

---

WRITERS FOR PEACE COMMITTEE

---

# NEWSLETTER

---



---

## INDEX

---

- **Germán Rojas** – Education for peace
- **Tanja Tuma** - Powder keg in the middle of Europe
- **Neža Vilhelm** - Interview with Jennifer Clement
- **Resolution on threats to freedom of expression, peace, and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, and Serbia**
- **Dessale Berekhet** - “War is Peace” and “Peace is War”!
- **Rainny Richard Ansumana** - The struggle of employees
- **Antonio Della Rocca** - Dealing with migration is a contribution to peace
- **Hamed Aynehvand** - Demonstration of fear
- **Poetry corner** (William Khalipwina Mpina)



---

# EDUCATION FOR PEACE

---

BY GERMÁN ROJAS (WFPC CHAIR, PEN CHILE)

One of the most important outcomes of the last meeting of the Writers for Peace Committee of PEN International, held on 19 September, was the adoption of the draft resolution entitled "Threats to freedom of expression, peace and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia," which was submitted by our committee to the 89th Congress of International PEN.

At the Congress the resolution was adopted by a large majority of 50 votes in favour, 4 abstentions and no votes against. Being a subject on which it is impossible to have unique visions, the idea of a consensus text in favour of freedom of expression, peace and stability ended up prevailing. And that is an extraordinary achievement for which I thank all those who took part in the debate.

The whole process of drafting this resolution gave me a deeper understanding of the current situation in the Balkan region. It is not that I was completely ignorant about the history and the events in those territories but having lived through the war that ravaged those countries in the 1990s, more than 12,400 kilometers away - which is the distance between Chile and the former Yugoslavia - meant in fact that my knowledge of that conflict was very superficial.

In these days in which the text of the aforementioned resolution was debated, I became aware of how difficult it is for citizens living in former conflict zones to be able to move towards positions that place at the centre of the debate the ideas of maintaining memory, recognizing one's own mistakes and not only those of the adversaries, opening up to the possibility of forgiveness, repairing the damage caused, and defining policies that make possible the non-repetition of the events and conducts that gave rise to the conflict. And I am not only saying this for what is going on in the Balkans, but I am also thinking about my own country, where 50 years after the coup d'état that overthrew the democratically elected President, it has not been possible for the Chilean political parties to agree on the text of a public declaration supporting the importance of strengthening democracy in Chile.

This reflection led me to think about the importance of children's education for peace. I understand educating children as a process in which they coexist with other people and from this mutual coexistence they are transformed into beings who live as do those who are part

of the community to which they belong. In other words, children must grow up in a world in which they respect themselves and others and are accepted and respected by the community.

To achieve this goal, it is important to act in several directions: a) allow children to see the mistakes they make as opportunities for them to act differently and not as acts that deserve punishment; b) do not promote competition that makes them act against each other; c) inspire in them the need to conserve and respect the nature that surrounds them and not to destroy it; d) not to deny in our daily actions as adults the values and virtues that we try to promote among children; and e) invite them to be builders of a better world, for which it is essential to live in harmony with nature and the other beings that share with us the space of the community in which we live.

We often make children feel that there is no alternative to the obligation to live in a world of struggle and competition. We make them believe that in order to survive they must fight and compete against others and against nature. This leads us to think that aggression is the fundamental emotion that defines the human beings, in circumstances where what makes us unique is the emotion of love, which only consists - to put it in the words of the Chilean biologist Humberto Maturana - in "the acceptance of the other as a legitimate other in daily coexistence" and who also adds "I want a world in which we respect the natural world that sustains us, a world in which we return what we borrow from nature in order to live".

If we agree with this vision, we need to end the patriarchal discourse of struggle and war and open ourselves to the possibility of living in a world where respect and collaboration is the norm.

Many people will think that this is utopian, but we must not forget that utopia is not the dream of the unattainable, but rather the stimulus that makes us persist in achieving what appears to our eyes as an ideal that only exists in hope.

The delegates from the Balkan countries made us live something similar to this at the last meeting of our committee, for which I am deeply grateful.

---

# POWDER KEG IN THE MIDDLE OF EUROPE

---

BY TANJA TUMA (PEN SLOVENIA)

Nationalism and autocracy persistently resurface in the countries of the former communist regimes in Europe that were once under the grip of communist regimes, whether they were part of the Soviet Union and behind the Iron Curtain or the former Yugoslavia. The specter of manipulated elections looms large in these nations. With fake news disseminated by alleged Russian trolls consistently favoring autocratic leaders who align themselves, to varying degrees, with Russia's imperialist agenda.

