

Quaker Action



Planting seeds of peace

Protecting our right to
housing in Atlanta

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Stopping police
militarization

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Celebrating 75 years
of QUNO

pg. 14



**American
Friends
Service
Committee**

Spring 2023 Volume 104 Number 1



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Quaker Action

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Who we are

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) promotes a world free of violence, inequality, and oppression.

Guided by the Quaker belief in the divine light within each person, we nurture the seeds of change and the respect for human life to fundamentally transform our societies and institutions.

Managing Editor

Ronna Bolante

Editors

Mark Graham
Theresa Kirby
Katherine Noble

Design

Aija Suuta
Carl Roose

Contact

quakeraction@afsc.org

American Friends Service Committee

1501 Cherry Street
Philadelphia, PA 19102
Tel: 215-241-7000
Toll-free: 888-588-2372

Cover photo

In March, AFSC's Middle East staff planted 100 lemon trees in the Jordan Valley.

Photo: Bilal Olimat/AFSC



Letter from our general secretary

It was my great honor to visit Addis Ababa, Ethiopia last winter to celebrate the launch of the Salama Hub. The hub is a brand-new initiative for African-based research and advocacy, and AFSC is a major sponsor of this innovative project. (Salama means “peace and safety” in Swahili.)

The Salama Hub is a great example of how our AFSC global community makes a difference in the world. Much of the policy that impacts the people of Africa has long been led and shaped by people from the U.S. and Europe. So, we built partnerships to change the situation. Around the world, AFSC recognizes communities’ unmet needs and people whose voices are ignored. We bring their insights to the halls of power, knowing that the wisdom to address these needs lies within communities themselves. This is one way that we put Quaker values boldly into action for a just and peaceful world.

I hope you enjoy learning more about Salama Hub in this magazine. In this issue, you’ll also see how we help fulfill important needs, speak truth to power, and lift up community insights in places as varied as Atlanta, Gaza, and the United Nations.

All of this work is a partnership. I want to thank you, our supporters, from the bottom of my heart for making all of this possible!

With gratitude,



Become a Partner for Peace Today!

Your support of AFSC goes even further when you start a monthly gift.


Monthly donors are Partners for Peace—supporting communities working every day to end injustice and create conditions for lasting peace.

Start your monthly gift today by visiting afsc.org/QAmonthly or calling our team in Philadelphia at 888-588-2372. As a thank you, we'll send you a free AFSC tote bag!



Get Alumni Network updates and join our Facebook group!

afsc.org/alumni



Tonya Histan
Director of Public Engagement



Photo: Anni Hanna

AFSC New Mexico hosted their inaugural Harvest for Justice reception, where they reconnected with former staff and volunteers. The photo above features the first director of AFSC New Mexico, **Luis Torres (second from left)**, with three members of the 1974 advisory committee, **Clark de Schweinitz**, **David Henkel**, and **Jerry Ortiz y Pino**.

Marjorie Nelson died on Dec. 29, in State College, Pennsylvania. In 1967, Marjorie, a 28-year-old doctor from Indiana, worked at AFSC’s Quang Ngai Rehabilitation Center in Vietnam. While in Vietnam, Marjorie was taken as a prisoner of war. But the accounts she shared of her experience in captivity reminded U.S. audiences of the value of recognizing the humanity in all people, even in times of conflict.

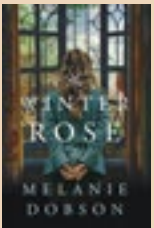
Tony Coleman, who worked for AFSC in Oakland connecting healing justice and youth, passed away in late September.

INTO THE ARCHIVES

Over the past year, several books have been published that describe AFSC’s work in key moments in history. Several relied on research in the AFSC Archives. These books include:



“To Live Peaceably Together: AFSC’s Campaign for Open Housing” (by Tracy E. K’Meyer) examines AFSC’s work to build communities where people of different race and class could live together in equality and dignity.



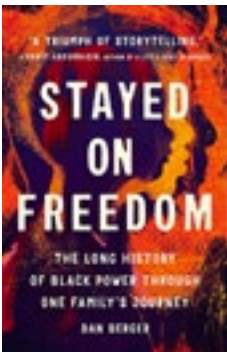
“The Winter Rose” (by Melanie Dobson) is a historical novel that draws inspiration from two former AFSC staff who worked with refugees in Spain and France during World War II.



