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THE HAGUE JOURNAL OF PEACE AND JUSTICE



THE HAGUE NEWSPAPER OF
PEACE AND JUSTICE
DIGITAL EDITION: QR-CODE



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Ivo Daalder: in the side wings of



Robert Gates (R) and U.S. NATO ambassador Ivo H. Daalder 2010 (GettyImages)

An ordinary Hague boy. Or was he? Ivo Daalder was able to closely follow and also direct world events over the past decades. A meeting with a man in the side wings of power.

By Willem van der Ham

Whether you're watching CNN or the BBC that day, the background is the same everywhere. A window, an intriguing artwork and a view of Lake Michigan. Ivo Daalder comments. It's May 10. 'Putin offers direct talks with Ukraine,' is the headline. His words enter the living rooms of the world calmly and clearly. Other media also consult him, such as Fox News and the New York Times. His appearances in podcasts are well listened to. On May 10 and the days before and after. Daalder's vision matters.

I remember him from when he was in elementary school. He was one class down. Our parents were close friends. I speak to Ivo as he waits at Vancouver International Airport. He

is in transit from Alaska to Chicago.

First, just reminiscing.

"We lived on Zilver Schoon Street, my parents, brother, sister and me. That is also where my first memories are, because I was two and a half when we moved there. I lived in The Hague until I was sixteen, until we moved to Italy for the work of my father, the political scientist Hans Daalder. I am and feel quite a Montessorian, because from kindergarten I was at the Montessori school Laan van Poot and then I was a student at the Hague Montessori Lyceum. It was a beautiful childhood. Like my brother, I played soccer at Quick. Unfortunately, I have little or no contact with people from those schools anymore, but I experienced The Hague as a great city."

"I can't say that The Hague as an international city or politics concerned me then or that thanks to the Peace Palace, for example, I felt a calling to become a political sci-

entist. I wasn't among the best students, I preferred to play soccer and so on. But also because I later came home quite often to my parents, who had moved to the Bezuidenhout area, I still feel like a real Hageenaar and I still see the Netherlands as my own country. I follow the Dutch soccer team and the Dutch skaters at the Olympics. I love Dutch cheese, Dutch licorice."

TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS

After Italy, Ivo moved to England, where he studied at the University of Kent and at Oxford, before emigrating to the United States. At Massachusetts University of Technology, he received his doctorate in 1990 on the topic "The Nature and Practice of Flexible Response: NATO Strategy and Tactical Nuclear Weapons".

Ivo: "I became an American citizen in 1994 and then had to give up my Dutch citizenship. I would have preferred not to do that. But on the other hand: America did lure. At the table at our house we talked a lot about politics and about the war and the importance of a strong role for the United States to maintain our peace and security. But that I got all these special positions... Really, I didn't really plan my career. You basically just roll into it."

That career is, in a word, impressive. Ivo was in direct contact with numerous world leaders. He was also involved in events that are among the great traumas of the Ne-

therlands in the recent past, the deportation of 7,500 to 8,000 Muslim men and boys, almost all of whom were later murdered by Serbian forces in the Bosnian town of Srebrenica (in the summer of 1995), and the downing of the Malaysia Airlines Boeing 777-200ER, MH17 (2014). During the Srebrenica events, Ivo was a member of the National Security Council, executive office of the president, and just before the MH17 disaster, he was the U.S. ambassador to NATO.

'Really, I didn't really plan my career. You basically just roll into it'

"The second day I was working in the White House at the National Security Council (NSC), August 2, 1995, I was leafing through The National Intelligence Daily, a kind of daily briefing for the president, but less detailed and certainly not with all the very sensitive information that was available. It contained pic-

power

tures of the mass graves in Srebrenica. Those photos were supposed to give an idea of what had happened. They were then distributed by the U.S. ambassador to the UN and the Security Council, Madeleine Albright. So my career in government began with this massacre. To an even greater extent, it influenced what I would do for a year and a half, when I worked at the National Security Council as part of the Bosnia team and was very involved in the conversations about how not only to respond to Srebrenica, but also how to bring a definitive end to the conflict. Shortly thereafter, on August 19, 1995, came the sad news and then the burial of the three Americans who were killed on Mount Igman Road while trying to enter Sarajevo. That was the beginning of a riveting process that eventually led to the peace agreement, in which I was very directly involved as coordinator of the peace treaty implementation at the NSC. With the Netherlands and the Dutch role, I didn't have much to do. We were focused on finding a way to end the conflict. And once that conflict ended, we had to make sure that the peace treaty was implemented. So that's where I spent most of my time during that period."

DAUGHTER

"I cannot say whether the U.S. learned any lessons from Srebrenica. The U.S. was not directly involved in this conflict. We had not participated in the UN operation. Madeleine Albright was annoyed that the war could not be ended. She favored US intervention. Al Gore, vice president, supported her. He reportedly went to the president to say, 'We have to do something, I can't accept this. My daughter asked me why we are letting this happen.' It did influence the decision-making in 1999 regarding Kosovo."

"One of the lessons learned from Srebrenica and Bosnia as a whole is that early intervention is more likely to succeed and is more important than acting too late. In that sense, it led to a more proactive intervention policy, probably with the most pro-

active version of that in the war in Kosovo. Shortly thereafter, George Bush became president who campaigned precisely against this kind of humanitarian intervention. And then came 9/11, Afghanistan, Iraq and a whole lot more. That made Srebrenica a minor issue in the eyes

'All of them, whether it was Clinton, Gates or whoever, they were open to advice and to new suggestions'

of Americans anyway."

Ivo then worked at the authoritative Brookings Institution and received an appointment as professor of International Relations at the University of Maryland. When Barack Obama succeeded George W. Bush Jr. as president in January 2009, Ivo was appointed ambassador to NATO on behalf of the United States.

HILLARY CLINTON

Ivo: "As an ambassador, I mainly dealt with the Minister of Defense. In my time, there were three of them: Robert Gates, Leon Panetta and Chuck Hagel. And of course with Hillary Clinton, who was Secretary of State. Contacts with them were intense. Five times a year either the Secretary of Defense or the Secretary of State, and sometimes both, came to Brussels, and there were two summits: one in Lisbon and one in Chicago that included the president, the foreign and defense ministers, and the national security adviser. All of them,

whether it was Clinton, Gates or whoever, they were open to advice and to new suggestions. They looked to you as the expert. They were very engaged. They were very open to ambassadors and others participating in the decision-making process, in which I played a special role because of my background and my views on NATO and nuclear weapons. Even though they didn't always agree with me, they listened to my ideas and suggestions."

DOWNHILL

"Regarding Russia, I had a very close working relationship with Russian Ambassador Dimitri Rogozin, with whom I was in frequent contact, especially in 2010 and 2011, mainly to work on the possibility of a missile defense system. When I left, very little had been accomplished. It was clear by then that the relationship between Russia and NATO was getting worse. Things were going reasonably well when Dmitri Medvedev was president. He was at the NATO summit in 2010, and we met him in Sochi in 2011. But when Putin returned in 2012, things went 'downhill' with the relationship. Putin did not come to the 2012 NATO summit in Chicago. Certainly after the Russian invasion of Georgia in 2008, the question of whether Putin would also invade Ukraine was not yet under discussion, but it was already an issue many people were thinking about. Europe repeatedly warned that Russia was on a revenge course to change the European security order. Therefore, it was not so surprising when it happened. There was no consensus within NATO beforehand on how to deal with this issue, and there is no consensus now on how to deal with it."

UKRAINE

Ivo is not coming to The Hague when the NATO summit takes place. His youngest son is getting married in Chicago then. But follow it, of course, he does. "The issue of defense spending has been a real American problem with respect to the Europeans, going back to 1952,

when Harry Truman demanded that Europe establish 60 of 90 divisions to defend NATO against a Soviet attack. So the idea that Europe should spend more is something that every ambassador has insisted on. So have I. What finally changed was not Trump, but Putin in 2014. Putin annexed part of Ukraine (Crimea) and orchestrated an uprising in Donbass in Ukraine. The question of spending more on defense became one on which most allies agreed in 2014. Two years before Donald Trump was elected, NATO agreed to spend two percent of GDP on defense by the end of the decade. The increases in defense spending since 2014 have been significant and have been realized at times when tension with Russia was greatest, particularly after the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022."

TRUMP

"What is very different since Trump, however, is the position of the United States in the international arena. Donald Trump is the first president since the 1920s to move away from the traditional view that the United States should play a positive role in international affairs, that it should engage in international affairs and that it should do so through strong alliances, an open economic system and the defense and promotion of democracy and human rights. Democratic and Re-

their borders. Therefore, less powerful states place greater emphasis on the need for an international system based on mutual equality, while stronger states rely on their own power and strength independent of international institutions. The latter position influenced the U.S. view of the UN and the Security Council, which allowed the U.S. to ignore universal principles and institutions. This is true not only for Donald Trump, but for most presidents and governments in the past and hence the attitude toward the International Criminal Court and other bodies. It is based on the sense that the United States has a unique responsibility that cannot and should not be limited by others."

FINAL INTERVIEW?

After 12 years working for the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, an independent, nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing knowledge and engagement on global issues, Ivo Daalder is retiring at the end of June. Does this mean that he is retiring from his work altogether? Is this perhaps his last interview? Or will he continue to comment for TV and elsewhere?

Ivo: "I stop running organizations. But real retirement, that's not in the cards. I am returning in the fall to Harvard's Kennedy School where I met my wife forty years ago and I will be a senior fellow at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs. I will write more - I have ideas for several books. And continue to comment, on television, through my podcast 'World Review with Ivo Daalder' and on my substack 'America Abroad.'"

'I will write more - I have ideas for several books.'

publican presidents for eighty years operated a system based on these fundamental principles, established under Roosevelt and continued under Truman, and has been the way the United States has engaged ever since."

"Trump doesn't believe in that. He doesn't believe in alliances. He doesn't believe in free trade and economic systems. He doesn't really believe in defense, promotion of democracy and human rights. All of that has taken a back seat. He believes that the international system as it was created and maintained, has used weapons against the United States, that others have benefited from the United States. He wants the system to be reformed at the expense of those others and better serve America's interests. He falls back on a more nineteenth-century view of international politics and its use. However unfortunate for the world, it is the reality of today."

UNIQUE RESPONSIBILITY

"Regarding the United Nations and global organizations in general, there has always been a fundamental gap between the vision that sovereign states are equal and a reality in which they are not. This manifests itself primarily in the ability to influence what happens both within and, more importantly, beyond



Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta (4th R) and U.S. Ambassador to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Ivo Daalder. (Getty Images)

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NATO summit in The Hague: the context and challenges

On June 24 and 25, all the world will be watching The Hague. Then the NATO summit will take place, where presumably all heads of government of NATO countries will be present. On its eve, skepticism reigns. The summit is said to have already been shortened by a day, and for a long time the question was even whether the U.S. president would come or drop out. Will there be unity or division? As global tensions and threats increase, NATO member states are quarreling. What will play out in The Hague and what are the challenges? Sabine Mengelberg, associate professor of international security studies at the Netherlands Defense Academy, explains the background.



Opening NATO conference in the Ridderzaal in The Hague, from left to right honorary chairman Dean Rusk (U.S. Secretary of State), Minister, Luns, and D. Stikker, Secretary General of NATO, May 12, 1964. Photo: Joop van Bilsen/Anefo (National Archives)

By Sabine Mengelberg

In 1949, the Treaty of Washington established the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Its purpose was to guarantee military protection of its member states and provide mutual solidarity. World War II was still reverberating at the time. Communism was booming, because after the Soviet Union - one of the victors in 1945 that did not want to relinquish its sphere of influence in Eastern Europe - a communist regime had come to power in China. A new war threatened, while the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki had proven that such a war could mean the destruction of the entire world.

Article 51 of the 1945 UN Charter provided the possibility for states to unite to face dangers. It established the so-called inherent right of individual or collective self-defense, the right of a state or group of states to defend themselves against a threat or armed attack. The Warsaw Pact, the military alliance of seven communist countries in Europe with the Soviet Union as the binding force, followed in 1955 based on that same article. The Warsaw Pact was dissolved two years after the fall of the Berlin Wall. NATO remained in existence. In addition to collective defense, NATO's traditional core mission, NATO was given other tasks. NATO sought cooperation with former Warsaw Pact countries, the alliance expanded and NSATO focused on crisis management, for example in the Balkans and Afghanistan. Putin brutally kissed the somewhat dozed

off giant awake. With Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the war in Ukraine in

2022, NATO's main task is back to deterrence and defense.

AGENDA

The upcoming NATO summit in The Hague is an important summit not only for the Netherlands as an organizer, but also for the NATO alliance as a whole. After all, there has been quite a bit of friction recently and the threat of war is high. So what's on the agenda? First, of course, the

The Hague will show what will be the lay of the land

many threats that surround NATO's territory and especially the war in Ukraine. Also on the agenda will be the overall increase in conflicts worldwide, the alliance's relationship with China, refugee flows, climate issues and terrorism. In addition, member states are under greater threat from non-state actors who are more likely to cooperate among themselves, such as Iran with terrorist groups like Hezbollah. The palette of threats has broadened. It has long since moved beyond traditional military threats to cyber-attacks on infrastructure, destabilizing elections or migrants deployed at the borders of the Baltic states to destabilize or even attack society.

