# In & Around the UN

## An Update from the Quaker United Nations Office

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## Peacebuilding and Early Recovery

As countries around the world struggle to emerge from conflict and place themselves on the path towards sustainable peace and development, many find themselves in need of effective assistance from the United Nations system and the broader international community in their peacebuilding efforts.

In the past, when talking about peacebuilding, scholars, practitioners and policy makers alike often drew an artificial line between the time at which a country was actively in conflict and when it had emerged as a "post-conflict" situation — meaning, in the most simplistic of definitions, post-peace agreement.

Because the UN uses different mechanisms of support for different points in a conflict, this very linear way of looking at the issue sometimes meant that the peacebuilding support that countries desperately needed was unavailable in the earliest stages, when the provision of humanitarian relief and/or deployment of a peacekeeping mission ought to have been accompanied by planning for longer-term reconstruction. The realization of this within in the UN community has led to the recognition of a phase known as "early recovery."

Though there is no hard and fast definition, early recovery is generally recognized as being the crucial stage at which it may still be unclear whether or not a country has really reached the "right side" of the tipping point between the road to peace and relapsing into conflict, but when a coherent peacebuilding strategy is nevertheless essential for any nascent peace to take a firm root.

Despite this evolution in peacebuilding theory, however, the quality of the UN system's support to peacebuilding in these situations has so far been patchy to say the least.

Recognition of the need to come up with a comprehensive, coordinated and coherent response from the UN community in such situations prompted the UN Security Council to hold a debate on post-conflict peacebuilding back in May 2008. In its conclusion from that meeting, the Security Council acknowledged the scale of the challenge facing the international community in supporting states to recover from conflict and build sustainable peace. It also recognized that an effective response requires political, security, humanitarian and development activities to be integrated and coherent, right from the start of planning that response. The Security Council therefore asked the UN Secretary-General to provide it with advice on how best to take this issue forward within the UN system, taking into consideration the views of the Peacebuilding Commission (the UN body created before the early recovery debate had fully emerged, tasked with developing more coordinated UN peacebuilding initiatives and drafting integrated peacebuilding strategies for the limited number of countries on its agenda).

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The Secretary-General's advice is going to take the form of a report, due to be released in the spring for consideration by the Security Council, probably in May 2009, and by ECOSOC and the UN General Assembly thereafter. The Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) has been tasked with the job of

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## Letter from the Director

2008 marks the 60th anniversary of Quaker accreditation at the United Nations. Over these years, the Quaker UN offices in New York and Geneva have worked steadily to represent Quaker principles and values, as the world of the UN has changed dramatically around us.

Our aims are as they always have been: to provide a space away from the microphones for quieter and more reflective discussions on the challenges that face the international community, a place for Rufus Jones' "quiet processes and small circles" in which he hoped that "vital and transforming events" would have an opportunity to flower; to represent voices that are insufficiently heard in the corridors of power; and to work quietly to foster approaches to international problems that are informed by Quaker insights.

As befits an anniversary year, 2008 has seen a reaffirmation of purpose. The office is fully staffed for the first time in several years, and we have undertaken a strategic planning process that has taken us back to re-examining the roots of our work in Friends' spiritual and social practices. Together with our engaged and knowledgeable committee and the support of AFSC, we have confirmed our focus on the UN's role in peacebuilding and the prevention of violent conflict, and are in the process of realigning our program work accordingly. In addition we continue to act in support of Quaker agencies in their work at the UN, and to reach out to Quakers everywhere.

This has been a year of contrasts. On the economic front, the world has lurched from a food and energy crisis to a financial meltdown; the only constant factor has been that it is the poorest who suffer the most, whether from high food and energy prices or from tighter credit and reduced demand. On the other hand we have seen from the US a resurgence of hope in the election to the US Presidency of a man of color — an historic event, whatever one's political perspective. And this is of no small significance here in New York — a United States that re-engages with the international community, that seeks to work in respectful partnership with the world, has the potential to re-invigorate the efforts of the United Nations, now more needed than ever.

