



MAY 2019

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**Experiences in peacebuilding with
the UN, donor governments, and NGOs**
May 8, 2019, 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m., Parkdale United Church
2919 – 8th Avenue N.W., Calgary, AB

Join us as we welcome **Cheyenne Sharbatke-Church**, an authority on adaptive program design and evaluations in peacebuilding, anti-corruption efforts, and governance. She is engaged in training as Professor of Practice at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy (Tufts University) and founded the social enterprise, Besa. Besa has worked with the UN Peacebuilding Fund, the International Red Cross, and the U.S. State Department.

We still need your financial support

**We are in serious need of ongoing funds to cover the basic monthly costs
of running our organization**

Our sincere thanks to all those who supported our annual fundraising drive.

While successful, we are still in desperate need of ongoing funds to support our society. Your funds pay for a part-time office employee who provides administrative and clerical support, and for monthly office operating costs such as phone and internet charges, and office supplies. Your donations also contribute towards events such as monthly educational meetings and conferences. All of our Board members graciously donate their time and services free of charge to support our work; this includes communication and accounting professionals, a lawyer, professors in academia, and community activists involved in peace efforts. Working together with you, we can make a difference. We would appreciate any financial support you can offer. Please see page 6 for how to donate, if you can.

**Ploughshares
Calgary Society
Annual General
Meeting
June 12, 2019
7:00 p.m.**

**See page 3
for further details**



- ❖ **'My soul is still in Rwanda': 25 years after the genocide, Roméo Dallaire still grapples with guilt.** In this CBC Radio segment, retired Lt.-Gen. Roméo Dallaire speaks with *The Sunday Edition's* host Michael Enright for the 25th anniversary of the Rwandan genocide. Dallaire does not mince words when speaking about Bill Clinton, who was U.S. president during the 1994 Rwandan genocide. See [My soul is still in Rwanda.](#)
- ❖ **10 things you should know about killer robots.** This article from the Project Ploughshares website provides facts about killer robots, which some have described as the third major revolution in warfare—after the emergence of gun powder and nuclear weapons. It is noted that a robust legal and regulatory framework must be put in place to limit such advances in military technologies. See [10 things you should know about killer robots.](#)
- ❖ **Rethinking national security?** In this thought-provoking, eight-page report issued in April, 2019, Martin Hellman, Adjunct Senior Fellow for Nuclear Risk Analysis, Federation of American Scientists, asks whether in this age of nuclear weapons, cyberattacks, terrorism, and environmental crises, national security is becoming inseparable from global security. He argues that we need to rethink national security at a fundamental level. See [Rethinking national security](#)
- ❖ **CJPM: After 37 executions, Canada must re-examine relations with Saudi Arabia.** In this April 24, 2019, news release, Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East called on the Canadian government to re-examine its relationship with Saudi Arabia in light of the country's executions of 37 men on April 23, 2019—its largest mass execution since January 2016. The majority of those executed were members of Saudi Arabia's severely oppressed Shi'a minority. See [After 37 executions.](#)
- ❖ **Threat of nuclear weapons use has risen says UK House of Lords International Relations Committee.** The House of Lords International Relations Committee with the UK parliament published its report "Rising nuclear risk, disarmament and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty" on April 24, 2019. With the issue of the report just days before states convene for the 2019 Preparatory Committee of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference at the UN in New York, the House of Lords committee has called on the UK government to address grave concerns about the deteriorating state of nuclear diplomacy. See [Report](#)
- ❖ **UN's Grandi slams 'toxic language of politics' aimed at refugees, migrants.** In this article posted on UN News, Filippo Grandi, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, says that during his three and a half decades as an international civil servant, he has "never seen such toxicity, such poisonous language in politics, media and social media," directed towards refugees, migrants, and foreigners. See [UN News](#)
- ❖ **Canada won't extend peacekeeping mission in Mali, Freeland says.** Critics have pointed to the Liberals' refusal to extend the Mali mission as emblematic of the government's failure to make good on its larger promise to support the UN and peacekeeping. See [Canada won't extend peacekeeping](#)

Save the date! June 12, 2019
Ploughshares Calgary Society
Annual General Meeting
7:00 p.m.
Parkdale United Church
2919 - 8th Ave. N.W., Calgary

The Ploughshares Calgary Society's Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held on Wednesday, June 12th, at 7:00 p.m. Following the AGM, the Very Rev. Bill Phipps will give a presentation. Please join us for our AGM and Rev. Phipps' presentation.

The AGM will be held in the conference room at Parkdale United Church.

All are welcome.

If you are upgrading your electronic equipment and have any of the following electronics that are still in good working condition that you could donate, we could use them to upgrade our own electronics:

- a workable laptop
- computer speakers
- a projector for a laptop
- a microphone

Please call our office at 403 270 7366 if you can help.