INTERNAL THREAT

Certainly since Donald Trump took office,

tension has also been simmering internally. This was not uncommon, for example when France left NATO under Charles de Gaulle a decade later after the Suez crisis of 1956 and in 2003 after the U.S. invasion of Iraq to overthrow Saddam Hussein's regime. So NATO does need to exude a degree of unity to maintain the alliance's credibility and resolve. It is precisely these internal tensions among the allies on many levels that make the upcoming summit a special one. So far, US President Trump's second term is an even bigger shock than his first for the alliance, especially for transatlantic-oriented European states like Poland, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For example, because the United States (U.S.) is threatening to annex Greenland and wants to annex Canada as its 52nd state. The U.S. attitude toward Greenland and thus ally Denmark threatens internal solidarity.

Officially, NATO has no mandate regarding conflicts between member states. The mandate literally lies only in collective defense against external attacks. Moreover, there is division within the alliance regarding its relationship with both Russia and China. Whereas the U.S. wants to start a dialogue with Russia, for some allies, including the Baltic states, Poland and Finland, this is as yet unmentionable. At the same time, most European allies view the relationship with China differently than the US. And then there is another dilemma: The Trump administration does not appear to be a supporter of the European Union (EU); at the same time, the demand is on the table for European NATO allies to strengthen their military capabilities by up to possibly as much as 5 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which is only possible for European member states through further European integration in the area of defense.

WORLD VIEWS

So it will be a complicated summit where two world views are diametrically opposed and the balance of power is shifting. All the conflicts in the world are pushing many countries together and the call for cooperation is getting stronger. This can also be seen in practice. Consider the accession to NATO of Finland and Sweden, the possible further expansion of the European Union, the rapprochement of the European Union and the United Kingdom. Moreover, more cooperation is also taking place outside NATO and the European Union. The so-called BRICS organization, the group of countries that includes India, China and Brazil, the fastest growing economies in the world, is expanding and trying to gain more influence. On the other hand, several states are increasingly fostering an inward-looking policy, a renaissance of the nation-state as a solution to the evil world outside.

As a result of all these dilemmas, it is unclear what the upcoming NATO summit, and thus the future European security order, will look like.

With all this in mind, experts will watch with suspicion how the member states will operate during and also after the summit. What power arrangement will prevail within the transatlantic relationship and Europe? In a world of increasing geopolitical tensions, mutual solidarity is of great importance. The Hague will show what will be the lay of the land.

Sabine Mengelberg is associate professor of international security studies at the Netherlands Defense Academy.



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'OTHERING'

By Caecilia Johanna van Peski

"Othering"-being "different"-is a psychological mechanism that creates divisions and categorizes individuals or groups as "different" or "not one of us. Its consequences fuel prejudice, discrimination and violence. Othering can lead to war. For this reason, it is critical to recognize and understand this concept.

Othering is in fact the opposite of belonging; where belonging implies acceptance and inclusion of all, othering suggests intolerance and exclusion.

"Other" can be based on a wide range of characteristics, including age, disability, ethnicity, nationality and race, gender identity, sex, language, occupation, political affiliation, religion, sexual orientation, skin color, socioeconomic status and also how a person behaves.

Countering those harmful processes requires the opposite of othering: sameness.

People "other" people they don't actually know at all. Lack of personal knowledge and contact with people can thus lead to all sorts of assumptions about them. This makes it easier to see them as strangers, enemies or even less human. Belonging to a social group brings many benefits. On the positive side, being part of a social group can provide support, care, connection, protection and identity. On the negative side, however, it can contribute to exclusion, prejudice and conflict with people outside the group. In this regard, exclusion can have a dramatic impact on people. Exclusion can mark them for life. People who belong to a minority group may face disadvantage in economic areas, housing or careers, or in criminal justice, education and health care because of othering.

Othering is also present in current American politics - as well as ours - on both sides of the political spectrum. It has contributed to conspiracy theories, the spread of disinformation, culture wars, the construction of enemy images and real-life violence. Authoritarian leaders, for example, stoke fear and resentment toward "others" to gain support for their political goals. Strategic othering can be used by leaders or political parties to justify certain actions or to gain public support from people who respond to those fears and concerns.

In my own work - in the Netherlands and internationally, within the armed forces, within multilateral organizations, within communities of which I myself am a part and within communities with which I work in war zones - I try to be alert to manifestations of othering. I know that for me this cannot be merely an academic exercise, but that I have a moral obligation to call myself to action. I have been traveling that journey for many years now and it has been challenging. I have also certainly not yet arrived at my final destination. It required from me vigilance and a willingness to face uncomfortable truths, even within myself. But in this struggle there also turned out to be the promise that, together with others, I can contribute to a future where "different" is not only tolerated but celebrated, where each individual feels valued and connected, and where the fabric of human experience is woven with threads of compassion, acceptance and understanding.

In the year we reflect on eighty years of peace and eighty years of the United Nations, let us work together to unravel step by step the structure of "otherness" to create a more inclusive, more compassionate, and more resilient world for all.

Caecilia Johanna van Peski holds the rank of commander in the Royal Navy.



NCIA Communications. Photo: PR

Beware of disinformation

By Han Bouwmeester

'Peace is the continuation of war by other means,' was a recent utterance by Putin's former spin doctor Vladislav Soerkov.

In doing so, he bastardized the famous statement by Prussian general and philosopher Carl von Clausewitz: 'War is the continuation of politics by other means.' Soerkov's words do not come out of the blue; they are illustrative of current attitudes in the Kremlin. Soerkov leaves open what those other means are, but it seems that the Russian authorities will allow themselves anything to realize this view of peace as a continuation of war by other means. The West has different views on this. Peace gives us a great deal of freedom. We can do whatever we want, as long as we stay within the rules. Indeed, we cherish that freedom, especially here in the Netherlands. That flexible way of living and dealing with each other is very dear to us. But peace and freedom are fragile, and therefore they need to be well protected. The feeling of peace and freedom can only be fully appreciated in a secure environment.

RUSSIAN THREAT

Is security always guaranteed? There are currently all kinds of developments ongoing on the world stage, such as the war in Ukraine, the conflict in the Middle East, the changing attitude of the United States and the rise of the global South. Within NATO, to which the Netherlands also belongs, the attitude and activities of the Russian Federation are considered the greatest threat. After all, NATO's territory borders Russian territory. The Russian threat is felt not only physically, with a chance of an armed encounter, but also in other areas, something Soerkov already hinted at.

One such other area Russian authorities are focusing on is undermining society with the help of disinformation. Ever since Russia annexed the Ukrainian peninsula of Crimea in 2014, Western experts have been conducting more research into the use of disinformation by Russian politicians, diplomats, military, security services and media. Back then, Russian authorities and media were already spreading reports about repres-

sion of Russian minorities in Crimea and about Ukraine being in the grip of fascists who wanted Ukraine to join the decadent West. According to Putin, he therefore had no other choice than to annex Crimea.

INFORMATION DISORDER

After the annexation, Western intelligence agencies increasingly warned of Russian interference in Western countries. For example, the Russians used disinformation to try to influence the 2016 and 2020 elections in the United States, as well as the 2016 Brexit referendum in Britain. The Council of Europe commissioned research on disinformation in 2018 and concluded that it has become an umbrella term for information that allows you to influence or even harm others. As a result, the Council no longer refers to "disinformation," but rather "information disorder," which consists

Open societies must be alert to this kind of subversion campaigns

of three types of information. First, misinformation, where people share non-factual information with no intention of harming others by doing so. Second, the "pure" disinformation, being non-factual information that is deliberately shared to harm others. Third is malinformation, which is factual information taken out of context or details magnified to hurt others.

The Russian disinformation, which the Russian authorities mostly have others spread so that they can deny any involvement, is mainly the pure disinformation and malinformation. The Russian authorities mainly try to use manipulated perceptions of political issues and their lies to erode trust in government organizations. People then begin to doubt the

legal authority of their country with the result that these people become less and less compliant with laws and regulations. This erodes internal security. People draw their own plan, no longer trust each other and also no longer feel responsible for society. Society becomes seriously divided.

ALERT

Open societies, pursuing a high degree of individual freedom as in the Netherlands, must therefore be alert to this kind of subversion campaigns. Precisely because in our country we value this freedom so highly, it is very sensitive to take appropriate measures against disinformation. After all, the government in the Netherlands does not want to prescribe what information one should or should not believe or prohibit media from spreading certain information. However, disinformation awareness and media literacy are beginning to increase in the Netherlands. Schools are paying attention to this, teaching students not to immediately believe everything that is said on television, radio, in newspapers, on websites or social media. No, on the contrary, they learn to look critically at new information and to use different sources each time instead of basing their opinions on just one source. And this wise lesson applies not only to students but to every citizen.

Han Bouwmeester holds the rank of brigadier general as professor of military operations studies at the Netherlands Defense Academy.

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The face of NATO: The secretary-general

By Georg Frerks

Mark Rutte is not the only Dutchman elected secretary general. Three persons preceded him. This makes the Netherlands a major supplier of NATO secretaries generals: no country delivered more. NATO is a political and military alliance governed by the North Atlantic Council (NAC) in which the permanent representatives of the member states meet. In addition, ministers or heads of state meet periodically, such as at the upcoming NATO summit in The Hague. The secretary general (SG) chairs the council. The SG sets agendas, facilitates discussions and decision-making, coordinates day-to-day business and is in charge of implementing decisions. The SG maintains contacts with government leaders and represents NATO to the outside world. He is literally and figuratively the face of NATO.



Press conference during the NATO Conference in The Hague by Secretary General Dirk Stikker, 11 May 1964. Photo: Eric Koch/ Anefo (National Archives)



Press conference on the occasion of the NATO meeting, May 29, 1979: NATO Secretary General Luns, Photo: Rob C. Croes/Anefo (National Archives)

*Dirk Stikker:
'The most fundamental
issue surrounding nuclear
weapons that NATO has
been unable to resolve is:
who has the decision
to use them and who
determines the targets?'*

*Joseph Luns:
'We must not intimidate
the Soviet Union, we must
understand it.'*

Dirk Uipko Stikker
(April 21, 1961 - August 1, 1964)

Main topics: Cyprus issue that led to serious tensions between NATO members Turkey and Greece, France's independent stance under President Charles de Gaulle, Cuba crisis.

VVD member Dirk Stikker (1897-1979) was a strong advocate of European cooperation. After the 1948 elections, he became Minister of Foreign Affairs and was, among other things, chairman of the Council of Ministers of the new Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC) and one of the founders of the European Payments Union. After a dispute with party leader Oud over the issue of New Guinea, he offered his resignation as minister and left the VVD in 1952. He became Dutch ambassador to London and permanent representative to NATO in 1958. In his country house on Lake Como, he received influential politicians such as Konrad Adenauer, Paul-Henri Spaak and Dean Acheson. When Spaak left early as SG at NATO, Stikker was unanimously requested by the North Atlantic Council as his successor. On April 21, 1961, he took office as the first Dutch SG. Stikker was on good terms with President Kennedy, who had him picked up by Air Force One when Stikker was seriously ill. He was admitted to the Walter Reed military hospital in Washington. After his initial recovery, the SG position nevertheless became too much of a physical burden and he retired early in 1964. Stikker's final sentences in his readable memoirs are characteristic of him: "The passing pomp of power puts no weight in the scale of history. In it only the fate of all counts, not the power of a few Real greatness [lies] hidden in the permanent search for unity and the maintenance of freedom, peace and justice."

Joseph Marie Antoine Hubert Luns
(October 1, 1971 - June 25, 1984)

Main topics: the Yom Kippur War (military conflict between Israel and a coalition formed by Egypt and Syria in 1973), tensions between Greece and Turkey over Cyprus, NATO "dual track" decision (to deploy nuclear-capable Pershing II and ground-launched cruise missiles in Western Europe while continuing negotiations with the Soviets), NATO expansion to include Spain.

Joseph Luns (1911-2002) served in eight Dutch cabinets between 1952 and 1971. Until 1956 as minister without portfolio and then as foreign minister. Luns was a striking figure and an ardent atlanticist. He advocated a robust defense policy and was seen as a realpolitiker and a good negotiator. This suited the Cold War era and helped him get the position of SG at NATO in 1971. Luns championed the expansion of NATO to include Spain and achieved the NATO double-track decision on the placement of nuclear-laden cruise missiles on European soil. He was also committed to modernizing NATO and keeping its armaments up to standard. He also managed to join forces after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Luns had himself driven around Brussels in a green Rolls-Royce, although he also had a very informal side with his jokes that he could recite in various languages while he occasionally presided over meetings in his slippers. He is considered the most unconventional SG ever. When he stepped down in 1984, President Reagan awarded him the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Luns continued to live in Brussels until his death; he felt that the Netherlands had become too progressive.



Jaap de Hoop Scheffer (seen from the back) at the table on April 3, 2008 in Bucharest on the sidelines of the NATO summit. Also at the table: UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso, Norwegian Defense Minister Anne-Grete Stroem-Erichsen, Russian President Vladimir Putin, translator, Romanian President's wife Maria Basescu, translator, U.S. President George W. Bush, Romanian President Traian Basescu, U.S. President's wife Laura Bush, German Chancellor Angela Merkel. Photo: Sorin Lupsa (AFP)

JAAP DE HOOP SCHEFFER:

I don't have to give Mark Rutte any advice

Jakob Gijsbert (Jaap) de Hoop Scheffer
(January 1, 2004 - August 1, 2009)

Main topics: Kosovo, 9/11, "war on terror," Afghanistan, Iraq.
Jaap de Hoop Scheffer. "I don't have to give Mark Rutte any advice."

