



THE  
HAGUE  
PEACE  
PROJECTS



# ANNUAL REPORT 2023

## The Hague Peace Projects

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# ANNUAL REPORT 2023

## A Message from the Director

2023 saw a change in both the direction and the directorship of The Hague Peace Projects. Our long journey through the peace landscape has seen our 'Changemaker' days evolve and culminate this year in a return to our core strength: **peace through dialogue**. In retrospect, dialogue has been the common theme throughout our activities since the beginning. The knowledge and expertise that we have gained along the way have all been acquired through talking and listening, and through these honest conversations we have grown.

We now find ourselves playing an increasingly important (and challenging) role providing context and balance to mainstream narratives on global and domestic conflicts. Our 'Time to Talk' series of weekly interviews continues to unveil the stories behind our conflicts, offering critical information that is unrepresented in Western mainstream media and political discourse.

Ours stories compete against a background of political, economic, and racist bias entrenched in our institutions and media, with the West's complicity and trivialization of the ongoing genocide in Gaza serving to highlight the deep crisis in Europe and America's information diet. In this sense, not a lot has changed since the Vietnam war.

Our investment in dialogue seeks to achieve sustainable peace and conflict resolution through a process of understanding and reciprocity, yet must do so while contending with a warmongering West whose militarization ambitions align with the alarming upsurgeance of extreme right in Europe.

Today, 'the honest conversation' faces an increasingly binary narrative from a privately-owned media landscape which perpetuates cycles of propaganda towards escalation and readily invests in conflict resolution by force. Through dialogue, we hope to counter-balance this selective exposure that ill-informs Western society and its institutions. Our weekly videos attempt to unravel the battle of narratives by having honest conversations, and steadily expose information that is crucial to this balance.

We believe an accurate representation of facts and exposure to knowledge is critical, such that a healthy and well-informed civil and political discourse may be equipped to achieve peace through consensus one day. It is through this process of knowledge gathering and understanding that we aim to encourage civil and political society to properly consider what is necessary to break our cycles of war and conflict.

### Steen Bentall

Director of The Hague Peace Projects



# The Hague Peace Projects

The Hague Peace Projects (HPP) is an international peace and human rights organization with its headquarters in 'The International City of Peace and Justice', in The Hague, The Netherlands.

We serve as a platform for dialogue and peacebuilding. By facilitating and encouraging the sharing of information and different perspectives, we strive for a well-informed civil and political discourse to break our cycles of violence and achieve peace through consensus.

## Our Values

- Dialogue
- Peace
- Sustainability
- Inclusion
- Human Dignity
- Human Rights
- Transparency

***“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”***

Margaret Mead

***The reality today is that we are all interdependent and have to co-exist on this small planet. Therefore, the only sensible and intelligent way of resolving differences and clashes of interests, whether between individuals or nations, is through dialogue.***

Dalai Lama

# 2023 YEAR IN REVIEW

Our projects and events in 2023 brought The Hague Peace Projects back to the discussion table. Our thanks go to the Oranje Fonds whose support of our Freedom Sessions Program gave us the opportunity to explore new activities and approaches. In doing so, the first 'Time to Talk' live debate took place and spawned our current series of weekly interviews and videos pursuing peace and its stories.

- **Peace in Ukraine – Time to Talk**
- **Freedom Sessions Fundraiser for Syria**
- **Stop the War**
- **Man and Nature**
- **Peace in Ukraine – Public Debate**
- **NL Election debate – Peace in Ukraine**
- **Time to Talk – Interviews – Videos**





FEB 2023

EVENT



## Peace in Ukraine – Time to Talk

**DATE:** Friday 19:00, 17th February 2023

**LOCATION:** The Grey Space in The Hague

**ENTRANCE:** Free

### GUEST SPEAKERS:

**Jan Pronk** (Emeritus professor, former Dutch politician and former UN Special Representative)

**Anette Freyberg-Inan** (Professor of International Relations Theory, University of Amsterdam)

**Bastiaan van Apeldoorn** (Professor of Global Political Economy and Geopolitics, Vrije Universiteit, Senator for the Socialist Party)

