PEACE CAUCUS
PEACE CAUCUS IN OFFICIAL RELATIONS WITH THE AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION
APHA Annual Meeting  October 24-27, 2021  ONLINE
www.aphapeacecaucus.org

PEACE, JUSTICE, & PUBLIC HEALTH: YOUR GUIDE TO APHA SESSIONS & EVENTS

DON’T MISS THESE PEACE CAUCUS & APHA COLLABORATIVE SESSIONS

Sunday October 17th

- 6:00-7:30 PM (MDT)
  2021 Health Activist Virtual Awards Ceremony
Promoting Health, Peace, and Social Justice
Presentation of:
   Paul Cornely Awards to Ebony Hilton and Ala Stanford
   Edward Barsky Awards to Rita Giacaman and the Jewish Voice for Peace Health Advisory Council
   The Paul Wellstone Award to U.S. Representative Cori Bush
   The AMSA Paul Ambrose Outstanding Student Activist Award - Recipient to be named
Registration $10  https://www.healthactivistdinner.org
Student Registration FREE

Sunday October 24th

- 10:00 – 11:00 AM (MDT)  Session 231.0
  Peace Caucus Business Meeting. ALL WELCOME!
  https://apha.confex.com/apha/2021/meetingapp.cgi/Sessio n/64656

- 4:00 – 5:30 PM (MDT)  Session 2065.0
  Advancing Public Health Interventions to Address the Harms of the Carceral System
  https://apha.confex.com/apha/2021/meetingapp.cgi/Session/63923

Tuesday October 24th

- 8:30 – 10:00 AM (MDT)  Session 4040.0
  Apartheid, Oppression, and Violence: The Health of Populations in War and Conflict
  https://apha.confex.com/apha/2021/meetingapp.cgi/Se ssion/62525

PEACE: A PREREQUISITE OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Since 1985 the Peace Caucus has served to make visible, as expressed in APHA’s 2009 policy statement, that “war has profound public health consequences, and it is an entirely preventable source of some of the world’s worst public health catastrophes.”

This year’s Peace Caucus program will feature presentations on the public health harms of systemic violence and conflict in the U.S. and around the globe.

On Sunday October 24th at 4:00 PM (MDT), session 2065.0 will bring together academics and community-based activists, including with the Deeper Than Water Coalition, an abolitionist group led by currently and formerly incarcerated people, to explore public health interventions to address the harms of the carceral system.

On Tuesday, October 26th at 8:30 AM (MDT), session 4040.0 will present on the drivers of violence against health care in conflict, the “weaponization of health care” and other public health harms of the current war in Tigray, describe how children are harmed by armed conflict in Myanmar, report on intimate partner violence in post-conflict Sri Lanka, and explore an approach to “peace through health” as applied to Israel and Palestine. The session will conclude by considering the role of health professionals in preventing the adverse health consequences of war.

Please learn more about the work of the Peace Caucus by attending our business meeting, session 231.0 on Sunday October 24th 10 AM-111 AM (MDT), and support the work of the Peace Caucus by joining at: https://www.aphapeacecaucus.org.
A CRITICAL TIME FOR LINKING OUR MOVEMENTS AGAINST GLOBAL WARMING AND MILITARISM

Robert Gould, MD, Co-Chair, Peace Caucus President, San Francisco Bay Physicians for Social Responsibility

At a time when we are daily reminded through spreading drought and wildfires, and extreme weather events, that our climate crisis is here and now, we cannot afford to continue to squander our resources for another era of militarism that only benefits the global military-industrial complex while accelerating our ecological demise. We must forthrightly bring into our conversations and policies the links between militarism and climate change.

The final collapse of U.S. war in Afghanistan, which since 9-11 has resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of mostly civilian lives, and at the cost of over $2.3 trillion, demands a serious re-examination of the use of our military, and the massive budgets that sustain it, as the best way to achieve national, and global security.

While belatedly, and very superficially acknowledging the strategic folly of our 20 years-long deadly and destructive “War on Terror,” the U.S. is moving quickly to mobilize support for an aggressive “New Cold War” of heightened confrontation against China and Russia. This deadly trajectory is fueled by overwhelming bipartisan consensus among Congressional leaders to expand our bloated military budget. Proposals include funding of advanced conventional weapons systems, such as greatly destabilizing hypersonic missiles capable of either nuclear or conventional payloads, and across-the-board modernization of our nuclear arsenal. All is projected to provide the continued basis of U.S. “escalation dominance” over all other militaries, whereby the use of such weapons would likely end virtually all human civilization in an instant, whether by “accident” or design.

