

Muriel Schmid (far left) poses with her CPT training group on their graduation day in February, 2013.



# An Interview With CPT's Co-Directors: Welcoming Muriel Schmid

p.2

## TEAM REPORTS

### Palestine

*Expansion of Illegal Israeli Settlements in Hebron*

5

### Colombia

*The Dangers of Organizing: Threats to Human Rights Defenders in Colombia*

9

### Iraqi Kurdistan

*"Children Don't Want to Sleep in Their Home"*

12

### Indigenous Peoples Solidarity

*Sitting in Awe with Discomfort*

14

Farewell and Gratitude p.2 | A Migrant's Story p.4 | Shout-Out p.4 | Lesbos: An Anonymous Future p.13

**BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS  
TO TRANSFORM VIOLENCE  
AND OPPRESSION**

vol.xxviii, No.4; OCT - DEC 2018



christian peacemaker teams



## Farewell and Gratitude to Jonathan Shively

As 2018 draws to a close, so does CPT's time with our Interim Administrative Director, Jonathan Shively, who has guided us on a path of organizational restructuring and re-evaluation. Over the past year and a half, Jonathan has worked closely with the Administrative Team and Steering Committee to bring an experienced outsider's perspective to CPT. He has offered his wisdom, and suggested many new directions to explore as we develop and grow as an organization. Please join me in offering Jonathan our heartfelt thanks and best wishes, as he departs from CPT to continue on his personal journey.

Caitlin Light  
Communications Coordinator

## Welcoming Muriel Schmid: An Interview with CPT's Directors

*In January, 2019, CPT is excited to welcome a new Administrative Director, Muriel Schmid. In a revival of CPT's past co-director model, Muriel will work with Milena Rincón, who has worked as Program Director for over two years and has helped guide the organization through several*



Muriel Schmid



Milena Rincón

*shifts in its organizational structure. Our Communications Coordinator sat down with both Muriel and Milena to ask them to share their thoughts, hopes and plans for their new co-directorship.*

**Q: To start out with, I was hoping that each of you could tell me a little bit about yourself, and about what you bring to your roles as Administrative and Program Director.**

**MILENA:** I am from Colombia, and I do my CPT work from Colombia. I have worked with CPT for almost 16 years. I grew up as first as a Roman Catholic, now I identify as Mennonite. I studied Psychology with a focus on Clinical Psychology as a part of my Bachelor, and I have a Masters in International Relations from a Swiss university, and a Masters in Political Science from a Colombian university. I am a very committed person to social justice issues; being a Colombian, a descendant of people who were forced into displacement, and witnessing the impact of violence in my country, makes me very aware and very sensitive to issues of war, conflict, and the need for sustainable peace in Colombia. CPT offers an opportunity for me to do the work of peacebuilding and peacemaking, from a different perspective. Working with CPT, for 16 years, has helped me to be who I am.

What I bring: perspective, commitment, and honesty for this work. Being from south America, and

having served in many contexts and cultures where conflict is present, but also different approaches to peacemaking in our partner communities.

**MURIEL:** I am a theologian and a minister who grew up in the French-speaking part of Switzerland. My ties are still pretty strong with Switzerland. I came to the US for an extended period of time for the first time in 1995 when I was 30, and that really kind of changed the course of my life in many ways; I met my partner, who is my spouse now, so that's definitely changed a lot of my life. My first encounter with Christians who were more oriented towards social justice and engagement was with the Quakers. It actually answered some kind of longing I had to find Christians who were living their faith in a very concrete way, in engagement, in social justice issues. That pushed me in different directions but led me to CPT many years later. I got acquainted with CPT's work when I was in Palestine with EAPPI, and I did my delegation and then my training with CPT. Then I worked as Program Director for two years from 2014-2016.

What I can bring to CPT: doubt, questions. And I've been working in different environments ... I worked in administration at a university in the US, I taught, I did some training in mediation and work for the Court's mediation program in Utah, I worked as a minister for 10 years. So [I definitely bring] organizational skills. And people skills; I like to engage with people, I like to listen to stories.

