of intimidation. Their renewal or extension is social and political dynamite for the near future. 1800 leases expire at the end of the year 2000, 1300 in 2001 and in the following years again several hundred each year. It is expected that within the next seven to eight years around 13,500 leases will expire, from a total number of 18,000. The NLTB has signalled that most of the land so far leased is required “for native use” in future, and they are trying to persuade the landowners not to renew the leases. At present it seems that in fact only very few leases have actually been renewed. A solution to this problem must be found that both safeguards the rights of the indigenous landowners and prevents the tenants of Indian origin from losing their existence. But that is easier said than done! It would be desirable to work towards a comprehensive land reform in the long-term, doing away with existing inconsistencies and uncertainties that constantly lead to conflicts.

However, in the short term the refugee problem must first be solved. After the coup, refugee camps were set up in the west and north of Viti Levu and on Vanua Levu for farmers of Indian origin whose houses had been burnt down during the conflict, or whose possessions had been destroyed or stolen. There are several hundred people supposedly still living in such refugee camps. Whoever didn’t go to a camp found refuge with relatives. The displaced persons cannot find work and their children often do not go to school. Those violently driven out as a result of the coup are now being joined by increasing numbers of sugar-cane farmers who have been forced to leave their (leased) land, as their leases have not been renewed. In the near future several hundred more small farmers of Indian origin will be forced to leave their (leased) land if their leases are not extended. They face a totally uncertain future.

If the refugees and displaced persons cannot or do not want to return to their home communities (and this does not seem to be the case for most people at present, in spite of the interim administration’s propaganda), then there will be a dramatic increase in poverty and urban squatter settlements. The Red Cross and other social and charitable institutions are at least of the opinion that they must prepare for this. It is hardly a realistic option for these farmers, driven from their (leased) land, to consider emigrating abroad – as members of the urban educated and business elite are doing -, for there are no countries willing to take them. Nor are there jobs for them outside agriculture, and only very few of them will consider working as rural workers for the indigenous landowners – fear of being made to work as a Pariah or more or less like a slave appear to be only too realistic.

Generally, economic development is necessary, even if not sufficient in itself to make sure that conflicts can be solved without violence in future. However, the starting conditions for Fiji have worsened drastically. The economy suffered great losses as a result of the coup. Tourism stopped entirely for a while and is only recovering slowly. Unemployment has risen

drastically; at least 8000 people lost their jobs as a result of the coup. This meant that unemployment doubled and rose to 15%. Exports dropped by 20%. As a whole the Fijian economy must reckon with minus growth of 8% in 2000, instead of the projected 3.4% plus. In view of the uncertain situation there is no new investment. The future of Fijian sugar-cane production and the sugar industry is completely in the dark; experts reckon that it is quite probable that this branch of the economy will collapse entirely during the coming years. Nor do things look good for the textile industry with its 18,000 employees. Hundreds of teachers, doctors, nurses, business people, intellectuals and other well educated skilled workers of Indian origin have already left the country and thousands more are trying to do so; a “brain drain” is taking place as it did after the coups in 1987. These skilled workers are welcome in Australia and New Zealand and can earn more money there than in Fiji. Fiji already has to advertise abroad for skilled personnel to close the gaps. The first 20 doctors from the Philippines arrived in the country over Christmas 2000.

In future, priority must be given to creating employment and opportunities to earn money, especially for the young generation pushing into the job market. It was after all indigenous unemployed young men with no vocational prospects who were responsible for the anti-“Indian” rioting in Suva and throughout the country in the wake of the coup. In future they also remain a potential for violent unrest. And no-one knows whether in future the young men of Indian origin, thrown together unemployed in the squatter settlements, will remain as restrained as has so far been the case, or will in turn follow the road of “counter-violence”.

At present, however, it is the indigenous Fijians who present the main problem as regards violent activity and a propensity for violence. The coup and the occurrences that followed have shown that there is tremendous potential for violence among young indigenous males that traditional mechanisms are less and less capable of keeping in check. Traditional authorities and traditional methods of conflict resolution are losing their power and effectiveness – apart from traditional chiefs misusing their authority to spur their followers on to commit acts of violence for their own advantage. Democratic mechanisms of a modern civil state are still underdeveloped or insufficiently accepted or legitimised.

The traditional institutions and authorities of indigenous Fijian society have been shattered for a long time to come by the coup and its consequences. At times, the Great Council of Chiefs, the highest of these authorities, was simply made to look ridiculous. Various aspects of modernisation – flight from the land and urbanisation, (un) employment in the modern business sector, formal education etc. - are eroding traditional social structures. Differences in the way these developments affect the regions, and competition between traditional authorities and their often unsuccessful involvement in the modern sector of politics and business, mean that this transition from traditional to modern is even more full of conflicts. The generation conflict also plays a very important role here.

In the meantime social differences are increasing within indigenous society. The number of poor people among the indigenous population is growing steadily and the majority of indigenous Fijians are dissatisfied with their situation in society. The indigenous Fijian elite try to divert their dissatisfaction, using the rich “Indians” as their scape-goat, and deliberately ignoring the fact that there are also great social differences within the “Indian” community, for example between sugar-cane farmers and urban workers on the one hand, and business people on the other.

Indigenous Fijian society is facing the difficult historical task of achieving the necessary transition from traditional communities to modern society in a socially acceptable way and

with as little violent conflict as possible. They must find a way of reconciling the concepts of traditionally belonging to the community with modern individualism, and the “chiefly system” with modern democracy. In order that people do not fall prey to disorientation and a disintegration of society it will be necessary to preserve traditional values such as the close ties to the land and the clan. It will also be necessary to see that modern structures are such that people are able to find a new place in modern society and do not fall into a void. This means, above all, training, jobs, and urban housing. Affirmative action policies remain necessary particularly for the advancement of the indigenous population, even if they were not very successful in the past, having led rather to the enrichment of a thin upper class than to an increase in the standard of living for the masses.

However, such particular attention to the indigenous Fijians must go hand in hand with efforts to finally bring about real co-operation and togetherness between the indigenous and the “Indian” Fijians.

For decades, mistrust, enmity, racial prejudice, ignorance and lack of knowledge about each other have dominated the relationship between indigenous Fijians and Fijians of Indian origin in many places. The coup and the occurrences in its wake have deepened the rift between the different groups in the population. However, as for the future, there is no alternative to cooperation that is realistically acceptable from a democratic and human rights point of view, they will have to start the arduous lengthy process of bringing about reconciliation and understanding. This means that schools and educational institutions, but also other protagonists of modern civil society are facing very special tasks.

3.6 Potential fields of work for civil conflict resolution and the Civil Peace Service

During the coup, the NGOs took a clear stance on the whole: they condemned the coup and the violence outright; tried to defend democracy and human rights with appeals, protest pickets, peace services, prayer meetings and other symbolic actions, such as the “blue-ribbon” campaign of the women’s organisations; and gave practical assistance to victims of violence. During this time they worked closer together, for example in the formation of the “Coalition of NGOs for Human Rights”, and proved their ability to stand firm. This brought them public recognition that they can now build on, when campaigning for democracy, political reforms, a strengthening of civil society, reconciliation between the various sections of the population and the empowerment of disadvantaged groups within society. They are in a much stronger position than after the coups in 1987 (even if limited to the urban centres, particularly Suva). But they are also affected to a certain extent by the “brain drain” and the tendency of others to resign and withdraw into private life. For many committed citizens the hopes raised by the 1997 constitution were shattered by the events in May 2000 and have left them demoralised and discouraged. To many of them it seems apparent that the era of democratisation that began in the middle of the nineties has already come to an end.

The generally positive evaluation of the role of the NGOs during the time of the coup cannot be extended entirely to the role of the churches. The churches, especially the Methodist Church, to which 60% of indigenous Fijians belong, have not distinguished themselves particularly during the coups. Although during the 1987 coup they had openly sympathised with the Taukei movement, this time they have at least not taken such a clear stance. This has

to do with traditionally close connections between the church leadership and the top indigenous leaders in state and administration, who as a rule are also members of this church, as are the traditional chiefs. This goes back to the introduction of Christianity to Fiji: the missionaries made great efforts to convert the chiefs, who then declared the conversion of all their followers, the whole vanua, to the new faith; thus there were no individual conversions but rather collective conversion “ordered from above”. Correspondingly the ruling position of the chiefs was interpreted as the expression of divine will. Since then the chiefly system (and with it indigenous political rule) and Christianity have been very closely linked in Fiji (in Fijian the same word is used for “chief” and for “God”: turaga; heavenly and earthly turaga are linked irrevocably). Some church people seem to be tempted by the offer, made by the rebels and also coming from within circles of the interim administration and the Constitutional Review Committee, to declare Fiji a “Christian State” in the constitution (with the corresponding privileges for the Christian churches and in particular for the then Methodist “State Church”, and discrimination against other religions). The fundamental evangelical groups, who are gaining ground rapidly in Fiji as in other Pacific island states, and who openly supported the coup, welcome this enthusiastically. The “Christian State” would be an instrument to cement and legitimise a racist undemocratic situation.

However, there are also many church groups at the grassroots, and individual personalities in the church context, who reject the idea of a Christian State outright and take a clear stand for the responsibility of Christians and the church for democracy and human rights. In this context special mention must be made of the Research Group of the Fiji Council of Churches (FCC-RG; Casimira Aisake, Koila Costello-Olsson etc.), who have not only presented the best analysis of the coup and its background but also – beyond their mandate of “research” – have also been actively involved in explaining to people what democracy, human rights and civil conflict management are. One example is their media campaign “Mending Bridges within our Communities”. As they have met with difficulties from member churches of the FCC because of their prominent stance on these issues, they are now trying to gain more independence from the FCC.