This enormous military budget has been justified by our political leaders on the rationale that in a world of nation-states in geopolitical contention over resources ranging from fossil fuels to rare minerals, there is no other rational choice but to maximize force projection for such control, and to deter opponents from attacking us in the process.

This militarist drive that has driven our endless and destructive wars in the Middle East now threatens to extend great-power military confrontation into the rapidly thawing Arctic. This is a last-ditch drive to control the new sources of oil and gas now “miraculously” made available, that if drilled and used, would completely use up our remaining “carbon budget” that we must adhere to in order to limit runaway temperatures that will almost certainly make our Earth uninhabitable.

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Moreover, the U.S. military is one of the greatest polluters of our planet. We cannot ignore the fact that continuing our massive expenditures on the military, in addition to preparing for the wars that directly destroy far-flung landscapes and create millions of refugees, greatly contributes to vast environmental pollution.

It is estimated that the U.S. military since 2001 has emitted 1.2 billion metric tons of greenhouse gases, equivalent to the annual emissions of 257 million cars on the road.

Our Department of Defense is also the largest institutional consumer of oil in the world, spending an estimated $17 billion a year. If the Pentagon were listed alongside other countries, just counting its fuel usage in isolation would rank it as the 47th largest emitter of greenhouse gases in the world, as it simultaneously ramps up demand for continued fossil fuel production, and resultant climate degradation.

In recognition of the enormous pollution and global warming contribution of the U.S. and global militaries, numerous organizations have joined a call for all governments to commit to “set clear GHG emission reduction targets for the military” that are consistent with the 1.5°C target specified by the 2015 Paris Agreement at the October UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow.

There are additional clear choices to be made. The fiscal cost of the 2 decades war on terror, estimated at $6.4 trillion, is far in excess of the estimated $4.5 trillion cost of changing the U.S. power grid to 100% renewable energy over the coming decade.

According to a 2019 study published by the Institute for Policy Studies, about $80 billion, or 11% of the military budget at the time, was sufficient to create enough solar and wind energy to provide power to every household in our nation, more than 127 million.

As such, there are ample resources in the U.S. and global military budgets to fund the needed transformations envisioned by a Green New Deal, both here and abroad. To begin to make any ground on this admittedly enormous challenge, we need to begin to break down the organizational and issue silos that have impeded development of a truly intersectional movement embracing our environmental, social justice and peace movements as integral, necessary parts of developing the capacity for saving our immanently and increasingly threatened web of life.

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This should be something that we can unite around. Two decades ago in San Francisco, for example, there was a major “Environmentalists Against War” presence in demonstrations that drew millions around the world, and we need to develop and build that consciousness into our current work. It is not much of a leap to connect the ideas and movements that have advocated for “defunding” police programs towards providing more “protection” in terms of what is needed for truly safe and healthy communities, without police racism and violence, to global anti-militarism movements that share a “defunding” perspective re: “swords into ploughshares” redirection of resources to serve our common human needs.

Blueprints for change exist. Much of these linkages have been incorporated within the “Third Reconstruction” introduced into Congress by Representatives Jayapal and Lee, in partnership with the Poor People’s Campaign, which provides a context to anchor our peace and environmental and environmental work organically with daily struggles of tens of millions of Americans against hunger, poverty, and racism that have been deepened so tragically by our COVID pandemic.

This is the type of thinking, of organizing, that we need to take on if we are to fundamentally change the direction of our country, still the richest and most powerful in the world, to start rapidly demilitarizing our foreign policy at all levels, and hopefully to encourage other great powers, particularly China, Russia, NATO nations, and the rest of the Nuclear Weapons States to follow our example.

Severely cutting our military budget, cancelling our plans to modernize our nuclear weapons, and calling for support for the U.N. Treaty to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) would be a good start for beginning to develop the global collaboration needed to cool global tensions and thus the planet. Only by partnering with the rest of the world in moving rapidly toward ending the arms race, can we develop the global political will and capacity to take on our climate challenge and regenerate a world we would seek to bequeath to all who will follow us.

Join the PEACE CAUCUS TODAY @ www.aphapeacecaucus.org
War in Tigray: A Case Study in the Destruction of Health Systems and the Creation of Famine as Weapons of War

Patrice Sutton, MPH, Co-Program Planner, Peace Caucus

When you think of how war harms health, likely bullets, guns, and other forms of violence come to mind. And violence does of course cause many deaths. But the war being waged in the Tigray region of Ethiopia over the past 10 months is a glaring and unambiguous reminder that the weapons of war that can have the most devastating and long-lasting adverse impacts on public health are not necessarily the bullets but rather the purposeful demolition of a well-developed health system, and the obstruction of food and humanitarian aid with the predictable outcome of widespread famine.