The recently released report *Toxic narratives*, silencing expression in the Western Balkans, commissioned by PEN International and supported by Fritt Ord Foundation sheds light on the troubling state of affairs in Bosnia and Hercegovina, Monte Negro, Kosovo, and Serbia. Spearheaded by editor Aurelia Dondo and authors dr. Lejla Turčilo and dr. Belma Buljubašić, the report delves into the dire situation of the FOE in these regions. Through interviews with 20 writers and in-depth research, the report paints a stark picture of the challenges faced. The report is available on the link ..... and was officially published on 18th October 2023 in Sarajevo and at the Frankfurt Book Fair.

War wounds from three decades ago are far from healed. New waves of nationalisms and populisms are poisoning the atmosphere leading to conflicts with potential to escalate into full-blown wars. The underlying causes for this unfortunate development are manifold, including the ineffective way of the international community to address ongoing issues. As soon as the guns fell silent, most of the world forgot about the Balkans but history has shown that festering wounds can erupt anew, as evidenced by the recent atrocities in Ukraine. It is as if, every few decades, we toss a stone into the fountain of history, bringing forth the specters of aggressive ideologies that previously resulted in ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity, genocides, and massive wartime rapes.

International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia have closed its cases, however, the crimes it documented still cast a long shadow.

Tragically, in some areas, there is a disturbing glorification of these crimes, leading to new waves of violence expressed through hate speech and malicious actions. Writers who dare to challenge the narratives of the populist regimes find themselves targeted and forced to abandon their homes, fearing for their lives.



The report is introduced by two prefaces, offering the perspectives from the past and the present. Boris A. Novak, Vice-President of PEN International, who in the 90s organized a huge humanitarian action for Sarajevo writers, writes:

“And where are the Balkans 28 years after our last tragic wars from which we have learned nothing, nothing at all? Of course, it is partly a consequence of the wrong policy of the international community – but there is a burning question for the Balkans as well: aren't we, inhabitants of the Balkans, also responsible for our own Balkan misery? Isn't the bad eternity of the Balkans OUR own fault as well? So, are we going to lament and lament and lament as infantile eternal victims of History asking all the time the others to help and curse them at the same time for their help – or are we going TO DO something about it OURSELVES?”

Germán Rojas, Chair of Writers for Peace Committee, is very clear as to what is needed: "This report sheds light on two key points: a) the urgent need to protect freedom of expression and b) that all actors – national and international – commit themselves to ensuring freedom of expression for all those who peacefully challenge official narratives. [...] Freedom of expression is the cornerstone of a democratic society. When the space for it is curtailed, abuses of other human rights follow. We must not forget that without freedom of expression there is no sustainable peace." During the 89th congress, the delegates of PEN International passed the Resolution on threats to freedom of expression, peace, and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, and Serbia proposed by Writers for Peace Committee and seconded by PEN Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegrin and Slovenian PEN centres.

Spread the word and use it to help secure peace in the region.

It takes only a single spark to ignite the explosive powder keg.



---

## INTERVIEW WITH JENNIFER CLEMENT

---

BY NEŽA VILHELM (PEN SAN MIGUEL)

**1. What kind of status does culture have in Mexico? Is it supported by the state, how do artists live there, are they able to live of their work, are there national theatres, orchestras, how is with libraries ...)**

Culture is supported by the state but also by a few private NGOs. It's almost impossible for an artist to make a living from their work, as the salaries are very low. Many artists work independently, creating their own space outside of the state-run areas. In Mexico, we do have libraries, but the statistics show that Mexico is a country that watches television, and now watch their telephones, and very few books are read.

**2. How does atmosphere in Mexico influence the work of artists? In what kind of atmosphere do you work there?**

Mexico is a fantastic place to work in terms of inspiration. Andre Breton said that the Surrealist movement did not have to come to Mexico, as the country was surreal in and of itself. Mexico both historically and presently has some of the greatest artists in the world.

**3. I once read the sentence: In South America we don't have authors in prison, we have dead authors. Is it really that bad or even worse? Can you name maybe some last examples of prosecutions of authors?**

I actually said that phrase. It was, 'In Mexico we don't have journalists in prison, we have journalists in graves.' It really is that bad because in Mexico there is total impunity. No one has been tried or jailed for killing a journalist and the president himself gives this horrible and shameful reality no importance, which means we have both legal impunity and moral impunity.

