



# PEACE CAUCUS

In affiliation with the American Public Health Association

Fall 2022

## Reflections at the Intersection of Unabated War and Militarism

By Robert Gould, MD, Caucus Co-Chair



A welcome milestone in health professional engagement in confronting our climate emergency was the unprecedented coordination of over 200 worldwide medical and health journals in the publication of an [editorial in 2021](#) declaring the anticipated rise in global temperatures to be “the greatest threat to global public health,” and calling for our governments to urgently cooperate in investing adequately to redress our environmental crisis to avoid risking “catastrophic harm to health that will be impossible to reverse.”

Unfortunately, this revolution of health professional consciousness has crashed up against the global disruptions posed by COVID and unabated militarism exemplified by the brutal war being waged by Russia in Ukraine. Beyond the already [horrific costs of human lives and uprooting of millions](#), we now face heightened dangers of nuclear weapons use, and the risk of a catastrophic radiation release from

nuclear reactors operating in the conflict zone.

Our government and its allies have responded to war-induced energy disruptions by promoting increased production of oil and gas. This, coupled with “false solutions” to our energy and climate crisis, exemplified by accelerated support for nuclear power and unproven “carbon capture” proposals, will delay us from making the rapid transformation to the truly clean energy systems we need to survive.

The war in the Ukraine is unfolding in conjunction with vastly increased U.S. military and nuclear weapons budgets that in and of themselves amplify our climate emergency. [The U.S. spends 28 times as much on traditional military security as on climate security.](#)

*Continued page 4. Image: International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons*

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**Peace Caucus Program at-a-glance**  
**APHA Annual Meeting**  
Nov. 6-9, 2022 | Boston, MA  
*All times Eastern Standard Time (EST)*

### Sunday, November 6

**Reproductive Justice Demonstration**  
12:30 PM | BCEC Summer St. entrance

**#2206 Flashpoints in Peace and Health: Updates from Palestine, Tigray, and the U.S.-Mexico Border**  
4:30 - 6:00 PM | BCEC 260

**2022 Health Activist Dinner**  
6:00 - 9:00 PM | Maggiano’s Little Italy Restaurant (4 Columbus Avenue)  
*Get tickets at [healthactivistdinner.org](http://healthactivistdinner.org)*

### Monday, November 7

**#3040 The War in Ukraine: Public Health Perspectives**  
10:30 AM - 12:00 PM | BCEC 258B

**#3194 National Security, Climate Change, and Public Health**  
2:30 - 4:00 PM | BCEC 260

### Tuesday, November 8

**#4108 Fund Health Care Not Warfare** (APHA Plenary Session)  
10:30 AM - 12:00 PM | BCEC West Ballroom

**#419 APHA Public Health Awards Ceremony & Luncheon**  
12:15 - 1:45 PM | BCEC West Ballroom  
Congratulations to Peace Caucus member Mulugeta Gebregziabher who will be awarded the 2022 [Victor Sidel and Barry Levy Award for Peace](#) (see page 2)

**#4249 Civilians: The Greatest Casualty of War and Conflict**  
2:30 - 4:00 PM | BCEC 260

**#4338 Activism to Promote Primary Prevention of War Roundtable**  
4:30 - 6:00 PM | BCEC 52B

### Friday, November 11

**Peace Caucus Business Meeting**,  
10:00 - 11:30 AM | Virtual over Zoom  
*Join here with passcode [Peace2122](#) or email [peacecaucusapha@gmail.com](mailto:peacecaucusapha@gmail.com).*

# Peace, Justice, & Public Health

## *Your guide to sessions and events at APHA 2022*

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."

Our 2022 Peace Caucus program will feature stellar presentations spanning the breadth and depth of how war and conflict overdetermine the health of populations and the responsibility of public health professionals to prevent these harms. All times Eastern Standard Time (EST) or UTC/GMT -5.

### Sunday, November 06

**Reproductive Justice Demonstration** *after opening session, BCEC Summer St. entrance*  
Demonstrate against the Supreme Court Dobbs abortion decision and the continuing attacks on reproductive justice across the country.