In these pages we hope to provide a flavor of QUNO's work, including background to some of the key issues as we see them and how we hope to make a contribution. We are small, yet with help from you, our partners and supporters, we will continue on the path marked by our predecessors here, working for sustainable peace.

*Andrew Tomlinson* ❖

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### Peacebuilding
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preparing the draft to go out in the Secretary-General's name.

As described in previous issues of this newsletter, QUNO has been following the PBC's work closely since its inception. Over the past two years it has sought to help the PBC become a more effective body, through activities such as hosting informal dialogues between stakeholders, sharing information and analysis on Burundi with PBC members and the PBSO, and helping to coordinate NGO activity on the PBC in New York.

These activities, coupled with the emergent discourse on early recovery, have led QUNO to look at the broader issue of how the UN system as a whole tackles the task of peacebuilding in post-conflict states. In approaching this more overarching theme, QUNO is particularly interested in ensuring that any strategy for peacebuilding in a country takes full account of the potential roles to be played by national and local civil society and other non-governmental actors. It is also concerned to ensure that the various players — UN departments, funds and agencies, member states, regional and multilateral organizations and civil society itself — can overcome the coordination challenges that often undermine peacebuilding efforts.

With this in mind, in September of 2008 QUNO co-hosted, with the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, a lunch for high-level UN diplomats, officials and representatives of interested think-tanks and NGOs on "Gaps in Early Recovery: Next Steps for the Peacebuilding Commission." Since then, QUNO has carried the conversation forward in contacts with attendees at that event, has engaged with the PBSO officials charged with preparing the UN Secretary-General's report and has played an active role in facilitating NGO input to the draft. In pursuit of the latter, in early December of 2008 QUNO hosted a briefing for New York-based NGOs with the report's coordinator. Later that same week in Geneva, the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform, a project run jointly by QUNO in Geneva, the Geneva Centre for Security Policy and the Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding of the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, held consultations for European-based NGOs on peacebuilding and early recovery and the role of the humanitarian and development community in national capacity development. There was close liaison between, and joint
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# Burundi: The Road to Peace

For many of the countries that we follow, there is a constant challenge for us to identify what it is that QUNO has to say that is unique or different, and what it is that we have to contribute.

For Burundi, the answer is clear. Burundi is home to 55,000 Friends, members of Burundi Yearly Meeting, who have been very active in their own communities working on peacebuilding, reconciliation, trauma healing and women's empowerment, often in conjunction with the African Great Lakes Initiative of the Friends Peace Teams (AGLI). Burundi is one of the initial two countries under the care of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), and is also a focus country for the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development. Finally, in conjunction with support from Quaker Peace and Social Witness, the AFSC office in Bujumbura, the capital of Burundi, has recently expanded its staff and resources. With this kind of intersection of knowledge and program interest, we have both something to say and a contribution to make.

Burundi AFSC Team. From left: Ramillo Rudaragi, Program Officer; Anna Crumley-Effinger, Program Associate for Policy and Advocacy; Netlyn Bernard, Deputy Regional Director; Ian Brightwell, Program Officer; Sarah Jackson, Program Officer; Andrew Tomlinson, QUNO Director (top); Freddy Simbakwira, Program Officer; Jacob Enoh-Eben, Country Representative (bottom right); Barthélemy Manirakiza, driver/logistics assistant (top right) © AFSC Burundi Team

QUNO was delighted to have the opportunity to visit Burundi in October, when the possibility arose to combine several tasks: to join a planning process for the AFSC office in Bujumbura, which included local NGO partners; to participate in the first visit to Burundi of Ambassador Lidén of Sweden, the incoming Chair of the Burundi Configuration of the PBC; and to visit with Pasteur Levi Ndikumana, legal representative of the Friends Evangelical Church of Burundi.