The Venezuelan Crisis By Kathleen McWilliams

In April, we welcomed two guest speakers from the University of Calgary's (UofC) Latin American Research Centre (LARC) to discuss the Venezuelan crisis: Dr. Pablo Policzer, Director of the LARC and an Associate Professor of Political Science at the UofC, and Dr. Maria Cristina Parra, a Venezuelan sociologist and Visiting Fellow at the LARC. Parra began by noting that from 1958 to 1998, Venezuela was ruled by two major parties who alternated between holding the presidency and establishing democracy. From the late 1940s to the 1990s, the government used oil revenues to spur unequal economic growth. By 1992, most people had lost trust in the institutions (except in the Church and military). Then, Hugo Chávez was elected president in 1992, gaining the electorate's support by promising to abolish government corruption, rebuild the republic and its institutions through a socialist revolution, and use the country's huge oil revenues to subsidize social programs for the poor. Parra noted that as a military man, Chávez coupled high oil revenues with a charismatic personality to impose authoritarian and centralized control. He nationalized many industries, businesses, and farms, claiming they would produce more and better goods and services in state hands. Today, many of these are inactive. By 1998, oil prices had slumped; with Venezuela's economy mainly dependent on oil, poverty and inequality increased.

Prior to his death in 2013, Chávez chose Nicolás Maduro, a leftist activist, as his successor. Maduro has gained the military's support, and they control the most important government offices, such as the state-run oil company, the energy company, food distribution, the mineral sector, illegal commerce, and more. Parra noted that Maduro also holds the confidence of the Cuban government who have supported him to the point that people view him as a "puppet president" of the Cuban government. She pointed out that under Maduro's tenure (and decreased oil prices that began in Chavez's term), Venezuela has faced hyperinflation, unemployment, and political discontent. People cannot buy even the most basic of products and services, hunger is prevalent, corruption is rampant, hospitals have no supplies to treat the most basic of illnesses, public safety is at risk, education is not supported, and electricity and water are in short supply.

Policzer began by explaining that democracy today has different dimensions that include constitutional order, which is the system of laws that people respect and that matter; an electoral democracy that includes free and fair elections; and participation, whereby people take part in the political system. He noted that in Canada, we do fairly well with constitutional order, but under Chávez, constitutional order did not work so well. However, Canada does not fare as well in political participation, Policzer said, as many people, especially youth, do not take an interest in the political system. Yet, in terms of participatory democracy, Venezuela was healthy, but this was broken when Chávez centralized power and controlled the executive branch.

Policzer noted that many elections and referendums were held before Chavez's death in 2013, but these were mostly considered fair elections. Under its previous 1961 constitution, Venezuela had two separate legislatures, known as the Congress, which comprised a Senate of Venezuela and a Chamber of Deputies. In 1999, Chávez established a Constituent Assembly whose members were to rewrite the constitution. However, Venezuelan constituent assemblies have the authority not only to change the constitution but also to dismiss

existing officials and institutions (Washington Post, 2017). In free elections for the Constituent Assembly, voters gave all but six seats to Chávez supporters, who convened in 1999 to begin rewriting the constitution, which was subsequently approved by the people in a referendum in December, 1999 (Wikipedia, 2019). In 2000, a National Assembly was elected as the *de jure* legislature for Venezuela. Antonio Perez (2017), a professor of law at the Catholic University of America, noted that Chávez “took measures to expand the powers of the executive branch of the GOV [Government of Venezuela], including sponsoring a successful referendum in 2009 ending presidential term limits and reducing the powers of other branches of the GOV, including seizing control of the Supreme Court by increasing its size and packing its membership with supporters” (p. 393). Dr. Policzer thus noted that Chávez represents rulers who come to power through free elections, but they really violate democratic order through constitutional order.

In 2017, Constituent Assembly elections were unconstitutionally convened by Maduro to choose members who were government supporters with authority over the lives of all Venezuelans (Washington Post, 2017), and to bypass the National Assembly. It was believed that this move was made to avoid holding other scheduled elections that the government expected to lose, including those for governors and mayors in 2017, and for the president in 2018 (Washington Post, 2017). This election had many of the normal safeguards missing, the opposition boycotted the vote, and over 40 countries failed to recognize the election. Since then, the two legislatures have operated in parallel, with the National Assembly forming the primary opposition to president Nicolás Maduro, and with the Constituent Assembly being his primary supporters. On January 23, 2019, Juan Guaidó declared himself acting president, citing clauses of the 1999 Venezuelan constitution and his majority in the National Assembly. The National Assembly has since supported Guaidó and become part of his transitional government. Policzer stated that the international consensus is that Venezuela is no longer a democracy.