“Against the Current” (by Deborah Ranniger) tells the story of Leonard Edelstein, who served as a conscientious objector in camps supervised by AFSC during World War II.

Jonis Davis worked for AFSC as a fundraiser for many years before retiring in 2009. Jonis passed away on Nov. 8.

The recently published book **“Stayed on Freedom”** by Dan Berger offers a new history of Black liberation. It tells the story of two grassroots organizers and AFSC alums, **Zoharah Simmons** and **Michael Simmons**, whose roles in the movement had never been told.



Middle: Michael Simmons, Right: Zoharah Simmons. Photo AFSC Archives

Do you have news or stories to share? Email us at alumni@afsc.org

Updates from AFSC



In Florida, TPS holders, family members, and allies rally to protect TPS. Photo: AFSC Florida

VICTORY

Since 1990, the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) program has protected people in the U.S. from deportation when the country they came from is afflicted by war, natural disaster, and other dangers.

In 2017, the Trump administration announced it would end this vital program—placing the lives of hundreds of thousands of TPS holders and their families in limbo. AFSC worked with TPS holders and allies to save the program. We arranged meetings with elected officials, organized call-in days, and held events

across the U.S. When President Biden took office, we kept up our pressure on the new administration and Congress.

Last fall, the Biden administration announced it would extend previous TPS designations for people from El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and several other countries until 2024. In addition, it renewed TPS for Haiti, allowing more Haitians to enroll in the program. New Jersey community leader Fidelina Alfaro is one of many who found relief in the new policies. Still, more is needed. “It’s time Congress

passes a humane immigration policy to allow TPS and other immigrants to adjust their status and obtain permanent protections,” she says. •



Imani Cruz
Policy Advocacy
Coordinator For Migration



In New Mexico, AFSC helps bring produce from local farms to schools. Photo: Core-Visual

UNITED STATES

A Farm Bill for all

This year, Congress is working to pass a Farm Bill. This massive piece of legislation is authorized every five years and affects every person in the U.S. The Farm Bill determines what food is grown, how it’s grown, and how affordable it is. It authorizes funding for vital anti-hunger programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). And it presents a critical opportunity to counter climate change through agricultural policies.

That’s why AFSC is working with partners nationwide to advocate for a just, equitable Farm Bill.

We’re urging Congress to pass a bill that:

- Strengthens and expands access to anti-hunger programs.
- Addresses climate change by supporting regenerative agricultural practices.
- Invests in local food systems to promote healthy food access and sovereignty.

WILL YOU JOIN OUR EFFORTS?

Visit afsc.org/farmbill to contact Congress, sign up for advocacy webinars, and learn more. •



Peniel Ibe

Policy Engagement Coordinator

GLOBAL

New study shows growing U.S. support for engagement with North Korea and China

Bringing people together plays a crucial role in building peace. Engaging in dialogue fosters relationships that reduce tensions. Our most recent research shows that many people in the U.S. agree.

These values are at the heart of AFSC’s decades of work for peace in northeast Asia. AFSC commissioned an opinion poll of 2,063 adults in the U.S., conducted by The Harris Poll in January. Here are some of the key findings:

- **67% agree** that the U.S. government should engage in talks with China to reduce tensions.
- **76% support** repatriation of service members’ remains from North Korea.
- **68% support** talks between the U.S. and North Korea.
- **62% support** lifting sanctions if they interfere with humanitarian aid.
- **58% support** lifting sanctions if they harm people’s livelihoods.
- **52% support** formally ending the Korean War with a peace agreement.

Our findings provide a roadmap for advocates and policymakers to move forward on these issues and build a more peaceful world.

LEARN MORE AT afsc.org/ChinaDPRKpoll



Beth Hallowell

Director of Research and Analytics

Q+A

Strengthening civil society in Africa

An interview with Kennedy Akolo, Africa regional director

PHOTO: NATHANIEL DOUBLEDAY/AFSC

Q: AFSC and the All-Africa Conference of Churches recently launched the Salama Hub in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Could you tell us more about it?

A: The Salama Hub brings together civil society organizations and individuals to research and advocate on issues that affect peace and stability in the Horn of Africa. The region includes Somalia, Djibouti, Eritrea, South Sudan, Sudan, Uganda, Kenya, and Ethiopia, which face a range of issues. These issues include war and other conflicts, extreme poverty, drought, and famine. One of the challenges to peacebuilding in the region is the lack of capacity of civil society organizations (CSOs). Most CSOs are primed for providing aid and services—not engaging in advocacy to address conflict. We’re also seeing more government restrictions on civil society that limit their ability to facilitate peace. The Salama Hub was created to strengthen the capacity of CSOs and help them organize to change policies and structures.