Burundi has been in and out of ethnically based violent conflict several times since independence in 1962. The Friends Church in Burundi had been active in peace work since its founding in 1934, but in 1994, shortly after the outbreak of a civil war which was to go on for the following 12 years, Friends decided that they had to get more involved in community reconciliation. They founded Ministry of Peace and Reconciliation under the Cross (MIPAREC), which has set up Peace Committees in more than a hundred communities all over the country, followed by other organizations focused on trauma healing and gender issues. Many Burundian Quakers have been arrested and beaten for their work (calling for peace in the middle of a civil war is no safer today than it was in 17th Century Britain), but Friends are now well-known and respected in Burundi for their peace work.

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We were humbled in talking to Pasteur Levi and his colleague, Aloys Ningabira of MIPAREC, and in meeting again with Adrien Niyongabo of Healing and Rebuilding our Communities (HROC). It was a privilege to meet these Friends who have been challenged to respond to dreadful violence in their own communities and have risen faithfully to that challenge.

These conversations set the scene for our other business in Burundi, which primarily involved planning with Jacob Enoh-Eben, (the new country director for AFSC) and his colleagues, particularly for joint work around the PBC. One of QUNO's objectives in our PBC work is to advocate for appropriate input from civil society into the proceedings of the Commission. With Burundi we have the opportunity to link the work of AFSC and their partners in coordinating local civil society organizations, along with the experience and expertise of Burundi Friends, with the formal and informal processes of the PBC in New York.

It was also valuable to be able to participate in discussions held at BINUB (the UN mission in Burundi) between Ambassador Lidén and other civil society organizations, with Friends represented at several different levels: New York (QUNO), Africa regionally (Netlyn Bernard, Assistant Regional Director for Africa, AFSC) and Burundi. We were able to meet with several of the important actors within the Burundian Government, BINUB and civil society, which has allowed us to jump start this refreshed effort to help the voices of Burundians be heard in deliberations at the UN. ❖

## Responsibility to Protect: the Challenge for Friends and for the UN

During the 20th Century, the world witnessed many instances of terrible killing and atrocities. Tragedies such as the Holocaust, Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge and the Rwandan genocide come to mind, and these represent only a few of the horrendous crimes committed against groups in situations of conflict. In many instances the international community's reaction amounted to "too little too late." Many have struggled to come to terms with this tragic track record and leaders have made repeated promises of "never again."

At the World Summit, held in New York during September 2005, world leaders adopted the concept of Responsibility to Protect (often known by its acronym R2P). The concept of R2P has evolved during the last decade with an emphasis on the responsibility of sovereign states to protect their people. This focus on state responsibility moved the concept away from previous discussions around humanitarian intervention. It specified that states have the primary responsibility to protect their citizens, and in cases where states are unable or unwilling to carry out this responsibility, it falls to the international community to ensure that people are protected. Building consensus around this concept has been an uphill battle: many countries view it as a potential pretext for intervention in their sovereign affairs, while others are reluctant to commit themselves to a framework that will obligate them to take action that may not be in their national self-interest.

Despite the challenges, world leaders agreed to language that outlined states' responsibility to protect their populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity (commonly referred to as the "four crimes"). Furthermore, the Summit outcome document committed the international community to take action using all appropriate means in cases when states are unable or unwilling to carryout the responsibility.

For Friends, the concept of R2P is no less challenging. In instances of mass atrocities or genocide we urgently seek measures that will put an end to the violence and killing. However, many Friends have difficulty embracing solutions that involve military intervention. For many, this is rooted in a deep felt commitment to pacifism and non-violence that emerges from the Peace Testimony. As a result, many Friends object to solutions that rely on the use of force. Not only do we find ourselves unable to support them on moral grounds, but we may hold deep-seated concerns that instead of bringing about sustainable peace, these solutions will sow the seeds of future violence and injustice. So for Friends, the discussion tends to be focused on prevention and non-violent response.