**Q: For the next question, I thought that we could focus more on the co-leadership model. How would you describe how your roles fit into the structure of CPT?**

**MILENA:** This is not a new model; we had a co-director model several years ago. One of the reasons we returned to this model was because the collaboration between the two directors seems very key and very important for the development of the organization. Each director brought specific skills that will help to complement each other with the purpose of helping the organization to grow.

**MURIEL:** I would emphasize that CPT is going back to a model that has existed at some point and seemed to be working to some extent at least, and the idea of going back to that to me translates some kind of trust in the model. I think I said that in the interview process, but the fact that Milena was the other director mattered for several reasons. First, I know Milena; I know her work and I know she has a long history with CPT. But also she's a person of color, she lives in another place, she has another context, another environment and perspective, and I think that matters for CPT especially. So that's unique, the fact that we are two women and we are not both white, or the fact that neither one of us is from Turtle Island\*, and I hope it will bring different things or a different way to think about it. When Milena was talking I had this image of Janus, the two-faced god in traditional Roman mythology. I think it really matters that you have two pairs of eyes looking at things, and [you are] able to share about what you look at, not looking in the same direction in the same way.

**MILENA:** It could be a very powerful model for CPT to have, in this case, two females in the leadership, and two females from -- actually that's right Muriel, neither of us is originally from the US context. We will bring an outsider perspective view. So that will be very interesting.

*The interview continues, and Muriel and Milena share about their history working together and their hopes for CPT in the coming years, online at <https://tinyurl.com/cpt-interview>.*

---

\*The Indigenous name for North America.

## A Migrant's Story - US Borderlands

By Soren Docken, CPT Delegate

Look at your skin. This is something you've known your entire life; you see it every time you look in a mirror or in a clear reflection. You know your birthmarks, your moles, your wrinkles, and even your scar from that fall you had in the fourth grade. But look at it again with this in mind: how would your life be different if your skin was a different color?

Any of us could easily have a different skin color. Humankind has a spectrum of skin colors and tones, but over the course of time, enormous and arbitrary imbalances have developed in how each of us experience life. A difference in skin color can affect where we live, how we view the world, and how we are treated.

While I was on the CPT Delegation in Arizona, a woman who I will call Eliana (changed to protect her privacy) shared her story. She is a Bolivian woman who accepted a job in California and was told they would help her get a six month work visa. She worked for six months, but there was one problem: she had a tourist visa, which did not legally permit her to work.

Eliana had unknowingly become a victim of labor trafficking. Unsure of where to go, the only solution she saw was reporting her employer to US Customs and Border Patrol, thinking they would understand and help.

They didn't.

Instead, Eliana was placed in handcuffs and taken to multiple detention centers over the course of two years. She was forced to work, ironically, since working without a visa had been her only crime, and was routinely mistreated by the guards.

There were times when Eliana lost hope and was ready to sign whatever papers they put in front of her, regardless of whether she understood a single word they said. However, thanks to God, the Florence Project, and visitors that came to see her and other migrants, she kept hope and eventually won her case. Now, she lives in Tucson, Arizona and leads a local initiative in support of migrants. Eliana's story may give you hope, and it should. But unfortunately there are many migrants whose stories do not end like hers. Instead, they get deported back to their country of citizenship, even if it is not safe. Or they die, in the detention center or the hot desert, which the US government has made a policy to exploit.

So now I challenge you: next time you hear a story or news report involving migrants, imagine yourself in their place. The only way we can improve these situations is if we listen and learn to empathize. We may not be able to choose where we come from, but we can choose where we go.

*You too can engage with the work of CPT, and hear the stories of people like Eliana firsthand. Learn more, and find 2019 delegation dates, at: <http://cpt.org/delegations>*

## Shout-Out: David Glick

CPT is proud to recognize David Glick for outstanding service to CPT. For years, David has volunteered his time and expertise to manage the technical side of our donor database. Whenever we on the Administrative Team need help, he is instantly on the case. He ensures that we are able to maintain contact with everybody that stands behind the work of CPT.

David told us, "I give time and money to CPT because I believe in CPT's approach of partnering with local peacemakers and recognizing systems of oppression. As someone who is often more comfortable talking to computers than people, I was glad to find a way to contribute to this work." Supporters like David are often unseen, but essential to what we do: it's only together that we can all keep moving forward. So today we make sure that you are seen and appreciated, David.