A problem is that the difference between “Indian” and indigenous is also reflected in religion: the indigenous Fijians are without exception Christians, while the great majority of the Fijians of Indian origin are Hindus or Moslems, with only 3% of them Christians. Inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue and exchange between the religious communities hardly exists at all. So far only very few groups have concerned themselves with this. Two very modest voluntary efforts are: People for Cultural Awareness (PIA, Father Frank Hoare), who has contributed to intercultural dialogue through weekend-workshops and two- week courses held since 1989, and the preparation of information materials; Interfaith Search Fiji (Tessa MacKenzie), who organises workshops to bring people of different religions together and works for a better understanding of the religions among each other (which is observed by the Methodist Church with scepticism and rejection). From a peace-building point of view there is still a large task awaiting us in this field in the future.

In general, a strong civil society in Fiji can make a decisive contribution to the peaceful resolution of the many-sided conflicts in Fijian society. In view of the weakness of the state apparatus, its lack of democracy and law and order, as well as the spreading culture of political violence as a result of the coup and its consequences, representatives of civil society with their policies of non-violence have a special role to play. Capacity-building for NGOs can prove to be of direct importance for peace building and crisis prevention. Giving more professional competence to the work of the NGOs can strengthen their position in Fijian society and improve their opportunities for civil conflict resolution. Under the present

circumstances even the use of the words “civil” society and “civil” conflict management are of very special significance: for the main concern is to reduce the influence and the power of the military in Fijian society. The events in 2000 have given the military a position so strong that it is unacceptable in a democratic society; for many Fijians they are the only guarantors of law and order and the decisive authority for solving problems. They must be ousted from this position and pruned back to a “normal level”. This means that they must once more be subordinated to democratically legitimate civil control, and any legitimation for involving themselves in political home affairs must be taken from them. In order that the country can develop in a democratic way under the rule of law it is absolutely necessary that the legitimation of the military be removed and politics be taken out of the hands of the armed forces. Otherwise the armed forces can become an uncontrollable power factor, even more so, as the concepts of democracy, human rights and the rule of law are still not firmly anchored in Fijian society, especially in the rural areas. Here is a great task for the representatives of civil society.

Besides this, a very important field for civil conflict management – as on Bougainville and in the Solomons - is work with violent young men and young men with a propensity for violence. These juveniles (between 15 and 25 years old) have a subordinate position in the village hierarchy, no-one is concerned about their needs, and life in the villages is increasingly unattractive, therefore they press into the towns in order to “make their fortunes”, only too often ending up unemployed and with no prospects. Programmes specially geared to such young people could have an enormous effect on violence and crisis prevention; the aim is to withdraw the foot soldiers from future potential rebel leaders.

A special feature of the situation in Fiji is the cultural and religious differences between indigenous Fijians and Indo-Fijians. In order to prevent this difference leading to ethnic-religious conflicts it is necessary to carry out projects of inter-ethnic reconciliation and understanding. Multicultural education programmes and leisure programmes for young people, discussion groups for members of different denominations, partnership projects between indigenous and “Indian” communities etc., are therefore genuine projects for a Civil Peace Service. Churches and church congregations should take a particular lead here.

There are three areas particularly suited for possible deployment of peace workers:
strengthening the NGOs working for human rights, democratic awareness building and civil conflict resolution; capacity building;

developing and carrying out programmes for young men with a propensity for violence;
- multicultural, inter-religious projects for understanding and reconciliation.

3.7 Potential partners for co-operation with the Civil Peace Service

A further special feature of Fiji is its central position in the South Pacific, making it the centre of all civil society activities for the whole region. The NGOs in Fiji are the nerve centres in the regional networks of civil society. Various umbrella organisations for the region have their main offices in Suva, and from here many activities spread out into the region and many stands are woven together. Fiji is therefore a very suitable place for projects of South-South co-operation. The Civil Peace Service should support and strengthen such South-South cooperation. NGOs capable of organising such cooperation should be particularly considered as potential partner organisations for the Civil Peace Service.

Pacific Concerns Resource Centre (PCRC) would be the first group to be considered. Their main office is in Suva, from where they represent the whole of the Pacific region, with corresponding links to NGOs in the other Pacific island states. The Centre has a solid organisational structure and functions as the central hub for the networks of civil society in the Pacific, exploiting its locational advantage in Fiji to an optimum. At the same time the PCRC is of course extremely “on the ball” as far as the events in its host country are concerned. This would make it possible for peace workers attached to the PCRC to both work within a “Fiji specific” context and yet have an effect throughout the Pacific. At present the PCRC is considering laying emphasis on peace education in future, giving particular emphasis to collecting and making use of traditional knowledge on peace building and conflict resolution. This is something that is very close to the heart of the new director of the PCRC, Hilda Lini (from Vanuatu). She intends to examine how far culture and mechanisms of “village peace” can be applied to or made use of in the modern world, the state, society and the international system. This approach stems from the conviction that there are valuable “indigenous concepts of peace” that have been considered too little in the “modern” crises and violent conflicts increasingly shaking the Pacific region, which could make a valuable contribution to civil conflict management. The PCRC has organised several workshops and a large conference on this subject recently. At the same time there is an awareness that the traditional concepts also require additional support from “modern” western approaches. The aim is to develop curricula, programmes and lesson material for such peace education, and to make them available to NGOs, churches, schools and state institutions in Fiji and other Pacific states. The inclusion of external peace workers in such a project can be meaningful, on the one hand, by bringing in additional “western” expertise concerning peace education, particularly the intercultural dimension, and, on the other hand, as an opportunity to learn from the “indigenous concepts of peace” and to pass what has been learnt on both at home and in other places. The PCRC emphasise emphatically that an external peace worker would have to be willing to “listen” and to “learn”. Such an open-minded peace worker, with training in peace education and sensitivity in intercultural matters, could do meaningful work in the present situation in Fiji, where NGOs and churches consider peace education to be urgently required. Furthermore, there is great demand for networking in the field of peace education throughout the Pacific region. The PCRC has functioning structures, which such a worker could easily fit into. (The only problem could be raising the money for a necessary – relatively high- travel budget, should the peace worker be given the opportunity to travel frequently throughout the region as would be meaningful). PCRC’s recent experience has also shown that there should be no difficulty obtaining a work visa for such member of staff (providing that there is not a shift further to the right within the country...).

The National Council of Women Fiji (NCWF), Chairperson: Miriama Leweniqila) would be another potential partner for projects with the Civil Peace Service. During the coup they were very much involved in activities for peace, democracy and human rights, and together with other women’s organisations, especially the Fiji Women’s Crisis Centre and the Fiji Women’s Rights Movement, they carried out very effective public relations campaigns: the daily protest pickets and prayers of “Women in Black”, the candlelight campaign and the “Blue ribbon” campaign. On 21st May 2000, the NCWF founded a special structure to organise these activities, the *Women’s Action for Democracy and Peace (WAD’aP)*, with its own steering committee and office (Chairperson: Tupou Vere, also staff member of PCRC; Secretary Sharon Bhagwan Rolls, also part of Fiji Council of Churches-Research Group (FCC-RG)). In the meantime the WAD’aP has four teams: Human Rights and Peace, Multiculturalism, Good Governance, and Economic Empowerment. Women working voluntarily lead all these teams. A big problem at the moment is the organisational weakness of the Council, who only have three paid staff (one of whom is employed on a limited contract paid by a Canadian

foundation only for a special project – counselling of street children and abused children) and a minute, badly equipped office. It would seem necessary to consolidate these structures to a certain extent if an external peace worker is to be meaningfully integrated into the work. Should this be the case, such a peace worker could undoubtedly be of use, especially in supporting the WAD'aP and its teams and furthering networking with other NGO's working for peace and human rights. In Fiji there is certainly a demand to learn more of experiences made elsewhere in organising campaigns and setting up the required structures. A peace worker to be employed in this field should therefore have experience in "peace-movement campaigns" and have organisational abilities in the field of "capacity-building".

Other NGOs in which in principle peace workers could be employed are either too weak organisationally (Interfaith Search and PIA, who do good work in the fields of intercultural and inter-religious understanding, but are simply too small and have too loose a structure to be able to absorb peace workers) or are so strong and self-confident that they do not need such support (the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre (Shamima Ali, Edwina Cotoisuva), the CCF (Akuila Yabaki), or the Fiji Council of Social ServicesFCOSS (Hassan Khan, Sashi Kiron, Nilesh Prasad), which is the umbrella organisation for over 300 member organisations founded in 1957 with well-equipped central offices in Suva), or the planning of their work makes it inopportune to include a peace worker at the moment (as in the case of the FCC-RG). Unfortunately at present there are no potential partner organisations carrying out projects with young men with a propensity for violence, in which peace workers could be included, meaning that this very important field of work cannot be tackled.

4. VANUATU

4.1 Summary, evaluation and recommendations

Vanuatu is a case of a pre-violent- conflict-situation, where crisis prevention in the classical sense (primary prevention) is what is required. In 1980, in the founding phase of the young state, there was a serious violent conflict and a secessionist rebellion could only be put down with the assistance of Papua New Guinea and Australia. But since then Vanuatu has been spared violent conflicts on a larger scale. There is however conflict potential here, both social and political, that can lead to violent clashes. A combination of the following could well produce an explosive mixture – in a similar way as in Papua New Guinea, Fiji or the Solomons: the Anglophone-Francophone differences left over from colonial times; land conflicts; rivalries between various parts of the country and the various islands; the contradictions between traditional and modern ways of life; socially problematic manifestations of modernisation such as urbanisation and massive (youth) unemployment; as well as manifestations of “bad governance” such as corruption and clientelism. However, in contrast to Papua New Guinea/Bougainville and the Solomon Islands, where violent conflicts have already broken out and peace building and post-conflict crisis prevention are now required, in Vanuatu there is still a chance of preventing an escalation of violence.