**4. Do you personally have had any troubles because of your work? Can you share something with us?**

I had 'troubles' when I was president of PEN Mexico with threats and even twice I had the tires of my car slashed and the telephone and internet cables were cut. After my book on the stealing of little girls, Prayers for the Stolen, I had to leave the county. I was able to stay at the City of Asylum in Pittsburgh with Henry and Diane Reese.



## 5. What can we as individuals and as a PEN family do?

The PEN family came together in the most extraordinary way when, as President of PEN Mexico, we worked to change the law so that the killing of a journalist was a federal crime and not a state crime. The whole community came together – every centre, every PEN president, the Swedish Academy and important writers from all over the world – this created a tremendous amount of pressure on the Mexican government and the law was changed. Other NGOs had tried to push for this change, but the global and intellectual PEN body can be a strong force indeed.



Property of <https://www.jenniferclément.org/>

---

## RESOLUTION ON THREATS TO FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION, PEACE, AND STABILITY IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, KOSOVO, MONTENEGRO, AND SERBIA

---

The Assembly of Delegates of PEN International, meeting virtually at its 89th annual Congress, 26 to 28 September 2023, expresses serious concern over growing challenges to freedom of expression in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, and Serbia, and the threats they pose to peace and stability in the Western Balkans region.

PEN International's upcoming report on Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, and Serbia, details the myriad pressures, intimidation, and threats aimed at stifling independent voices. Writers, journalists, publicly-engaged intellectuals, and civil society activists face a range of challenges, including disinformation and smear campaigns, physical threats and violence, economic censorship, and abusive Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPPs), aimed at silencing their opinion and critical reporting. The space for alternative voices is shrinking, particularly for those who oppose dominant – often nationalistic – political narratives. At the same time, hate speech is on the rise, not only through online harassment by trolls and bots, but also by politically powerful actors who use it to manipulate public opinion. The ongoing stigmatisation by political leaders of independent voices and the failure to prevent and sanction such acts fuel a climate of growing anxiety, fear, and insecurity. Many critical voices feel they have no choice but to self-censor.

This divisive rhetoric is particularly dangerous in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, and Serbia – which continue to experience ethnic tensions – and directly threatens peace and stability in the region.[i]

In the 1990s, nationalism and populism, fuelled by Slobodan Milošević and its Socialist Party of Serbia, tore apart the former Yugoslavia, causing one of the cruellest wars in Europe and Central Asia since World War II, claiming over 130,000 lives and displacing four million people. For over 24 years, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia investigated genocide and war crimes, including summary executions of civilians, conflict-related sexual violence, and the destruction of cultural heritage. With wounds still unhealed, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, and Serbia have yet to fully achieve truth, justice, and reparation. By restricting freedom of expression, these post-conflict societies face new divisions and possible new grounds for conflict.[ii]


**The Assembly of Delegates of PEN International calls on the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, and Serbia to fully uphold the right to freedom of expression and to create an environment in which free public debate can thrive. The very first steps towards this must include:**

- Immediately end the glorification of war criminals, revisionist narratives and hate speech, and the denial of war crimes and genocide.
- Publicly, unequivocally, and systematically condemn all acts of violence and targeted attacks against writers, journalists, and activists.
- Ensure impartial, prompt, thorough, independent, and effective police investigations into all alleged crimes against writers and hold those responsible to account. Dedicate the resources necessary to investigate and prosecute attacks.
- Bring laws, policies, and practices pertaining to freedom of expression and media freedom fully in line with their international obligations and commitments.
- Recognise SLAPPs as a growing threat to freedom of expression and adopt anti-SLAPP legislation.

[i] For more information, see PEN International, Bosnia and Herzegovina (Republika Srpska): Drop criminal defamation bill, 22 May 2023  
Freedom House, Nations in Transit 2023, Kosovo  
PEN International, Montenegro: Authorities must stop harassment and intimidation of the Montenegrin PEN Centre, 10 October 2022,  
PEN International, Serbia: Investigate death threats against writer Marko Vidojković and hold those responsible to account, 12 February 2023,

[ii] For more information, see Visit to Serbia and Kosovo - Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence, Fabián Salvioli (A/HRC/54/24/Add.2), 10 July 2023; OHCHR, Bosnia and Herzegovina: Divisive post-conflict politics and a failure to address conflict drivers must be addressed to prevent violent extremism and terrorism, says UN expert, 20 January 2023;