Policzer pointed to the Inter-American Democratic Charter, adopted September 11, 2001, by the Organization of American States (OAS), which is an inter-American agreement with the central aim of strengthening and upholding democratic institutions in the countries of the Americas. Calls have been made for Venezuela to be expelled from the OAS due to increasingly authoritarian policies and assaults on the democratic constitution. Juan Guaidó has also pointed to Article 233 of the Venezuelan constitution, which states that the president of the National Assembly shall take charge of the presidency of the Republic if the president becomes unable to serve for a variety of reasons (i.e., death, resignation, permanent mental or physical disability, etc.); however, Policzer noted, Maduro is not incapacitated, and much vagueness surrounds this article. Normally, the Supreme Court would rule on this, but it is stacked with Maduro loyalists. He further noted that Canada has supported peaceful regime change while the U.S. has been more forceful in calling for the overthrow of Maduro’s government; other groups such as the Vatican have called for dialogue between the parties to resolve the dispute. Finally, Policzer noted, he believes a vigorous public debate is needed with space to consider the complexities of the situation. For the transcript of Dr. Parra’s talk, refer to [Talk](#). For more information on the Venezuelan crisis, refer to the [UofC’s LARC website](#).

More upcoming events

Meeting the threat populism poses to Canada's international interest

Tuesday, May 22, 2019, 7:30 p.m.

Memorial Park Public Library

1221 2 Street S.W., Calgary



Canada's former ambassador in Venezuela, Ben Rowswell shares his perspectives on the perils of populism in countries close to Canada.

Venezuela was once the richest, most stable country in Latin America with the deepest traditions of democratic rule. Twenty years of populist rule later, its politics are so paralyzed that it cannot address the most basic of its social or economic challenges, leaving its society in free fall toward a future that may be even worse than the current strife and humanitarian catastrophe. The perils of populism are not limited to Latin America, however. The same politics of polarization and paralysis have divided the United Kingdom and are weakening the United States.

As Canada's ambassador in Venezuela from 2014 to 2017, Ben Rowswell had a front-row seat to the tragedy. He now sees elements of the same play underway in countries much closer to Canada and with it, a new threat to our international interests. He will share his perspectives in a talk hosted by the Canadian International Council Calgary on Tuesday, May 22.

Ben Rowswell was appointed President and Research Director of the Canadian International Council on November 19, 2018. He has 25 years of experience as a practitioner of international relations. He earned his expertise in international security serving with the United Nations in Mogadishu, Somalia, in 1993, as Canada's first diplomatic envoy to Baghdad, Iraq, after the fall of Saddam Hussein, and as the head of the NATO Provincial Reconstruction Team in Kandahar at the height of Canada's involvement in Afghanistan. Ben has advised top levels of government on international strategy in the Privy Council Office during the tenures of Jean Chrétien and Stephen Harper, and at the Washington DC Center for Strategic and International Studies from 2003 to 2004.

Cost: Free. [See this page to register.](#)

Marda Loop Justice Film Festival

JustREEL Film Series presents:

Most Likely To...

Tuesday, May 14, 2019, 7:00 p.m.

River Park Auditorium, 3818 14A Street S.W., Calgary, FREE ADMISSION

Children are not born criminals. And one city is making sure of that. *Most Likely To . . .* is a look at the Calgary Police Service's (CPS) approach to youth-at-risk crime prevention through intervention, education, and most importantly, human connection.

Disruptive. Defiant. Dangerous. Everyone remembers one kid in their class unanimously voted most likely to end up behind bars. If we know that kids need help, then why aren't we helping them?

Most Likely To . . . follows the lives of Kevin and Timmy, 8 and 18, over the course of a year as they fight for a better life than they were born into. With the help of CPS, Kevin and Timmy realize that their future doesn't have to be decided by their past.

Release Year: 2019; Run time: 60 minutes; Producer: Calgary Police Service Production

We are very grateful for your loyal moral and financial support over the years that has allowed us to continue working for and educating about peace. Please consider donating for 2019 soon if you haven't already done so. If you have already sent in your donation for 2019, we thank you. Please make your cheque payable to Ploughshares Calgary Society. If you write the cheque to the name of Project Ploughshares, the bank *will not* honour it for us, so please write it to Ploughshares Calgary Society. Thank you.

Yes, I am interested in supporting the peace work of the Ploughshares Calgary Society. I'd like to make a donation in the following amount:

\$10 _____ \$25 _____ \$50 _____ \$100 _____ \$250 _____ or in an amount of _____

or with a monthly donation of _____ or I am interested in volunteering _____

Name: _____

Phone #: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Prov _____ Postal Code _____ Email: _____

Payment Options

Cheque _____ PayPal _____ Cash _____

Make cheques payable to **Ploughshares Calgary Society** or go to www.ploughsharescalgary.ca to make your payment via PayPal. Please mail completed form with donation to the Ploughshares Calgary Society, 2919 - 8 Ave. N.W., Calgary, AB, T2N 1C8.

Please note that we are unable to provide tax receipts at this time.