**Thank you!**



*The site of the second new settlement.*

## Expansion of Illegal Israeli Settlement in Hebron

*By CPT Palestine*

Hebron (al-Khalil), where CPT Palestine is based, is the commercial and industrial center in the West Bank, accounting for roughly one third of the GNP. 215,000 Palestinians and between 500 and 800 Israeli settlers live in Hebron/al-Khalil. Just outside, approximately 7,000 settlers live in the settlement of Kiryat Arba.

Currently, there are five settlements within Hebron/al-Khalil: Beit Haddassah (1979), Abraham Avino (early 1980s), Beit Romano (1983), Tel Rumedat (1984) and Beit Al Rajabi (2014 through court order). In the recent years, settlers have illegally expanded into Palestinian buildings: occupying buildings above stores in the Souk, along Shuhada Street, and above stores in the old Gold Market area. Now, according to Haaretz, the Israeli government approved \$6.1 million in government funding to expand Israeli settlement in Hebron/al-Khalil.

With the approval of this funding, construction on new settlements is set to begin soon. The first new settlement will be located on the site of a former Palestinian bus garage, now an Army base, on Shuhada Street. “Advance planning” has also been announced for a second site over Hebron/al-Khalil’s warehouse/vegetable market. Settlers have occupied this site for years, but it is just recently that the Defense Ministry issued a legal opinion that enables the project to move forward (Haaretz, 1 November, 2018).

These developments are shocking, especially given that Israeli settlements within Palestine are illegal according to international law; the Geneva Convention of 1949 prohibits the settlement of occupied territories. As CPT, other human rights organizations, and Palestinian activists have documented over many years, the presence of these illegal Israeli settlements leads to an apartheid state within Palestine, characterized by systematic oppression of the Palestinian people.

Shuhada Street prior to 1994 was a bustling Palestinian commercial street lined with shops. The owners of the shops lived upstairs. Following the killing of 29 and injuring of 125 Palestinians in the



Ibrahimi Mosque, Palestinians have been prevented from even walking on a large section of Shuhada Street. Now, with the addition of further illegal Israeli settlements along Shuhada Street, Palestinian residents are concerned that there will be even greater limits on their freedoms, and an increase in settler violence.

Additionally, in August of 2017, an Israeli military order was issued to establish a Hebron City Council for Israeli settlers. Currently, the Hebron Municipality supplies municipal services to all residents of Hebron/al-Khalil. The addition of a council for residents of the illegal Israeli settlements has the potential to dramatically impact Palestinian residents of Hebron/al-Khalil, and further legitimize the presence of the settlers. The Hebron Municipality has petitioned the High Court to challenge this order.

The future of Hebron/al-Khalil is now, and the people of Palestine remain steadfast. CPT Palestine calls on the global community to stand with them.

## Save Education in Hebron: Meeting Report

*By CPT Palestine*

Recently, representatives of CPT Palestine attended an urgent meeting alongside representatives from UNICEF, OCHA, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Ecumenical Accompaniment Program in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI), Temporary International Presence in Hebron (TIPH), community leaders, and staff of the Directorate of Education. This meeting was called by Mr. Atef Al-Jamal, Director of Education and Higher Education at Hebron, and Mrs. Muna Haddad, Head Division of Follow-Up Field, for 14 November, 2018. Here we report some of the key issues discussed, and some outcomes of the meeting.

Haddad and Al-Jamal called the meeting for those present to share information and develop strategies to protect the students who attend schools in the H-2 area of Hebron/al-Khalil. The students have experienced Israeli military entering their schools and removing children and staff, and shooting tear gas into the schools. After school, students often experience sound bombs and tear gas being shot in their direction by Israeli military. CPT is present daily at two checkpoints, Qituon and Salaymeh, to provide a protective presence for the students. The CPTers also gather statistical information for the United Nations, documenting the numbers of students going through checkpoints and observed violations of their human rights. On the week of 18 November, CPT documented Israeli military shooting over 80 tear gas bombs in the direction of students.