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Genocide survivor Grace Mukagabiro from Rwanda stands in the mock graveyard erected by Oxfam campaigners outside the United Nations headquarters in New York in order to urge governments to endorse the responsibility to protect civilians against future mass killings. The graves have been marked with "Never again" in reference to what the world said after the atrocities in Rwanda.
© Oxfam International

Over recent months, the UN has seen renewed focus on the concept of R2P. The UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki Moon, is expected to release a report on the topic in advance of a General Assembly debate that will likely take place some time in the first few months of 2009. There is concern in some circles that the debate could open an opportunity for language on the concept to be renegotiated and weakened; others see the debate as an opportunity to push for a stronger commitment to implementing the concept in cases where genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleans-

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## Interfaith Dialogue with Iranian President Continues to Foster Mutual Understanding

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's visit to New York in September 2008 for the opening of the UN General Assembly did not garner the same media interest as the previous year. But while attention was elsewhere, QUNO was quietly taking part in its ongoing series of dialogues and exchanges with Iranians. Thus twice over, the words of Doug Bennett, President of Earlham College, rang true: "…with lower temperature and less bombast, it has been possible to hear the architecture of [Ahmadinejad's] understanding of the world."

This year's dinner, September 26 at the Hyatt Hotel in midtown New York, organized by QUNO/AFSC, the Mennonite Central Committee, Religions for Peace and the World Council of Churches, was the fourth in a series of high-level bridge-building and reconciliation efforts, meant to further the mutual understanding among many religious traditions. The addresses were loosely organized around the theme, "Has not one God created us all?" (Malachi 2:10.)

In many ways, the event mirrored last year's (see QUNO's newsletter from January 2008). Participation, however, was higher than ever, with more than 100 religious leaders from a greater variety of faiths and nations: the event opened with Muslim, Roman Catholic, and Zoroastrian prayers, as the Muslims present prepared to break their daily fast with the Iftar dinner. Miguel D'Escoto Brockmann, president of the United Nations General Assembly, and the Reverend Kjell Bondevik, former prime minister of Norway and president of the Oslo Center for Peace and Human Rights, both took the floor, Brockmann declaring, "We must recognize each other as brothers and sisters because all of our religions have the law of love as a very important guiding principle."

Rabbi Lynn Gottlieb.
© Mennonite Central Committee

A groundbreaking moment was the address by Rabbi Lynn Gottlieb, whose work, as she describes it, is "rooted in the lineage of those in the Jewish community who follow the path of engaged non-violence." Lynn is the first female rabbi ordained in the Jewish Renewal movement. She is the co-founder of the Muslim-Jewish Peace Walk and a founder of the Shomer Shalom Institute for Jewish Nonviolence. Lynn read and interpreted Torah passages on peacemaking, and insisted on the value of dialogue and reconciliation in spite of political pressure:

*…I stand here today, even when many of my co-religionists are dismissing, demeaning or boycotting this important conversation. I want to make clear that there are many thousands of Jewish people within my community whose voices are not heard, but nonetheless support dialogue as both a religious obligation as well as a way to give witness to hope.*

To follow up and continue to "give witness to hope," QUNO became involved in planning several days' worth of dialogue and events in New York for a visiting delegation of Iranian religious scholars. Alongside the Mennonite Central Committee, Eastern Mennonite University and AFSC, as well as other partners, QUNO worked to plan worship services with Christian, Jewish and Muslim prayers; adult education classes on faith's role in civic responsibility; a panel on women's role in building peace, from a perspective of faith; a discussion with Persian scholars; a mini-conference with seminary students; and visits to the homes of local Quakers and others.

We were among many others, then, disappointed to hear that because of visa issues, the delegation had decided to postpone the trip indefinitely.

QUNO affirms the words of Rabbi Lynn Gottlieb, "Peace is not envisioned as a quietist or passive stance. Rather, shalom, the condition of harmony and well-being for the whole of society and the human heart of the believer is a condition that must be actively sought and publicly acknowledged for the sake of preventing violence and building peace." ❖

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## Conflict in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo Highlights Challenges for the UN around Building Sustainable Peace

Renewed conflict broke out in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (eDRC) in late September of 2008. The conflict reached an acute level as the Congrès National pour la Défense du Peuple (CNDP), led by Laurent Nkunda, came within 12 kilometers of the provincial capital of Goma. Although a cease-fire was declared as the CNDP threatened to take one of Congo's largest population centers, the situation was tenuous at best, and the international community centered its attention on two separate but parallel avenues for action: the appointment of a Special Envoy by the UN Secretary-General, and a much needed reinforcement of the UN peacekeeping force, MONUC. Subsequently, on November 3rd, Olusegun Obasanjo, former president of Nigeria was named as the Secretary-General's Special Envoy. On November 20th, following a great deal of debate, an increase of 3,000 troops was approved by the UN Security Council to help MONUC fulfill its mandate.