**Henk Baars** (Voorzitter Kerk en Vrede)

The first event in our 'Time to Talk' series. We invited prominent figures and speakers to share their expertise and concerns regarding the escalating war in Ukraine and engage in a public debate on the route to peace and diplomacy. This event was made possible with our cooperation with the Oranje Fonds and their support of our 'Freedom Sessions' initiative.

This event focused on the war in Ukraine which had been going on for almost one year. Tens of thousands of people had already died in the bloodiest conflict on the European continent since World War II. Both Russia and Ukraine, with its Western supporters, seem to think only in terms of military escalation. Increasingly heavier weapons and bloodier tactics. Knowing that multiple nuclear-armed militaries are involved in this struggle raises the very concerning question: where will it all end? Are politicians today aware of the ultimate disastrous consequences of a constant cycle of escalation?

It is high time that we give diplomacy a new chance before it is too late. Every conflict, even this one, needs to end at the negotiation table, preferably sooner than later to save human lives. But how to get there and build a peace movement to prevent further escalation and push for peaceful solutions to this conflict?

For more information visit:

[Peace in Ukraine: Time to Talk – Freedom Sessions#3 | The Hague Peace Projects](#)



## Freedom Sessions Fundraiser for Syria

**DATE:** Friday 19:00, 24th February 2023

**LOCATION:** HPP

**ENTRANCE:** Free

On the 6th of February 2023, an earthquake hit Turkey and Syria causing devastating damage and loss of life. Those affected are in dire need of emergency relief with at least 24 million people already affected by the disaster. This event, in cooperation with the Syrian community of The Hague and with support of the Oranje Fonds, sought to raise attention and funds to provide desperately needed relief.

For more information visit:

<https://thehaguepeace.org/site/fundraiser-for-earthquake-victims-from-syria-freedom-sessions4/>

FEB 2023

WEBSITE

# STOP THE WAR

De-escalation Starts with Dialogue. It's Time to Talk!

SUPPORT TALKING

## STOP THE WAR

### New website:

[stopthewar.nu](https://stopthewar.nu)

Marking the start of our 'Time to Talk' series, the StopTheWar.nu website was launched as a platform to support peace and follow its dialogue via weekly interviews with prominent thinkers and experts. The platform provides an alternative to the dangers of selective media exposure to the rhetoric of warmongering and posturing that further escalate armed conflict.

*With this initiative, we aim to:*

Abandon the policy of escalation and actively seek a diplomatic solution to the conflict in Ukraine, for example by setting up a national advisory committee to advise on possible diplomatic solutions to the war.

Make efforts at EU level to appoint an EU peace envoy who will explore the possibilities for a diplomatic solution with both Russia and Ukraine.

Use the influence of the Netherlands in the EU to organize an international conference between all warring parties, including Russia, the US, Ukraine, NATO and the EU, in which agreements can be made about a common, permanent and sustainable security framework.

For more information visit:

[StopTheWar.nu](https://StopTheWar.nu) – Time to Talk! | [The Hague Peace Projects](https://TheHaguePeaceProjects.org) and [stopthewar.nu](https://stopthewar.nu)





## Man and Nature

**DATE:** Thurs 19:00, 20 April 2023

**LOCATION:** HPP

**ENTRANCE:** Free

On the 20th of April we hosted 'Man and Nature' – a public discussion and art exhibition exploring the whole story surrounding the climate crisis. We examined the link between the exploitation of the earth and colonialism, the pros and cons of giving rights to nature, and talked about how to restore and 'restore' our relationship with the earth and each other.

