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**UNITED NATIONS YOUTH AND STUDENT ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRIA**

GRAZ - INNSBRUCK - KLAGENFURT - LINZ - SALZBURG - VIENNA



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## Abstract

### External Discussion Forum 2

**“International Conference on the Establishment of an  
'UN Emergency Peace Service'”**

### **The Need**

Despite the need at times to move quickly to prevent genocide, "ethnic cleansing," and crimes against humanity, the United Nations has no reliable capacity to move promptly, even if halting a catastrophe could save hundreds of thousands of lives. Genocide in Rwanda illustrates this incapacity, as do the massive killings of innocent people in Cambodia, the former Yugoslavia, East Timor, Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, the Sudan, and elsewhere.

The time has come to create a permanent UN Emergency Peace Service to ensure that the next preventable humanitarian disaster will not occur. If such a service had been established earlier, it could have prevented many of the atrocities that have killed millions of civilians, wounded millions more, forced tens of millions from their homes, destroyed entire economies, and wasted hundreds of billions of dollars. Of course such a service would not be a panacea for security problems in general; indeed it would be designed to complement - not replace - other essential national, regional, and United Nations efforts. Yet an Emergency Peace Service could provide immediate, full protection in some crises and serve as an advance group that would prepare the way for subsequent additional help, if needed, in larger conflicts - a vital function that is not provided by any existing agency. Such a service could also help address extreme environmental and natural disasters in cases where other remedies are inadequate for averting major threats to human life.

### **The Proposal**

Because a UN Emergency Peace Service would be permanent, based at UN designated sites, and include mobile field headquarters, it could move to quell an emergency within 48 hours after United Nations authorization. Since it would be individually recruited from among volunteers from many countries, it would not suffer the reluctance of UN members to deploy their own national units. As its 12,000 to 15,000 personnel would be carefully selected, expertly trained, and coherently organized and commanded, it would not fail in its mission due to lack of skills, equipment, cohesiveness, experience in resolving conflicts, or gender, national, or religious imbalance. Because it would be an integrated service encompassing civilian, police, judicial, and military personnel prepared to conduct multiple functions in diverse UN operations, it would not suffer for lack of components essential to peace operations or from confusion about the chain of command. By providing a wide range of functions, the UN Emergency Peace Service would, for the first time in history, offer a rapid, comprehensive, internationally legitimate response to crisis.

### **The Plan of Action**

Because governments have not created the necessary UN capability, the responsibility for breathing life into the United Nations Emergency Peace Service now lies with civil society, working with allies in the UN and interested governments. To create this service, a growing number of citizens' organizations and leaders of civil society are determined to: (1) identify interested parties throughout the world to expand the number and diversity of those committed to this initiative; (2) secure agreement on the principles, composition, and financing of a UN Emergency Peace Service; (3) draw on expert knowledge to ensure that the growing constituency is accurately informed and to write detailed plans for the Emergency Service and how to establish it; (4) develop a well-organized network of support with a compelling website, promotional materials, list of endorsements, and speakers' bureau; and (5) encourage a wide consultative process among non-governmental organizations, the UN system, and national governments to ensure the implementation of a successful strategy.