The deficits in the political system, as far as civil conflict resolution is concerned, place special responsibility on the representatives of civil society and give them a special role to play. Vanuatu has, in comparison to the size of the country and the strength of the traditional communities, a relatively well-developed civil society with various NGOs working for democracy, human rights and in particular women’s rights, as well as civil conflict resolution. It will be their task to enter into alliances with traditional protagonists, who still determine to a large extent life in the rural villages. Such alliances and links between modern values and forms of conflict management within civil society on the one hand, and traditional values and forms of conflict management on the other (in Vanuatu summed up by the term “kastom”) can form bulwarks to prevent violent conflicts escalating, and can so open the way to non-violent conflict resolution.

Priorities for civil conflict management in general and the sending of peace workers within the framework of the Civil Peace Service in particular, are in working with unemployed urban male youths and in strengthening the position of women in society.

Bougainville and the Solomon Islands (and with certain reservations also Fiji) have shown that the “foot soldiers” of potentially violent groups in such conflicts are unemployed youths with no prospects, whilst women and women’s organisations play an important role in ending or preventing violent conflicts. We can therefore draw the conclusion that in the case of Vanuatu, work with young people and with the women can be of great importance in preventing crises. This kind of work can contribute to saving Vanuatu from a fate similar to Fiji or the Solomons, and is therefore Civil Peace Service in the best sense of the words.

In Vanuatu, the unemployed youths in the towns form a relatively new social (problem) group, who have a special propensity for violence they are capable of using. So far politicians have officially hardly concerned themselves with them at all. However, there are some

organisations and initiatives that are developing programmes and projects for this group of society. Peace workers could well support their work.

Women's position in society in Vanuatu is still a subordinate one, both traditionally and in a modern context. Women are objects of male violence in various ways in everyday life. And this subject too has not yet been sufficiently talked about at an official political level. Various women's organisations are working hard to explain more and enlighten people on women's rights, to protect women from male violence, and to strengthen women's role in the family and in public life. It could also be meaningful to send peace workers to support their work.

4.2 Background and history of the present conflict constellation

The Republic of Vanuatu, in the Western Pacific, is made up of 82 islands (67 of them inhabited) and has a total area of 15,000 square kilometres. The largest islands are Espiritu Santo (4010 sq.km.), Malekula (2053 sq.km.) and Efate (887 sq.km.) The capital, Port Vila, is on Efate; with 30,000 inhabitants it is the largest town in the country. The next largest town is Luganville on Espiritu Santo with 8,000 inhabitants. Vanuatu has a total population of around 190,000 citizens, 94% of them Melanesians. In addition there are French people, Vietnamese, Chinese and citizens of other Pacific island states. The indigenous Melanesians belong to over a hundred different ethno-linguistic groups. Lingua franca is Bislama, a Pidgin language with a strong French element in it; equally official administrative languages are French and English. The population growth, almost 3% annually, is high, the population is very young (72% under 30 years old). Around 80% of the population live from subsistence farming and additional cash crops. The soil is fertile as a rule, the majority of the land on the islands is suitable for agricultural use, and a variety of agricultural products are cultivated, for example, coconuts, taro, cassava, yams, breadfruit, various vegetables and tropical fruits. The people keep pigs, poultry and cattle. Although cattle are an important export commodity, the most important export is still copra. Besides the large plantations, it is the smallholders who produce this copra; over two thirds of the crop at present with a growing tendency. Further cash crops are cocoa and cava, whose importance is growing - particularly in face of the sinking prices for copra. Tropical timber and tuna fish are also exported. However what is economically far more important is the fact that Port Vila is an important place for so-called "offshore" financial services; in Vanuatu people do not have to pay income tax or tax on capital, which means that dozens of banks and financial institutions are to be found in the tax haven Port Vila. Vanuatu also offers foreign shipping companies a so-called flag of convenience. Tourism is also increasingly becoming an important branch of the service industry (over 50,000 tourists annually).

During the 19th Century British and French settlers settled on what was then the New Hebrides. Trading companies dealt in sandalwood and indigenous workers, recruiting and shipping them – with more or less criminal methods – to work in the plantations in Australian Queensland, in Fiji, New Caledonia and Samoa. The competition for the New Hebrides between the colonial powers Great Britain and France was regulated in 1887 by a first agreement made by the British-French Marine Commission for the protection of their citizens on the islands. In 1906 both powers set up a joint administration, and the condominium of the New Hebrides became the only French-British colony of colonial times.

In 1980 the New Hebrides achieved independence as the Republic of Vanuatu. This was preceded by bitter conflicts erupting into violence in some cases, the consequences of which are still reflected today in the constellation of conflict factors in Vanuatu.

Decisive reasons for the violent conflicts surrounding the transition to independence are to be found in the system of British-French colonial administration and the differences between the two colonial powers. In spite of their formal joint colonial rule the French and the British both established their own colonial structures on the New Hebrides. There were two legal systems, two different police forces, two official languages (English and French), three administrative zones (a British one, a French one and a joint one), three courts of justice and three currencies. The systems had more differences than things in common, and the indigenous population, as the object of colonial rule, was also split along the lines of difference of the colonial powers. One example was the competition between the school systems and the language taught there, which has led to Anglophone and Francophone sections of the indigenous population. In the field of religion this difference has also left its mark in the dominance of Catholicism in the French-speaking sections of the population and Presbyterianism and Anglicanism in the English-speaking sections. Today the Presbyterians are by far the largest group with over 40% of the population, followed by Catholics and Anglicans each with around 15% of the population.

In the era of decolonisation after the Second World War and especially since the Sixties, both colonial powers have tried to win support and alliance partners for their colonial and decolonisation policies from among the indigenous population. Much simplified, it was a case of the British wanting to withdraw “gently and quietly” from their role as colonial power, while the French wanted to hold onto their colonial rule – not least in the interest of and under pressure from the French settlers on the islands, whose numbers were far greater than British settlers. The British therefore supported representatives of the indigenous population who were for independence, and wanted to organize a trouble-free transition into independence as smoothly as possible with them. The French built up counter forces, who opposed independence or rather, a “too rapid” transition to independence. This constellation meant that the transition process to independence was accompanied by violent clashes leading up to the secessionist Santo rebellion in 1980 and its vicious suppression.

Both sides were supported by movements that had been founded in the Sixties. On the one hand, the national movement under Father Walter Lini, which must be seen in the context of the anti-colonial movements within the developing “Third World”, and which demanded political independence for the condominium. Lini and his supporters looked to the traditions of their Melanesian communities – to “kastom”-, in order to justify their anti-colonialism historically. However, they used this historical retrospective to serve a modern ideology of nation and nationhood, and demanded independence from the colonial rulers in its name. The leaders of this national independence movement came from the Anglophone section of the population, had been educated under the British system and belonged to the Presbyterian or the Anglican church (Lini was an Anglican priest). The British colonial rulers were willing to come to an agreement with Lini and his movement about the transition to independence.

On the other side was a strictly traditionalistic movement, also founded in the Sixties, also referring to the traditional “kastom”, but wanting to return to the pre-colonial traditional way of life with its Melanesian values. The aim of its followers was for cultural and economic independence at village level, but political independence and a discourse that uses categories of nationhood had absolutely no meaning for them. This so-called Nagriamel-Movement, under the leadership of one Jimmy Stephens, was at first limited to the largest island, Espiritu

Santo. Its direct aim was to prevent the extension of the – white – plantations from the coastal areas into the inland of the island, and beyond that to get back the land that had been taken from the indigenous population by white settlers in the previous sixty or seventy years. As these settlers were mainly of French descent, Nagriamel was originally anti-French. The French imprisoned Jimmy Stevens for the first time in 1968 for his protests against the French land policy. However, they later realised that Stevens was far more useful to them as an ally against the National Movement rather than in prison. The French actually managed to bring Stevens and his supporters into opposing Lini's National Movement by making various promises and concessions – especially by returning some of the land. For the French, who wished to retain their colonial rule, saw a far greater danger for themselves in Lini. They were able to exploit the Francophone-Anglophone differences to harness Nagriamel for their own ends. The people on Francophone Espiritu Santo distrusted Lini's Anglophone National Movement greatly. They were afraid of coming under Anglophone dominance in an independent state, and therefore opposed political independence. With Nagriamel's support the French were able to build up an opposition movement to Lini's National Movement, which had real support in the indigenous population. In terms of party politics this took the form of the – Francophone – Union of Moderate Parties (UMP) in which united both those opposed to Lini and those opposed to independence. In 1970 Lini and his supporters had already founded the New Hebrides National Party, out of which the – mainly Anglophone – Vanuaaku Pati (VP) developed as the party of the independence movement. The formation of political parties and party politics therefore developed along the lines of the Francophone-Anglophone division.