**2206 Flashpoints in Peace and Health: Updates from Palestine, Tigray, and the U.S.-Mexico Border** *at 4:30 PM - 6:00 PM | BCEC 260*

Featuring presentations on the public health consequences of war and conflict in Tigray (see related newsletter article below), Palestine, Syria, and the U.S.-Mexico border.

### Monday, November 07

**3040 The War in Ukraine: Public Health Perspectives** *at 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM | BCEC 258B*

We endorsed this session, which was organized by APHA and discusses the war's impact on environmental health, the work of Doctors Without Borders, attacks on healthcare, the threat of nuclear war, and sexual violence in the war.

**3194 National Security, Climate Change, and Public Health** *at 2:30 - 4:00 PM | BCEC 260*

Collaboratively organized with the International Health section, this session features Michael Klare discussing what "national security means in the face of our climate emergency", Christine Hurley presenting a case study of the health harms associated with the US Navy's electronic warfare force on Whidbey Island, Washington, and Paul Walker, who will speak on the health and environmental impacts of U.S. military operations.

### Tuesday, November 08

**4108 Fund Health Care Not Warfare** (APHA Featured Plenary Session) *at 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM | BCEC West Ballroom*

Military spending accounts for more than 10 percent of all federal spending and nearly half of discretionary spending. Yet from 2008 through 2018, state governmental public health spending saw no growth—except in injury prevention—leaving states ill equipped to respond to COVID-19 and other emerging and existing health needs. The speakers in this session, planned by APHA's Peace Caucus, will address **redirecting excessive U.S. military expenditures** to adequately fund public health, create equitable health care, and ensure the availability of health workers to meet these needs.

**4249 Civilians: The Greatest Casualty of War and Conflict** *at 2:30 - 4:00 PM | BCEC 260*

Impacts among different populations and geographies will be discussed, including families, women, children conceived through sexual abuse and exploitation during peacekeeping missions as well as the strategies which drive adverse health impacts such as restricted movement.

**4338 Activism to Promote Primary Prevention of War Roundtable** *at 4:30 - 6:00 PM | BCEC 52B*

This interactive session will provide glimpses into the goals, strategies, and accomplishments of various organizations and individuals working to educate, mobilize, and effect change on the upstream determinants of conflict, war, and violence. After brief introductions from presenters, attendees will have the opportunity to interact and discuss in more depth with each roundtable.

There is much more! Visit our program [online](#) or in the app for a complete list of all sessions endorsed by the Peace Caucus.

## Annual Virtual Peace Caucus Business Meeting on Nov. 11th

Learn more about the work of the Peace Caucus by attending our VIRTUAL business meeting on Friday, Nov. 11, at 7 AM PT / 10 AM ET. [Join at this link](#) with passcode Peace2!22 or email us at [peacecaucusapha@gmail.com](mailto:peacecaucusapha@gmail.com).

## Join us!

*Please help advance advocacy and action on behalf of one of the greatest social determinants of health: PEACE*

The Peace Caucus was founded in 1985 to educate and engage the influential voice of public health professionals in efforts to promote peace. Through outreach and educational activities, we strive to illuminate that peace and social justice are key determinants of the health of populations across the globe. Public health professionals possess the skills needed to identify and disseminate information about the impacts of global militarism on the health of the planet. Your participation in Peace Caucus activities can ensure that the connection between peace and health is a vibrant part of the APHA, public health education, and policy-making. Learn more and join at [www.aphapeacecaucus.org](http://www.aphapeacecaucus.org).

Follow us on Twitter  
[@APHAPeaceCaucus](https://twitter.com/APHAPeaceCaucus) for updates!

## 2022 Health Activist Dinner

Join health activists for a social hour, three-course dinner, and awards on Sunday, Nov. 6, at 6:00 pm ET at Maggiano's Little Italy Restaurant in Boston. Dr. Ted Brown will give the keynote: "History of the US Health Left." Get tickets (\$90 regular, \$40 student) at [healthactivistdinner.org](http://healthactivistdinner.org).

# The “Unseen” War in Tigray

**C**ONGRATULATIONS to Peace Caucus member Mulugeta Gebregziabher, PhD, who will be awarded the 2022 Victor Sidel and Barry Levy Award for Peace. The award draws attention to the profound health consequences of war and what public health workers can do to help prevent war and promote international peace.

