Global Action to Prevent War (GAPW), in partnership with the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Foundation (LUKMEF) in Limbe, Cameroon and the International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect (ICR2P) in New York, sponsored two workshops for military, government and civil society leaders in Cameroon and neighboring countries on prospects for improving civilian protection and human security within the Central African region. These workshops were funded by the Ira Wallach Fund for the Eradication of Genocide, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and the ICR2P with supplemental support from Michael and Nan Frydland and Richard Fuller.

The Cameroon workshops represent the latest in a series of programs designed to bring into regional settings the strategies, tools and norms debated within the international community to prevent and address atrocity crimes and other major threats to human security and good governance. With workshops in Pretoria, Manila, Jakarta and Brazil already completed, GAPW came to Cameroon to help ensure that the security needs and aspirations of the region’s diverse communities and constituencies are fully vetted and subsequently made available to help influence global policy.

The Yaounde workshop was led by Christian Tanyi of LUKMEF, and included diverse regional leaders in civilian protection, including Voke Ighorodje (a consultant to the ICR2P from Nigeria), Anne Nkwain Nsang (director of the regional UN Information Centre), and Andre Kabi (Handicap Afrique in the DRC). Participants in Yaounde looked at a range of issues impacting civilian-military relations, the role of women in peace processes, efforts to promote good governance, and prospects for more robust preventive and diplomatic efforts to address in their earliest stages atrocity crimes and other grave threats to human security. Attention was also given to new peacekeeping tools and capacities being developed for community, regional and international use, including GAPW’s proposal for a United Nations Emergency Peace Service (UNEPS).

The second workshop, also focused on civilian protection priorities, was co-organized by Ben Oru at the University of Buea and was the first of what will be several university briefings held this year throughout Cameroon, and perhaps the region, on tools and norms for promoting civilian protection and human security, including the important norm of the responsibility to protect.

Central Africa proved to be a challenging environment in which to organize, but it is also a region of hopeful new civil society influences, abundant human and natural resources, and govern-
ment and military officials who are becoming weary of armed conflict and are more interested in connecting skills across professional contexts to enhance community and national security.

It is also a region where security issues are engaged holistically, where development priorities require progress on arms transfers and where dialogue across issues and professional sectors is desired and engaged with increasing seriousness.

GAPW hopes to sustain a long-term relationship with LUKMEF and the other institutional representatives who participated in our workshops, including UN, government and military officials. We will encourage development of LUKMEF’s new regional center that will include advocacy on civilian protection norms, tools and strategies. And we will also play a supportive role in efforts to create a viable civil society-military collaborative training and discussion institute that can develop complementary skills for the prevention and resolution of conflict and help overcome some of the mistrust across sectors. A subsequent breakfast meeting with military officials reaffirmed their desire to take steps to heal divisions and increase collaborative opportunities with their civil society counterparts (see institute proposal below).

Finally, we were thrilled to have made the acquaintance of Nico Halle, one of the foremost human rights lawyers in Central Africa. Illness prevented him from attending our Yaounde workshop, but we were able to track him down for a good, long conversation at which time he confirmed his deep commitment to the disarmament and civil society priorities that inspired the workshop and motivate the workshop’s partners and participants.

A more comprehensive report on these workshops is being prepared and will be made available soon at www.globalactionpw.org.

**A Proposal for a Civilian-Military Institute to Enhance Community and National Security**


The institute would combine discussions among various peace and security stakeholders with training and analyses of diverse and complementary skills sets available through civil society, the military and other stakeholders to prevent and resolve conflict, enhance human security and support inter-agency efforts to promote social and economic development, respect for human rights and good governance.

The need for such an institute was voiced consistently by the group that gathered in Yaounde, which consisted of civil society and military leaders as well as regional and UN officials. They cited the following potential, long-term benefits from such a program:

- More dialogue between military and civil society leaders would help clarify misconceptions about the mission, motives and activities of these and other government and community stakeholders operating across the country;
- Joint training and discussion focused on conflict prevention and resolution would help clarify the diverse and
growing base of complementary conflict prevention and community development skills that could then be put to work in the service of more peaceful and sustainable communities; and

- Regular engagement across sectors would be useful for promoting cooperative problem solving in the peace and security arena that integrates and respects diverse gender, racial and cultural contributions to conflict prevention and the promotion of human security.

It is our experience that the African continent provides many helpful models for the development of such an institute. Cameroon has its own distinctive economic and security challenges, but also has the abundant human and material resources needed to create a model of sustainable, peaceful practice in the Central African region. There should be no wholesale application of other approaches to the Cameroon context. Nevertheless, the following tools and policies have proven effective in other African regions and should be consulted as guides to institute development. Moreover, resource persons associated with the tools and policies listed below can join with local UN officials and international stakeholders to provide ongoing support and confidence building for this proposed institute and its various activities.

- Professor Dani Wadada Nabudere is executive director of the Marcus Garvey Pan-Afrikan Institute in Uganda. His institute works on community peacekeeping strategies and educational materials to address the agro-pastoralist violence that has plagued Northeastern Uganda over several years. ([www.mpai.ac.ug/](http://www.mpai.ac.ug/))

- The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has developed a comprehensive framework for conflict prevention and human security that combines early warning mechanisms, field-based workshops and peace building activities involving diverse stakeholders, cross-border security initiatives, youth empowerment and other practical disarmament and sustainability measures. This framework is considered by many to be a model of comprehensive analysis and practice among regional organizations. ([www.ecowas.int/publications/en/framework/ECPF_final.pdf](http://www.ecowas.int/publications/en/framework/ECPF_final.pdf))

- Ghana has adopted a model for a National Peace Council, supplemented by robust regional and local mechanisms, that seeks to institutionalize and harmonize peace building and conflict prevention activities throughout the country. The NPC has an expressed mandate to promote the peaceful resolution of conflicts at all levels of government, as well as to do what is needed to build inter-group trust and confidence. The emphasis is emphatically on promoting and practicing non-violent means for resolving conflict that integrates diverse skills and cultural perspectives. ([www.mint.gov.gh/dmdocuments/A_PEACE_ARCHITECTURE_FOR_GHANA_.pdf](http://www.mint.gov.gh/dmdocuments/A_PEACE_ARCHITECTURE_FOR_GHANA_.pdf))

Content and logistical support will continue from the UN-based GAPW, the Martin Luther King Memorial Foundation in Limbe, and other partners as the institute is further conceptualized and eventually made concrete. We are committed to doing what we can to support and promote Cameroon’s role as a regional leader in collaborative and sustainable security that respects its broad stakeholder base and integrates their diverse community contributions.