In the middle of the Seventies opposition between the two movements came to a head and there were frequent violent clashes. Jimmy Stevens began to campaign for a "Nagriamel Federation" as an alternative model to an independent Vanuatu. After the VP had won a great victory in the elections for the National Parliament in November 1979 and the declaration of independence was therefore only a question of time, Jimmy Stevens decided on secession. He knew that he had the full support of the French settlers, and in secret also of the French government, who were decidedly against the course of their British condominium partner supporting independence. Since January 1980 there had been open campaigning for secession both on the island of Espiritu Santo and on the island of Tanna, which was also a stronghold of the traditionalists. Dubious US American businessmen joined the extremely heterogeneous alliance of secessionist forces at this time, quite obviously following their own economic interests in supporting the secession movement. In May and June the conflict between those in favour of independence and those in favour of secession came dramatically to a head; there were violent clashes on Espiritu Santo and Tanna and thousands of Lini's supporters had to leave the islands. In July the violence escalated without the British or French security forces having intervened. In spite of the unrest Lini proclaimed Vanuatu's independence on June 30th 1980 with British agreement and against the French wishes. Beforehand Lini had obtained assurances from the governments of Papua New Guinea and Australia that they would protect the young republic from attempts of violent secession. In fact units of the Papuan armed forces, the PNGDF, landed in Vanuatu on 18th August 1980. With logistic support from Australia the 350 soldiers were able to break the resistance of the secessionists relatively quickly. On the 31st August their leader Jimmy Stevens surrendered to the authorities, and mid-September the PNGDF left Vanuatu again. From this point on, the newly formed Vanuatu Police Force, with their paramilitary section, the Vanuatu Mobile Force (VMF) took up the pursuit of the secessionists. Around 2,500 of them were arrested on Espiritu Santo, Tanna, Malekula and other northern islands, but the majority of them were soon released. Altogether there were 583 prosecutions for participation in a violent attempt at secession, but only the leaders of the rebellion received longer prison sentences; Jimmy Stevens was

sentenced to 14 ½ years. When they realised that the rebellion was not going to succeed, the French government evacuated several hundred French citizens to Noumea in the French colony New Caledonia; 127 further French settlers, who had been involved in the rebellion, were expelled from the newly founded state of Vanuatu as a result. In the years that followed, relations remained strained between the former colonial power France and the young Republic of Vanuatu; Vanuatu denounced the French atomic testing in the Pacific more vehemently than any other state, and supported unequivocally the independence movements in the French Pacific colonies, particularly in New Caledonia/Kanaky. Even if their relationship has improved in the last few years, points of conflict still remain: for example Vanuatu still even today claims sovereignty over the Matthew and Hunter islands to the east of New Caledonia.

With the quelling of the Santo rebellion, the French plans to make a purely French colony out of the New Hebrides had failed and the unity of independent Vanuatu had been preserved. However, the young republic was burdened with a heavy handicap as a result of the violence during its genesis. The split between the Anglophones and Francophones stemming from colonial history had become deeper. Even if not all Francophones had been for secession and not all Anglophones had been affected by the rebellion, nevertheless the attempt at secession had more or less fixed a line of separation between Francophone (pro secession) and Anglophone (pro independence). The fears of the Francophones that they would be ridden over roughshod in an independent Vanuatu were substantiated at first in the following years – for which they were not least themselves to blame. For, in order to secure their rule and to prevent further secession attempts, the victorious Anglophones undertook certain measures which could be considered as anti-Francophone. The French language was excluded from public life, Anglophone dominance was created in politics and administration, and the parts of the country that had a Francophone majority were neglected to a certain extent as far as development was concerned.

During the last twenty years the Anglophone-Francophone division has remained, but it has clearly lost its importance for politics and society in Vanuatu. This is because Lini and his followers committed themselves to democratic principles of government under the rule of law, resisted the temptation to rule in a dictatorial manner over those defeated in the rebellion, and in the end followed integrative policies aimed at creating a joint national consciousness among all Ni-Vanuatu (the new term for the inhabitants of Vanuatu). The constitutive elements of these policies - summed up in the term “Melanesian Socialism” – such as communalism, reference to “kastom”, Christian- humanistic and traditional Melanesian values were shared and approved of to the same extent by both Francophone and Anglophone Ni-Vanuatu. Another reason was that other new lines of division and tension became obvious and of greater importance and relevance than the Anglophone-Francophone divisions.

The latter is clearly apparent in the party political occurrences of the last few years. In the first legislature of the young republic the VP was clearly the dominant political force under the leadership of Walter Lini, who ruled the country as Prime Minister from 1980 to 1991. In Parliament, consisting first of 46 members and later 52 members, the opposition was formed essentially by the Francophone UMP. Lini’s unquestioned leadership was first challenged from among his own ranks in 1988. Barak Sope, the number two in the VP tried to overthrow Lini with the help of the President at that time and support from the oppositional UMP. A serious constitutional crisis developed during which individual acts of violence took place, bringing the country once more to the brink of violent confrontation. Eventually Lini was able to win the battle for power. Barak Sope and his followers were expelled from the VP and founded the Melanesian Progressive Party (MPP). In 1991, there was a revolt from within the

VP against Lini, whose position had been much weakened by the 1988/89 crisis, and he was voted out of office as leader of the party and the government and replaced by Donald Kalpokas. Lini and his faithful followers then founded a new party, the National United Party (NUP). This division of the Anglophone camp into VP, MPP and NUP parties meant that in the December 1991 elections the UMP emerged as the strongest party. They entered into a coalition with Lini's NUP, and Maxime Carlot Korman from the UMP became the first Francophone Prime Minister. This new political constellation and coalition contributed considerably to healing the Anglophone – Francophone divisions, and enabled the Francophone sections of the population (30% today) to “catch up” in public life, - by receiving posts in the administration among other things. Another indication of the normalisation taking place was that the formerly secessionist Nagriamel took a normal place in political life as a political party under the leadership of Frankie Stevens, a son of Jimmy Stevens, and even entered into cooperation with the Anglophone MPP. (Jimmy Stevens was finally released from prison in 1991; he died shortly afterwards). After the elections in March 1998, a coalition government was finally formed between the VP and the NUP (from which a further group, the People's Democratic Party had split off in 1994); Kalpokas became Prime Minister and Lini his Deputy. However this government did not survive very long. In November 1999, Kalpokas resigned, threatened with a vote of no confidence by the opposition. On the 25th November 1999, the leader of the MPP, Barak Sope, was elected as Prime Minister by 28 votes to 24. Since Lini's death in February 1999, he is now the strong man in Vanuatu politics.

(addendum June 2001: On April 13, 2001, a motion of no-confidence was tabled against Sope in parliament. 27 out of 52 parliamentarians supported the motion. Edward Natapei of the VP was then elected Prime Minister. This change of government was possible because the UMP changed sides. The UMP's Serge Vohor became Deputy Prime Minister.)

The divisions of the VP and the quickly changing coalitions of the Nineties made it obvious that besides the Anglophone-Francophone differences reflected in the party political structures, there were other equally important differences, which while not doing away with these blocks, yet put them in perspective and were increasingly reflected in political parties. In this context provincial loyalties and differences must be mentioned.

The individual political leaders' place of origin plays an important role in who supports him and what kind of politics he follows. Still - perhaps even increasingly so - the differences between the various islands play an important role in the political and social life of Vanuatu. A united nation and a united national consciousness have so far been just as little achieved as in the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea. Politicians are still primarily considered as the representatives of certain islands and as champions of the people living there, and they see themselves in this light also. It is still very important for political loyalties whether someone comes from Efate, Tanna, Malekula or another island. Thus Lini, as an Anglican priest from Pentecost island, always had most support there from the Anglophone-Anglican population, and his NUP had their stronghold there (not however in the Francophone-Catholic centre and south of the island). Stevens senior and his sons and their Nagriamel movement and party are a phenomena of Espiritu Santo. However, the people of Santo are only a united body towards “foreigners”, the 26,000 inhabitants of the island, divided as they are into 28 language groups, have considerable differences among themselves, particularly between the coastal regions and the centre of the island, where Nagriamel was founded and has its closest homelands. Barak Sope, on the other hand, has his base on Efate, more exactly in the villages close to the capital Port Vila. He very skilfully played up the differences between the people of Efate and the immigrants from other islands streaming into the capital, to his own political advantage. That he was playing with fire was proved abruptly on May 16th 1988, when during a demonstration in Port Vila and the accompanying riots, one person was killed. Barak Sope was the man

behind these events that set off the crisis in 1988/89. What caused the events were the demands of the inhabitants of the three villages closest to Port Vila for compensation for the land which they had had to surrender as “public land” for the development of the capital. The Efate people confronted the immigrants – a constellation that we know only too well from observations in other crisis regions in the South Pacific, and something that still plays an important role for the conflict situation in Vanuatu at the present time.

4.3 The present constellation of conflict factors

The reference to the reason for the riots in 1988 brings us once again back to the central reason for conflicts in Melanesian society: land. In Vanuatu land is still 97% in traditional communal possession of the villages and clans. Land has the same extreme importance for the Ni-Vanuatu as for the other Melanesians. On the 20th July 1982 the Vanuatu Weekly expressed it in this way: “Land to Ni-Vanuatu is what a mother is to a baby. It is with land that he defines his identity and it is with land that he maintains his spiritual strength. Ni-Vanuatu do allow others the use of their land, but they always retain the right of ownership”. The concept of land possession and ownership as a resource to be bought or sold, as represented by the European colonial rulers and settlers, was diametrically opposed to the Melanesian concept. That was reflected in the severity of the land conflicts between the colonial rulers and settlers on the one hand and the indigenous population on the other. These conflicts were also an essential reason behind the development of both the Nagriamel movement and the Independence movement. In the independent Republic of Vanuatu the system of traditional land rights is firmly anchored in the constitution. Nevertheless in the process of modernisation within society there are developments taking place that reflect a tendency to erode the traditional land system. At the ideological-political level (for example, in the UMP) there are voices speaking out for privatising land possession, and increasingly individuals have land practically at their disposal, almost as though it were private property, yet under the guise of the traditional system. This can in future lead to more severe land conflicts in a new form, just as increased immigration and urbanisation have already led to land conflicts. The latter especially afflicts Port Vila.