Human Rights Council Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review Forty-third session 1-12 May 2023, Montenegro, Compilation of information prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights



05/10/2023  
RESOLUTION ON THREATS TO FREEDOM OF  
EXPRESSION, PEACE, AND STABILITY IN  
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, KOSOVO,  
MONTENEGRO, AND SERBIA

[Read more](#)



---

# “WAR IS PEACE” AND “PEACE IS WAR”!

---

BY DESSALE BEREKHET (PEN ERITREA)

I was born and raised in a country in the Horn region where war and conflict are so common that many quip, "It's a good thing Africa has only one Horn." Had there been two, the problem could have doubled!

In fact, at the time of my birth, Eritrea was a province of Ethiopia, governed by Emperor Haile Selassie I. Some argue that we, the people of Eritrea, were better off under this imperial regime. And I now believe they are correct.

After 1993, Eritrea seceded from Ethiopia, becoming the 182nd member of the international community and hoisting its flag at the UN. Achieving statehood came at a great cost, involving a bloody war from September 1961 to May 1991 that resulted in countless casualties and generations living with the aftermath.

## **A Pyrrhic Victory:**

After May 1991, Eritreans abroad were mobilized under the slogan, "Our martyrs brought this land with their blood; we will rebuild it with our sweat!" This sentiment fuelled optimism that Eritreans could accomplish anything. Alas! This optimism dissolved within a decade, sending many back into exile again. And eventually we understood that the triumph we seem to enjoy was a Pyrrhic Victory!

## **The Incredible Human Toll:**

Tens of thousands of young people perished to liberate Eritrea. The combatants who survived knew war but were ill-equipped for peaceful coexistence. Lacking rehabilitation, they struggled to adapt to civilian life, leading to existential crises and disillusionment. On their perplexing reality - "War is Peace" and "Peace is War"!

## **The Cycle Repeats:**

In 1998, a new war broke out between Eritrea and Ethiopia. Those who thrived in conflict found their calling again. This senseless war had devastating long-term effects, deeply scarring the national psyche.

## **A Lost Innocence:**

Once known for its hospitality, Eritrea has become a nation of suspicion and fear. It was a society which used to welcome strangers at home without any doubt. However, now, the social fabric of the people is entirely destroyed, and reduced to the degree where a mother and the daughter, a father and his own son cannot be trusted. And Eritrea has become the epicenter of the war-torn Horn region, it no longer thrives in peace but wallows in a perpetual state of conflict.



## **Concluding Remarks:**

Finally, the Eritrean earnest dream is dead! And the focus for Eritrean writers and journalists in the diaspora is now on liberating the minds of those still under the country's dire situation. Talking about democracy and human rights is almost a luxury Eritrea can't afford; the aim should be to end brutal totalitarianism and give a fresh start.

Moreover, the education system and curriculum have been deliberately militarized and politicized by the existing ruthless regime. Literature, arts, and cultural works have been designed, manipulated, and controlled to concur with, promote and cement the thoughtfully falsified narratives. This has produced a society that repeats the same narratives which were imposed on it without questioning any information supplied by the regime. As a result, the society has lost its ability to explore, investigate, critically review, and analyse information. This situation must be reversed to its original state. If not, no people divided against itself can ever stand as a nation!

---

# THE STRUGGLE OF EMPLOYEES

---

BY RAINNY RICHARD ANSUMANA (PEN SIERRA LEONE)

Work, work and work! Yesterday to this very day, at this very moment, innocent and competent skilful employees have their jobs taken away from them by employers and left to struggle with their poor families. It is evident that many surveys had found out that more and more hardworking employees suffer from contract termination as a result of their desire to upgrade themselves, subjecting them to unemployment and their poor families to hard struggles. Employers, stop the heartless termination of employees' contracts. It is not all about working for employers' success, but also about career development and upgrade of employees to be more productive and to earn better salaries and other benefits.



The very desire of employers to enslave employees at work places is a major problem causing incessant employees' contract terminations. Without freedom at work, the employees have no chance to question the required hours of work, so employees work for much longer hours without overtime pay. Without freedom at work, they will have no right to rest as employees will be entitled to 21 or more days leave on contract documents but the employees will be never granted leave, nor the employees be given a leave-wage. As a result, they move from employees' status to working as slaves. Unfortunately, the labor laws in Sierra Leone are well written and well-documented but not enforced. Of course, the employers take advantage of this, to the detriment of innocent, poor employees.