UNICEF staff reported that there has been a sharp increase between 2017 and 2018 in violations by Israeli military experienced by students going to, coming from and present at school. The Directorate raised the concern that students who experience this violence will have their education significantly affected. They will also experience psychological and physical symptoms of trauma. He called for the group gathered to develop strategies for the immediacy and long term, including communication between different human rights organizations that may have greater impact through cooperation.

The meeting also discussed upcoming procedures to help address the problem of education in Hebron/al-Khalil. In the near future, there will be clinics established for children experiencing psychological trauma and medical issues. Teachers will be trained in first aid. Workshops will be held for community members to address the issue of violence by the Israeli military. The directorate plans to increase the number of observers at checkpoints. Plans are in process to develop programs for 18-20 year olds who are unemployed or not attending school.

The group committed to continued conversation through social media and future meetings. It is important that the students in H2 are provided with safe environment to pursue their education. The data collected by CPT and EAPPI, as human rights organizations, proves critical in monitoring violence experienced by students, and will be used when UNICEF and Directorate of Education



CPT

*As students walk home from school, an Israeli soldier with a tear gas gun stands in their route.*

meet with Israel.

Accordingly, at their next meeting with Israeli authorities, UNICEF also intends to raise the issue of recent denials of entry for international observers. Now more than ever, the work of these organizations is necessary to ensure the security and dignity of Palestinians.

## The Power of Narrative

*By a CPT Canada Intern*

Storytelling is an essential part of culture and history, and narratives hold a lot of power. They can be used for harmful stereotypes, and ideologies, but also for advocacy, the passing along of values and for teaching important lessons. Because of the power that stories hold, it is important to recognize that there is never one single narrative.

History and stories are never neutral; they are shaped by the biases of those who hold them. Our lives are composed of interrelated narratives, and each person's view of a situation differs based on the experiences and ideologies that they carry. As I reflect on my internship with Christian Peacemaker Teams and my time in Palestine, I am continually brought back to this idea of narratives, their power, and how they engage other people.

I grew up hearing one kind of story about Israel, surrounded by Christian Zionists who praised every military victory of Israel, whether it was destroying tunnels, bombing Gaza, or annexing land even further into the West Bank for more illegal settlements.

I used to hold the narrative that the wall is for security, the occupation was a necessary measure of defense, and home demolitions occurred in villages from which rockets had been launched as attacks on Israel. However, as I began seeing for myself the function and location of the wall, it became clear very quickly that this was not simply a security wall, but rather, as many



*Members of the Youth Sumud, a Palestinian group dedicated to nonviolent resistance, dance while hosting CPT delegates.*

would call it, the Separation and Annexation Wall. It weaves its way in and out to block off key resources, cutting people off from their own land and other neighboring villages. Most of the wall falls inside the West Bank, and separates Palestinian villages from other Palestinian villages. The process for Palestinians walking through checkpoints was not one of security, but rather humiliation, and an assertion of power and dominance.

The villages that I visited which face demolitions were not villages that had ever been involved in attacks on the state of Israel. They face demolitions because the state refuses to recognize land ownership documents, or criminalizes new infrastructure, or finds other justifications to prevent Palestinian villages from expanding. The goal is to make life so difficult that they eventually leave.

As I began hearing the stories of those who live in the Negev and West Bank, it was clear that there was significant dissonance between the narratives I had previously heard and the narratives I was now hearing and experiencing. It was also clear that the narratives I had held previously did not fall in line with what I believe to be true of the gospel, or with what I saw. My faith and understanding of God do not justify an ideology of any group of people being superior to any other. The system of apartheid and oppression that the state justifies by twisting Scripture is anything but reflective of who God is.

In “The Danger of a Single Story,” writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie says, “Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign, but stories can also be used to empower and to humanize. Stories can break the dignity of a people, but stories can also repair that broken dignity.” Now, I am left to ponder how to use narrative effectively to amplify others’ voices, and spread awareness about issues like the occupation and oppression of Palestinian people.



*Campeñinos from El Guayabo and Las Pavas, two of CPT's partner communities, demonstrate peacefully in front of the local court in Barrancabermeja.*

## **The Dangers of Organizing: Threats to Human Rights Defenders in Colombia**

*By Caldwell Manners, CPT Colombia*

One of the most dangerous aspects of defending the rights of your community in Colombia is being labeled a guerrilla: accused of being part of an armed insurrection against the state. This tactic of stigmatization of human rights defenders and social activists is a staple in the playbook of the government. The consequence of being named a guerrilla is often death or imprisonment.