Q: Can you talk about the role of research in the Salama Hub’s work?

A: A major component of our efforts is to commission African researchers to conduct studies that will help us influence policymakers. Studies on Africa are usually done by Western researchers or others outside of the region. We often see how bias, ignorance, and misunderstandings can affect that research.

By using African researchers, we are working to decolonize the process of research. Our research must be grounded in communities. It will involve partnerships with local universities and academic institutions. We want to make sure we have genuine evidence and perspectives from the region so we can address the root causes of conflicts.

“By using African researchers, we are working to decolonize the process of research. Our research must be grounded in communities. ”

Q: What are some of the things that the Salama Hub has done since it opened?

A: As of January 2023, we have brought together a total of 50 CSOs that are now part of this consortium. We have also opened a renovated diplomatic space in Addis Ababa where CSOs can hold sensitive conversations with government officials, diplomats, and others.

We have formed working groups on priority issues. These issues include exploring how climate change affects peace in the region and engaging more women to help mediate conflicts. We’re also looking at how to address tensions among pastoralist communities, which are herding communities that are semi-nomadic.

Our goal is to support organizations in advocacy efforts beyond local governments. That will include addressing issues at the European Union and United Nations, and with the U.S. government and African Union.

At the end of day, the Salama Hub is about transforming lives in this part of world. If this program is a success, it could change how the Horn of Africa responds to and prevents conflict. •

PROTECTING OUR RIGHT TO HOUSING

Everyone deserves to live in safe, healthy homes. But across the United States, people face evictions as neighborhoods are gentrified and home prices rise.

Renters are displaced by property owners eager to sell in a booming real estate market. And many tenants live in hazardous housing conditions that landlords fail to address.

Due to a long history of racist housing policies in the U.S., low-income people of color are disproportionately harmed by these problems.

The affordable housing crisis in the U.S. is not a crisis of resources. It's a crisis of moral priority. Far too often, elected officials choose to prioritize high-end developments and tax breaks for the wealthy instead of ensuring all people have safe, clean, affordable housing.

For over a decade, AFSC's Atlanta Economic Justice Program (ATLEJ) has helped renters and homeowners organize and advocate for their right to housing. Through trainings and grassroots leadership development, we support communities in building public pressure campaigns to create change.

HOUSING JUSTICE ACTIVIST
JULIET BROWN (FRONT), ACCOMPANIED BY AFSC
STAFF AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS.



ILLUSTRATIONS: AIJA SUUTA

BY TIM FRANZEN AND FOLUKE NUNN

HERE ARE SOME WAYS WE'RE MAKING A DIFFERENCE TOGETHER

RESISTING EMINENT DOMAIN

Eminent domain refers to the power of government to take private property for public use. And it is one way government has historically displaced Black and Brown communities.

That's what the city of Atlanta did in 2012 when it forced residents from their homes in the historic Black community of Peoplestown. The city announced plans to seize 27 homes on one block, ostensibly to mitigate flooding. The plan involved building a state-of-the-art park with a waterfall, a gazebo, and ponds. Never mind that most of those homes had never flooded, or that city engineers had no evidence that their plan was necessary or would even work.

Several homeowners organized a coalition of community members and organizations, including AFSC, to oppose the forced displacement. They hired their own lawyer and engineering firm. Over the years, our coalition did everything we could to draw attention to what the city was doing—and build public support for our resistance. We showed up at city council meetings, held rallies and marches, staged sit-ins at the mayor's office, and garnered national media attention.

Last year, we finally concluded the decade-long struggle with a bittersweet victory. Under a new mayoral administration, families reached a satisfactory settlement with the city. They agreed to leave their homes—and the city would pay them enough to cover their legal and engineering expenses, afford new homes, and more. Through our resistance, our coalition succeeded in making developers and public officials rethink the use of eminent domain to

displace communities of color.

Says former Peoplestown resident Tanya Washington, "We hope our fight will inspire other communities to stand up for themselves and inspire responsible exercise of authority by those in power."

HOLDING LANDLORDS ACCOUNTABLE

In many places around the U.S., landlords are getting federal subsidies to rent to low-income people—even for conditions that are unsafe or unsanitary. Millennia Housing Management is one such landlord.