Similarly to the role of Honiara for the Solomon Islands, Port Vila has become a pole of attraction for Vanuatu, drawing migrants from other islands seeking work in the public administration and the modern business sector. (Luganville, the main town on Espiritu Santo, plays a similar role for the north of Vanuatu; of Luganville’s 7, 000 inhabitants only 13% are from the island itself, but 14.5% are from Pentecost). The inhabitants of Efate and especially Port Vila and the surrounding villages are not happy about this development, for after all foreigners are settling on their land, and often illegally in “squatter settlements”. The Efate people do not see why Port Vila, as the capital for the whole of Vanuatu, should be open to all Ni-Vanuatu to settle there. The fact that the capital is on their island means that they demand that “man Efate” should also be given preference in politics and the apparatus of state (for example, in the distribution of posts), and that they should be the leaders for the whole of Vanuatu – something which has been supported and exploited by personalities such as Barak Sope, but which cannot be accepted by politicians and inhabitants of the other islands. (In fact so far three Prime Ministers – Kalpokas, Carlot Korman and Sope – were “man Efate”).

In spite of certain differences between north and south, there is a fairly strong feeling of community on Efate, the feeling of being “man Efate”, the majority of them being Anglophone and Anglican or Presbyterian. They were therefore strongly represented in the

independence movement, especially as the land taken from them in colonial times was mainly in the hands of French settlers and, before independence, business life in Port Vila was also dominated by the French, who, when offering jobs, gave preference to the immigrant francophone Ni-Vanuatu instead of the local Anglophone inhabitants. This only changed after independence, since when Port Vila has become rather an Anglophone town. The increasing migration of people from other islands to Port Vila has also strengthened the people of Efate in their feeling of belonging together and has led to increasing conflicts about jobs and land with the immigrants, who in the meantime make up 85% of the population in the inner area of the town.

The reason behind the increased migration to Efate/Port Vila (and to a lesser extent to Luganville) is the population growth on some islands, which has put considerable pressure on the amount of land available for subsistence farming, but also the attractiveness of modern urban life especially for the young members of the population. The modest life in the villages on isolated islands seems less attractive to the young people than the attractions and possibilities offered by a "large town" (of after all 30,000 inhabitants) such as Port Vila. "Push and Pull factors" are therefore leading to population movement such as has never been seen before. As a result "squatter settlements" have arisen in and around Port Vila and Luganville. Land conflicts have also arisen with the local inhabitants. And gangs of unemployed young people with no prospects, "rascals", have already begun to threaten public safety and order, as in the towns of Papua New Guinea. More than half the population of Port Vila is under 18 years old. Many school-leavers cannot find a job. The unemployment rate in Port Vila and Luganville is unofficially 85%. There is inevitable tension between the local population and the immigrants, but also between the immigrants from various islands, for they all come from different socio-cultural backgrounds, have had hardly any contact with each other previously, and now primarily relate to each other as competitors for jobs and opportunities for earning money, for training, for posts in the state bureaucracy and for other short resources. The most they have in common is their detest of the absolute foreigners to the island, in the case of Vanuatu the Chinese and Vietnamese in particular, who dominate business life in the town and in case of doubt always serve as scapegoats.

Members of the political elite succumb only too easily to the temptation to stir up these tensions for their own gain, to play off the various groups against each other and to build up personal networks of supporters to use against their rivals in this game of power. Corruption, nepotism and clientelism in politics are a matter of course in Vanuatu as in many other Pacific island states. The alliance between corrupt, power-hungry politicians "at the top", and unemployed young men without prospects and ready for violence "at the bottom", who can then "sort" themselves along "ethnic" or other lines of division, can be extremely dangerous. The latest history of the Solomon Islands and Fiji demonstrate where this can lead.

Without being too pessimistic and predicting an almost inevitable "Fijian" or "Solomon Islands" future for Vanuatu, it is necessary to emphasise the parallels in this combination of conflict factors and their undisputed violent potential: differences between various regions of the country and differing ethno-linguistic groups within the population, population growth, migration from the country to the towns, growing (youth) unemployment, land conflicts, bad governance, incomplete nation-building, a lack of citizen- and national consciousness, burdens from the colonial past, and the dominance of non-indigenous groups of the population in business life.

In order to master this explosive combination of conflict factors, relevant circles in politics and society in Vanuatu are increasingly putting their trust in "recustomisation", the reliance

on “kastom”, the “good old” values, customs and habits of the traditional Melanesian communities, as a counterweight to the negative influences of modernisation. “Kastom” is in fact still intact and functional in many parts of Vanuatu (more so probably than in Fiji, the Solomons or Papua New Guinea) and is capable of contributing to the resolution of conflicts, for example by arbitration in conflicts between villages, or punishment according to traditional rules for offences within the village community. Institutions and rules of “kastom” are recognised and protected by the constitution and the laws of the country, for example, the role of the traditional chiefs or the traditional communal system of land rights and land possession. The National Council of Chiefs has constitutional status and advisory authority on questions of land and “kastom”. In general, Vanuatu tries to combine “kastom” with the modern western political and legal systems. This is meaningful in various social fields and has proved to be very successful – as in the local dispensation of justice and settlement of land conflicts. However, in other fields it is also problematic, for example, when fundamental human rights are in contradiction to certain “kastom” practices.

Besides this, “kastom” in Vanuatu – as also in Fiji – is strong or has been eroded to a differing degree in different parts of the country. It may appear meaningful in certain respects to revert to “kastom” as a political and ideological concept in order to cushion the impact of social development, to channel it in an orderly way, and to resolve conflicts without violence. But such action fails to recognise that certain manifestations of modernisation cannot be prevented – and from the point of view of sustainable development, democratisation and human rights should not be prevented. First, these manifestations of modernisation cause conflicts for which “kastom” has no set of rules available; second, violence and violent conflict are quite an element of “kastom”; and third this recourse to “kastom” can be instrumentalised by interested parties in the modern battle for power and profit, even so far that “kastom” is no longer (only) an element of traditional community feeling, but has in itself become an element of the modern world.

The island of Tanna is a good illustration of this problem. Tanna is of particular importance for the development of Vanuatu as a whole, as the most threatening “disturbances” are spreading from here at present (Tanna has in this way taken on the role that Espiritu Santo had in the founding years of the young state). The Tanna people are considered to be particularly belligerent, and make up the majority of the immigrants to Efate/Port Vila, where they are not particularly well liked; Tanna is the stronghold of the most significant Cargo movement in the country (Jo (h) n Frum), and in 1980 Tanna was the second stronghold of the secessionist rebels after Espiritu Santo.

Around 25,000 people live on Tanna, making it the island with the third highest population, generally considered to be “over populated”. Five different languages are spoken on the island, yet there is a quite strong feeling of belonging together as Tanna people (which does not mean that there are no land conflicts among each other). “Kastom” is still very strong on the island even today. This means that the chiefly system is still intact; but also that women have an absolutely subordinate position in the patrilineally governed communities in Tanna (as in most parts of Vanuatu); that “swapping” of women and violence against women are elements of Tanna “kastom”. On Tanna, “kastom” and Christianity have an arrangement, which makes it possible for the people to hold firm to traditional customs, and yet still to be good Christians in their own understanding. People still have bad memories of a phase in the Twenties when overzealous converts tried to forcibly impose Christianity on “kastom” by forbidding and punishing things like drinking Kava and “swapping” wives as being unchristian. As a reaction to this so-called “Tanna Law” the majority of the population turned away from the Christian churches and only followed “kastom” again. Christianity and

“kastom” were only brought together again (with dominance of the latter) within the framework of the John Frum Cargo Cult. This goes back to a certain John Frum, who at the end of the Thirties is said to have appeared to the most important chiefs on Tanna and given them a special message and teaching: they should hold firm to “kastom”, particularly the drinking of kava, the “swapping” of wives and the traditional dances, but at the same time they should return to the church and the Christian faith; if they followed these instructions they could expect great riches in the future; a sign from the west would prove the truth of this teaching. Shortly afterwards, coming from the west, a US war ship landed on Tanna to recruit men to work for the US troops stationed in Port Vila, fighting against the Japanese in the Pacific war. The Tanna people saw huge amounts of “cargo” on board this ship, distributed to them “free of charge”. From this moment on, the John Frum Cult was confirmed for the vast majority of the Tanna people and became the guideline of their life. In the Seventies, the John Frum followers allied themselves willingly to the Nagriamel secessionists, because they believed that the VP of the Anglican priest, Lini, would force them to return to the “Tanna Law” period in an independent Vanuatu. For them Tanna was already independent, thanks to John Frum, and the concept of political independence of the state did not mean anything to them. Therefore they took part in the 1980 rebellion, which led to severe and violent clashes between the majority of the secessionists and the minority of the supporters of independence. Yet here on Tanna the secessionists were also defeated with help from outside. Even today, the John Frum movement is strong on Tanna, which is a stronghold of the traditionalists and of “kastom”, that they are modernising to a certain extent. For example, the John Frum Movement takes part in the elections; and the chiefs, who come off best under traditional circumstances, bring “kastom” to bear in refusing to comply with such “unreasonable demands” of the new age – as demands for equal rights for women. In doing so, they appeal to the – state-supported - concept of “recustomization”. Those Tanna people who leave the island and go and live in Port Vila for example, take their traditionalist ideas with them into their new environment. However, the combination of traditionalistic fundamentalism and frustration stemming from being affected by modern phenomena such as unemployment and social exclusion – in squatter settlements for example – can create an explosively violent mixture, especially as solving problems in a violent way is by no means looked down upon, and the use of violence in a “small” way - in the family, against women – is daily practice both in the traditional and the modern context.