In early November, farming communities and organizations accompanied by CPT Colombia launched the campaign “Somos Como Tu” (“We Are Like You”). As the campaign’s press release states, “It seeks to show the people, institutions and authorities of the region the true essence of the work taken on by the campesinos\* in their struggle for their rights and ours. In the end, they are common people, hardworking, honest and supportive, they are like any of us.”

Since the signing of the peace agreement between the FARC-EP and the government in late 2016, over 400 human rights defenders and social activists have been selectively assassinated. In a recent interview, the UN’s Human Rights Chief in Colombia, Alberto Brunori, declared the killing of human rights defenders “extremely worrisome,” something that can be avoided if the government would comply to the peace-agreement it ratified.

On the northern edge of the middle Magdalena river valley, the peace prize winning farming community of Las Pavas has been trying to get local authorities to respond to a palm oil company’s hostile acts against them, but to no avail. Despite legal rulings in their favor by the highest courts in the country, security personnel from the palm oil company continue to act



with impunity.

A few hours upriver in the community of El Guayabo, leaders have suffered from judicial persecution, a systematic effort to debilitate their resistance to displacement. The national government has stepped in to forestall multiple eviction orders because of local authorities' ties with regional paramilitary structures and irregularities in the judicial processes. The Public Advocate's national office has asked law enforcement to pay special attention to this community, due to their geographic and security vulnerabilities. However, local police often arrive to the community accompanying Mr. Rodrigo Lopez Henao, who has used constant harassment, intimidation and pressure tactics while claiming ownership of land that the farmers of El Guayabo have been working for the last 30 years.

In a country with six decades of internal conflict, the image of a campesinx has been associated with left-wing armed insurrection -- guerrillas. Often their public image is used as a justification of the use of violence against them. The state's interaction with them has generally been through their armed forces, pushing communities to distrust the state that has abandoned them. The economic policy decisions of the state have ignored and marginalized the local economy and culture of the campesinxs in favor of corporations that have historically been complicit in the forced displacement of rural communities.

The message is clear. If the state is to protect the lives of human rights defenders and social activists, it has to recognize that displaced campesinxs who organize are legitimate actors in accompanying the country out of violence into healing.

\*Small farmer. The 'x' is for gender inclusivity.



*Jose Menlo, community leader from El Garzal, stands before the regional police station in Barrancabermeja with a gift basket of local produce from the village, as a bridge-building gesture as part of the Somos Como Tu campaign.*

## **We Are Like You\***

*By Jhon Henry Camargo, CPT Colombia*

I  
We are like the thousands of oppressed who walk barefoot through life,  
We, that majority that rise every day to fight for their lives,  
We are like all the condemned to survive.

II

We are like all those who have been denied their rights,  
Those who are silenced yet struggle everyday to be heard,  
Those who have lost everything, have little or nothing.

III

Our children also suffer the hunger of our country,  
Our children are also victims of war,  
As all who resist violence,  
We are targets of weapons and excuses for hatred.

IV

We are like those who still see a possibility,  
Like those who see education as transformation,  
Like those who still see hope in education,  
Like those who flee from gases today.

V

We live in the same country as you,  
In that country that is bleeding from the war,  
A war led by the rich and executed by the poor,  
We are like all those poor children of Colombia,  
Who die among the bullets.

VI

We are those without water, without land, without property,  
We are of that 93% that resists violence,  
We are of that majority impoverished, displaced and murdered,  
We are the last in line,  
Those that nobody values, those who are ignored.

VII

We are the ones whose water they polluted,  
Those whose house and land has been taken away,  
We are like those who no longer have a home,  
We are like those who sleep in the street,  
We are like those who beg for alms.

VIII

We are human rights defenders.  
Our job is to defend life,  
Defend the water, defend the earth,  
Our work is for you.

IX

We are like you, because we love life,  
We are like you, because we still have hope,  
We are like you, because we fight every day,  
We are just like you ....