When De Hoop Scheffer was still foreign minister, British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw told his wife at a dinner that they were thinking in NATO circles about De Hoop Scheffer's candidacy as SG. He himself knew nothing at the time. De Hoop Scheffer: "It was a foggy process of several months to gauge support among allies and reach consensus. In 2004, I took office as SG. The SG is often sought from medium-sized countries that themselves do not have too pronounced interests or agendas and are therefore less inclined to interfere with the work of 'their' SG." He already knew NATO well. As a "young fellow," De Hoop Scheffer worked at the Dutch Permanent Representation to NATO. "That was still in the time of the Cold War, so at the time of the 'classic NATO.' The discussions were about the placement of nuclear missiles and there was a substantial military presence in Germany in view of a possible attack from the Soviet Union. Many Dutch soldiers were stationed in Germany at the time. But above all, NATO was a political-military alliance. It was not only about weapons and troops, but certainly also about shared values such as freedom and democracy. Interestingly, within NATO at that time there was already the Eurogroup, where common European consultations took place with the knowledge and consent of the United States. Given contemporary discussions about Europe's role and contribution to NATO, that fact is not without significance."

WHITE WINE

In 2004, he found a totally different NATO. He defined it as an "expeditionary NATO". NATO was in Afghanistan with 100,000

troops, there was a peacekeeping mission in Kosovo and NATO provided humanitarian aid after the massive earthquake in Kashmir. De Hoop Scheffer: "NATO became a bit too much of a toolbox from which everyone thought they could get what they wanted. Economizing on defense was at the order of the day. The Western European democracies had settled into a beach chair, as it were, after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the implosion of the Soviet Union and poured themselves a proverbial glass of white wine. They counted on the United States for their security, on Russia for their energy and on China for cheap products. Moreover, the problem with Western democracies is their limited horizons due to regular elections, which makes long-term political and parliamentary support for deployment difficult. Take the Afghanistan fatigue that occurred. If we are not careful, the same will happen again with Ukraine! Actually, no serious operation could be undertaken anymore without a leading role of the United States, because Europe's own defense budgets had been drastically cut under the guise of peace dividends."

TABOO

During his time as SG, of course, 9/11 and the subsequent "war on terror" - the military campaign launched by U.S. President George Bush Jr. to drive out terrorism worldwide - were major issues. For him, this meant quite a bit of balancing between two camps. Within NATO, there was a big divide between the United States on one side and France and Germany on the other over the invasion of Iraq. By still accepting the American request to supply troops and thus join the mission in Afghanistan, this dispute could be stripped of its sharp edges and a gesture toward President Bush could be made. But also in Afghanistan the real issues were circumvented. De Hoop Scheffer: "The word 'war' was out of the question in the Netherlands and in Germany the word 'Krieg' was taboo. In the Netherlands there was talk of a reconstruction mission.

The realization that this was far too rosy a picture only broke through when Dutch soldiers also paid the highest price."

NORM

All US presidents raised the issue of the allies' defense budget. That was an ongoing theme. De Hoop Scheffer: "Eventually the two-percent norm was set at the 2014 summit in Wales, but many countries could not or would not keep up with that, until very recently. That norm will go somewhere toward three and a half percent of Gross Domestic Product

'Trump doesn't seem to realize how important soft power is'

for pure defense expenditures and one and a half percent for related infrastructure and cybersecurity) at the upcoming summit, I suspect. What is new is that failure to meet agreements made on the spending norm is now directly linked to America's guaranteed protection of those countries. Ultimately, a strong, unified NATO is also an American interest, and Putin must remain convinced that NATO's deterrent is and remains credible."

HATCHET

Then Putin's Russia. "When Russian nationalist and hardliner Dmitry Rogozin was appointed NATO ambassador in 2008, as a welcome gift he brought me a big box that contained a huge hatchet. Rogozin said the hatchet was now buried, but everything showed the opposite. Back in 2005, Putin called the collapse of the Soviet Union the greatest geopolitical

disaster of the 20th century! At the Munich Security Conference two years later, Putin was adamant and his speech contained essentially all the same language he uses today. A year later he invaded Georgia and since then the threat has only increased. Unfortunately, it has taken a long time for this realization to sink in everywhere. Take the Nordstream project that was seen as something purely economic without looking at the geopolitical security aspects."

The same applies to Ukraine, according to De Hoop Scheffer. "Ukraine has been a headache for NATO allies since 2008; there was and is simply no consensus on the issue. For example, at the NATO summit in Bucharest in 2008, Ukraine was actually sent off empty-handed with the sentence: 'The question is not if, but when Ukraine will become a NATO member.' And even after the annexation of Crimea, only a weak response followed. However, it was maneuvering between Bush and Merkel. As SG, I could not but defend that somewhat half-hearted formula that the parties finally agreed upon. Only now are we seeing a real strengthening of the eastern flank, also because Sweden and Finland have recently joined."

Hasn't NATO been too intrusive? Wasn't the expansion going too fast? Putting yourself in Putin's shoes, didn't it come across as threatening?

De Hoop Scheffer: "The rapid pace of expansion has indeed been criticized. But what would the situation be if it had not happened? The people of the Baltic States had already suffered under the tsars, the revolutionaries, the Nazis and the Soviet regime. Without NATO membership, they would now be under Putin's thumb!"

SOFT POWER

Emotional were the ceremonies at the 2004 accession of new NATO members. "Numerous attendees had tears in their eyes as their flags were raised and they felt protected from the oppression they had experienced firsthand."

With Putin, vigilance remains necessary. De Hoop Scheffer: "With Putin, you never know. Some experts expect Russia to be strong enough by 2030 to test NATO militarily. In essence, they are already doing that through so-called hybrid warfare, or fighting by other means through, for example, subversion, fake information and destruction of (data) infrastructure."

At least as bad, he says, is another problem. "Under Trump, it seems that the United States is deliberately letting its 'soft power' slip out of its hands. Trump doesn't seem to realize how important soft power is, for example, in relations with emerging powers and developing countries. Through aid, all kinds of UN organizations and the like, you can not only do a lot of good, but also build good political relations. The demolition of USAID (aid in the broadest sense through, for example, HIV medication and vaccines) is now causing an outright disaster with perhaps hundreds of thousands of victims. Europe must somehow take over some of these projects. We cannot abandon these people to their fate and, in a political sense, not let Africa fall into the hands of the Russians and Chinese!"

De Hoop Scheffer does not envy Rutte. "All in all, we are at a difficult moment with all the tensions internally and externally. I don't have to give Mark Rutte any advice. His main task is to keep things together so that NATO can move forward. He can do that like no other and that responsibility is in good hands with him. We can and should wish him much success."

SCAN HERE
FOR DUTCH



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2025

The Hague launches first Just Peace Festival ahead of NATO summit

JUST PEACE. FESTIVAL

justpeacethehague.org



12-26 juni
Den Haag

**Brengt
vrede
en recht
tot leven**

MET
Dialogen
Movie Nights
Acties
Exposities
Optredens
Uitreikingen

**Road to
Summit**

The Hague

From June 12-26, 2025, The Hague will transform into a vibrant stage for peace, justice and social innovation during the first edition of the Just Peace Festival. This new, city-wide festival is a joint initiative of The Hague Humanity Hub, Leiden University and the municipality of The Hague, in cooperation with more than fifty (inter) national organizations.

With over 60 events and contributing partner organizations, more than 100 speakers and a broad social and cultural program, the festival aims to engage thousands of residents of The Hague with an urgent and hopeful question: How do we build a just and peaceful world together?

HIGHLIGHT OF THE ROAD TO SUMMIT PROGRAM

The Just Peace Festival is the substantive and cultural highlight of the city's Road to Summit program, leading up to the June 24-25, 2025 NATO Summit in The Hague. As world leaders consider global security, the festival invites citizens to reflect on NATO's role as well as to explore together alternative visions and strategies for sustainable peace.

DIALOGUE, ART AND ACTIVISM COME TOGETHER

Under the banner of Just Peace, The Hague Humanity Hub has been organizing public activities around peace and justice for years. This year, for the first time, that program is being bundled into a full-fledged festival that brings together dialogue, art and activism. Think challenging debates, impressive exhibitions, films, music, dance, workshops and more. The city will be the setting for meaningful encounters and new ideas.

WHY THIS FESTIVAL?

At a time when war and conflict are often top-down driven, the Just Peace Festival offers a different perspective: peace is created from the bottom up. Not just at negotiating tables, but rather in society - through imagination, cooperation and involvement.

Therefore, the festival is an invitation to everyone: think along, participate, speak out. Whether you are a Hague resident, artist, student, researcher or just a curious person: you are welcome. Together we are building new paths to peace - towards a fair future.



**Universiteit
Leiden**
The Netherlands



**SCAN HERE
FOR DUTCH**



Art, courage and solidarity as resistance and resilience in difficult times

Humanity in Times of Tension is a bold and hopeful exhibition that explores how people respond to crisis with courage, creativity and solidarity. Through powerful art, storytelling and interactive experiences, it highlights the voices of resistance, resilience and imagination in the face of injustice.

As part of the Just Peace Festival 2025, the exhibit invites visitors - especially younger generations - to think, connect and consider how we can build a more just and empathetic world, even in these challenging times. Immerse yourself in stories of resistance, resilience and the power of communal coexistence. It is sometimes difficult to remain hopeful in these times, in this world, where conflict, inequality and climate challenges affect so many lives.

HOPE
The exhibition "Humanity in Times of Tension" offers space for that hope - not by ignoring the problems we face, but by facing them honestly. Through art, stories and shared experiences. It highlights powerful stories: from people standing up against injustice to communities showing courage and strength in times of division. Together, these voices form an important conversation about the choices we make when faced with inequality and adversity. This is not an exhibition about giving up. This is about hope, courage and connection. It shows how ordinary people speak out, protect each other, imagine a better future and take action. The exhibition includes photography, paintings, installations, multimedia experiences and interactive spaces.

GLOBAL CONVERSATION
Curators Nadja Houben (Human



'Pietà for World War III' by Lumli Lumlong (Hong Kong Exile Artist Duo).

Rights in the Picture) and Loretta Lau (NGO DEI) and program manager Marija Pop Trajkova (The Hague Humanity Hub) met with artists from various regions. With different points of conflict, the exhibition expanded naturally. What began as a response to political tensions grew from into a global conversation. The exhibition now unfolds through seven thematic zones:

- **Zone A:** No Justice, No Peace - explores how peace cannot exist without justice.
- **Zone B:** Freedom of... - deals with the freedom to be who you are, freedom of the press and the freedom to protest.
- **Zone C:** Memory, Identity and Country - asks: What would you do if you only had a few hours to leave a home you could never return to?
- **Zone D:** A-WAR-d - unravels the burden of war and authoritarianism through artistic intervention.
- **Zone E:** The World is What's Hap-

pening - captures unfiltered perspectives of young artists navigating a world in flux.

- **Zone F:** Change for Climate - elevates voices often excluded from mainstream environmental debate.
- **Zone G:** Float to a freer world - inspired by kite flying in areas where it is forbidden, and symbolizes freedom across borders, from Gaza to Johannesburg.

This structure allows us to show the multifaceted nature of human struggle - and the shared hope for justice and dignity.

DEN HAAG
Loretta Lau: "The decision to move NGO DEI to The Hague was a conscious choice. The Hague, known as the international city of peace and justice, aligns closely with our mission to promote freedom of expression, creative freedom and social justice through arts and cultural initiatives. Since settling here, we have joined the Humanity Hub, a vibrant community of like-minded



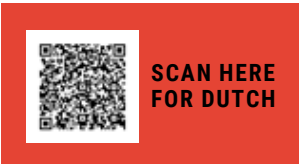
'Stories from the Streets of Myanmar' by Visual Rebellion Collective.



'HBX KITES of Transformation' by Rienke Enghardt.

organizations. This collaborative environment led to our involvement in the Road to Summit initiative. During one of our first meetings, the idea for an artistic intervention that would run parallel to the NATO Summit was born - not to promote it, but to critically address global tensions. For me, this was a necessary step. At a time of increasing polarization, growing fear and ongoing wars, it is essential to put humanity and dignity at the center."

ART BELONGS TO EVERYONE
The main message is this: in times of tension, our humanity must shine through. Courage, creativity and solidarity are more important now than ever. And art is not just for the elite or the gallery walls. Art can tell stories, can be dance, personal expression - it belongs to everyone. When people find creative ways to express themselves, they can begin to heal, they can inspire others and move society forward.



SCAN HERE FOR DUTCH

This unique experience and interactive exhibition will be on display at Amare for two weeks. Starting Wednesday evening, June 11, also the opening and kickoff of the Just Peace Festival.

Art Exhibition | Performance | Workshop

Joint Exhibition of Road to Summit

Amare
Spuiplein 150
Den Haag

11-26
JUNE 2025

This unique experience and interactive exhibition will be on display at Amare for two weeks. Starting Wednesday evening, June 11, also the opening and kickoff of the Just Peace Festival.

HUMANITY in times of TENSION

Exhibition

JUST PEACE FESTIVAL

With a series of Just Peace Movie Nights, we invite the Hague public to participate in dialogue about peace and justice through film and storytelling. Films open hearts and eyes - they bring complicated themes to life and make the human story behind big issues palpable.

An in-depth conversation follows each screening, in which filmmakers, thinkers, policy makers, artists, activists and the audience reflect together. Thus, the evenings become not only a window into the world, but also a meeting place for engagement and new perspectives in the city of peace and justice.



Film 'Behind the Numbers' - Anticha&Build.

JUST PEACE MOVIE NIGHT X YPENBURG LIBRARY

FILM TITLE: 'The Walk'

DATE: Friday, June 13, 7:45 - 9:45 p.m.

LOCATION: Ypenburg Library, Schrabber 8

'The Walk' follows the journey of Amal, a 3.5-meter tall giant doll. Amal is a young refugee girl who travels from the Syrian border in Turkey all the way across Europe in search of a home. The film combines vérité documentary with imaginative, semi-scripted elements to create a fairy tale for adults.