With a panel of invited expertise and a diverse audience we enjoyed an open and engaging evening as we delved into this important theme. Our speakers for the evening were:

- Jan van de Venis (rights to nature)
- Chihiro Allianchu (restore our relationship with earth)
- Sophie Kwizera (nature and human rights)
- Benjamin den Butter (moderator)

'Man and Nature' also marked the opening of an art exhibition inspired by this theme and featuring the work of activist artists: Jakob de Jonge and Steen Bentall. This event concluded our cooperation with the Oranje Fonds and their support of our final 'Freedom Sessions'.

For more information visit:

[Man & Nature: Overdue Relationship Therapy | The Hague Peace Projects](#)

JUNE 2023

EVENT



## Peace in Ukraine – Public Debate –

**DATE:** 30th June 2023

**LOCATION:** Pakhuis de Zwijger

**ENTRANCE:** Free

**GUEST SPEAKERS:**

**Lidija Zelovic** (schrijver en documentairemaker)

**Ewald Engelen** (hoogleraar financiële geografie aan de UvA)

**Derk Boswijk** (2e Kamerlid CDA met defensie als één van zijn portefeuilles)

**Tayfun Balçık** (historicus en journalist bij De Kanttekening)

With Russia's invasion of Ukraine underway for almost a year and a half, it seems in all likelihood, that more than a hundred thousand people have already been killed in a conflict that is already the bloodiest on the European continent since the end of the Second World War. Millions of Ukrainians are fleeing, and the humanitarian consequences of this war are becoming incalculable. In the meantime, the relationship between the West and Russia continues to worsen with a mutual escalation in their war rhetoric and investments giving reasons for grave concerns for the whole international community.

For more information visit:

[Peace in Ukraine – Public Debate – Pakhuis de Zwijger, June 2023 | The Hague Peace Projects](#)

NOVEMBER 2023

EVENT



## NL Election debate – Peace in Ukraine –

**DATE:** 16th November 2023  
**LOCATION:** LU, WIJNHAVEN  
**ENTRANCE:** Free

**GUESTS:**

**Ruben Brekelmans** (VVD)  
**Jasper van Dijk** (SP)  
**Liesbeth van der Heide** (CDA)  
**Isa Kahraman** (NSC)  
**Gijs Tuinman** (BBB)

About 80 visitors sat on the steps of Leiden University in The Hague to listen to the vision of our political leaders. They felt the politicians reasoned one-sidedly from the perspective of arms deliveries, while they had been asked about their proposals for achieving peace. There was disappointment with the lack of knowledge about diplomatic options, such as the influence of the BRICS countries, China's 12-point plan, Saudi Arabia's interventions, etc. Moral arguments seemed completely absent from Dutch political decisions. Eventually, a proposal arose for an informative conversation behind closed doors between the peace movement and interested MPs about conflict mediation.

For more information visit:

[Verkiezingsdebat: Hoe komt er vrede in Oekraïne? | The Hague Peace Projects](#)



FEB – DECEMBER 2023

INTERVIEWS



## Time to Talk – Interviews – Videos –

**DATE:** Weekly interviews since 23rd Feb 2023

**LOCATION:** HPP

**ACCESS:** Free

Interviewer: [Jakob de Jonge](#) (Chair HPP)

The 'Time to Talk' series reflects The Hague Peace Projects' belief that dialogue is the route to understanding our conflicts and breaking the cycles that perpetuate them. It is humanity's only tool for achieving real sustainable peace.

These videos show us how critical it is to peace that we never forget the importance of talking, the inclusivity and honesty of which determines our ability to understand, de-escalate, and prevent our conflicts. The interviews represent a concerted effort to encourage dialogue and provide a platform for the human relations and rights that grow from it. It is our hope that through the earnest efforts of a well-informed and inclusive civil society, that real non-violent, political, social, and environmental transformation can be achieved.

For this to be possible, it is crucial that mainstream information exposure is well-balanced in terms of (freely) offering multiple perspectives and informed journalism, as opposed to selective and biased towards political and economic interests which typifies the bulk of the Dutch media diet today.