---

<sup>1</sup>This poem makes reference to the “Somos como tu” (“We are like you”) campaign mentioned in the accompanying article, which aims to change the negative image of human rights defenders and social leaders to one that shows their true face. Learn more at <https://www.pas.org.co/somos-como-tu>



*A villager showing CPT pieces of the rocket that was dropped on Chame Rebatke.*

## “Children Don’t Want to Sleep in Their Home”

*By CPT Iraqi Kurdistan*

On 3 September, 2018, Turkey bombed the Kurdish village of Chame Rebatke in the Amedi district of Iraqi Kurdistan. This is the first time in two years that the village itself has been bombed, though there has been continuous bombing in the nearby area over the years.

Prior to the missile strikes, local villagers from Chame Rebatke and other nearby villages have reported that drones fly overhead daily. These drones are noisy and an invasion into people’s lives. But beyond being a nuisance, drones also make the villagers fearful to leave their homes. “Lives of farmers are completely different than people in the city,” said Zaya, a farmer of Chame Rebatke. “We need to go out; we need to get our harvest.”

Turkey has been bombing Iraqi Kurdistan for decades, claiming that they are targeting armed groups in the mountainous regions of Kurdistan. However, those who are most impacted are communities of peaceful Kurdish civilians.

On the night of 3 September, a Turkish rocket shook the village of Chame Rebatke, landing just outside village limits on a mountain a few hundred meters away. The entire village woke, and all the families came out to see what had happened. Five minutes later, another Turkish rocket struck within the village, shattering windows, causing structural damage to buildings, and shaking the ground beneath the villagers’ feet. The impact caused people to fall to the ground. Zaya said that if one village close to the point of impact had not fallen, “shrapnel would have wounded or killed him.”

Fear, terror, and destruction remain in the village of Chame Rebatke. Since the night of the bombing, villagers are afraid to leave their homes and be seen by the drones flying overhead. Children are alarmed now by the sound of doors shutting, traumatized from the experience of Turkish bombing in their village. Ninos, a villager from Chame Rebatke, told CPT that “My children don’t want to sleep in their home, so we moved them to their uncle’s home in Erbil.”\* Local leaders say that if bombing continues, everyone will leave the village, their home, and their livelihood, if they can afford to do so. Once people leave, very rarely do they return.

The missiles on the night of the 3rd also destroyed the villagers’ sesame crop, resulting in a loss of



income that families rely on for the entire year. The bombings and fear of future bombings also stunts the growth of the village. “We can’t invest in any projects. We are worried that if we start and bombing starts, who will compensate us for that project?” It is a constant struggle simply to survive as a village being bombed by Turkey, with no opportunity to thrive.

Update: The village was bombed again on the 9th of November, after this article was originally written. Two bombs were dropped roughly 50 meters from a house. CPT Iraqi Kurdistan visited again during the week of November 12.

---

\*A larger city, where there is no bombing within city limits.



*Frontex vessels patrolling the border along the Mytilini Strait, between Turkey and Lesvos, Greece.*

## An Anonymous Future: Moath’s Story

By CPT Lesvos

This story starts in June 1948, when the Israeli army began to occupy Palestine, village by village. My family is from a village called Tuol Karem. When they started to take Tuol Karem, street by street, the Iraqi Army came to oppose them. The Iraqi army was knocking on the doors of each house on my street and they were telling the families that they would take them to Iraq to keep them safe. They said that the families would not stay there long, and after a week they would be able to come back. They said they would clear the area, and then the families could return.

My great grandmother dug a hole in the ground in front of the door, put the key of the house inside, and then covered it up. She also put out a week’s supply of food and water for the chickens and the other animals in the garden. Our family agreed to bury the key outside the house in case they were separated, so whoever came back could open the door. The family also buried all their jewelery in the back garden, because they were afraid the occupation forces would steal everything expensive that they owned.

That story is 70 years old, and no-one from my family has gone back yet.



My father was only one year old when he was brought from Palestine to Iraq. In 1980 he met my mother in Baghdad. They got married and had 6 children, including me. In 1997, my dad passed away. I was 11 months. He had a heart attack because of the whole situation. They didn't allow us to have a house, a farm, a car, or even a motorcycle. So he passed away, and after that the family started to separate, because they didn't want to have the same life as my father. First my sister left for Jordan in 2005 with her husband. In 2011, my other sister also left for London. In 2012, my third sister left for Canada. In 2015, my mother decided to go to Jordan as well. Finally, in 2016, me, my brother, and his family left and traveled to Greece.