JUST PEACE MOVIE NIGHT THE SHARP EDGE OF PEACE X CORDAID X ART WORKS PROJECT

FILM TITLE: 'The Sharp Edge of Peace'

DATE: Thursday, June 19, 6:30 - 10:30 p.m.

LOCATION: Koorenhuis, Prinsegracht 27

"The Sharp Edge of Peace" is a documentary that follows the only women on the Afghan government's negotiating team as they confront the Taliban and fight to preserve women's rights within a fragile peace process. Set against the backdrop of decades of global conflict, the film shows why lasting peace is only possible when everyone has a voice at the table. The screening will be accompanied by the exhibition "Women Between Peace and War: Afghanistan."

Tip: Combine this film screening with a visit to the exhibition "Women Between Peace & War: Afghanistan" at the Koorenhuis, organized by Art Works Project and Cordaid.

JUST PEACE MOVIE NIGHT X SCHEVENINGEN LIBRARY

FILM TITLE: 'Blue Carbon'

DATE: Monday, June 16, 5:30-7:30 p.m.

LOCATION: Scheveningen Library, Scheveningseweg 333

'Blue Carbon' shows how a relatively unknown ecosystem can play a crucial role in the fight against climate change. Music producer, DJ and biologist Jayda Guy invites viewers to listen to nature and communities working against the climate crisis, combining science and sound to bring attention to the value of nature.



'Film YUMI - The Whole World'.

JUST PEACE MOVIE NIGHT X CENTRAL LIBRARY

FILM TITLE: 'YUMI - The Whole World'

DATE: Wednesday, June 18, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

LOCATION: Central Library, Spui 68

'YUMI - The Whole World' follows the inspiring story of three law students from the University of the South Pacific who take their fight against climate change to the world's highest court. From their classroom, they enter the international diplomatic arena to achieve a historic UN resolution that legally requires states to take climate action. Their mission: to protect their island communities from extinction.

Tip: Combine this film screening with a visit to the Arts & Law Think Thank Climate Pavilion in the Atrium from June 11-18. A workshop will take place in the Atrium prior to the film.

JUST PEACE MOVIE NIGHT X MOVIE HOUSE X UNESCO YOUTH COMMISSION

FILM TITLE: 'Stranger in Paradise'

DATE: Friday, June 20, 7 p.m. - 9 p.m.

LOCATION: Filmhuis The Hague, Spui 191

The film shows three different groups of refugees who arrived in Sicily, highlighting various approaches to European immigration law. The documentary reveals the tensions between idealism, reality and policy in Europe's handling of migration.

JUST PEACE MOVIE NIGHT X LIBRARY NEW WALDECK

FILM TITLE: 'Behind the Numbers'

DATE: Friday, June 20, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

LOCATION: New Waldeck Library, Rossini Avenue 141

'Behind The Numbers' discusses the socioeconomic exclusion of LGBT-QIA+ persons through the story of an intersex person from Zimbabwe, a lesbian couple from Bangkok and a trans woman from the Netherlands, all of whom encounter hetero-normative obstacles.

JP MOVIE NIGHT X III EUROPE X YOUTH AGAINST CORRUPTION

FILM TITLE: 'Bribe, Inc.'

DATE: Saturday, June 21, 6 p.m. - 9 p.m.

LOCATION: The Hague Humanity Hub, Fluwelen Burgwal 58

'Bribe, Inc.' sheds light on the hidden world of corruption within global trade. Focusing on Unaoil, which for years paid millions of dollars in bribes to major companies in the oil industry, the film reveals the devastating consequences of their actions and the disappointing attempts to act against this financial crime.

SCAN HERE
FOR DUTCH



A taste of what the city has to offer during dive into the full program at **justpeacetheh**

CONCERNED ABOUT THE FUTURE: FROM OVERWHELM TO CLIMATE ACTION

June 4 and June 19
The Alternatives Factory
The Grey Space

This session is designed for anyone who feels overwhelmed, powerless or alone in the face of the climate crisis. Instead of yet more information or bad news, this gathering provides a safe space to reflect, share feelings and imagine the future together. Through art, storytelling and interactive exercises, Gregg Hone (artist) and Laura (environmental scientist and coach) help participants acknowledge their concerns and transform them into connection and the power to act. The session is creative, honest and hopeful, showing that change is possible when we come together. You don't need any prior knowledge-all emotions are welcome and everyone is welcome to participate.

COLORS FOR PEACE WORKSHOP (CHILDREN)

June 14, 15 and 18
Amare

What does peace mean to you? This question is the starting point of a creative process in which children reflect on major themes in a playful and accessible way. Their imagination comes to life in a painting of their own that will have a place in the pop-up museum in Amare.

THE FREEDOM THAT I BREATHE (EXHIBITION)

June 14-20
NGO DEI Gallery in The Hague
NGO DEI

'The Freedom that I Breathe' is a solo exhibition by Hong Kong-born and Taiwan-based cross-media artist Missy Hyper (茜利妹). Using various media - including visual art and multimedia installations - Missy Hyper depicts her journey from Hong Kong to Taiwan and reflects on the broader quest for freedom and self-expression.

THE TOOLBOX OF EMPOWERING INSTRUMENTS (EXHIBITION)

June 12-26
Atrium, The Hague
Art&Law Think Tank

This exhibition presents a mobile pavilion, built of scaffolding, symbolizing a collaborative space for reflection and dialogue. The content consists of videos and legal materials related to the ICJAO, inviting participants to explore issues of climate justice and international law. Throughout the week, several events will take place in connection with the pavilion.

THE COST OF ALLIANCE (EXHIBITION)

June 12-26
Stream The Hague

The Cost of Alliance delves into the tensions and paradoxes of alliance within NATO. Four contemporary artists explore themes of propaganda, arms race and global citizenship with a fringe program (consisting of two events) that invites critical thinking. What do we sacrifice for security, and who pays the price?

HUMANITY IN TIMES OF TENSION (EXHIBITION)

June 12-26
Amare

NGO DEI, Human Rights in the Picture, The Hague Humanity Hub
How do we remain human in a world of tension? From war and climate change to increasing social divisions - the pressure on our shared humanity is increasing. During Humanity in Times of Tension, we will explore with artists, thinkers and change-makers how we can give meaning to peace, solidarity and responsibility in these times.

CHILDREN'S BOOK READING: SEVEN GATES (ENGLISH)

June 14
Amare

The Seven Gates takes you on a magical journey through the tropical rainforest, inspired by the rich biodiversity of the Leuser ecosystem. In enchanting images and stories, you will meet extraordinary forest dwellers and discover the impact of war and deforestation. A poetic call for peace - with each other and with the nature that provides our home.

MANDALA STARS FOR PEACE

June 14
Amare

In this creative workshop you will make your own colorful mandala star with simple materials such as wool, sticks, beads and glue. Each star symbolizes inner balance, harmony and your personal wish for peace. The activity is playful, meaningful and accessible to everyone. At the end, you take home your unique mandala star as a symbol of light and positivity.

WHAT FORMS OF MASCULINITY CAN WE COLLECTIVELY CREATE FOR A FAIR WORLD? (ENGLISH)

June 17
The Hague Humanity Hub
Impunity Watch

This panel discussion talks about the role of militarized masculinity in perpetuating structural impunity and violence. From the practice of transitional justice, it discusses why a focus on masculinity is essential for sustainable peace, conflict prevention and human rights.

OPEN HOUSE - STORIES, SYSTEMS & SOLIDARITY

June 17 and June 18
Commit Global
Lange Voorhout 86

A live exhibition and collaborative event organized by Commit Global. Open House offers an immersive experience of the impact of digital tools in humanitarian response. Through storytelling, interactive demonstrations and community contributions, the event invites participants to connect, reflect and shape the future of humanitarian technology.

HBX KITE OF TRANSFORMATION

Multiple dates and locations

Weather Report Foundation

In honor of the NATO Summit in The Hague, Rienke Enghardt's HBX Kite of Transformation returns: an art kite as a symbol of freedom, solidarity and dialogue. Come to West's pavilion, Amare or join the kite on Scheveningen beach.

ROBERT D. KAPLAN - SPECIAL EVENT DURING THE NATO SUMMIT (ENGLISH)

June 25
The National Theatre
Crossing Borders Festival and The National Theatre

Get ready for a unique conversation with world-renowned American journalist and author Robert D. Kaplan following his latest book, "The Barren Land" (Waste Land). In an interview with investigative journalist Michael Persson, Kaplan delves into the roots of our permanent crisis and takes a keen look at the geopolitical future through history and literature. A rare opportunity to hear one of the most influential thinkers of our time speak live.

WIJKMAKERS

Coalition Schilderswijk

'WIJKMAKERS' is a podcast program that provides space for the stories, ideas and initiatives of artists, community builders and other involved residents of the Schilderswijk. With fresh perspectives and honest conversations, we explore how to build a just city together, inspired by the neighborhood's resilience and solidarity.

PEACE CEREMONY WITH PEACE FIRE

June 21
At the foot of the Peace Palace
The Rainbow Circle

For 23 years, four times a year, on the first day of each season, we have held a peace ceremony with a peace fire at this spot. In this we pray, sing and dance around a small fire. In this way we want to create a field of Light, Love and Peace. The theme of the June 21 meeting will be Peace in Europe.

NATO: MADE IN EUROPE

June 20
Current

As part of the exhibition The Cost of Alliance, this program delves into the hidden history of NATO in Europe. With a lecture on NATO exhibitions in the 1950s and a film about the secret war headquarters in Maastricht, artists Vladislav Shapovalov, Kristina Benjocki and Stijn Verhoeff explore how image and power converge. This will be followed by a conversation about the role of exhibitions as geopolitical tools.

THE FUTURE OF PEACE AND JUSTICE: OUR ROLE AND IMPACT AS CITIZENS

June 22
The Social Hub
The Adaptation Company & The Netherlands Makes Impact Foundation

The world is at a crossroads: democracies are challenged, legal systems are under pressure and (international) cooperation is more important than ever. But how do we build a future together in which peace and justice are the basis of our society? What role can we as citizens play to continue to strive for a just world?

PROGRAMMA

the Just Peace Festival - Hague.org.

THOSE WHO WANT PEACE...**until June 25**Royal Library
KB | national library

Si vis pacem, para pacem: if you want peace, prepare for peace. In this small exhibition you will dive into the age-old dilemma: do we build peace with weapons or with law and cooperation? Using historical masterpieces from the KB collection, you will discover how thinkers, writers and activists throughout time have expressed their views on war, peace and security.

**FROM PROBLEM TO PLATFORM -
A CO-DESIGN WORKSHOP ON
TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPED FOR
REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS
(ENGLISH)****June 10**Lange Voorhout 86
Commit Global

Hands-on workshop in which participants collaboratively design digital solutions that truly support refugees and migrants. Through storytelling, scenarios and co-creation, you connect technological innovation with human experience. A unique opportunity for designers, developers, policy makers and aid workers to work together to create empathetic and safe technology.

WE ARE THE STORY**June 11**The Patty Corner
Arab-West Foundation

During this intimate community workshop in the Rustenburg-Oostbroek neighborhood, participants of different origins come together to really get to know each other. Each attendee brings an object that tells something about their culture, identity or heritage - from a family recipe to a piece of clothing or heirloom. In a warm atmosphere with coffee and delicacies from different cuisines, we share personal stories, learn from each other's backgrounds and discover shared values.

**ARREST OF SUSPECTS
FOR INTERNATIONAL CRIMES
(ENGLISH)****June 12**Leiden University Wijnhaven
International Bar Association

This panel discussion examines the experiences of international criminal tribunals and the International Criminal Court (ICC) in locating and arresting suspects. What are the key tools that lead to the successful search and arrest of suspects who are the subject of international arrest warrants? And what are the main challenges in locating and arresting suspects?

QUEERTOPIA**June 15, 18, 20, 21, 22, 25
and 26**The Grey Space in the Middle
Workshop van de Woestijne

Queertopia is an immersive experience where, as a participant, you enter a conversion machine, no matter how you go in, you come out queer. In this alternate reality, the LGBTQIA+ LGBTQ+ lobby triumphs with a new healing & training program. What if love and attraction can no longer be captured by labels or political agendas?

**IMAGINING PEACE:
A COLLAGE WORKSHOP****June 15**

Amare

Discover what peace means to you during this creative paper collage workshop. Bring your sense of peace to life with paper, color and imagination - no rules, no mistakes, just your unique expression. We will conclude with a shared reflection. Materials included.

PEACE TECH HACK 2025: CITY FORUM EDITION**June 16**The Grey Space
Didi (Project Didi)

Peace Tech Hack is where technology meets peacebuilding. This hackathon brings together developers, designers, entrepreneurs, peacebuilders and changemakers to co-create a prototype City Forum - a digital public square designed for local engagement, collaboration and civil discussion. Today, public interaction in cities has largely shifted to social media platforms, which often fall short on neutrality, safety and local context.

**BENJAMIN FERENZ LECTURE SERIES
(ENGLISH)****June 16**Wijnhaven, Leiden University
Leiden University

In its war against Ukraine, Russia has attacked not only people but also the environment. From blown up dams to burning forests, this ecocide leaves deep scars. In this program, experts supporting Ukrainian prosecutors and judges offer a unique insider's perspective on the legal battle against these environmental crimes.