Dr. Gebregziabher has worked tirelessly to bring attention to the largely “unseen war” in Tigray, which began in November 2020. United Nations’ investigators have recently described actions there as a “war crime” which now threatens to expand into a conflict that encompasses the horn of Africa.

Specifically, in September, the United Nations International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia’s report to the Human Rights Council stated:

“... the dire humanitarian situation in Tigray, where the Federal Government and allies have denied some six million people access to basic services, including electricity, internet, telecommunications, and banking for over a year. We have reasonable grounds to believe that the Federal Government and its allies have looted and destroyed goods indispensable for the survival of the civilian population in Tigray, killing livestock, destroying food stores, and razing crops while also implementing severe restrictions on humanitarian access to Tigray. Based on figures from the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs,



*the combined effect of these measures has left 90% of the population in dire need of assistance, representing an 80% increase since the beginning of the conflict. Most of the population in Tigray must now survive on limited and nutritionally inadequate diets. Sources also reported an increase in child marriages and child labour, human trafficking, and transactional sex as desperate means for survival.*

*We have reasonable grounds to believe that the widespread denial and obstruction of access to basic services, food, healthcare, and humanitarian assistance amounts to the crimes against humanity of persecution and inhumane acts.”*

Please come to session 2206 “Flashpoints in Peace and Health” on Sunday, Nov. 6th at 4:30 PM ET to learn more about the war in Tigray from Dr. Gebregziabher, including what health professionals can do to support peace.

## Ukraine Crisis: Responses and Background

**U**nited for Peace and Justice is a network of organizations with a diversity of views regarding the nature of the current crisis in Ukraine. But all agree in their opposition to the threat or use of force as a means to resolve conflict. Their compilation offers a selection of Ukraine resources from a variety of organizations and perspectives, from UFPJ member groups and elsewhere. Inclusion here

does not indicate endorsement by UFPJ or the Peace Caucus.

Don’t miss APHA’s session 3040 “The War in Ukraine: Public Health Perspectives” at the 2022 national meeting, including presentations on the war’s environmental health impacts, the work of Doctors without Borders, attacks on health care, the threat of nuclear war, and sexual violence.

## Webinar: Impacts of War & Conflict on the Well-being of Refugees

This virtual panel was hosted by the Peace Caucus and APHA Human Rights Forum on September 16th and brought together leading scientists and public health professionals speaking to the critical impact of war and conflict on the health and well-being of refugees. Speakers, including Peace Caucus members Dr. Rohini Haar and Dr. Shelley White, articulated the importance of primary prevention based on their extensive work on the weaponization of health and conflict and movement building at the U.S.-Mexico border respectively. *Dr. White will talk more about her work at the border at APHA 2022 in our session #2206 “Flashpoints in Peace and Health” on Sunday, Nov. 6.*



## The Global Alliance on War, Conflict and Health Launched!

The Global Alliance on War, Conflict and Health was launched on July 1, 2022. The Alliance is a member-based collaborative platform and encourages engagement from both individuals and institutions who work towards and share their vision for a world without war, where health is protected, justice upheld, and peace promoted. The Alliance was launched via a stellar online event now available on Youtube. APHA leaders and Peace Caucus collaborators Dr. Amy Hagopian and Dr. Samer Jabbour are co-chairs of The Alliance, and the Peace Caucus is proud to be among the founding members. Learn about getting involved at [warconflicthealth.org](http://warconflicthealth.org) and *hear from Dr. Hagopian about The Alliance at our APHA 2022 session #4338 “Activism to Promote Primary Prevention of War Roundtable” on Tuesday, Nov. 8.*

*“Unabated War and Militarism”  
cont’d from page 1:*

The \$740 billion in the 2021 U.S. military budget could have provided almost 150 million adults with basic healthcare for one year as just one example of the tradeoffs we are making as a nation.

The U.S. will be spending hundreds of billions of dollars over the next 2 decades on its nuclear weapons buildup, vowing under President Trump to spend Russia and China “into oblivion” to win the nuclear arms race to the end of civilization.