In other regions of the Pacific, and in the world in general, this combination has already led to devastating eruptions of violence. In Vanuatu the conditions are such that the same could happen here: a society in transition from a traditional to a modern way of life with all the manifestations of social disintegration and disorientation that go with it; a national state that is not yet established in people’s minds; a growing number of marginalized, mostly young people with no prospects; a political elite concerned first and foremost with their own advantage; a culture of violence in daily life and a high degree of belligerence in society; the relatively easy division of people into constructed social groupings at enmity with each other along ethnic, provincial, religious or other lines of division.

There have already been individual outbreaks of violence on a larger scale (although in no way comparable to the wars on Bougainville and the Solomon Islands or the coups in Fiji). In the Nineties, there were recurring riots in Port Vila with plundering and arson, the last one being the so-called National Provident Fund Riot in 1998. The riots were finally brought to an end by the authority of church leaders while the police proved to be rather helpless.

In fact, the 150 men of the Vanuatu Police Force and the 300 men of the paramilitary Vanuatu Mobile Force are more part of the problem than its solution, for both their loyalty and their

reliability can be called into doubt. There have been frequent acts of insubordination, mainly on account of late or insufficient wage-payments. On October 12th 1996, members of the VMF even attempted a rebellion, which resulted in the majority of the VMF leadership being detained and replaced in November 1996.

Moreover violence is visibly increasing in everyday life. The crime rate is rising, violence against women and children, rape and child-abuse are pressing social problems, and youth gangs are fighting against each other and turning to violent crime. For their part the police are not “squeamish” when dealing with criminals or suspects, they tend to be violent and do not always adhere exactly to the law. In other words there is a growing culture of violence and a propensity to violence in everyday life, which can prove to be a breeding ground for politically motivated violent conflicts on a larger scale.

But there are, of course, factors and forces that (can) work effectively against the outbreak of violent conflicts. There are most certainly opportunities for civil conflict management and chances for non-violent conflict resolution. The developing civil society and self-confident NGOs play an important role in this context.

4.4 The situation of civil society and opportunities for civil conflict resolution

So far Vanuatu has been spared violent conflicts on a large scale – apart from the Santo Rebellion in 1980. As I have already demonstrated however, potential for such violent conflict is certainly there. This means that Vanuatu is a case where both effective crisis and conflict prevention are necessary - and possible.

However Vanuatu, although formally a constitutional democracy, has several central deficiencies in the political system at a national level, which, at first glance, do not make it a very reliable partner as far as crisis and conflict prevention are concerned: clientelism and partisanship; political models bound to provincial and personal loyalties rather than to the national good; personal striving for power by members of the political elite; a hardly developed consciousness of state citizenship, democracy or human rights. Under these circumstances, protagonists from civil society have a particular responsibility for crisis prevention and conflict prevention. Vanuatu - concentrated on Port Vila and Luganville - has a relatively well-developed and varied scene in this context, with good contacts both internationally and in the rural areas. The international contacts make it possible for actors in such a small “isolated” country as Vanuatu to exchange and share ideas and experiences with others – the importance of which should not be underestimated. The rural contacts enable them to transport new ideas and values into the traditionally ruled village communities. In view of the fact that traditional ways of life and “kastom” are still intact and very strong in the rural areas of Vanuatu, particular sensitivity is required in this field. In the best case, it can lead to cooperation and strengthening of both sides – although certainly not without some tension – between protagonists of modern civil society and traditional society, and to a combination of modern values such as democracy and human rights and traditional values based on “kastom”. Such an alliance and such a combination could form a decisive bulwark against conflicts being carried out violently, and enable a non-violent form of conflict management.

An “alliance” between civil society and the traditional community, or rather their protagonists – NGOs and chiefs – can be effective in preventing crises and violent conflicts. At the same time, it cannot be ignored that violence is a part of the structures in “kastom” (e.g. violence against women) and that - in a similar way as in Fiji – “kastom” is being increasingly misused by individuals striving for personal power and profit. They use it to cover up or to legitimise the economic inequality and social differences that are developing between “big men” and ordinary people - and also to justify the continued oppression of women. But it would be wrong just to accuse the chiefs of having malicious intent; it is far more the case that their position – a balancing act between tradition and the modern world – often demands too much of them. It is the same with the following generation of young men, who see themselves on the one hand subject to the strict rules of “kastom”, but also expected (and expecting of themselves) to hold their own in the modern sector and to be individually successful. A heightening generation conflict is one result of this constellation, which in many places “kastom” cannot easily cope with.

The *churches* have a key role to play in coping with these problems and in making links between the values of civil society and the traditional communities. As in other Pacific Island states they have a very good standing in society and public life and are very respected, and they have a more comprehensive coverage of the rural areas than all other NGOs. In Vanuatu it is mainly the five large churches in the Vanuatu Christian Council – Presbyterians, Anglicans, Catholics, Church of Christ, and Apostolic Church – who face up to their social responsibility by initiating and supporting social projects. (Although the Christian Council as an institution is rather weak at the moment). The Presbyterian Church, as the largest church in Vanuatu, intends to give special attention to youth work and women’s work in future. They see a great social problem in youth unemployment and the high rate of school drop-outs. According to the Presbyterian church it is vital to develop perspectives for these drop-outs, and also for the large group of the “educated unemployed” (school-leavers with certificates who cannot find jobs), in order to prevent future social unrest and outbreaks of violence.

Indeed, the *male juveniles, or rather young men* pouring into the towns form a relatively new social (problem) group for Vanuatu (as for Fiji and the Solomons) that is particularly ready and willing to use violence. They are hung between village “kastom”, which they have left behind, and modern urban life, of which they have great expectations that are all too often disappointed. They have considerable problems of orientation, especially then, when they have been living in the town for a considerable time and have relatively few links to their home islands and villages and the “kastom” there. They require specific attention in order to help them find a way in transition from the traditional to the modern that is acceptable both to them personally and to society as a whole.

Government politics in Vanuatu has so far not faced this problem at all. But some NGOs are looking after these young people. The *Vanuatu Cultural Centre* has set up a “Juvenile Justice Project” which tries to integrate urban juvenile criminals in a “kastom” based process of conflict resolution, developing forms of “restorative justice” and mediating between victims and offenders, rather than grinding them through the mills of a Western-type justice and prison system that they insufficiently understand. They are striving for a combination between “kastom” and the western legal system. Seven islands have so far been chosen for the project. In the advisory councils all the “stakeholders” are represented: police, judiciary, churches, National Council of Chiefs, youth representatives and women representatives, and the USP. A Canadian volunteer also belongs to the project team. The links to the chiefs and the communities on the islands are made through so-called field workers. A further venture in work with urban juveniles with a propensity for violence is the “Vanuatu Young People’s

Project” that offers young people opportunities for occupying themselves and spending their free-time, tries to establish further training opportunities for school drop-outs and supports income-generating projects. Such kinds of youth work projects are rare in the region of the South Pacific so far.

The subordinate position of *women* in the traditional community has been carried over into modern circumstances. Women are still more or less considered the possession of the men and their rights are not respected. Domestic violence is a great social problem not only in the traditional village communities but also in the towns – and especially in the squatter settlements, where marginalized men work out their frustrations on the women. Violence under the influence of alcohol plays an enormous role here. Unwanted teenage pregnancies and rape are on the increase, as well as sexually-transmitted diseases. There is little public awareness that women have a right to protection from violence and that “domestic violence” is a crime to be brought before the courts; educational work in this field is urgently required. For even today crimes such as rape or child-abuse are as a rule still dealt with in the traditional way, by compensation (between men), i.e. with no regard for the victim. In this area of society specifically, “kastom” is used to stabilize and legitimate male dominance and men’s violence.

Official politics show little concern for women and their rights. A special law for the protection of women, due to be passed recently, has just been postponed yet again by the government. The very influential National Council of Chiefs is anti-women. There is no woman member of parliament. Even at the lower political level, such as on village committees, women are spectacularly under-represented. Neither in the administration nor in the police force is there any awareness that women must be specially protected; in particular the police have no training or sensitisation for dealing with such subjects as rape, child-abuse or domestic violence. The work of the various women’s NGOs is therefore all the more important. They put their trust in long-term processes of learning – for both women and men – and point to the first successes of their work particularly among the younger generation. In the meantime, many young women speak out and behave much more self-confidently in public and towards men than their mothers would ever have dared to. These women can be an important bulwark against the escalation of (male) violence in politics and public life. Strengthening the position of women and women’s organisations is consequently crisis prevention and conflict-prevention work – even if such strengthening has as a matter of course also the effect of heightening conflicts at first (in the relationship of the women to their husbands, who hold fast to women’s traditional position and role).

4.5 Potential partners for co-operation with the Civil Peace Service

NGOs concerned with women’s work and youth work are particularly suited as cooperation partners for projects of the Civil Peace Service in Vanuatu. Support for them can be of importance in reducing violence and preventing crises.

Established in 1980, the *Vanuatu National Council of Women* (Virginia Toaliu) makes efforts for the “empowerment” of women. Taking the subordinate position of women in politics and society as their starting point, they endeavour to strengthen women in the village context particularly, encouraging them and equipping them to get involved in village politics, to go into the village committees and to make women’s concerns heard there. This raises opposition

from “kastom” and from the chiefly system. The eight members of staff in the central offices of the Women’s Council offer workshops on various subjects, such as use of the media, human and women’s rights, or how to write a project application. They attempt to reach the women in the villages with a weekly radio programme and a monthly newsletter. At present the main sponsor organisation of the Women’s Council is the ICCO from the Netherlands. The Council works together with the government, especially with the Ministry for Women. At a regional level they have particularly close relations to the Fiji National Council of Women.