**VOICES FROM THE MARGINS:
DIVERSIFYING VOICES IN EUROPEAN MEDIA
(ENGLISH)****June 19**Lange Voorhout 86
The London Story

In a world full of polarization, it is more important than ever to hold space for genuine, empathetic exchange. During the Just Peace Festival, The London Story will engage with journalists and experts from the MigraVoice Super Power Community - an EU project that amplifies the voices of migrants and refugees in European media. Join us, break out of your bubble and be inspired by new perspectives! Embassy Monera Carkos Vlado in 'House of the Book' during NATO summit

HOUSE OF THE BOOK**June 19**

Thursday, June 19, Museum House of the Book raises the flag of Monera Carkos Vlado. This has been the empire of artist Gerard van Lankveld (Gemert, 1947) since 1967. With the raising of the flag on the facade, the museum is declared the embassy of Monera Carkos Vlado in the Netherlands. This symbolic empire forms an independent world with its own language, flag, currency and identity, based on peace and hope. By hosting the Embassy of Monera Carkos Vlado, the museum wants to convey a message of hope and peace to all world leaders attending the NATO summit.

NJR GENERATION PEACE**June 19**House of Europe
National Youth Council (NJR)

Generation Peace is a youth event about what security really means - not in terms of defense, but from your everyday life. On June 19 you will engage with other young people, experts and organizations about peace, difference and what you want to bring to the NATO summit. Expect a panel, interactive sessions, an exhibition and above all: room for your voice.

PEACE CONFERENCE ARTISTS STATENKWARTIER**June 21 and 22 for all of The Hague****June 28 and 29 for neighborhood residents of Statenkwartier**
The Couvee House, Statenkwartier

In a room in Couvee House, ten cathedrals will stand in a circle. Visitors will enter in groups and will exchange views on the concept of peace and justice. All are welcome. The results of this alternative, lively "conference" will be used to create a wall of post-its with statements that emerge during these conversations.

OFFSESSION ON PEACE**June 21**Korzo Theater
OffProjects

Choreographer Amos Ben-Tal and his collective open their creative process to curious minds. During OFFsessions, they share their ideas, questions and practices in an intimate, playful and accessible setting. This edition focuses on the question: what does peace mean for movement? A unique opportunity to experience dance as conversation, inquiry and encounter.

**ANATOMIC CABARET
(ENGLISH)****June 21**

The Grey Space

'Atomic Cabaret' is a scintillating science-political musical about the dangers of the nuclear age, starring Lynda Williams. With a mix of science, satire and music, she files the absurdity of the atomic bomb - from Trinity to Trident - marking eighty years since Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

**ALLIANCE AND
ALLEGIANCE****June 22**

Current

As part of the exhibition The Cost of Alliance, this debate brings together artists Juul Honddius, Lotte Geeven and Anika Schwartzlose with geopolitics expert Arnout Brouwers. Together they address the role and image of NATO, and explore the line between alliance and loyalty. A stimulating conversation about power, image and positioning.

**SPIVAK SPEAKS!
(ENGLISH)****June 25**

West Hague

West Hague welcomes leading thinker Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak for a lecture at the NATO Summit. This kickoff of the multi-year Worlding Art program focuses on her thinking on representation, equality and engagement. Spivak, a pioneer in postcolonial theory, connects philosophy with action and advocates for art as a space for care and unheard voices.

NATO MOVIE WEEK**Multiple dates and locations**

Movies That Matter, Flora, PAARD, Dakota

As part of the NATO Summit, during NATO Film Week, you can watch films in various movie houses that highlight themes of security, conflict and peace from surprising perspectives. Followed by discussions with speakers who will elaborate on the stories and topics from the films.

**SCAN HERE
FOR DUTCH**

Hague Talks: What is Just Peace? | June 23, 2025 at Amare Studio

Join Hague Talks at Amare Studio on Monday, June 23, with inspiring stories from changemakers about the road to peace. Speakers include Kumi Naidoo, former director of Greenpeace, Rugiatu Neneh Turay-Koroma, founder of Amazonian Initiative Movement, and Jess O'Connell, co-founder of N'NINKIE. The evening will be complemented by performances by musician NAAZ, "spoken word" artist Nicchelle Buyne and artist Ruby Joemai of CTRL+ALT+IDENTITY.

Through powerful lectures and artistic performances, Hague Talks challenges conventional ideas about peace and justice. It invites you to reimagine what just and lasting peace might look like - both globally and in your own community.

Anchored by the question, What does Just Peace look like?, the evening creates space to explore different perspectives and consider how imagination can move us to collective action.

SPACE FOR REFLECTION: JUST PEACE DIALOGUES BRING THE WORLD INTO CONVERSATION ABOUT PEACE

At a time of growing geopolitical tensions, democratic erosion, digital threat and ecological crisis, the Just Peace Dialogues offer a unique platform for collective reflection. For seven days - from Monday, June 16 to Sunday, June 22 - The Hague will be the setting for in-depth conversations about the foundations of peace in a changing world. Each of the nine gatherings is dedicated to a specific aspect of peace, with the goal of not only asking questions, but also opening new avenues of thought. This series of nine public dialogues is the substantive heart of the festival, bringing together diverse voices around the pursuit of a just and sustainable peace.

NINE DIALOGUES ON PEACE: SIX THEMES, THREE REGIONS, ONE WORLD

Each of the dialogues hooks into the six main themes of the Just Peace Festival: imagination of peace, geopolitics, democracy and rule of law, technological security, equality, and sustainability. Below is an overview of the highlights:

1. Imagining Peace (June 16) The festival opens with a fundamental question: what do we mean by "peace"? In this session, thinkers and speakers explore how we can memorialize peace in a world of armed conflict, ecological crises and growing inequality. The message: peace is more than the absence of war - it is an active social condition that requires creative thinking.
2. Peace in Europe (June 17) Eighty years after the end of World War II, there is war again in Europe. This dialogue explores how sustainable peace is possible in a changing geopolitical landscape. The timing - a week before the NATO summit in The Hague - makes this session particularly relevant for reflection on Europe's role in global security.
3. Peace in Sudan (June 18) With the war in Sudan as a tragic example of forgotten conflict, this meeting sheds light on possible scenarios for recovery and reconciliation. The dialogue emphasizes the need for inclusive solutions that include youth and the diaspora.
4. Peace in Israel-Palestine (June 19) One of the most fraught and urgent themes today. This dialogue moves beyond polarization and seeks ways to promote hope, security and justice in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.
5. Democracy and Peace (June 20) Is democracy a guarantee of peace, or is there a paradox in the system? This session asks critical questions about the functioning of democracies in a world where authoritarianism and populism are on the rise. Speakers explore the need for democratic renewal.
6. Cybersecurity and Peace (June 21, morning) From cyberattacks to online hate campaigns, digital threats undermine peace worldwide. This dialogue seeks ways to harness digital spaces correctly as forces for freedom, security and peace.
7. Rule of Law and Peace (June 21, noon) The international legal order is under pressure. This session explores whether the current system of international law is still adequate - and if not, what legal innovation is needed



Dialogues. Photo: Sacha Celine Verheij

- to promote global peace.
8. Equality and Peace (June 22, morning) Inequality is at the root of many contemporary conflicts. From gender discrimination to racism to colonial inequality, this session highlights how true peace is only possible when equality of opportunity for all is central.
 9. Climate and Peace (June 22, noon) The final dialogue addresses the climate crisis - not only as an ecological, but also as a security challenge. Can ecological transition be an opportunity for global peace? This session offers hopeful insights on how sustainability and peace can reinforce each other.

DIALOGUE AS AN INSTRUMENT OF PEACE

What makes the Just Peace Dialogues unique is their inclusive and inquisitive nature. They are not about affirming existing opinions, but asking difficult questions and exploring alternatives. By bringing together citizens, experts and decision-makers, these conversations promote shared reflection on the fundamentals of peace.

In a time of increasing fragmentation and polarization, the Just Peace Festival shows how essential dialogue is. Not empty words, but an exercise in empathy, imagination and responsibility. This makes the Just Peace Dialogues a valuable contribution to The Hague as a global city of peace - and a powerful plea for a more peaceful future.

Organized by Leiden University, the Just Peace Dialogues take place at The Hague Campus on Wijnhaven and at The Hague Humanity Hub. The language of communication is English, and the meetings are open to everyone - from policymakers, academics and journalists to young people, military personnel and concerned civilians. The key message: peace does not arise from silence or consensus, but from critical, respectful dialogue among diverse perspectives.



Just Peace. Photo: HollandParkMedia



Hague Talks. Photo: PR



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More information and free registration for the individual dialogues is available through the Just Peace Festival website: justpeacethehague.org

Message from the residents of The Hague



Leila Prnjavorac.

Jean-Bernard Maweja.
Photos: Martijn Beekman

How do the average residents of The Hague feel about the upcoming NATO summit? How do they view world peace, hope and the future? For the “Hello World!” project, partner BeHague spoke to various residents of The Hague and asked them for their message to the world.

On the initiative of the municipality of The Hague
by Monique van der Meijden

LEILA PRNJAVORAC

‘It can happen again’

“I have been given a platform to share my stories and give a face to a former refugee. My story is that of the more than 473 million children living in war zones or fleeing their homes, and of those who are no longer able to tell their tell it.”

Leila was nine years old when war broke out in Bosnia and eleven when she had to flee with her family. “We were told that our city was being cleansed and that if we stayed, we would be killed. My father had already been in hiding for a year. The moment when homemade explosives exploded at our door was the signal to my parents that this was really the last warning. There was no other option but to flee.”

PEACE AND HUMANITY

“It could all happen again in an in-

stant. It is important that ordinary people do not remain silent and do nothing, but speak out and unite. Excluding groups of people and designating scapegoats happens slowly. Let's not go down that road any further. I have seen with my own eyes how words can turn into actions in no time and that your best friend and neighbour can become your enemy from one day to the next. Let's connect with each other in hope and loving humanity. In which peace and humanity humanity are the bridge to a world in which we want to live side by side as equals.”

Leila is a chairperson, speaker, programme maker, guest lecturer and The Hague Freedom Ambassador. Read the full stories of Leila Prnjavorac, Jean-Bernard Maweja and other residents of The Hague at www.behague.com/hallo-wereld/

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JEAN-BERNARD MAWEJA

‘Everyone’s contribution is unique’

“We are all part of this world. We all have a purpose and something to contribute to the world. Inclusion is what matters and what I want to talk about.

We talk to Jean-Bernard Maweja, founder and coordinator of Queer Mind. This foundation ensures the safety and visibility of queer men. She does this by organising dialogue sessions and contributing to discussions with the municipality and other organisations. It does this by organising dialogue sessions and contributing to discussions with the municipality and other organisations. “We can still learn a lot from each other by having conversations on an equal footing level.” For example, the foundation came up with the rainbow benches in the city to promote visibility and acceptance. These colourful benches are not only places to rest, but also a powerful symbol of acceptance, diversity and equality for all residents of The Hague.

Jean-Bernard: “At the same time, we hope to connect by engaging in positive conversations and promoting inclusion. During NL Doet, we cleaned the rainbow benches with a group of people. It’s painful to see that they are repeatedly vandalised. It feels as if others think you should go back into the closet.

That’s such a shame. If you deny someone’s identity or get angry about it, you also deprive them of the opportunity to enrich the world. Everyone’s contribution is unique. Isn’t that beautiful?!”

SAFE PLACE

Queer Mind also takes in people who have nowhere else to go and have been rejected by their community. The foundation provides a safe place with like-minded people. This is also to prevent people from becoming suicidal or ending up in the wrong environment and being temporary residents can chill out in the living room, talk to a social worker, and shower and take care of themselves.

Jean-Bernard: “We are the only organisation that does this in the Netherlands, and the waiting lists are long. So there is definitely a need.”

Peace events in the neighbourhoods

TRANSVAAL AND SCHILDERSWIJK SHINE

During the NATO summit, The Hague will welcome dozens of world leaders. If it were up to Atalay Celenk and Mustafa Barbouch, two residents of The Hague who are involved in the project, the Schilderswijk and Transvaal neighbourhoods would also play a prominent role. ‘We want to put The Hague in a positive light

and let the Schilderswijk and Transvaal shine,’ say the two entrepreneurs. ‘If it’s possible with so many nationalities in less than two square kilometres, then it’s also possible to live together elsewhere without war and misery. We want to be an example for the world. Especially now, with world leaders coming, we want to show that things are going well here, that it is possible.’

The Children’s District Council involves children in thinking about the neighbourhood and what is needed to live together peacefully. Kizzy Held, children’s coordinator at De Mussen community centre, says: ‘A peaceful world starts in the peaceful Schilderswijk.’

Abderrahim Kajouane, senior advisor at PEP: “By establishing connections with local initiatives and encouraging knowledge sharing, we create new opportunities for cooperation. In this way, we contribute to promoting The Hague – including Transvaal and the Schilderswijk – as a model city in the field of peace, safety and social cohesion.”

- **Saturday 14 June** Peace Run Experience the Cultures of the Schilderswijk & Transvaal
- **Monday 16 June** Peace Conference “Peace Close to Home” in Transvaal,



Children’s neighbourhood council: Kids in De Mussen. Photo: Janne Igbuwe

Dialogue evening at the Vaillant Theatre.
Photo: Michel Heerkens

ALTERNATIVE TOP IN STATENKWARTIER

There is also room for a Peace Round Table Conference in the Staten Quartier. Various artists have designed a lectern in their own style with their vision of peace and justice. Everyone, from 6 to 106 years old, is welcome to take a seat behind one of the lecterns. ‘The Hague is, after all, the city of peace and justice, they say, so let’s make that a reality,’ says Rebecca van Leeuwen, board member of the Statenkwartier neighbourhood council.