UN Special Envoy Obasanjo arrives in eastern DRC for talks with rebel leader Laurent Nkunda.
© UN Photo/Marie Frechon, Photo # 208593

The ongoing conflict in eDRC illustrates the high level of complexity that often faces the UN in its role around international peace and security. The DRC crisis involves a complex array of more than 22 militias and government forces whose allegiances and grievances are far from clear. The government of DRC has relied on force to suppress opposition and has a reputation for rampant corruption; further, its armed forces are among the worst perpetrators of human rights violations in the world. To make matters worse, the complexity transcends borders, and involves the interests of multiple states. This produces a sense of urgency born out of a fear that history could repeat itself and mirror the last war in the DRC that drew in armies from six neighboring countries.

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Involvement by neighboring countries is largely the result of residual grievances from past ethnic conflicts and the constant struggle to maintain control over the valuable natural resources in the Great Lakes region. In the face of such a multi-faceted conflict, the UN's inability to control the situation and push the peace process forward has resulted in a significant loss of credibility on the ground and incited a great deal of anger from civilians in the region.

The primary challenge for the UN thus far has been to balance short-term needs for the protection of civilians, and long-term needs for a sustainable peace process. Many humanitarian NGOs hope that the increase in MONUC troop numbers will help the UN carry out its protection mandate; however, it is recognized that these troops will not be seen on the ground for several more months. This deployment gap has led to calls for the EU to supply a temporary bridging force to the eDRC. While a great deal of attention has focused on the military aspects of peacekeeping, work within the UN has also highlighted the importance of the political track and need for mediation efforts to begin addressing the root causes underlying the conflict.

While the conversations at the UN shift back and forth between the military and political, all agree that there is no military solution to this crisis. Force is seen by many as necessary to stabilize the region and create a space for dialogue, yet ultimately the solution requires a peace process that engages the many actors involved, addresses long-standing grievances and provides some hope for the economic and social development needed to move towards sustainable peace.

Over the coming months, QUNO will continue to work with our partners in the region and at the UN to support efforts for long term solutions to this current crisis. ❖

## New QUNO Team—All Aboard

The year 2008 saw many changes in the QUNO NY Office. After being only partially staffed for most of the year, we are now happy to report that we have a full crew.

Everyone is new, except for Associate Representative Sarah Clarke. Her institutional memory, superb administrative skills and calm demeanor have held this office together throughout its changes, and everyone relies on her expertise and good judgment.

QUNO New York Staff: Standing: Ed Martin, Eleanor Andrews, Emily Higgs, Sarah Clarke, Francesca Riddy-O'Dowd; Seated: Ingrid Schwarzkopf, Dir. Andrew Tomlinson

As many readers will recall, Andrew Tomlinson became our new Director in February, providing direction and stability to QUNO NY and its mission. Andrew brings to this position 20 years experience in international finance. He also has worked as an archaeologist in Europe, the Middle East and India. Besides being our new "Quaker Ambassador" to the UN, he also is clerk of Chatham-Summit Monthly Meeting.

In the summer, our Program Assistant Anna Crumley-Effinger left to work for AFSC in Nairobi. We were very grateful that Program Assistant Gabriel Morden-Snipper agreed to stay on as a Program Associate until November, providing us with valuable support and continuity. He is now in Burundi.

Our new Program Assistants began in August: Eleanor (Ellie) Andrews spent the previous two years in Mauritania working for the Peace Corps, doing humanitarian work, and volunteered for a while at QUNO Geneva. She thus brings us in-depth field experience to inform our UN work. Emily Higgs was part of the AFSC youth delegation that went to the Nobel Peace Summit in Rome, and has done AVP work in prisons in South Africa and in Rwanda. Emily's mix of Quaker smarts and tough field-work assignments is also proving to be a great complement to our work here. Both PA's will be with us until summer 2009.