Another reason is greed. The employers are full of greed and loaded with great desire to cheat their employees. The employers will do everything possible in order to pay their employees very low salaries and force their employees to believe that they have been very helpful by creating the job in the first place. This is mere punishment.

Employees are inspired to learn new skills, go through career development and upgrade themselves at work to attract well-paid salaries, promotions and to gain other benefits. In fact, the attitude of many employers is to deliberately pay salaries late, underpay employees, and create little or no motivation at work; so, employees push for better facilities and better conditions of service by upgrading themselves while on job, but this is what employers hate and end up terminating the contracts of those employees pushing for career development.

To stop this callous punishment of employers on employees, the Sierra Leone labor laws must be enforced and monitored at every working place to ensure employees freedom at work and be well paid and as well be allowed to upgrade career while on job. Interestingly, some good employers in good organizations greatly welcome the idea of career development in order to have productive employees which will lead to productive organization. So, do not punish employees with contract termination because they want career development. Instead, create the learning and training environment for the employees so that they will in turn become productive in their services.



---

# DEALING WITH MIGRATION IS A CONTRIBUTION TO PEACE

---

BY ANTONIO DELLA ROCCA (PEN TRIESTE)

The online meeting on September 19, 2023 of the Writers for Peace Committee (WfPC) helped me to reflect on the fact that the issue of migration of people requires urgent attention, since it constitutes one of the most important threats for world's peace.

PEN International and the WfPC are on the front line on this theme - the Resolution on Migration and Displaced Writers approved in 2019 in Manila and, even before, the Make Space Campaign started in 2017 in Lviv are already part of our DNA.

However, the political events of the last two years, combined with the action of the elements and the issue of climate change, have enhanced the migration phenomenon beyond every expectation.

Many countries which may be fortunate enough not to have war on their territory (but we shall remember that peace is not only "absence of war") are anyway interested in it, as transferors or recipients of migrations of refugees. In these migrations, writers are an important, but minor entity.

In Italy we have experienced an extraordinary increase of refugees. It is widely known, and a not insignificant part of the migrations which are the so-called "Balkan route," which leads directly to Trieste and/or Austria.

In my opinion, we Europeans must give to those voiceless people, a channel to make their voice heard, and PEN International through the WfPC may be an important player in this game.

It is not an easy task. There is no place for unnecessary personalisms. And it is quite difficult avoid getting implicated in day-to-day politics, at internal and international level.

If we cannot propose solutions, we can anyway find and keep alive the right spirit that may lead not only to the re-establishment of peace in the conflict-affected areas, but also give the necessary importance to the army (I use this term deliberately provocatively) of refugees leaving their homes hoping for a "normal" life.

Anyway, I think that we literary people must be conscious that there will be no peace in any part of the world till the economy works on the understanding that profit is not everything... if this may ever happen.

And we must work on a short/medium term perspective, remembering the words of John Maynard Keynes: "In the long run we are all dead."



---

# DEMONSTRATION OF FEAR

---

BY HAMED AYNEHVAND (ICORN RESIDENT)

A year has passed since the Mahsa movement with the slogan "woman, life, freedom" which was formed in protest against the arrest and murder of Mahsa Amini at the infamous Moral security police headquarters. None of the layers of social and cultural life in Iran are the same. The gap between the nation and the government had reached its peak before, i.e. after the protests of December 2017 and November 2019. However, the persecution of protestors in the streets and the executions of young people whose only crime was to defy the "gender and political apartheid" in November 2022 came to a blood bath. The hatred between the government and the people has reached the stage when there are very few politicians among the Iranian opposition who think that there is a way to talk with the government about the reforms.

The ongoing dialogue between the various branches of the opposition, and even the reformists who used to be a part of the political structure of the Islamic Republic, is only about the transition from the Islamic Republic to a democratic society with the least damage possible. The transition from a government that "preventively" arrested journalists, political activists and family members of the plaintiffs (who lost their loved ones last year in those three months) seems today, on the anniversary of the Mahsa movement, almost impossible. The government which, on the 16 of September 2023, implemented an unannounced martial law throughout Iran to show that everything is normal.

The "Manifestations of fear" in the face of the government with the presence of armed security forces, anti-riot motor bikers and military personnel carriers in the streets before the formation of "People's Demonstrations" communicated an important message: the government has no other way to survive except by force and violence.