- **Saturday 21 en zondag 22 June**, Couvéehuis, Statenkwartier

For more information about the Peace events in the neighbourhoods, visit www.roadtosummit.nl.

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'Vote for a Woman': from clever voting tip to systemic change

The personal need to be represented, both for herself and for all women, transformed Devika Partiman (b. 1988) into founding "Vote for a Woman". With her organization, she has been working tirelessly for more inclusive and representative politics in the Netherlands since 2017. In a world where democracy does not always mean inclusive representation, Partiman is an example of how to make your voice heard despite inequality and resistance.

By Sacha Celine Verheij

'What if men were mistreated and abused so much? Then more would be done about it'

Leading up to the Just Peace Festival, we are highlighting the themes of the festival. You are the perfect person to talk about the theme of democracy! Can you tell us a little more about your organization Vote for a Woman?

"Vote for a Woman" began as a campaign to vote smartly for women. Only about 30 percent of Dutch politicians are women, and among those women there is very little diversity. We have since grown into a foundation that works broadly for gender equality in politics - from the water board to the House of Representatives, from municipalities to the European Parliament. Among other things, Vote for a Woman offers mentoring programs, lobbies for better leave arrangements and fights against online hatred and intimidation toward female politicians."

Why are you doing this work?

"When push comes to shove, you see that classic women's rights, such as abortion, are not safe in the hands of the majority of men. The inequality of women and girls is so normalized. What if men were mistreated and abused so much? Then more would be done about it. For example, look at Sunny Bergman's recent documentary "Blue Balls and Other Rape Myths" about sexual abuse. So many things are still seriously wrong.

'The biggest challenge is to get political parties to really move. Many administrators express support but take no action'

What challenges do you face in achieving gender equality?

"The biggest challenge is to get political parties to really move. Many administrators express support but take no action. I get around the laconic 'yes, of course everyone must be safe in politics and representation is important' and then make no commitments, by finding ways to force change through public pressure and strategic communication. For example, we successfully contributed to 'gender mainstreaming' in Amsterdam's policy, which means that from now on every policy choice is considered in terms of its impact on women and girls. And more and more political parties are putting more women on their electoral lists."



Devika Partiman. Foto: Nina Schollaardt

'95 percent in politics are college-educated, while college-educated people make up only 36 percent of society'

How do you make politics accessible and democracy inclusive for all?

"There are still quite a few barriers that prevent many women and other citizens from being politically active. For women specifically, you can think of traditional gender patterns that thwart their ambition, the fact that we unconsciously accept leadership by (white) men more readily, but also practical thresholds such as that meeting times often do not match the needs of women and that leave arrangements for politicians are poorly regulated. But there are also barriers that transcend gender and affect more people. Consider prejudices about education level: there is a strong idea that you have to have an academic background to participate in politics. Some 95 percent of our politicians are college-educated, while college-

educated people make up only 36 percent of society. Second, people of color unfortunately often experience discrimination - including in politics - and have fewer role models who came before them. There are large immigrant communities in the Netherlands, such as Somali, Eritrean, Moluccan, Indonesian, Vietnamese and Chinese Dutch, that you hardly see back. In addition, the experiences of role models, such as Sylvana Simons, show how much you can be judged on the color of your skin. This has a discouraging effect. You also see people with a migration background being pitted against each other: 'We already have one in the top 10!' We must continue to question the white norm and work toward a politics where everyone feels welcome."

'Representation is about increasing the chances of being heard'

How do you experience the current political shifts to the right?

"The growing influence of the extreme right and conservative forces in the Netherlands worries me. Especially because of the undermining of women's rights, the rule of law and democratic institutions. You see in right-wing parties that women are deliberately put prominently forward to give the appearance of being inclusive. But racist women also exist. Homophobic women also exist. As a result, you might think: it won't help if more women become politically active. But research clearly shows that that is not true. The mistake people sometimes make is that they confuse representation of a group with the actions of an individual. Representation is about increasing the chances of being heard: the more women there are in politics, the more likely the interests of women and girls will be on the agenda and heard. Focusing on the individual is distracting from the core; we need to focus on the group!"

'We need to be more creative, old means no longer work'

How do you keep going despite everything that is happening in the world?

"I see the building blocks of democracy crumbling. Petitions with 40,000 signatures, State Council opinions, official investigations, debate requests and demonstrations are being ignored. Traditional avenues of democratic influence and debate are being undermined. We need to be more creative, old means no longer work. Civil society must adapt to a political arena that increasingly seems to have deaf ears."

From smart voting campaign to systemic change, you know how to inspire us with Vote for a Woman. What can you do yourself?

"Become a member of a political party, you can do so from the age of 14! This way you get an insight into how things work behind the scenes and you can have an influence. Once you are a member, you receive newsletters on programs, see how the list is made, and you can go to local meetings where you get to know other members and politicians. Change must come from the outside, but also from the inside.

Read the full interview at www.justpeacethehague.org
Devika Partiman's mission remains clear: until women have an equal voice in decision-making, her work remains essential. In this regard, voting for women is not an end in itself, but a powerful tool for structural change.
Watch/listen/read tip for readers: Podcast Damn Honey!



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Eight generations over eight decades United Nations

Eighty years ago, in June 1945, the United Nations (UN) was founded. In each decade, the organization had to face new challenges. How do different generations view the UN and its pursuit of peace, justice and development?

OLIVIA (2011),
high school student

"When countries cooperate better, there is less room for war - and more opportunity for a fair world for all. The United Nations plays an important role in this. But if young people are the future, we also need to be heard today. After all, you can't make a future without involving young people, can you?"

EMILE LAMBRINOS (2003),
law student and president Leiden Caribbean Community

"Peace is more than silence after a war. For my generation, peace means being heard, having equal opportunities and being safe. As an island child, peace is also cultural belonging. True peace requires justice, participation and respect for everyone, regardless of origin. 'Peace is not the absence of conflict, but the presence of justice,' said Martin Luther King Jr."

IRIS DE LEEDE (1995),
diplomat at the Dutch Permanent Representation to the UN in New York

"Only at the UN do all countries have a voice and engage with each other. I learned there to really listen to others - as difficult as that can sometimes be - and to focus on what we have in common. Successful cooperation in the UN is only possible if it remains a place where everyone is adequately represented, including future generations. That means that the pie must be shared with more and so some will have to give up a piece."

DAN PETRICĂ (1989),
associate professor and international relations researcher

"The UN is imperfect - hampered by vetoes and outdated structures - but is still the most representative platform for global dialogue and coordination. Although its carry-through power is limited, its international role remains unmatched. With real reform - more inclusive, agile and willing to be more accountable - it can adapt to current crises and play a crucial role in addressing the challenges of the future."



Olivia.



Emile Lambrinos.



Iris de Leede.



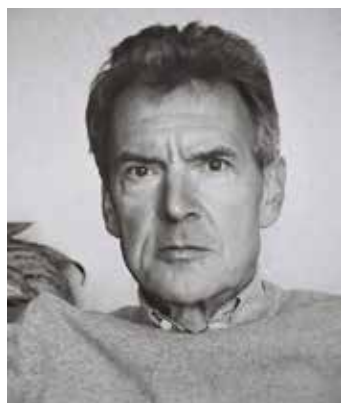
Dan Petrică.



Caecilia Johanna van Peski.



Mike Eman.



Vincent van den Bergen.



Paul Meerts.



Joris Voorhoeve.

CAECILIA JOHANNA VAN PESKI (1970),
commander in the Royal Navy

"The 1973 oil crisis constitutes one of my earliest childhood memories. My mother bought thick duvets for the whole family in case there was no more heating. The oil crisis prompted the UN to call for a New International Economic Order with fair trade and financial structures. When I entered the job market in the 1990s, the pursuit of fair distribution and sustainability became my personal commitment."

'If young people are the future, we also need to be heard today'

'The UN is: a place where every nation counts, and where hope remains a common language'

MIKE EMAN (1961),
prime minister of Aruba

"When I signed the Paris Climate Agreement, on behalf of the Kingdom, in the solemn UN plenary hall, I felt a silent promise in the air. A small island was given a big voice. That moment embodied what the UN is: a place where every nation counts, and where hope remains a common language."

VINCENT VAN DEN BERGEN (1950),
former head of global environmental policy at the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (VROM)

"I was born in January 1950 in The Hague. As a toddler, I walked by Grandpa's hand from the Bezuidenhout neighborhood, on my way to the bakery, past the rubble of the March 1944 bombing. Meanwhile, institutions had been created to promote peace and order. Later, I worked on UN treaties myself. Criticism is possible, but demolishing UN institutions without putting something better in their place leads to chaos. And chaos we must prevent."

PAUL MEERTS (1946),
negotiation expert

"At the Clingendael Institute in The Hague, the United Nations has always been a rewarding subject for role-plays. Security Council simulations in particular were a great success, because the Security Council has quite an influence on the behavior of countries. We usually made up a crisis that could flare up years later. Unfortunately, our predictions often proved correct."

JORIS VOORHOEVE (1945),
former professor of international organizations

"The UN was able to play a positive role in the 1950s. True, the Security Council was unable to fulfill the UN's primary task of maintaining peace due to the veto power of the so-called Big Five, but in other areas the UN did advance world consultation and cooperation to some extent. The wars that have raged and continue to rage, and the painfully wide disparities in wealth and well-being, show that the UN needs major reform. But thorough reform is blocked by the veto powers and by so-called "national interests... So it is imperative that the rule of law democracies work well together to help address those issues and better enforce international law."

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IS THERE FUTURE FOR PEACE

THE CHOICE IS OURS

International law is flouted. Peacekeeping missions fail. Humanitarian aid is discontinued for lack of funds or due to situations that are too threatening. The war machine is running at full speed. Defense budgets go up sharply. Many billions are pumped into the arms industry. Peace and justice organizations, on the other hand, are facing cuts that are shaking their very existence.

May 18, 2025. More than 100,000 people called on the government to draw a red line regarding Israel's actions in Gaza. Is this loud call for peace a trend reversal? What needs to happen to avert all these threats and give humanity a new perspective? Before another world war breaks out, the third one?

PACT FOR THE FUTURE

In September 2024, the heads of state and government “representing the peoples of the world” met “to protect the needs and interests of present and future generations”. Together, as the United Nations (UN), they concluded a new treaty, the Pact for the Future, an endorsement and renewal of the now 80-year-old United Nations Charter. They decided to take actions to promote sustainable development and international peace and security. ‘Global transformation is an opportunity for renewal and progress based on our common humanity. Advances in knowledge, science, technology and innovation can provide a breakthrough to a better and more sustainable future for all. The choice is ours. THE CHOICE IS OURS.’

Does this reassure given the unruly reality of all those wars and conflicts worldwide? Shouldn't the people make themselves heard much louder and more often, as they did in the 1960s through the 1980s, the decades before the fall of the Berlin Wall, when the Cold War came to an end?



Peace demonstration The Hague, 550,000 people demonstrate against the deplyment of cruise missiles, October 29, 1983. Photo: Rob C. Croes/Anefo

Wessel Toonen on behalf of the Netherlands Association for the United Nations

‘CONSENSUS MUST BE REACHED AGAIN’

“The Charter of the United Nations laid the groundwork for the founding of the United Nations on Oct. 24, 1945, setting forth the ground rules of international relations as a kind of Constitution for the world. A ban on the use of force, respect for universal human rights and recognition of sovereign member states were to ensure peace and justice worldwide.

Opening the conference on April 25, 1945 - World War II was still in full swing - U.S. President Truman spoke to the three hundred envoys from fifty countries, “You, participants in this conference, are the architects of a better world. Our future is in your hands. Your efforts at this conference will determine whether a suffering humanity can achieve a just and lasting peace.’ On June 26, 1945, the Charter was signed. The Secretary General of the Conference Alger Hiss himself brought the Charter to the White House; the only parachute in the military plane was attached not to him but to the Charter, so carefully did he handle it.”

“Eighty years later, the world looks completely different. For example, the end of the Cold War and the emergence of newly independent countries have fundamentally changed the composition and priorities of the organization. The United Nations now has 193 member states with widely varying achievements in democracy, prosperity and respect for human rights. In San Francisco, only four women sat at the negotiating table. African countries - located on the now fastest growing continent in the world - were not heard or even invited. The word ‘climate’ is completely missing from the text.”

“The UN Charter was always intended to be a living document. Although the Charter makes no mention of terrorism, the United Nations did take urgent steps on counterterrorism after 9/11. The recently expressed desire of member states to expand the Security Council for better representativeness and reflection of contemporary realities requires an amendment to Article 23 of the UN Charter that determines the membership of the Security Council. Thus, in order to future-proof the United Nations, consensus must again be reached.”

PAX, the largest peace organization in the Netherlands

‘NETHERLANDS SHOULD ACT AS THEIR ALLY’

“The Dutch government must make every effort to maintain and strengthen the multilateral system of which the UN is the linchpin. The system is far from perfect, but it is the only thing there is to prevent the world from being at the mercy of a struggle between different power blocs, where power and violence prevail, and not peace and justice. The Pact for the Future is a watered-down version of what we envisioned. But no Pact for the Future would have become an unmitigated disaster for the entire multilateral system.”

“PAX is deeply concerned about the credibility of the Netherlands as the host of the main institutions of international law. With allies, the Netherlands rightly invokes international law as justification for providing armed support to Ukraine to defend itself against Russia’s war of aggression. At the same time, the Netherlands and other European countries continue to support Israel and look away from the genocide in Gaza. The criticism now voiced by the Dutch government toward Israel is still far too cautious and weak, and still does not lead to concrete steps to put more pressure on Israel. By this attitude of double standards, European countries, and the Netherlands as host of the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court in the first place, are rendering themselves untrustworthy. On the contrary, led by South Africa, countries of the Global South are appealing to the institutions of international law to stop Israel’s genocide in Gaza. The Netherlands should act as their ally.”