A recent article in the Hill co-authored by APHA and Peace Caucus members Len Rubenstein and Mulugeta Gebregziabher, explains how the intentional destruction of Tigray’s health care system, as a strategy of war in Tigray and in other conflicts, portends far-reaching, long-lasting, and dire effects on the health of the civilian population.

The war in Tigray has led to severe famine, with many factors contributing to this outcome, including creating impediments to aid, the work of NGOs, banking, and communications. According to the UN humanitarian agency OCHA, 400,000 people are currently in famine-like conditions, and 1.8 million now in emergency levels of hunger at risk of starvation. Yet the government of Ethiopia, has, according to USAID “obstructed access” by land and air into Tigray, such that USAID chief Samantha Powers described the flow of humanitarian aid into the devastated region as “woefully insufficient.”

Reflecting on the current situation in Tigray the UN Secretary General António Guterres warned on August 26th, “A humanitarian catastrophe is unfolding before our eyes”, adding “The unity of Ethiopia and the stability of the region are at stake”, and calling for an immediate ceasefire and the launch of national political dialogue.

The massive humanitarian crisis in Tigray needs an urgent solution. To that end, public health professionals can lend their voice to calls consistent with the recent UN Secretary General’s appeal for peace including an immediate end to hostilities; guaranteed, unrestricted humanitarian access: re-establishment of public services; and the creation of conditions that allow for the start of comprehensive political dialogue to find a solution for the crisis.

To learn more about the intersection of war and public health we invite you to attend the Peace Caucus session, Apartheid, Oppression, and Violence: The Health of Populations in War and Conflict (session 4040.0) on Tuesday October 26th at 8:30 AM (MDT) which will include presentations on the destruction of health systems as a weapon of war generally, the war in Tigray specifically, and the role of public health professionals in preventing these health catastrophes.
From Horror to Hope: Recognizing and Preventing the Health Impacts of War

“From Horror to Hope: Recognizing and Preventing the Health Impacts of War,” a 400-page book written by Peace Caucus member, and Past President of APHA, Barry Levy, M.D., M.P.H., will be published by Oxford University Press in early 2022.

Initial chapters provide an overview of the nature and epidemiology of war, and human rights, ethics, and international law. The book covers a wide range of health consequences of war and its aftermath, including assaults and injuries, malnutrition, communicable diseases, mental disorders, reproductive health issues, and noncommunicable diseases and their prevention. Chapters also focus on the impacts of war on military personnel and veterans, its impacts on the environment, and determining the health impacts of war. The book addresses vulnerable populations. Additional chapters cover conventional and chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons and their control. A final chapter discusses the prevention of war and the promotion of peace. The book cites numerous publications and includes more than 50 photographs and other figures and tables. It also features profiles of 18 inspiring individuals who have contributed in various ways to preventing war and promoting peace, including several Peace Caucus members. When released, please find information about the book at www.oup.com

PERILOUS MEDICINE
The Struggle to Protect Health Care from the Violence of War
LEONARD RUBENSTEIN

For reviews, content and more information about this 2021 publication please go to this link.

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Peace Caucus Chairs Valerie Pacino, MPH, PhDc; Robert Gould, MD
Peace Caucus Program Planners: Anlan (Annie) Cheney, MPH; Valerie Pacino, MPH, PhDc; Patrice Sutton, MPH
You won’t want to miss participating in this year’s virtual Health Activist Dinner, featuring award recipients for their contributions to addressing COVID-19 inequities, threats to peace and social justice in the Middle East, and homelessness in the United States — followed by breakout room discussions on these issues.

Co-hosted by American Public Health Association Past Presidents Linda Rae Murray and Barry Levy, this event will include presentation of:

- The Paul Wellstone Award to Representative Cori Bush (D-MO) for her passionate leadership in addressing the plight of people experiencing homelessness and other social justice issues.

- Paul Cornely Awards to two physicians who organized major initiatives to address the COVID-19 needs of African American communities, Ebony Hilton and Ala Stanford.

- Edward Barsky Awards to Rita Giacaman and to the Jewish Voice for Peace Health Advisory Council, who have championed the health and human rights of Palestinians.

- The American Medical Student Association’s Paul Ambrose Outstanding Student Activist Award.

The awards presentation will be followed by one-hour breakout room discussions, moderated by national leaders, on COVID-19 inequities in the United States and globally, on homelessness in the United States, and other health and social justice issues.

You can register and get more information about this event at: healthactivistdinner.org

2021 Virtual Health Activist Dinner

Awards Ceremony and Breakout Room Discussions

Sunday, October 17, 8:00–10:00 p.m. ET

$10 Registration, Students Free