The attack of the security forces on the houses of the plaintiffs' families, arrests or house arrests to prevent anniversary funeral ceremonies shows that the government considers its foundations of legitimacy to be so shaky that even such a small act as holding a limited anniversary ceremony poses a serious risk which should be prevented in any way possible. Also, it is not important that the tradition of the anniversary funeral ceremony, which is very popular among Shiites, should be considered as unimportant in a Shiite government. "Victory by creating fear" is the policy of the Islamic Republic these days, and victory here has no meaning other than the survival of the Islamic Republic.

Contrary to what was going on inside the borders of Iran, outside the borders, Iranians living in different countries, despite their differences in views and belonging to different branches of the opposition, staged protest demonstrations in front of the embassies of the Islamic Republic. To honour the memory of the victims of the Mahsa movement emphasized the irreversible desire to overthrow the Islamic Republic.

The author observed relatively large demonstrations of the opponents of the Islamic Republic in Graz and Vienna in Austria and met with a group of human rights activists protesting in front of the European headquarters of the United Nations which displayed numerous pictures of political prisoners and symbolic graves of the executed activists during the Mahsa movement.

The children who were killed during the Mahsa movement were an indication of people trying to disrupt the normalization of the relations between the vulgar mullahs and their bully partners in the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps with European countries and international institutions. Their determined protests, along with the voices of Iranians fed up with the oppression of the Islamic Republic and their reflection, will make the transition from the "reign of terror and hostage taking" possible one day.

Although the government, intoxicated by the safe passage of Mahsa's anniversary, has developed the illusion of being a legitimate body, political observers believe that the military and militaristic social administration are showing people an iron fist that manifests only the institutionalization of anger and hatred. The revolt of the people still creates political opportunities for the future. The Mahsa movement was the precursor of the revolutionary movement aimed at overthrowing the political system established in Iran. This powerful and stormy revolutionary movement that will connect an important part of all economic, social and inter-generational classes to activity on the streets has not arrived yet but it is on its way.

Then we will see mothers with daughters, fathers with sons, and grandfathers with grandchildren together in the streets. Reliable evidence of the political, economic and social movements shows that the Islamic Republic will not have a chance to experience its third leader and society will not have the capacity to accept it. With the death of Ali Khamenei, the current cohesion of the repression forces against the revolutionary movement will be lost.



---

**Writers for Peace Committee congratulates Nargess Mohammadi, Iranian writer and human rights defender for the Nobel Peace Prize 2023 and calls on Iranian authorities to release her immediately.**

---

The Enigma of a Mysterious City

Dear Lord, a mysterious city once peaceful,  
Is now ravaged by war, tearing families apart,  
and turning visions to fear.

The soil is stained with bloodshed,  
while cries pierce the air and hope dwindles,  
as violence and hate ensnare.

When will healing come and peace reign?

Once a green land, now turned to dust,  
where life yells mercilessly and dreams burst.

The city is darkened with fumes of smoke,  
with no relief but pain, death, and grief.

When will peace come and sit on the chair of authority?

Dear Lord, hear the screams of the Mysterious City,  
once green, now turned to sand.

We pray for the flora, fauna, and humans too,

We pray for their wishes and hopes laid bare.

End the war and bring peace, we dare.

by William Khalipwina Mpina (PEN Malawi)







---

## **Writers for Peace Committee, Newsletter No.8, November 2023**

Published by: Slovene PEN, Tomšičeva 12, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia  
For publication: Tanja Tuma, president of PEN Slovenia, member of the Advisory  
Committee of the WfPC and member of the Board of PEN International

Chair: Germán Rojas, Chair of the WfPC (PEN Chile)  
Contributors: Germán Rojas, Chair of the WfPC (PEN Chile)  
Tanja Tuma, member of the Advisory Committee of the WfPC and member of the  
Board of PEN International (PEN Slovenia)  
Neža Vilhelm (PEN San Miguel)  
Dessale Berekhet (PEN Eritrea in exile)  
Rainny Richard Ansumana (PEN Sierra Leone)  
Antonio Della Rocca (PEN Trieste)  
Hamed Aynehvand (ICORN resident)  
Proofread by Kim Echlin (PEN Canada)  
Edited and designed by Sara Katarina Zver

The publication is free of charge.

It is accessible online only on the link:  
<https://www.penwritersforpeacecommittee.com/newsletter>



Writers for Peace Committee does not necessarily endorse all the opinion expressed  
in the articles contained in this Newsletter, which are the sole responsibility of their  
authors.