‘The UN was not created to take us to heaven, but to avoid hell’

(former UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld)

AGAIN?



Tens of thousands of protesters marched May 19 from the Malieveld to the Peace Palace and back through the city center. Photo Region15 - Herman van der Woude



Charter of the United Nations is signed by Dr. Alexander Loudon, Dutch ambassador to the United States. Behind him the Dutch delegation (including representatives of overseas territories) (National Archives)

UNITED4PEACE: A MORE PROACTIVE PEACE MOVEMENT

Photographer Dolph Kessler's work took him to many places around the world, including Ukraine, where he created the photo book "Lviv, city of paradoxes" (2014). He finds the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 terrible, but he does not like the one-sided narrative that placed all the blame on Putin. So he wrote the book "War or Peace, Want to Win or Draw" (June 2024). His conclusion? In geopolitical conflicts, the stakes should not be increasing power but maintaining peace. He calls this the "peace-oriented preventive dialogue". Dolph: "The renewed pursuit of a peaceful world requires clear choices. The United Nations must return to the center of power. There must also be a new, active, broad and international peace movement that can make an impact. The peace movement is enormously fragmented and may also become more proactive. George Kennan, the former U.S. ambassador to the Soviet Union, proclai-

med back in 1997 that further expansion of NATO would be a "fatal error". Now we often lag behind events. This is happening again now with the conflict between China and the U.S. that could have even more terrible consequences than the Ukraine conflict. Why is no one addressing that?" "Such a new peace movement - I call it United4Peace - I think could learn a lot from Greenpeace, which is completely self-supporting and has over 3 million donors worldwide. Since most people want peace and not war, there should be enough support for it." First of all, there needs to be a proper framework. "I am thinking, for example, of independent think tanks that monitor and analyze conflicts, focusing on the role of dominant countries and blocs in the escalation of conflicts. I also think of 'logic of peace teams' that can be deployed in conflict areas, where they work with local peace organizations. In addition, United4Peace facilitates inde-

pendent journalism to counterbalance the mostly deterrence and "logic of war" based reporting of established media. In short, the ambitions are big and require an entrepreneurial approach, with clear goals and financial independence. Perhaps Bill Gates' organization could be interested in this. War always creates new poverty, and his organization wants to spend nearly \$10 billion a year on poverty alleviation."

The QR code takes you to the first outline of Dolph's organization in formation.



'The world is over-armed, but peace is under-funded'

(former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon)

OFFICIALS PROTEST ISRAEL POLICY GOVERNMENT

It's an unusual sight: officials protesting their own government and minister every week, for more than 75 weeks now. It started with Foreign Affairs officials themselves. They could not stomach the government's failure to take any serious action against the Israeli government when it was demonstrably committing crimes against humanity and violating human rights. Soon others joined in. Every week there are now some 450 of them. "How can you take the oath of office to the Constitution that enshrined in Article 90 the promotion of international law and at the same time cooperate in the implementation of a policy that ignores this article?" said Angélique Eijpe, one of the initiators. The limit of normal loyalty had been reached. So the group christened itself "Officials and the Constitution" and is standing up for consistent compliance with international law and a permanent cease-fire and full humanitarian access to Gaza. The protests are causing visible discomfort among the political and official leadership of the ministry. There is also a lot of publicity surrounding them. Eijpe: "Of course, you can't expect the protest to make the news every week, but the coverage on social media with thousands of followers continues tirelessly."

MARIJE LIEUWENS DISTRIBUTES POSTER 'PEACE NOW'

Everywhere in the Netherlands you see the 'Peace Now' poster behind windows. Marije Lieuwens, creator of the poster: "They are now hanging all over the Netherlands, including at sports clubs and at the hairdresser's. The poster now even goes all over the world, even in the shelters of Kharkiv and in Sudan." Marije started the poster campaign in November 2023 in response to what was happening in Gaza and Israel. "I thought: the whole world is on fire, I have to do something," she said. The poster was designed by artist Max Kisman. "People use the posters to show that they are concerned about the horrific events in the world and signal that they want to see things differently."

The poster is not attached to an organization with branding around it. It costs Marije money and a lot of time. You can support her action, see QR code.



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The United Nations is preparing for cuts and a major restructuring

The United Nations is preparing for its most radical restructuring in decades as it faces an escalating financial crisis and declining support from key donors. Under the so-called 'UN80' initiative launched by UN Secretary-General António Guterres, the UN Secretariat could face a 20% budget cut and the elimination of nearly 7,000 jobs by 2026.

The financial shortfall is largely caused by the United States. The administration of US President Donald Trump has proposed cutting nearly 90% of funding for international organisations, including the UN. An internal memo seen by Adam Taylor and John Hudson of The Washington Post outlines plans to end US funding for the UN, NATO and 20 other organisations. The plan was approved by the US House of Representatives in early May. If confirmed by the Senate, this would mean that the UN would lose its largest donor, which provides \$13 billion in funding, or more than a quarter of its total budget.

In addition, the US currently owes the UN more than \$1.5 billion in arrears, and the liquidity crisis is exacerbated by payment arrears from China, the second largest donor. There seems to be no hope that other UN member states will step in to make up the expected funding shortfalls. According to Richard Gowan of the International Crisis Group, diplomats and UN staff are talking about the need to 'do more with less,' but no one seems to 'know exactly what that means.'

RHETORIC

Although Guterres has presented the UN80 reforms as a proactive modernisation effort, observers see them as a direct response to this reduction in funding. As Damian Lilly notes in The Global Observatory, the secretary-general's rhetoric about 'purposeful multilateralism' masks the urgency of keeping the UN financially healthy as financial contributions collapse.

Critics have criticised the rushed nature of the reforms. A report by the independent media platform Devex quotes Ian Richards, leader of the UN staff union, who warned that 'managers still have no idea how to implement this.' Former UN emergency relief chief Martin Griffiths called it a 'plan about cuts, not reform.' The proposed cuts threaten departments such as peacekeeping, disarmament, development and human rights. According to a report by the independent media group PassBlue, insiders warn that core functions and mandates will be affected.

WAKE-UP CALL

Among other things, consideration is being given to merging the World Food Programme and the Food and



The headquarters of the United Nations is located in New York. Photo: UN

Agriculture Organisation – both of which are struggling with funding shortages and increasingly overlapping tasks – or strengthening cooperation between UN agencies dealing with migration, such as the IOM and the UNHCR.

There are also plans to establish a central executive secretariat for the UN to replace the fragmented administrative structures.

Andreas Bummel, executive director of Democracy Without Borders, argues for a strong UN, particularly to promote multilateral cooperation, sustainable development, human rights and humanitarian aid. Bummel: "What the UN needs is a rethink of how it is funded, how it functions and how it connects with the people it is supposed to serve. This crisis must be a wake-up call. It is high time to involve citizens in the discussion about the future of the UN. Strengthening democratic participation and representation can help restore legitimacy and thereby increase support for a strong and well-funded United Nations."

Democracy Without Borders, together with Democracy International, calls on the UN to use citizens' assemblies to gather public input on important global issues. The organisation also advocates the establishment of a UN parliamentary assembly with elected representatives and the introduction of a UN world citizens' initiative, so that citizens can submit issues for consideration by the General Assembly.

**Published with permission of Democracy without borders*

SUCCESSSES AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF EIGHT DECADES OF THE UNITED NATIONS

The United Nations (UN), founded in 1945, has had a significant impact on peacekeeping, human rights, development and humanitarian efforts over the past 80 years. Conflicts have been resolved in countries such as Namibia, Cambodia, Colombia and El Salvador. In the field of global security, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which provides for the control of nuclear programmes and the promotion of nuclear disarmament, was established in part through the efforts of the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna. The United Nations works with the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in The Hague to destroy chemical weapons and prevent their use. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, 1948) is an important milestone in the field of human rights. The Human Rights Council (UNHRC, 2006) investigates human rights violations and holds states accountable for failing to comply with the UDHR. Without these UN legal institutions and international tribunals (Rwanda, former Yugoslavia, Kosovo) and the International Criminal Court, horrific atrocities would have gone largely unpunished.

The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS, 1994) helped to establish legal rules for the use of natural resources and the prevention of environmental pollution worldwide, as well as to maintain peace on the high seas. Hugo Grotius' book *Mare Liberum* shows how international law was first described in the Netherlands, serving as the basis for the rule of law at the UN more than three hundred years later.

Another well-known UN organisation is the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), which works to promote the welfare of children, including through the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The World Bank is the world's largest institution for development cooperation. UNESCO (known for its World Heritage Sites, among other things) has a mission to contribute to peace-building, poverty reduction, sustainable development and intercultural dialogue through education, science, culture and communication. The World Health Organisation (WHO) plays a guiding and coordinating role in the field of health and well-being.

(with contributions from Caecilia J. van Peski)



SCAN HERE
FOR
ENGLISH

drastic



*'This crisis
must be a
wake-upcall'*

This Is Not My Story To Tell – Willie Oeba

*This is not my story to tell.
How do I talk about world peace,
If everything I have, we have had to fight for
Tell me, if word is life, what is living
if freedom of speech ain't worth dying for
It feels like we have been here before
But one thing is constant
Silence is all we know
So speak up, because this is not my story to tell*

*How do I talk about world peace,
if my mind is always at war
How does it help to amplify my voice
if my thoughts want to forget everything I saw
What do I say about human rights,
If humans have decided to disregard the entirety of human life after all
Tell me, who decides who stands on the other side of the gun, first of all.
Speak up, because this is not my story to tell.*

*If you shoot me, I won't feel the hate after I am gone
Rage will not burden me
If you kill me for fighting for my freedom,
You would have done me a favor of not letting me live as a slave.
Living is overrated if just life is all that we have.
Without justice, it is impossible to express absolute love*

*Justice isn't just a word, it is a just word
One that comes just before the word -peace
The actual pick when you try to choose between this and that
If the just God is love, then justice is what love thinks it is
Justice is independent, the prefix in to that word means none of it*

*Democracy is a word guide
sometimes used more with dictators than liberators
Liberators who are often oppressed by the people they are fighting for.
For the dream,
Dreams of a once vibrant nation
Nations that instead of their people, put their government first
First of all, word is life but the whole world is silent
Word is life, so if we don't speak
then what happens to people who cannot hold the pen?
Speak up, because word is life but life is just a word.*



Justice & Peace Netherlands

Justice & Peace Netherlands is a non-profit organisation that works worldwide and in the Netherlands to defend and promote human rights and social justice, with the aim of contributing to just, sustainable and inclusive societies. Artists' Safe Haven initiative Justice & Peace is convinced that art and culture are an essential part of a safe and just world. The Artists' Safe Haven initiative was developed for artists and performers who, through their work, are committed to human rights in a non-violent manner and who are threatened or otherwise pressured because of their work or activism.

Willie Oeba

Willie Oeba is a spoken word artist from Kenya who has been committed to human rights, including women's rights, for more than ten years. He founded a youth organisation and mentors young artists in the fight against inequality. Through performances, online campaigns and education, he wants to inspire young people to use art for human rights and social justice.

**JUST
PEACE.
FESTIVAL**
12-26 JUN
2025

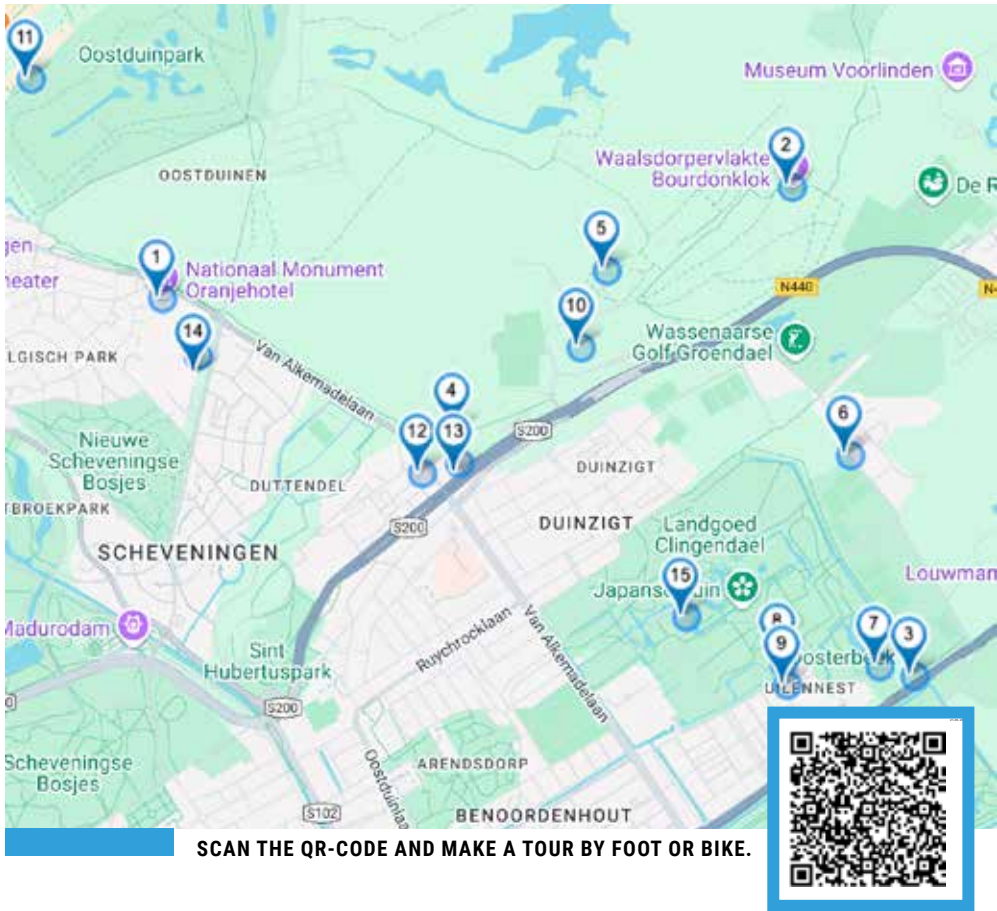
Brengt vrede en recht tot leven
Bringing peace and justice to life



The backyard of the International Criminal Court

By Willem van der Ham

In the early twentieth century, two entrepreneurs from The Hague planned to build a World Peace City in the Oostduinen. Things turned out differently. On the highest peak in the imposing dune landscape - the Oostduinen - where they wanted to see the Peace Palace rise, the International Criminal Court has been located since 2002. The area around it is by no means a peace paradise. It is a guilty landscape where the history of World War II has left deep traces. There are also reminders of the Cold War and buildings that today play a prominent role in maintaining peace and international law.