Millennia is one of the largest affordable housing providers in the country. It manages over 30,000 units across 26 states. But it has failed to rectify horrific living conditions in many of its complexes. Rats, roaches, and garbage; leaking pipes; and mold issues have sickened tenants. In Atlanta, Millennia's Forest Cove complex was condemned by a judge, citing numerous code violations. It took months and millions of dollars for the city to relocate the 200 residents to other affordable housing.

Multiple deaths and injuries have occurred in Millennia properties in other states. These include three people killed by a fire in Arkansas, and a mother and child killed by a carbon monoxide leak in Mississippi.

Today, Millennia tenants are organizing nationwide to hold Millennia accountable, with support from AFSC and partners. We're urging the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and members of Congress to investigate Millennia's mismanagement and neglect. We're calling for more federal oversight and enforcement to ensure all federally subsidized housing providers provide

safe, sanitary housing. And we're engaging others in our efforts through actions online and at Millennia complexes around the U.S.

"The fact that it was necessary to form a national movement against a company that's supposed to provide vulnerable people with healthy, safe, and dignified living conditions speaks to the systemic failures in our affordable housing system," says Becky, a Millennia tenant in Memphis. "Millennia is by no means the only company that profits from the marginalization of those whose voices are routinely ignored." If we can hold Millennia accountable, Becky says, "it will open the door for people who are in similar situations with other predatory landlords to be able to fight back and win."

To learn more about the Millennia Resistance Campaign, visit: afsc.org/millennia-campaign.

BUILDING COMMUNITY POWER

Many people facing evictions or hazardous rental housing conditions don't know where to start in advocating for their rights. That's why AFSC published the "How to Defend Your Home" manual.

"How to Defend Your Home" is a step-by-step guide to help people research and develop a campaign strategy. It offers best practices for sharing personal stories with the public and for organizing neighbors and the larger community. It also discusses ways to negotiate with landlords and escalate public pressure.

The manual is based on a resource created by Occupy Our Homes Atlanta, a coalition AFSC helped form during the foreclosure crisis in the early 2010s. Mildred Obi was one of many who used that resource as a blueprint. Like many people,

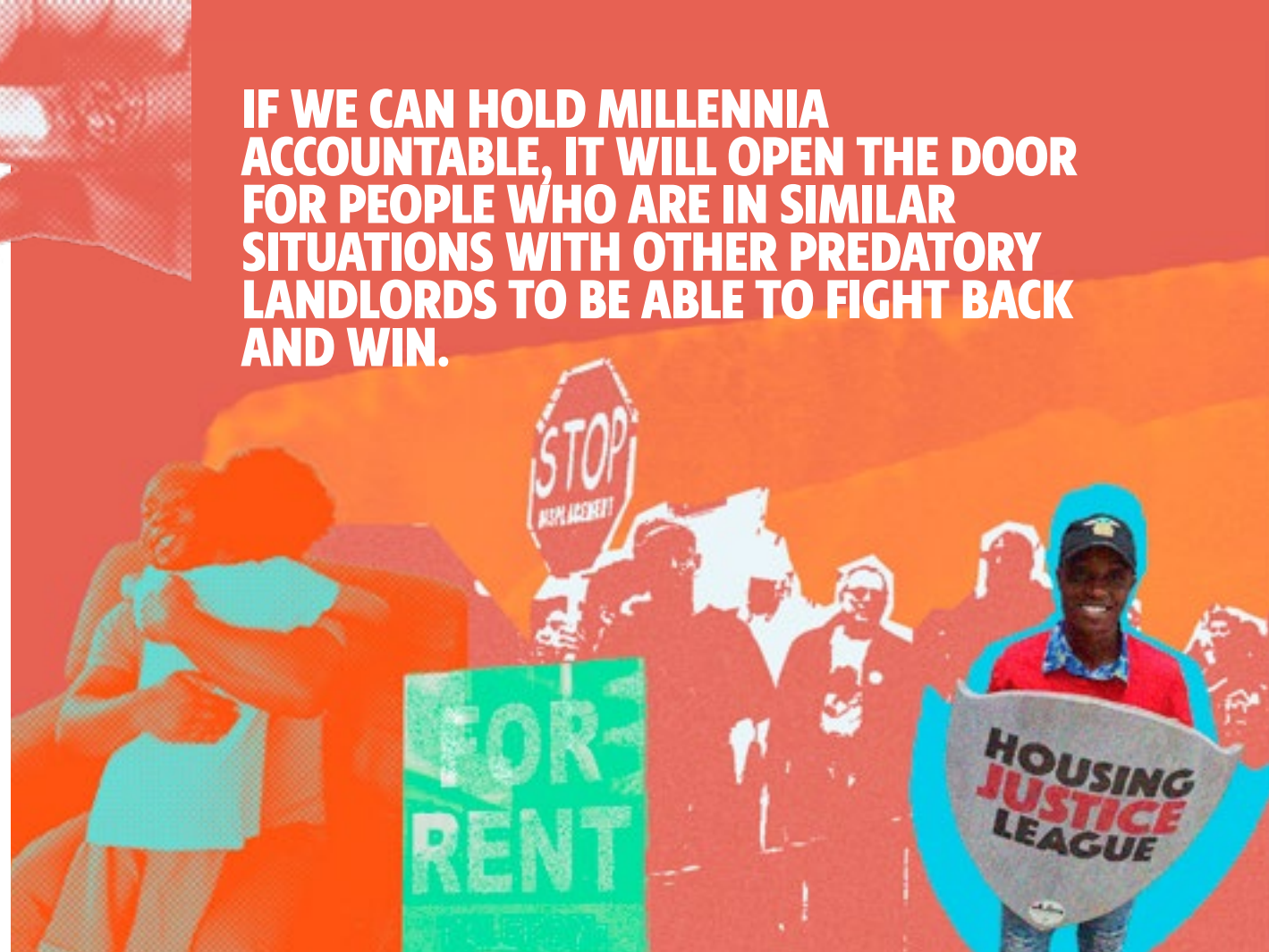
she had lost her job and fallen behind on mortgage payments. A senior in her 60s, she struggled to find employment, and despite her best efforts to work with the bank, she was evicted.