In the area of administration we received valuable support from Cathy Thomas, a woman of many talents, who graciously jumped in to take care of various administrative, finance and personnel tasks after Yvonne Lewis' departure in the spring, in addition to her ongoing work on the website and database. Cathy agreed to work with us while we undertook recruitment for a fulltime staff person, and in October Ingrid (Inga) Schwarzkopf joined the team as the new Coordinator for Finance and Administration. Inga comes to us with long experience in administration in the finance sector. Taking over from Cathy Thomas, she will look after the needs of the QUNO office and Quaker house. She also happens to be clerk of Brooklyn Friends Meeting.

Our most recent addition is Francesca Riddy-O'Dowd, Associate Representative. Francesca joins us from the UN Liaison Office of the Council of the European Union, where she was a diplomat monitoring developments at the Security Council and in peacekeeping and human rights. She brings us a great depth of experience in UN affairs, as well as a set of relationships which nicely complement ours.

In addition to these QUNO fulltimers, Ed Martin, AFSC's Quaker International Affairs Representative for Iran, has been seconded to our office from ASFC on issues relating to Iran.

For 2009, we expect this new, reinvigorated team to move forward on many new exciting projects. ❖

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### Peacebuilding

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participation of, the two QUNO offices in these events.

The preparation of the UN Secretary-General's report is still in the early stages. As well as engaging with NGOs, the PBSO has begun the process of consultation with the PBC and UN Security Council members and other interested UN member states, UN entities, regional actors such as the European Union and other multilateral actors. It is impossible to predict at this stage what the report will say, but there is cause for hope that it will endeavor to tackle all the key issues, including how UN and international actors can best enhance the full spectrum of national capacities for building peace, and how to make the UN system's support to a comprehensive and coherent approach more effective, through getting leadership and strategy right, getting funding on the ground faster, focusing earlier on building national capacity and giving a much bigger role to national and regional capacity.

As with so many initiatives at the UN, though, getting the text right is only the beginning of the battle; the real challenge will lie in translating those words into action on the ground. ❖

## Responsibility to Protect
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ing and crimes against humanity are being committed.

In preparation for the debate, much work has gone into further articulating the concept. While the Secretary-General's report has yet to be published, it is widely anticipated that it will emphasize the need for preventive measures to ensure that such atrocities are never committed in the first place.

Such an approach includes a wide array of state responsibilities: human rights monitoring; implementation of laws that protect all members of society; promotion of reconciliation and healing processes following instances when atrocities have been committed; and support for civil society groups that work across divides and strive to foster deeper tolerance are all examples.

An emphasis on prevention also includes opportunities for the international community to provide assistance and capacity building. These may include using the role of the Secretary-General in conducting public or private diplomacy, international assistance for social and economic development needs or deployment of UN Peacekeepers to prevent or deter outbreaks of violence. The new UN Peacebuilding Commission also offers a mechanism through which the international community can support efforts towards long-term sustainable peace and prevention of the four crimes.

Finally, much work has gone in to articulating non-violent options for timely and decisive response by the international community in instances when a state is unable or unwilling to protect its people. These may include use of the Secretary-General's good offices and the vital role of outside mediators; development of early warning and assessment mechanisms; fact-finding missions by the Special Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide or by the Human Rights Council; interception of radio broadcasts that incite commission of the four crimes; diplomatic sanctions on travel or financial transfers; and restrictions on the flow of arms.

This broad range of measures for states and the international community, and the emphasis by many on prevention, offers an important space for engagement by Friends. Many Quaker service agencies, Friends' communities and individual Quakers are involved in work on the ground that offers valuable insights into the opportunities and challenges around efforts to prevent the commission of these crimes. Over the coming months, QUNO will work to identify opportunities to share these Quaker perspectives as this debate continues to unfold. ❖

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