We have been here on Lesvos for almost two and a half years. My brother and his family are going to go to Germany soon. As for me, I have an anonymous future because nobody knows what's going to happen.

The problem now is that we don't know how all of us will ever be able to be together again.

Moath is one of approximately 10,000 people trapped in the open-air prison of Lesvos because of the EU-Turkey Deal. His life is one of the many lives being destroyed by hostile EU and state policies of containment and exclusion.



*Over the three days of the Grassy Narrows Women's Gathering the delegates had many meaningful conversations. Photo by Kathy Moorhead Thiessen.*

## Sitting in Awe with Discomfort

*By Emily J. Dueck, CPT Delegate*

Last July, our group of seven delegates gained new wisdom about Indigenous-settler relations by listening to the stories and struggles of Indigenous people in Shoal Lake 40 and Grassy Narrows. I found myself conflicted between feelings of awe and discomfort, as I saw such beauty, wisdom and strength in Indigenous culture and traditions, but simultaneously felt uneasy as a person of European descent who continues to benefit from the structures of colonialism.

I had read and thought much about Indigenous-settler relations and post-colonial strides towards decolonization before this delegation. However, the tangibility of hearing stories and seeing sites firsthand gave me a new lens on the ongoing injustices inflicted on Indigenous people, and their continued resilience in the face of so many obstacles. I was deeply impacted by the narratives of residential school survivors, and statements that expressed continued disappointment with the governments' broken promises.

We visited Shoal Lake 40, a human-made island reserve two hours west of Winnipeg which has had



no access to the mainland when the ice is forming or melting. The 250 people of this community, living on the lake that is the source of Winnipeg's drinking water, have no water or food security. Groceries are purchased from the mainland, and since 1997, community members have transported truckloads of five-gallon water bottles weekly to provide clean drinking water. Shoal Lake 40 felt like a different world. Buildings were in disrepair and there was no proper waste disposal or sewage system. Could it really be that communities only a couple of hours outside of Winnipeg live in such impoverished conditions?

The good news in the story of Shoal Lake 40 is that they are in the process of building Freedom Road, which will give them access to the mainland and lead to new economic opportunities and the construction of a water treatment facility.

One of the highlights of the delegation was the privilege of participating in an Indigenous women's gathering just outside of Grassy Narrows. We spent a weekend visiting with First Nations women in a large wigwam, witnessing their music, traditions and ceremonies. One of the unfortunate realities was that many of these women were experiencing these traditions for the first time. Elders who remember their languages and traditions have been teaching them to younger generations after a century of forced assimilation to European ways.

Once again, I found myself with conflicting emotions. I was in awe of the deep connection these women have to the earth and each other, and the way they celebrate, but felt some discomfort when a couple of the women remarked on there being so many of us (white women), which they saw as an imposition.

Throughout the experience of this CPT delegation I reflected on the deep complexities of Indigenous-settler relations as well as how non-native Canadians can benefit from the wisdom of Indigenous peoples. I also contemplated the next steps that need to be taken to continue down the path of decolonization, which would ultimately restore health, autonomy and prosperity to Indigenous communities. I found some wisdom in Katie Boudreau Morris' article "Decolonizing Solidarity: Cultivating Relationships of Discomfort:"

In whatever form decolonization takes, working in solidarity with Indigenous struggles means taking responsibility for our relationship with the land, including the uncomfortable emotions and the personal and national identity challenges that come with that.

Perhaps it is the normalization and ownership of discomfort which will propel us to move beyond our own fears, towards righting wrongs and working toward mutual respect and acceptance. For the continued improvement of Indigenous-settler relationship, experiences of fully listening to each other as we did on this CPT delegation are pivotal, and could advance the pursuit of justice for Indigenous communities.