Mildred launched a public campaign, and community members rallied behind her. They held a sit-in at a local bank branch, gathered thousands of petition signatures, and marched with Mildred to move her back into her house as an act of civil disobedience. Eventually, the bank agreed to work out a payment plan with her so she could keep her home. She still lives there today.

"Having that community support is very important," Mildred says. "Knowing you're not alone, that you have rights, gives you strength. It empowers you."

To download the manual, visit afsc.org/HomeDefendersManual.

IF WE CAN HOLD MILLENNIA ACCOUNTABLE, IT WILL OPEN THE DOOR FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE IN SIMILAR SITUATIONS WITH OTHER PREDATORY LANDLORDS TO BE ABLE TO FIGHT BACK AND WIN.



EMBRACING COMMUNITY-BASED SOLUTIONS

People across the U.S. are pursuing innovative approaches to address the affordable housing crisis. Community land trusts—owned and governed by residents themselves—provide one alternative, community-based solution.

This year, AFSC's program in Atlanta is partnering with local nonprofits—the Guild and Housing Justice League—to establish such a trust. Since 2015, the Guild has worked to stop the gentrification and displacement of Black communities through projects that promote community ownership. Recently, the Guild purchased a property in Atlanta, where several affordable homes will be built.

The first house is expected to be completed early next year. It will be the

home of housing justice activist Juliet Brown, who in 2021 faced eviction from the home she had lived in for 30 years. Earlier this year, AFSC helped Juliet move into a lovely home in East Atlanta, where she will live temporarily as we work with the Guild to complete her forever home.

These are difficult economic times for so many people. But people in Atlanta and across the country are proving that when we work together to resist housing injustices, we can win—and reclaim our homes and dignity. •



STOPPING KILLER POLICE ROBOTS AND MILITARIZATION

Across California, local activists are working to keep military weapons out of policing.

By Jennifer Tu and John Lindsay-Poland

**“I DON’T UNDERSTAND
HOW WE AS A SOCIETY
ACCEPT THESE
WEAPONS OF WAR
ON CIVILIANS.
THESE ARE WEAPONS
OF WAR INTENDED
TO MAIM, AND
SOMETIMES TO KILL.”**

Those were the words of a community member at a City Council hearing on the military weapons used by police in Santa Cruz, California.

During the hearing, police revealed that their arsenal includes a BearCat armored vehicle, AR-15 semi-automatic

assault rifles, and chemical agents, including tear gas. The disclosure disturbed some community members—who urged elected officials to limit how these weapons could be used.

For over a year, communities across California have used a new state law to advocate for police demilitarization. The law, AB 481, brings a new level of transparency and accountability by requiring law enforcement agencies to disclose what military equipment they have and propose a policy for its use. These policies must be approved or rejected by civilian elected officials in a public hearing.