There is no change in this strategy in sight under the Biden Administration. The recently released U.S. National Security Review states, “Nuclear deterrence remains a top priority for the Nation ... A safe, secure, and effective nuclear force undergirds our defense priorities by deterring strategic attacks, assuring allies and partners, and allowing us to achieve our objectives if deterrence fails.”

The U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) is calculated to be “the world’s largest institutional user of petroleum and correspondingly, the single largest institutional producer of greenhouse gases (GHG) in the world.” The DOD’s GHG emissions result from war, as well as the U.S.’ on-going non-war operations, exercises, wargames, and the maintenance of military installations.

It is unimaginable to ponder the existential consequences of this strategy that prioritizes military spending in dollars and greenhouse gas emissions over human health and survival.

Even a limited nuclear war would cause abrupt climate disruption and global starvation. As documented in a recent report by the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, the repercussions of nuclear explosions include impacts to our climate, which could devastate global food

production. The report found that a full-scale conflict between Russia and the United States would result in an estimated 5 billion people out of 6.7 billion worldwide would be dead within 2 years from starvation.

The recently passed Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), while providing significant support for promising green technologies, simultaneously perpetuates fossil fuel extraction and reliance on nuclear power, and leaves climate justice behind. The IRA has been largely stripped of the original “Build Back Better” programs that our most overburdened communities were promised to enable their full participation in a “Just Transition” to a green future.

As public health professionals we need to redouble our efforts to help build an intersectional movement that is local, national, and global in its vision, and capable of developing the political power to transform our world and upend the centrality of war, conflict, and militarism in our national and global priorities.

To this end, be sure to attend APHA’s opening session where you are sure to be inspired by the Rev. Dr. William Joseph Barber II and hear about the incredible work of the Poor People’s Campaign mobilizing people in support of justice, peace and health for all. Understand what is possible if our budgetary priorities shifted from Shailly Gupta Barnes, a co-author of the Poor People’s Moral Budget, at the APHA featured session Fund Health Care Not Warfare.

We invite everyone to come to the Peace Caucus sessions at APHA’s annual meeting this year which offer an opportunity to learn more about the one of the most profound social determinants of planetary health: war and conflict, and to connect to avenues for activism in support of peace, health, and planetary survival.

## Recent Publications of Interest

### [Six stops on the National Security Tour: Rethinking Warfare Economies](#)

Book | 2022 by **Miriam Pemberton**

“The U.S. military economy incorporates hundreds of American communities. This is the first book to connect our national security apparatus to the local level via deeply reported portraits of six carefully selected locations.”

### [The Pentagon, Climate Change, and War: Charting the Rise and Fall of U.S. Military Emissions](#)

Book | 2022 by **Neta C. Crawford**

“How the Pentagon became the world’s largest single greenhouse gas emitter and why it’s not too late to break the link between national security and fossil fuel consumption.”

### [Russia’s War in Ukraine: The Devastation of Health and Human Rights](#)

Article | 2022 by **Barry S. Levy MD MPH** and **Jennifer Leaning MD SMH**

“...health professionals have responsibilities not only to respond to the needs of current victims but also to engage in preventing the devastating, long-lasting, intergenerational effects of war on human health and life.”

### [From Horror to Hope: Recognizing and Preventing the Health Impacts of War](#)

Book | 2022 by **Barry Levy**

Provides an evidence-based, comprehensive review of the impacts of war on health, human rights, and the environment and applies a public health perspective to recognizing and preventing these impacts and to promoting peace.

### [Perilous Medicine: The Struggle to Protect Health Care from the Violence of War](#)

Book | 2021 by **Leonard Rubenstein**

“Pervasive violence against hospitals, patients, nurses, doctors, and other health workers has become a horrifically common feature of modern war. These relentless attacks destroy lives and the capacity of health systems to tend to those in need. Inaction to stop this violence undermines long-standing values and laws designed to ensure that sick and wounded people receive care.”

Keep up-to-date with the Peace Caucus on Twitter (@APHAPeaceCaucus), Youtube, and at [www.aphapeacecaucus.org](http://www.aphapeacecaucus.org)!