## Contact CPT

|   |                    |                     |
|---|--------------------|---------------------|
| <b>CPT Chicago</b><br><i>Chicago, Illinois</i>                    | CPT.org            | peacemakers@cpt.org |
| <b>CPT Canada</b><br><i>Toronto, Ontario</i>                      | CPT.org            | canada@cpt.org      |
| <b>Colombia Team</b><br><i>Barrancabermeja, Colombia</i>          | ECAPCOLOMBIA.org   | cptco@cpt.org       |
| <b>Palestine Team</b><br><i>Hebron, Palestine</i>                 | CPTPALESTINE.com   | cptheb@cpt.org      |
| <b>Indigenous Peoples Solidarity</b><br><i>Winnipeg, Manitoba</i> | CPT-IPS.tumblr.com | ips@cpt.org         |
| <b>Iraqi Kurdistan Team</b><br><i>Suleimani, Iraqi Kurdistan</i>  | CPTIK.org          | cptiraq@cpt.org     |



Non-profit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Chicago, IL  
Permit #7845

**CALL TO ACTION: Help us keep Dunya's story alive**

*In the September 2018 issue of our newsletter, we reported on the death of Dunya Rasheed, a teenager in Iraqi Kurdistan. She is only one of many victims of the cross-border bombings that Turkey visits upon her region. The Turkish military hid the evidence of the bombing that killed Dunya, and tried to force local people to delete video footage of the incident.*

*In the words of her family: "We think that Turkey is targeting the Kurds in general. Old and young, men or women, they don't care. What is my crime? Is it my fault I was born as a Kurd?"*

*In this issue we follow up on Dunya's story with an invitation: join us in demanding that Turkey's bombing of civilian populations ends immediately. If we do nothing, the story will die with her. It will happen again.*

Sign our petition here: <https://tinyurl.com/stop-bombings>



**SPONSORS OF CPT**

- Church of the Brethren / On Earth Peace
- Mennonite Church Canada
- Mennonite Church USA
- Congregation of St. Basil (the Basilians)
- Presbyterian Peace Fellowship
- Das Deutsche Mennonitische Friedenskomitee

**BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS  
TO TRANSFORM VIOLENCE  
AND OPPRESSION**

USA: P.O. Box 6508  
Chicago, Illinois 60680  
Tel: +1-773-376-0550  
Fax: +1-773-376-0549  
[peacemakers@cpt.org](mailto:peacemakers@cpt.org)

CANADA:  
103 Bellevue Ave  
Toronto, ON M5T 2N8  
Tel: +1-647-339-0991  
[canada@cpt.org](mailto:canada@cpt.org)

**christian peacemaker teams**  
**P.O. Box 6508**  
**Chicago, IL 60680-6508**



**CALL TO ACTION: Help us keep Dunya's story alive**

In the September 2018 issue of our newsletter, we reported on the death of Dunya Rasheed, a teenager in Iraqi Kurdistan. She is only one of many victims of the cross-border bombings that Turkey visits upon her region. The Turkish military hid the evidence of the bombing that killed Dunya, and tried to force local people to delete video footage of the incident.

In the words of her family: "We think that Turkey is targeting the Kurds in general. Old and young, men or women, they don't care. What is my crime? Is it my fault I was born as a Kurd?"

In this issue we follow up on Dunya's story with an invitation: join us in demanding that Turkey's bombing of civilian populations ends immediately. If we do nothing, the story will die with her. It will happen again.

Sign our petition here: <https://tinyurl.com/stop-bombings>



**SPONSORS OF CPT**

- Church of the Brethren / On Earth Peace
- Mennonite Church Canada
- Mennonite Church USA
- Congregation of St. Basil (the Basilians)
- Presbyterian Peace Fellowship
- Das Deutsche Mennonitische Friedenskomitee

**BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS  
TO TRANSFORM VIOLENCE  
AND OPPRESSION**

USA: P.O. Box 6508  
Chicago, Illinois 60680  
Tel: +1-773-376-0550  
Fax: +1-773-376-0549  
[peacemakers@cpt.org](mailto:peacemakers@cpt.org)

CANADA:  
103 Bellevue Ave  
Toronto, ON M5T 2N8  
Tel: +1-647-339-0991  
[canada@cpt.org](mailto:canada@cpt.org)



**christian peacemaker teams - canada**  
**équipes chrétiennes d'action pour la paix canada**  
**103 Bellevue Ave**  
**Toronto, ON M5T 2N8**