The law gives Californians unprecedented opportunities to pressure elected officials to take a public stand against police militarization. It is also a chance to end law enforcement’s sole discretion about what makes communities safer—or

the gear it has in its possession, which generates more risk. AFSC’s California Healing Justice Program has been supporting local activists to do just that. We have researched the holdings of hundreds of police departments in California, filing 351 public records requests on police militarization. And we have shared this information with local activists, provided analysis of proposed policies, and helped community members advocate for change.

In multiple cities, we have seen how community activism has moved elected officials to oppose police departments’ policies when they hadn’t before.

Here are some examples of the progress we’ve made over the past year:



BANNING LETHAL ROBOTS

Last November, San Francisco’s Board of Supervisors voted to allow police to use lethally armed robots. Outraged community members and groups, including AFSC, immediately spoke out. The protests at city hall, national media coverage, and intense public pressure worked. Several lawmakers changed their positions. And in a complete reversal, the Board of Supervisors voted the following week to ban police robots from using deadly force.

In Oakland, AFSC staff questioned police at a public hearing about how they planned to use the robot in their inventory. Police officials revealed that they intended to keep the option of using their robot to kill. But after the media reported on this exchange, Oakland Police changed course. Now the department’s policy prohibits lethal use of its robot.

KEEPING NEW WEAPONS FROM ABUSIVE JAIL STAFF

In Alameda County, community activists helped stop more weapons from being supplied to a jail with a history of violence against the people in its custody. In recent years, people incarcerated in Santa Rita Jail have faced sadistic, inhumane treatment, including beatings ordered by deputies. Over the past eight years, at least 60 people have died in the facility.

Last year, Alameda County’s sheriff proposed a policy that included acquiring more PepperBall launchers for the jail—adding to the 114 launchers it already had. The policy would have placed no restrictions on the additional weapons. Officers would be able use them indiscriminately—and even fire them at people point-blank or at someone’s face, neck, or vital organs.

But persistent activists refused to let that happen, showing up at county meetings to speak out. Eventually, a county supervisor—who had been one of the sheriff’s strongest supporters—declared he would vote “no” on the proposal if the PepperBalls were part of the policy.

INCREASING TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

In Richmond, the police department and attorneys heavily revised their proposed usage policy, based on AFSC’s recommendations and community demands. The resulting policy limited authorized uses for assault rifles, projectile launchers, and tear gas, among other equipment. Another change now prohibits police from using flashbangs when encountering someone in a mental health crisis.

The City of Orange refused to disclose its recent purchases of militarized equipment, despite requirements under AB 481. So in April 2022, AFSC successfully sued the city for that information. A few weeks after being formally served, the City of Orange publicly produced all the public records we had requested.

In Santa Cruz, the police department initially refused to include its 70 AR-15 style “patrol rifles” in its inventory of

military-grade equipment. Police argued the rifles were “standard issue.” With support from AFSC, a small group of activists urged councilmembers to reject that argument. These activists pointed out that these rifles weren’t carried by bicycle cops or police officers patrolling popular beach areas—and therefore could not be considered standard issue. Councilmembers agreed and told police to update its public inventory to reflect this information.

WHAT’S AHEAD

Community activists have made real progress in demanding transparency and accountability from police. But we have much more work ahead. Some law enforcement agencies have yet to propose a policy for elected officials and the public to review. Other agencies have proposed policies that place no limits on how police officers deploy military-grade weapons in our communities.

That’s why AFSC and partners are keeping up the pressure on local governments to comply with the new law. This year, police departments will have to start publishing annual reports on how they’re using militarized equipment—and elected officials will reevaluate existing policies. AFSC is supporting activists to analyze these reports and advocate with city councils and county supervisors. Making changes now is critical to keeping our communities safe. •

The City of Orange refused to disclose its purchases of militarized equipment.

AFSC sued for that information.

A few weeks later, the city produced all of the public records we requested.

To learn more about California’s AB 481 and how community organizers are using it to create change, visit:

[AFSC.ORG/AB481REPORTTOOLKIT](https://afsc.org/ab481reporttoolkit)



Celebrating



of

Quakers at the United Nations

Photos: AFSC Archives

In the final days of World War II, world leaders came together to form an international body to prevent future global catastrophes. They established the United Nations (U.N.). Its stated purpose: *“To save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind.”*

For generations, Quakers had been actively involved in preventing violent conflict and supporting war relief efforts. They had sent representatives to the League of Nations and supported the founding of the U.N. Now Quakers wanted representation for their concerns for global peace and justice—and to ensure that the voices of local communities were part of policy discussions.