WORLD WAR II

- 1. NATIONAL MONUMENT ORANJEHOTEL**
More than 25,000 people were imprisoned in Scheveningen prison during World War II for acts that the German occupiers saw as offenses. Since 2019, it has been a memorial center as well as a museum.
- 2. WAALSDORPERVLAKTE**
The monument on the Waalsdorpervlakte in The Hague was erected in memory of the civilians, including many resistance fighters, who were executed by the occupying forces in the dunes on the outskirts of the city during World War II. A commemoration is organized annually on May 4 at the monument by the Honor Platoon Waalsdorp.
- 3. ATLANTIC WALL**
The approximately 2,685 kilometers long Atlantic Wall, erected by the Germans as a line of defense against attack from the sea, is still clearly visible in the Oostduinen. It consisted there of nearly one hundred bunkers, searchlight installations and other objects, and across the dunes ran tank walls and steel beams cast in concrete.
- 4. MAURICE KIEKPAD**
From the Oranjehotel and the Waalsdorpervlakte runs the Maurits Kieepad. Kiek knew all about radio technology and, as a spy, managed to find out military data from the Germans and transmit it to England, first in Belgium and later in the Netherlands.
- 5. MONUMENT CAMP WAALSDORP**
The Oostduinen have been used as a military training ground for centuries. In 1940, the camp was set up as a prisoner of war camp for about 2,000 internees, but it was never used as such. During the bombardment by the German Air Force



Food dropping by a British aircraft April 29 1945 (The Hague City archive)

- on May 10, 1940, 58 soldiers of the 1st Depot Infantry were killed in their sleep.
- 6. MONUMENT FOOD DROPS DUINDIGT**
In early April 1945, the Allies and the occupying forces negotiated in the deepest secrecy about how to deliver aid to the starving population. Four places in the vicinity of the major cities in the western part of the Netherlands were designated as drop sites, including racecourse Duindigt. At noon on Sunday, April 29, 1945, about thirty British bombers dropped the first food parcels with great precision. The monument at racecourse Duindigt, unveiled on April 30, 1995, commemorates the food drops that took place here between April 29 and May 10, 1945.
- 7. FILMSTAD/LAND ESTATE OOSTERBEEK V2**
In 1935, Jewish film entrepreneur Loet C. Barnstijn opened Filmstad on the old Oosterbeek estate. The film studio complex was confiscated by the German occupiers during the war. At the end of the war, the Germans used the halls for the assembly of V2 rockets. Thus it came about that the world's first functional rockets were launched from Wassenaar territory.

COLD WAR

- 8. SEYSS-INQUART BUNKER**
Reich Commissioner of the Netherlands Seyss-Inquart took up residence in Clingendael country estate. Near his residence, a large camouflage bunker was constructed in which he could retreat in case of a foreign attack. After the Cold War, the bunker became a Command and Communications Center. At the end of the last century, the bunker fell out of use.
- 9. JULIANA BARRACKS**
In this originally German barracks for the Ordnungspolizei, built in 1943, the Royal Army had its headquarters from 1948-2010. In 2021, the Juliana Barracks were transformed into Julia's Park, an open living area with high-end residential units and a monumental garden that matches its surroundings and upscale residential environment.
- 10. NATO**
In 2012, several pre-existing NATO research institutes merged into the NATO Communications and Information Agency (NCIA), an information and communications technology research center. The NCIA is the front line against cyber threats and protects NATO's networks.

- 11. AIR WATCHTOWER**
During the Cold War, 279 air watchtowers were built in the Netherlands. Only two of them were brick buildings: Air Guard Tower 5C1 in Scheveningen and Air Guard Tower 5D1 in Oude Wetering. From 1953 to 1964, the Scheveningen tower was in use by the Air Guard Corps.

- 12. FREDERIK BARRACKS**
Frederik Barracks was built shortly before World War II. The Admiralty building, occupied by Naval Headquarters in 1983, housed the Defense Materiel Organization (now called the Materiel and IT Command) until 2018. An approximately 10-story office building houses the headquarters of the Military Intelligence and Security Service (MIVD).

INSTITUTIONS OF PEACE AND INTERNATIONAL LAW

- 13. INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT**
The International Criminal Court (ICC) investigates and tries individuals accused of the most serious crimes of concern to the international community: genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and the crime of aggression. The Court participates in a global struggle to end impunity. Currently, 124 countries are members of the ICC.
- 14. SCHEVENINGEN PRISON**
The United Nations Detention Unit (UNDU) is located in Scheveningen prison. The unit has an autonomous management structure, but uses a number of facilities available at the Dutch prison. Suspects and convicts of the ICTY and the International Criminal Court reside there in pre-trial detention under the responsibility of the United Nations.
- 15. CLINGENDAEL INSTITUTE**
Clingendael Estate was the residence of Reich Commissioner Arthur Seyss-Inquart during World War II. In 1982, the Netherlands Institute for International Relations moved into the mansion. The institute works for the public and private sectors, including policymakers, business leaders, the Dutch armed forces, law enforcement agencies, diplomats, politicians and NGOs.



25th Remembrance Day commemoration by the Oranjehotel Foundation in the prison on Pompstationsweg, September 12 1970. (The Hague City archive)



International Criminal Court, Photo: Harry van Reeken (The Hague City archive)



The Seyss-Inquart bunker on the Clingendael estate (photo: Netherlands Institute for Military History)



SCAN HERE FOR DUTCH

HOPE FOUNDATION DOES NOT GIVE UP

Making art brings children of Gaza light and joy

The work of the HOPE Foundation in Gaza is becoming increasingly dangerous, “there are no words for that”. But they continue anyway.



Photo: Mohammed Shurrab

By Georg Frerks

Gaza, daily news. Everyone has an image of the horrors taking place there. The Hague-based sculptor Ingrid Rollema and her colleague Suzanne Groothuis keep in daily contact with the people they know so well through the app. Through the HOPE Foundation, Rollema has supported artistic projects for children in Gaza for more than 30 years.

“Earlier, then, there were occasional laughs. That’s over now. Hunger is the culprit. You see people slack off, voices become weaker, the brain works less, thinking becomes more difficult. You literally feel them slowly disappearing. Children are falling out of school desks. A father in search of food for his family dropped dead. Hunger is being used as a weapon. Israel wants to make people dumb and drive them out. Everything that keeps people alive and on their feet is being destroyed. It started with bakeries, then hospitals and medical personnel followed. Food and medicine are stopped and journalists who report on this are killed. Now Israel is targeting the fabric of society and community workers like us are also being targeted. My body is walking around here, but my head is constantly in Gaza.

Compared to what is going on there, the daily things from here feel so banal. I should actually be making sculptures, but I can’t. I can’t detach myself from what is happening in Gaza. There are no more words for that. So the title of our 2024 annual report is ‘No words’.”

ART HEALS

Her cozy, cluttered studio in downtown The Hague is full of sculptures and materials. She tells how she came in contact with Palestinian pediatrician Fathi Arafat. “Fathi had a sense of the healing aspect of art to complement his medical work. On my first visit to Gaza, I had brou-

“Can you love someone you don’t know?”

ght four pencils. A girl who had not spoken for two years carefully spoke a few words after a week of drawing. That has always stayed with me.” Gaza’s population is young: 65 percent of residents are under the age of 25. Many children are traumatized as a result of the conditions.

Rollema: “The arts encourage imagination and thus help build self-respect and self-confidence.”

The HOPE Foundation works with local artists and organizations. An Art Academy has been established and a breakdance school. The Open Studio in Khan Younis includes an Art Lab, a visual arts studio, a computer room and a library. All these activities so far reach about a thousand children a day. “One of the staff members, Mustafa, philosophizes with the children about all kinds of questions that come up, such as ‘can you love someone you don’t know?’ He also creates poems with the children to occupy their minds. Collapsed buildings and car wrecks are painted. Rollema: “In this way their broken world is turned into something beautiful. The children watch a puppet show among the ruins. That’s how you bring back a little humanity and a positive attitude and don’t lose sight of human dignity.”

BULLDOZED

The situation makes it increasingly dangerous and difficult to continue the work. A number of buildings in which the foundation and its partners worked have been bombed to the ground. Just recently, two employees were killed: Dorgham and Ahmed. Dorgham made countless children in the refugee camps happy with his theater, traveling cinema

and the inflatable pools in which they could play. Ahmed co-founded the breakdance academy. “Yet it remains important to be able to bring another glimmer of light to this terrible tragedy,” she said.

Rollema experiences that in the Netherlands there is increasing sympathy for the people of Gaza. The foundation is getting a lot of support at the moment. That is heartwarming. There are also exchanges between school classes in Gaza and the Netherlands. A correspondence was started through drawings. A new project is in the pipeline where the children will share their diaries. The idea is that in the future they will exchange recipes of their favorite foods. So that Arabic food will be made in Dutch schools. Due to the famine, this project is of course at a standstill.

The solidarity is very encouraging and keeps Rollema going. “The financial support the foundation receives is badly needed to rebuild everything. It may sound strange, but even then making art will restore some light and joy among the traumatized children of Gaza.”

SCAN HERE
FOR DUTCH



Those who dare to speak out will grow

On the eve of the Second World War, Charlie Chaplin addressed the world on the silver screen in one of the best speeches on peace and justice ever made. Who can write the best speech inspired by this scene from “The Great Dictator”? From the many excellent entries, we chose the speech by **Peter den Hollander**. He will receive the book “De droom van Den Haag” (The Dream of The Hague) by Benjamin Duerr. The winners of the second and third prizes, **Bram van Dijk** and **Tom Nathans**, will also receive this book.



BEST SPEECH

Dare to be human in the safety of freedom

By Peter den Hollander

Let's be honest: we live in a time when everything seems to have to happen quickly.

We have to perform, react, meet standards whose essence we barely understand. And amid all those deadlines and opinions, I want to ask one existential question. Something big, perhaps. But also something very simple.

We have to perform, react, and meet standards whose essence we barely understand. And amid all those deadlines and opinions, I want to ask one existential question. Something big, perhaps. But also something very human.

What does it mean to be free?

Not freedom as “doing what you want”, but as “really daring to choose”. Spinoza said: you are only free when you understand why you do what you do. Freedom comes from insight. Not from impulse, but from awareness. It takes courage. Courage to pause, to doubt, to not follow the crowd because you think that's the right thing to do. And that is exactly what is needed to experience freedom: people who make conscious choices, not only for themselves, but also for others.

But true freedom cannot exist without security. Not the security of rules and cameras, but that of trust. Of seeing and being seen. Of being given the space to fall and get back up again. I see it in education: those who feel safe dare to speak out – and will grow. So let's create a space for each other in which safety serves freedom, rather than limiting freedom. Let's stop judging each other for our opinions, of pigeonholing. And let's listen to each other sincerely and without cynicism. That is what gives us both freedom and security.

It is not for nothing that The Hague is the city of peace and justice. The Peace Palace, built with money from Carnegie, is a symbol of something we ourselves must embody: a society in which difference is not feared but respected.

And humanity? That means respecting the freedom and security of yourself and others. It is in the moment when you decide not to cancel someone because of a different opinion – but instead to engage in conversation. Hugo de Groot believed that reason is stronger than rhetorical violence. We need that belief today more than ever.

So my appeal is simple: be curious. About yourself. About others. Ask yourself what freedom really means when you look at it critically.

Dare to be human – in freedom and safety, not only when you are strong.

COLOPHON

The PEACE & JUSTICE newspaper is an initiative of the TOEN Foundation in partnership with Den Haag Centraal (DHC) and The Hague Humanity Hub.

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The first Hague newspaper of Peace and Justice was published last year in September. Missed it? Download your digital copy here



www.naartoen.nl

This newspaper was made possible by the Vfonds, the municipality of The Hague, the Luis de Pels Foundation, the province of South Holland and the Ministry of Defence.



Eighty years of freedom/eighty years of the UN. International Day of Peace, Peace Week

JUST PEACE WEEKEND IN SEPTEMBER

On 20 and 21 September, we will be celebrating together with The Hague Humanity Hub, Pax, the province of South Holland and the Dutch Association for the United Nations, we will celebrate eighty years of freedom/eighty years of the UN. Locations include the Command Bunker in Clingendael, at the end of Wassenaarseweg. Programme: Peace market, film, performances, lectures, workshops and exhibitions.

Niets doen is geen optie



20 — 28 sept '25
vredesweek.nl