These videos, therefore, serve to provide a much-needed balance to the diversity, quality, and honesty of information which is freely available to civil society and the public of The Netherlands and abroad.

For more information visit: [HPP YouTube channel](#) [stopthewar.nu](#)

## Video's releases in 2023:

Feb 23, 2023

**Stop The War: Peace in Ukraine - Time To Talk!**

Feb 27, 2023

**Stop The War: Interview met Harry van Bommel: hoe komen we uit de crisis in Oekraïne?**

March 6, 2023

**Stop The War: Interview met Henk Overbeek: hoe heeft de oorlog in Oekraïne zo ver kunnen escaleren?**

March 13, 2023

**Stop The War: Interview met Jan Pronk, de noodzaak tot diplomatie**

March 27, 2023

**Stop The War: Interview met Nilab Ahmadi: over het gebrek aan discussie en over Westerse hypocrisie**

April 4, 2023

**Stop The War: May-May Meijer over de waarde van het leven en de kansen voor diplomatie**

April 12, 2023

**Stop The War: oud CDA-minister Bert de Vries: aanloop naar de oorlog en ruimte voor diplomatie**

May 2, 2023

**Stop The War met prof. Ewald Engelen: Over Amerikaans imperialisme en hoe de EU zichzelf ondermijnt**

May 19, 2023

**Stop The War. Lidija Zelovic over het gevaar van oorlogspropaganda en trauma's door oorlog**



May 26, 2023

**Stop The War: Prof Tom Sauer over grondoorzaken van de oorlog en het risico op nucleaire escalatie**

June 8, 2023

**Stop The War: Arne Tulner over Europese eenwording en een nieuwe Europese veiligheidsstructuur**

June 16, 2023

**Stop The War. Wendela de Vries: de Nederlandse rol in wapenhandel & het militair industrieel complex**

June 23, 2023

**Stop The War. Guido van Leemput: de vredesbeweging in de jaren '80 en zijn boek 'De gelaagde oorlog'**

June 30, 2023

**Stop The War: prof. Freyberg-Inan over onderhandelen en de crisis van de (geopolitieke) verbeelding**

July 4, 2023

**Vrede in Oekraïne, Tijd om te Praten! - Publiek Debat, Pakhuis Edition 30 juni 2023**

Aug 9, 2023

**Stop The War: Henk Baars (Kerk en Vrede) over pacifisme en de roep om een staakt-het-vuren**

Aug 23, 2023

**Time to Talk: Pieter Ham, agrarisch ondernemer in Rusland: de economische belangen achter de oorlog**

Sept 5, 2023

**Time to Talk: Amir Kiyaei (DiEm25): The US and EU oligarchy as a root cause of the war in Ukraine**

Sept 11, 2023

**Time to Talk: Anniversary of Ukrainian independence**

Sept 15, 2023

**Time to Talk: Jeffrey Sachs calls upon EU leaders to push back against foolish US war policies**

Sept 22, 2023

**Time to Talk: oud CDA-wethouder Mirjam Ateş-Snijdewind, (Religies voor Vrede): Vrede als kernwaarde**

Oct 3, 2023

**Time to Talk: Jasper van Dijk (SP) over vrede, onderhandelingen en kernwapens in Volkel**

Oct 6, 2023

**Time to Talk: Larry Johnson (former CIA analyst) about war profiteers and the real risk of WWII**

Oct 13, 2023

**Time to Talk: Chris de Ploeg, onderzoeksjournalist over de grandoorzaken van de oorlog in Oekraïne**

Oct 20, 2023

**Time to Talk: Pascal Lottaz, (Neutrality Studies): Gaza genocide & ending the cycle of violence**

Oct 25, 2023

**Time to Talk: Maryia Cherenko (Ukrainian doctor) about the need to end the war.**

Oct 27, 2023

**Time to Talk: Jan van de Kolk (Kairos-Sabeel) over 75 jaar bezetting van Palestina.**

Nov 1, 2023

**Time to Talk: Umayya Abu-Hanna (Palestinian Israeli journalist and writer)**

Nov 6, 2023

**Time to Talk: Rawad Yonus (Palestinian academic): moral responsibility to speak out against genocide**

Nov 10, 2023

**Time to Talk: Reinout Sterk (militaire advocaat): Oorlogsmisdaden in Gaza & hypocrisie van Nederland**

Nov 21, 2023