In 1948, Quakers were granted U.N. accreditation, allowing them to carry out their work at U.N. headquarters in New York and directly participate in the meetings and activities of this body. This new office was called, simply, the Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO). Today, there are

Quaker offices in both New York and Geneva, which represent Quakers through Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC). QUNO in New York receives critical administrative and financial support from AFSC and collaborates on many programs and statements.

Over the years, QUNO staff have worked with diplomats, U.N. officials, and community members to implement the United Nations’ original vision of peace and human rights.

This year, we celebrate the 75th anniversary of QUNO as a shared initiative of the global Quaker community. Here is a look at some of QUNO’s work over the years.



BRINGING COMMUNITY VOICES TO THE U.N.

Much of QUNO’s work is behind the scenes, building trust by bringing together people from a range of backgrounds, including diplomats, U.N. officials, staff of civil society organizations, academics, and community members.

“It’s important that communities play a leadership role in policy discussions that affect them,” says Sarah Clarke, director of QUNO New York. “In many cases, the international community comes in as an outsider and imposes solutions on people. Instead, it should work hand in hand with local communities who already know what the solutions are, but need support—including humanitarian aid, technical assistance, or support with political negotiations.”

In New York and Geneva, QUNO provides quiet spaces—away from formal U.N. meeting rooms—to allow important conversations to take place. In New York City, Quaker House is a setting where people can gather in a comfortable, off-the-record environment. The meeting space is essentially a living room, where people sit in a circle (not at a table) to talk, often over food.

This unique environment “encourages people to gather like human beings, share information they might not have otherwise, and come up with new and creative solutions,” Sarah says. These gatherings have facilitated key conversations at critical moments in QUNO’s history.

One example is the period after 9/11, as the United States embarked on its “war on terror.” Disagreement emerged at the U.N. around whether governments should engage with rebel armed groups, classified by some as “terrorists.” QUNO advocated for dialogue with all parties as the path to peace. A small briefing at Quaker House brought outside experts together with diplomats, including those from countries where armed groups were fighting against the central government.

Over the course of the discussion, participants spoke about challenges

In the early 2000s, QUNO’s work helped U.N. officials recognize that efforts to reintegrate armed combatants after a conflict must include careful thought about the gender of former soldiers.

facing their countries. One of the diplomats shared their own experience in a mediation effort when a government leader stopped referring to the other side as “terrorists” and instead began calling them “my brothers in the jungle.” This had a transformative effect that allowed constructive conversations to follow.

Another example, Sarah says, is a meeting that took place after the 2007 elections in Kenya. Violence erupted over the disputed results, leaving more than 1,300 dead and hundreds of thousands more displaced. Rumors and misinformation fueled further conflicts.

QUNO brought Dekha Ibrahim Abdi, a Kenyan community leader and nonviolence activist to speak with U.N. officials, diplomats, and others at Quaker House in New York. Dekha Ibrahim Abdi spoke about how peace activists launched a social media and texting campaign to counter misinformation and diffuse violence. The tactic was innovative at the time—and it was working.

“Many of our U.N. partners had only read grim stories in the media about violence between different factions contesting the election—and hadn’t heard about the community-led efforts like this one



QUNO representatives Kavita Desai and Sarah Clarke (left) welcome guests for discussions at Quaker House. Photo: Guang Xu

where everyday people were coming together to create peace,” Sarah recalls. “Using social media was all new 15 years ago. A lot of people in that room there were thinking, how could this be used in other contexts? Now it’s a standard tool to prevent violence when you have a transition of power.”

QUNO’S QUIET, STEADY IMPACT

Long-term persistence is key to QUNO’s work. Through perseverance, QUNO has helped change attitudes, create new understandings, and develop new global standards.

For example, QUNO’s work on girl child soldiers in the early 2000s led U.N. officials to recognize that efforts to reintegrate armed combatants after an armed conflict need to include careful thought about the gender of former soldiers. It shouldn’t be assumed that all child soldiers are boys.

Through attention to disarmament, landmines, and small arms issues, QUNO

has underlined the destabilizing impact of the weapons of war. In multiple ways, Quakers have influenced U.N. priorities for peacebuilding on the ground, upholding the value of reconciliation and dialogue across all societies.