Founded in 1992, the *Vanuatu Women’s Centre* (Merelyn Tahī, Miriam Bule) is a women’s organisation that has taken strengthening the role of women as its task. (They work in close cooperation with the Fiji Women’s Crisis Centre). Their main task is the counselling of women and children who are victims of domestic violence. They run a central office with seven members of staff in Port Vila, including a small library, a branch office in Luganville (Sanma Counselling Centre) and a women’s refuge (“Safe House” in a motel in Port Vila at present). They spread information and educate people via brochures, radio programmes, information sheets, posters and a newsletter on the subjects of violence against women, rape, women’s and children’s rights, child abuse, and sex education. They also carry out six workshops on “community education” annually in villages on the islands. However, it is only possible for them to do so where the chief, who must first be asked, gives his permission. The chiefs’ willingness to cooperate differs from island to island and from village to village. Where local circumstances allow it, they establish committees against violence against women (Komiti agensem vaelans agensem ol women); at present there are ten such committees. Their members receive training as counsellors and are then active at grassroots level. The Vanuatu Women’s Centre works closely together with other NGOs and the churches, and even their cooperation with the police is said to be good. They receive financial assistance from AusAid and donor organisations in Britain and New Zealand.

The *Vanuatu Family Health Association* (Blandine Boulekone) works in the field of health education, family planning and sex education. They offer trainings for counsellors, run two hospital clinics (in Port Vila and Santo) and do educational work via brochures and radio programmes. They experience the lack of psychologically trained personnel as a particular deficit in their work – as also in the work of the other NGOs working in this field. (Female) peace workers with special qualifications for working with women and children who have been victims of violence (particularly rape, abuse, and incest) could do valuable work to support the reduction of violence, by training counsellors or by preparing basic information materials and manuals. It is conceivable that they could be attached either to the Vanuatu Women’s Centre or the Vanuatu Family Health Association.

A particular institution that supports both women’s causes and those of young people is the *Wan Smolbag Theatre*, a theatre group in Port Vila that is well known throughout the Pacific. Although they have a theatre in the capital they mainly play in the villages on the islands and in the squatter settlements in the towns. Their plays, videos and songs have to do with three main subjects: domestic violence, reproductive health, and good governance/voting rights. Recently the group has also attached a clinic for reproductive health to their theatre in Port Vila, following the idea that if you offer sex education in the theatre, you must also offer assistance in how to put it into practice. Young people can therefore now seek advice in the clinic and be supplied with condoms etc. This combination of theatre and clinic is unique in the region. The theatre group is made up of young people (mostly out of the squatter settlements in Port Vila), is very popular among young people and also offers trainings for young people from other Pacific states, where they have already been on tour (Fiji, Solomon Islands, Kiribati, Palau). The main sponsors at present are Oxfam New Zealand and the EU.

The Wan Smolbag Theatre needs experts in the field of work coordination and impact assessment. They wish to gather information using more exact proven methods to ascertain the effect of their work, and they wish to make their own work more effective through better management. Peace workers wishing to work with the theatre would therefore have to have certain expertise in social sciences and/ or experience in the fields of project management, project planning and coordination. The theatre has already had Peace Corps volunteers (USA) working with them and feels themselves in a position to occupy a peace worker (who however – besides the required qualifications – will have to be extremely tolerant towards the rather chaotic way of working – often experienced with “theatre people”).

The work of the Wan Smolbag Theatre has relevance for violence and crisis prevention, just as that of the women’s and youth organisations already named. The intention is to reach the group of male urban juveniles ready for violence and offer them alternative social prospects without recourse to violence; the group of women who suffer violence in everyday life should be helped to free themselves from their role of victim of violence and to develop their potential to diminish violence and further peace. A society in which young men do not react with violence and in which women work self-confidently for peace and civil conflict resolution is stabilised so as to prevent crises, and is much less in danger of experiencing such violence as Papua New Guinea/Bougainville, the Solomon Islands or Fiji experienced.

Besides the NGOs named above, it would also eventually be possible to position a peace worker with NGOs who have their seat in Port Vila but whose work is not limited to Vanuatu. In a similar way to Suva in Fiji, Port Vila functions to a certain extent as a central hub for the network of NGOs in the region. Thus PIANGO, the Pacific Islands Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (Henry Vira), has its central offices in Port Vila. Further the headquarters of the *Foundation of the Peoples of the South Pacific International* (FSPI: executive director Rex Horoi). FSPI has branches and cooperation partners in Kiribati, Tuvalu, Samoa, Tonga, Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea and East Timor (as well as Australia, the USA and Great Britain). FSPI does research in social studies, and offers training and education programmes which partly come under peace and conflict research studies and civil conflict management. For example, at present it is running a research program on “conflict management of disputes over natural resources” and a training program on “conflict management for community based resource development”. Its aims are amongst others to develop a pool of qualified “conflict management trainers” for the South Pacific region. Main sponsors at the moment are AusAid, EU, New Zealand ODA and the British Department for International Development. FSPI is planning a big new project, “Gardening Governance and Democracy”, which has direct links with crisis prevention and civil conflict management. This project aims at strengthening structures of democracy, the rule of law and civil society in the face of crises and wars in the region, in order to prevent further violent conflicts. The project intends to research, among other things, alternative conflict management mechanisms giving special consideration to traditional conflict resolution concepts. It should also develop appropriate concepts for conflict management in the Pacific which combine “Western” and traditional approaches. In the medium term one outcome should be the creation of a virtual think tank of experts in good governance. In the long-term a “Centre for Pacific Good Governance” should be created. For the coordination and organisation of the dialogue between members of the think tank a “good governance advisor” should be appointed. This could be a job for a peace worker trained in political science with a special focus on peace and conflict research, with abilities in programme and project management and well versed in modern information technology.

5. Final Comments

This report gives no cause for optimism. There is much that indicates that the development of this region of the South Pacific, which in comparison with other regions in the South, has so far been regarded as relatively quiet, stable and peaceful, is heading towards far-reaching crises. The wars in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, the coup and the mutiny in Fiji are not exceptions from this perspective but rather indications of future violent conflicts in other areas of this region. West Papua is the most recent, and yet the oldest link in this chain. Here is an even greater potential for escalation, and we are facing the possibility of military violence that will cause even more human suffering. This proves once again that the complex transition from traditional communities to modern capitalist societies, with all the contradictions involved in it, is a process marked by wars and violent conflicts. At the same time, of course, it would be wrong to fall into the trap of thinking in terms of historical determinism and succumbing to fatalism. Mankind makes its own history, and even if the basic conditions for a sustainable peaceful development in the South Pacific are worsening in view of the global destruction of the environment, the manifold constraints of the transition from traditional to modern society, the forced integration into a globalised economy dominated by the capitals of the North, and - mostly home-made - bad governance (whereby they are only catching up with “normality” in other regions of the South), yet there are also signs of hope and chances to solve the problems successfully. The transition processes in the societies of the South Pacific can be managed without violence - or at least with little violence -, sustainable development is possible, if people succeed in preserving traditional forms of society and politics, traditional values and spirituality, and traditional methods of conflict regulation, and at the same time managing to assimilate them in the modernisation processes they are inevitably facing. They will also need to succeed in limiting the negative aspects of modernisation in its various forms - from ecological destruction to unemployment and corruption - and balancing them out with skilful policies. Both will have to be achieved by those acting in the region, but those in the North share the responsibility. For the tropical timber, the copper and gold, exploited under conditions that destroy the environment and lead to the disintegration of traditional social structures, are exploited by companies from the North for consumers in the North. The consumer goods, for which the unemployed youths turn criminal, are brought on to the markets by companies from the North. And the style of politics employed by local elites with the aim of personal power and enrichment, is modelled on the liberal-democratic states of the North. “We here” in the North cannot escape the responsibility for the misery in which “they down there” find themselves.

There are many people who work, with warm hearts and cool minds, to overcome this misery “down there”. I have seen this for myself while visiting NGOs working for democracy, human rights, development and peace - especially those linked to the churches - and talking with their staff. Their awareness of the problems and their analysis of the situation is usually crystal clear, their approaches to solving the problems and dealing with conflicts are convincing. They attempt to combine traditional methods and instruments of conflict resolution from their local context with modern methods of civil society. And this combination - and with it the cooperation between modern protagonists of civil society (be they human rights organisations or church women’s groups) and traditional protagonists (e.g. chiefs, village elders) offers the best chances for sustainable problem solving, crisis prevention and peace building. As a positive example the peace process on Bougainville can serve as a model in this sense. However it also shows how long-winded and difficult such processes are. Those people and organisations working for peace and human rights there have a depressingly hard time, and on the Solomons, Fiji, Vanuatu - not to speak of West Papua - it does not look any better. They well require support from outside. The *Civil Peace Service*

and the work of *peace workers* can only be *one aspect* of such support - and is not unproblematic at that. For if it is true that local customary methods of conflict resolution have to play an important role, then it must be very carefully considered which “niches” exist where the employment of external staff, with the necessary special abilities not available locally, makes sense and promises success. One area frequently mentioned is *work with people traumatised by war*, and the training of local staff in trauma counselling. Such deployment will, as a rule, have to be at a “meso level”, for example training the trainers or networking with various NGOs and local initiatives. It makes little sense to send peace workers “into the villages”. At the same time it must be guaranteed that such outside peace workers are ready and capable of feeling their way into the traditional social structures and methods of conflict resolution. Apart from professional expertise it also requires a certain amount of ethno-social and intercultural competence. Many people I spoke to emphasised that external peace workers will have to be prepared *to listen and to learn* and that the deployment of such workers is only meaningful if it covers a *longer period* (several years). For time is an important factor in Melanesian society, time to get acquainted with each other, to learn and to build up trust. “Unmelanesian haste” is neither good for peace processes nor would it be good for the deployment of peace workers. Besides which it only seems meaningful to employ peace workers in the region if it is planned from the beginning as a “two-way traffic”. It is not only a question of transferring specialised knowledge of civil conflict management “there” and qualifying and supporting local peace staff in their work, but also of learning from local traditional methods of conflict management and bringing back “here” what has been learnt (and passing it on further). Merely “accompanying” local protagonists on the spot as they work for crisis-prevention, conflict resolution and peace building, just listening, watching, questioning, taking notes, and documenting can be Civil Peace Service. For curious questions and reflection by an outsider can encourage local people to reflect their own actions through a process of “creative foreignness”, thus enabling them to achieve a more reflected and more successful approach in their work. Another aspect of the two-way traffic character of the Civil Peace Service has also been mentioned before. It should be made possible for people from the region, and from the South in general, to take part in the training courses of the Civil Peace Service here. For they have the best knowledge of local constellations of conflict, they know about the customary mechanisms of conflict resolution (and their deficits) and they can best judge what additional expertise is required. Such an opening of the Civil Peace service is urgently required in the sense of equal cooperation, and would also provide another opportunity for the much pleaded for South-South exchange. Peace activists from the South Pacific and the Horn of Africa will most certainly have a lot to share with each other about their experiences of civil conflict resolution, and German peace workers could learn a lot by listening.