**Time to Talk: Prof. Bastiaan van Apeldoorn, 1e kamerlid (SP) hoe stoppen we oorlogsmisdaden in Gaza?**

Nov 21, 2023

**Time to Talk: Yuval Gal, kandidaat kamerlid (BIJ1) over genocide in Gaza, Zionisme & antisemitisme**

Nov 27, 2023

**Time to Talk: Hoe komt er vrede in Oekraïne - Verkiezingsdebat 2023**

Dec 8, 2023

**Time to Talk: Karen Kwiatkowski, ret. USAF Lieut. Colonel: Gaza & the danger of a US empire in decay**

Dec 14, 2023

**Time to Talk: Peter Emerson, director of The deBorda Institute on the dangers of majoritarianism**

Dec 23, 2023

**Time to Talk: Lawrence Wilkerson, Ret. US Colonel**

**PEACE: TIME TO TALK!**

# CLOSING STATEMENTS

## Looking Ahead in 2024

2023 was a year of talking and marked a new focus for our contribution to the public good: *peace through dialogue*. We have learned more this year than any of the preceding, simply due to the number of people we have talked to. People from different backgrounds with different perspectives, all of whom own and form parts of the stories that enrich and broaden our truths.

2024 promises an even greater need for these voices to counteract a worrying escalation in global unrest. Tensions are evident all around the world but nowhere are they clearer than in Gaza, where the West's participation in genocide can no longer hide in the pages of history books. Anno 2023, and the world's largest concentration camp can be viewed live on our screens - only you will have to visit non-Western media to see this.

The painful hypocrisy of the West's condemnation of Russia, yet support of Israel, has unmasked any illusion of their peaceful intentions. For the world outside their borders, and according to the UN, the West are war criminals, and with its escalating militarization, growing inequality and right-wing extremism, fears of direct confrontation between global superpowers are becoming more realistic by the day.

The denial of the West has found refuge in its expanding crusade for war, with demonisation instead of diplomacy as its favourite weapon. Its neo-liberalism failings have found a friend in the military industrial complex and see a vast game of profits to be played for. The failure of our democracies to govern for its people has ushered in a new wave of fascism throughout Europe, seeking to distract discontentment with war and oppression.

The current rate of escalation bodes nothing good for next year. And though all is eventually solvable by dialogue, it looks likely that peace will continue to suffer before the conversations we need to have are possible. 2024 may just be the quiet before the storm.



**THE HAGUE PEACE PROJECTS**

# ORGANISATIONAL INFORMATION

## The Hague Peace Projects

[www.thehaguepeace.org](http://www.thehaguepeace.org)

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### **Steen Bentall**

Director

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## Board of Directors

Chair: de Jonge, Jakob Hendrik

Board Member: Bwira Kyahi, Sylvestre

Treasurer: Leegwater, Margaretha Elizabeth

## ANBI Information

The Hague Peace Projects is a nonprofit peace organisation run by volunteers, located in The Hague, The Netherlands. Our ANBI Policy Plan can be seen [here](#).

With the ANBI (Algemeen Nut Beogende Instelling) status from the Dutch government, The Hague Peace Projects is recognised as a Public Benefit Organisation (PBO). This means that our organisation is committed to the public benefit and that donations made to The Hague Peace Projects are deductible from the taxable income of donors.