QUNO played a key role in the shaping of the 2030 U.N. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a blueprint for achieving a more sustainable future for all. As part of negotiations, QUNO convened diplomats, U.N. officials, and civil society representatives to build global support for including a goal on peace. QUNO’s discussions were effective. Today, one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals calls on countries to “promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.”

All 193 U.N. member states have committed themselves to work toward the Sustainable Development Goals. Many countries now voluntarily report on their progress. Others have officially incorporated these goals into planning

and policies to better meet the real needs of communities. Progress on these goals can affect whether countries obtain funding from other governments, the U.N., or other sources. And in many places, the Sustainable Development Goal of peace has provided a tool for civil society to demand transparency and accountability from their government.

“The United Nations is at its strongest when all of its member states can come together, even through tensions that exist,” Sarah says. “QUNO plays an important role in bringing people from diverse backgrounds together, helping them see and listen to the perspectives of others, and reaching consensus toward a common goal.” •

REGISTER & MORE: [AFSC.ORG/QUNO75](https://afsc.org/quno75)

PHOTO: GUANG XU



QUNO 75th anniversary celebration

JUNE 9-11, NEW YORK CITY

Join AFSC and QUNO for a weekend of celebration and learning with leaders and staff working for peace and justice in the U.S. and around the world.

In addition to celebrating QUNO’s 75th anniversary, our weekend includes:

- A global convening on Quaker approaches to migration and forced displacement.
- Opportunities to hear from young leaders working to transform U.S. immigration and criminal legal systems.
- Worship with Friends.



Program spotlight

VISUALIZING A FUTURE BEYOND YOUTH INCARCERATION

67 Sueños mural. PHOTO: AFSC/67 SUEÑOS

Since 2010, AFSC’s 67 Sueños program has supported the organizing efforts of undocumented youth and youth from mixed-status families in Oakland, California. Through political education, trauma healing, and ARTivisim, 67 Sueños helps youth develop leadership skills. It also supports them in leading campaigns to end youth incarceration and militarized policing.

“Youth should not be incarcerated for their mistakes,” says youth artist Genesis. “Instead, they should be given rehabilitation, to have someone to guide them and to help their growth while giving back to their community.”

Last year, young people from 67 Sueños created the public mural, “Soñando y Cambiando: A vision to heal our communities.” The mural was inspired by the “Youth Justice 10-Point Plan” developed by 67 Sueños and other youth organizations in the Free Our Kids Coalition. This plan offers a vision to transform how government

“Youth should not be incarcerated for their mistakes. Instead, they should be given rehabilitation, to have someone to guide them and to help their growth while giving back to their community.”

— YOUTH ARTIST GENESIS

and communities respond to young people involved in the criminal legal system. And the mural depicts those youth-led solutions: nurturing healthy relationships, creating just and equal learning environments, and repairing harm to transform conflict.

Find more events and actions at afsc.org/getinvolved

JOIN US ONLINE
“Light in Gaza” series

Last year, AFSC helped bring voices from Gaza to U.S. and international audiences with the anthology “Light in Gaza: Writings Born of Fire.” Now you can join us for monthly online discussions with book contributors and AFSC staff. In these webinars, we explore the challenges faced by Palestinians under Israeli blockade—and explore the richness and resistance in everyday life in Gaza.

[AFSC.ORG/EVENTS](https://afsc.org/events)

TAKE THE PLEDGE

Think Twice Before Calling the Police

Across the U.S., communities are organizing to create a future where we rely less on police—and ensure community safety for all. One way we can all help is to think twice before calling the police. Sign our pledge and join our webinar series to learn more about alternatives that build real community safety.

[AFSC.ORG/THINKTWICE](https://afsc.org/thinktwice)





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When you make a planned gift to AFSC, you ensure we have resources to pass on to future generations of change makers. And today, your planned gift will go even further.

A generous group of donors will match planned gift commitments up to \$1 million in support for AFSC's work today.

To learn more, contact Alyssa Chatten at **888-588-2372** or **GiftPlanning@afsc.org** or visit **afsc.org/legacy-match**. *Thank you for your support!*

Here's how you can make a planned gift to unlock matching funds:

Include a gift to AFSC in your will, trust, or beneficiary designation. Or make a new life income gift such as a charitable gift annuity.

Tell us about your future gift by completing our Legacy Challenge Commitment Form.

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