APPENDIX

Contact/Organisations visited

Papua-New Guinea/Bougainville

Lukis Romaso, KumGie
 Ulla Kroog, GDS
 Eckart Garbe, GDS
 Sister Lorraine Garasu, Bougainville Inter-Church Women's Forum
 Veronica Hatutasi, The Independent
 Anna Solomon, Word Publishing
 Andy Siedersleben, Austrian Development Service (tel.)
 Reinhard Lorenz, Austrian Development Service

Solomon Islands

Charles Kelly, Solomon Islands Christian Association (SICA)
 John Roughan, Solomon Islands Development Trust (SIDT)
 Eric Takila, President, SICA und South Sea Evangelical Church (SSEC)
 George Saemane, SSEC Peace Office (also DSE Peace Office)
 Sophia Chottu, General Secretary, YWCA
 Moses Bariri, Project Manager, YWCA
 Rose Niaronga, Development Service Exchange (DSE)
 Laurence Kepangi Makihi, DSE
 Martina Ului, President, National Council of Women
 Agnes Akwai, President, Red Cross Solomon Islands
 Timothy Laesanau, World Vision
 Bob Pollard, SICA Peace Office
 Matthew Wale, SICA Peace Office
 Abraham Baeanisia, President, SIDT
 Miriam Adomea, SICA Women's Association
 Martha Horiwapu, SICA Women's Association
 Doreen Sam, Solomon Islands Women Network (SIWNET)
 Luke Memua, Save the Children
 Brother Harry Gereniu, Melanesian Brotherhood

Fiji

Motarilavao Hilda Lini, Director, Pacific Concerns Resource Centre (PCRC)
 Tupou Vere, PCRC (zugleich National Council of Women Fiji)
 Michael Makasiale, PCRC
 Nick MacLellan, PCRC
 Fipe Tuitubou, PCRC
 Vijay Naidu, Director, Centre for Development Studies, USP
 Teresa Isiteri, Secretary General, FCC
 Samoa Tafia, PCC
 Father Frank Hoare, People for Intercultural Awareness (PIA)
 Tarcisius Tara Kabutaulaka, School of Social and Economic Development, USP
 Fele Nokise, Vice-Principal, Pacific Theological College (PTC)
 Manfred Ernst, PTC
 Edwina Cotoisuva, Fiji Women's Crisis Centre
 Tessa MacKenzie, Interfaith Search Fiji
 John Scott, Director, Fiji Red Cross
 Akuila Yabaki, Executive Director, Citizens Constitutional Forum (CCF)
 Imrana Jalal, Fiji Women's Rights Movement
 Miriama Leweniqila, President, National Council of Women Fiji
 Tabua Salato, National Council of Women Fiji
 Sharon Bhagwan Rolls, FCC – Research Group (FCC-RG)/Advisory Committee
 Larry Thomas, FCC-RG/Advisory Committee
 Koila Costello-Olsson, FCC-RG
 Aisake Casimira, FCC-RG
 Rev. Tomasi Kanailagi, President, FCC and Methodist Church
 Hassan Khan, Director, Fiji Council of Social Services (FCOSS)
 Sashi Kiron, FCOSS
 Nilesh Prasad, FCOSS
 Susanna Evening, President, Catholic Women's League
 Anit Singh, Human Rights Group

Vanuatu

Blandine Boulekone, Vanuatu Family Health Association
 Virginia Toaliu, Vanuatu National Council of Women
 Pastor Pakoa Maraki, General Secretary, Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu
 Rex Horoi, Director, Foundation for the Peoples of the South Pacific International (FSPI)
 Miriam Bule, Vanuatu Women's Centre
 Joemela Simeon, Juvenile Justice Project
 Peter Walker, Wan Smolbag Theatre
 Suliana Siwatibau, Islands Consulting (also PIANGO)
 Sylvia Linggi, FSPI
 Emily Niras, Vanuatu Young People's Project (tel.).

Selected Bibliography

Amnesty International: Solomon Islands. A forgotten conflict (AI - Report ASA 43/05/00). London 2000.

Anderson, Mary B./Angelika Spelten: Conflict Transformation. How International Assistance can contribute (= Stiftung Entwicklung und Frieden, Policy Paper 15). Bonn 2000.

Arbeitsgemeinschaft Kirchlicher Entwicklungsdienst (AG KED) (Hg.): Frieden muß von innen wachsen. Zivile Konfliktbearbeitung in der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit. Ein Werkstattbericht der kirchlichen Hilfswerke. Bonn 1999.

Arbeitsgemeinschaft Kriegsursachenforschung (AKUF): Das Kriegsgeschehen 1999. Daten und Tendenzen der Kriege und bewaffneten Konflikte. Hg. V. Thomas Rabehl. Opladen 2000.

Arbeitsgemeinschaft Qualifizierung für zivile Konfliktbearbeitung/Zivilen Friedensdienst (Hg.): Friedensfachdienst ist machbar! Profis der zivilen Konfliktbearbeitung im Einsatz. O.O., o.J..

Baehr, Ralph: Fidschi. In: Nohlen/Nuscheler, S. 350-368.

Böge, Volker: Friedenskonsolidierung in Nachkriegszeiten. Der Fall Bougainville (= Forschungsstelle Kriege, Rüstung und Entwicklung, Arbeitspapier 3/99). Hamburg 1999.

Böge, Volker: Bergbau – Umweltzerstörung – Gewalt. Der Krieg auf Bougainville im Kontext ökologisch induzierter Modernisierungskonflikte (= Kriege und militante Konflikte, Bd. 8). Hamburg 1997.

Buchholz, Hanns J.: Salomon-Inseln. In: Nohlen/Nuscheler, S. 426-436.

Debiel, Tobias: Entwicklungspolitik als Konfliktprävention. In: epd-Entwicklungspolitik 1/99, S. 16f.

Debiel, Tobias/Martina Fischer/Volker Matthies/Norbert Ropers : Effektive Krisenprävention. Herausforderungen für die deutsche Außen- und Entwicklungspolitik (= Stiftung Entwicklung und Frieden, Policy Paper 12). Bonn 1999.

Ernst, Manfred/Holger Szesnat: Der Inselstaat ist tief gespalten. In: Der Überblick 3/2000, S. 80-85.

Evers, Tilman (Hg.): Ziviler Friedensdienst - Fachleute für den Frieden. Idee - Erfahrungen - Ziele. Opladen 2000.

Fiji Council of Churches Research Group: Remembering the Past for the Future. An Analysis of Fiji's Political Crisis. FCC Research Group Report. Suva 2000.

Heinrich, Wolfgang: Förderung von Friedensprozessen durch EZ. In: Entwicklung und Zusammenarbeit, 40.Jg., 1999, H.4, S. 106-109.

Matthies, Volker(Hg.): Vom Krieg zum Frieden. Kriegsbeendigung und Friedenskonsolidierung. Bremen 1995.

Matthies, Volker: Krisenprävention als Friedenspolitik. Zur Entstehung und Entwicklung eines neuen politischen Konzepts. In: Entwicklung und Zusammenarbeit, 40. Jg.,1999, H.4, S. 103-106.

Matthies, Volker: Krisenprävention. Vorbeugen ist besser als Heilen. Opladen 2000.

Miles, William F.S.: Bridging Mental Boundaries in a Postcolonial Microcosm: Identity and Development in Vanuatu. Honolulu 1998.

Nohlen, Dieter/Franz Nuscheler (Hg.): Handbuch der Dritten Welt. Band 8: Ostasien und Ozeanien. 3., völlig neu bearbeitete Auflage. Bonn 1994.

Pazifik-Netzwerk e.V./Pazifik-Informationsstelle (Hg.): Unser Land - unsere Seele. Pazifikstaaten und ihre Landrechte. Neuendettelsau 1999.

Scharmann, Ludwig: Vanuatu. In: Nohlen/Nuscheler, S. 460-475.

Seib, Roland: Papua-Neuguinea. In: Nohlen/Nuscheler, S. 410-425.

Trease, Howard van (ed.): Melanesian Politics. Stael blong Vanuatu. Christchurch 1995.

Journals:

Fiji's Daily Post, Suva

The Fiji Sun, Suva

The Fiji Times, Suva

The Independent, Port Moresby

The National, Port Moresby

Pacific Islands Report, Honolulu

Pacific News Bulletin, Suva

The Post Courier, Port Moresby

Solomon Star, Honiara

Vanuatu Weekly, Port Vila