



Costa Rica, as an independent nation, has never known slavery. A country where compulsory basic education was established in 1869. A country in which capital punishment was abolished in 1882. Costa Rica abolished its army as an institution in 1949. And, in 1983 the government declared our country a neutral, and unarmed state, a move that contributed to the peace process in Central America.

Conflict will always arise among people. What we must learn is how to deal with that conflict without resorting to violence.

At this beginning of the twenty-first century, we are being called upon to face the needs of humanity, in all its tragic urgency. And we must, at the same time, face up to the requirements of the species: this century shall be peaceful or shall not be at all.

—Rodrigo Carazo
President of Costa Rica, 1978-1982
Honorary Founder, AWWA

The establishment of a U.N. Council for Nations Without Armies can be the first step in changing the world's perception of the practicality and feasibility of demilitarization among nations.

In addition to our effort to reduce current violence, together we can plant seeds for a world without war.

We will bring forth clear and positive messages on demilitarization, based on rigorous studies, political experiences, and individual witness and testimony.

A WORLD WITHOUT ARMIES



—Practical Steps toward a World Without War—

In our current period of global conflict and social unrest, there is increasing interest in the topic of demilitarization. More than ever, there is an urgent need to analyze the potential for demilitarization in various nations. Costa Rica provides a model for this, having abolished its armed forces in 1949 while maintaining the highest living standard in Central America. We work with people in Costa Rica and endeavor to spread their exemplary practice of having no army to other parts of the world.

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OBJECTIVES

1. Academic studies of the demilitarization potential of twenty nations.
2. Some of the Central American nations will start the process of demilitarization.
3. Other nations with high demilitarization potential will start and complete the process of abolishing their armies.
4. The United Nations will establish a Council for Nations Without Armies.
5. Citizens throughout the world will become fully aware of those nations currently without armies and the many advantages of a society free from the burden of maintaining military forces.
6. Individuals who feel disenfranchised and disenfranchised by national and international politics will be empowered by participating in movements and conversations that can change the future of the international security system.

METHODS

- We support the Women's Initiative for Demilitarizing Central America.
- We encourage researchers in peace studies and other relevant fields to conduct research on demilitarization potential of nations.
- We request that the governments of nations with no armies, including Costa Rica, Iceland, and Panama, propose to the United Nations General Assembly the establishment of a Council for Nations Without Armies. The Council will discuss the security of their member states and undertake action on their behalf.
- We promote Courageous Conversations--friendly, and non-polarized discussions that explore the need and steps for creating a world without war.
- We support and sponsor peace and reconciliation programs in many parts of the world.
- We support and sponsor international childrens' art exhibitions envisioning a world without war.

A Formula for Prosperous Conversion recommended by AWWA

A nation calls for volunteers among its soldiers, 5 - 10% per year, and reinsert them into civilian life, guaranteeing equivalent salaries and benefits as in military service. The former soldiers with new skills will participate in national projects that improve the wellbeing of citizens and the economy of the nation. These projects can increase employment for other citizens. Some military forces may transform into civil service units. This conversion process may be coordinated with that of neighboring nations.

NATIONS CURRENTLY WITHOUT ARMIES

24 countries: Andorra, Costa Rica, Dominica, Grenada, Haiti, Iceland, Kiribati, Lichtenstein, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Micronesia, Monaco, Montserrat, Nauru, Palau, Panama, Saint Kitts and Navis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and Vatican City.

For more information: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_without_armed_forces.

THE CONTINENT CURRENTLY WITHOUT ARMIES

Antarctica provides an example that a whole continent can be free of armed forces under international agreement.

NATIONS INTERESTED IN DEMILITARIZATION

In Switzerland, 35.6% of the voters supported the abolishment of its army in a referendum in 1989.

In 1998, the conference "The Leadership Challenges of Demilitarization in Africa" (LCDA) took place in Tanzania. There, officials from twenty-seven countries discussed the political, social, economic, and philosophical ramifications of demilitarization in the future, demonstrating a strong interest among nations in the abolishment of armed forces.

PROJECTS ORGANIZED SINCE 2002

- Sponsored the sixtieth anniversary celebration of the United Nations in collaboration with US and Costa Rican musicians, at the UN University for Peace in Costa Rica in April 2005. The multi-color painting "Circle of All Nations," 21' x 26', which was created for the fiftieth anniversary of the signing of the UN Charter in San Francisco, was displayed at the event.
- Co-sponsored the first women's workshop for Central America Without Armies with Dirección Nacional de Prevención de la Violencia y el Delito, Ministry of Justice, Costa Rica, in San José, Costa Rica in May 2006.
- Helped organize international exhibitions of children's art "Envisioning Our World Without War, in Costa Rica (San Ramon), U.S.A. (San Francisco, California), Canada (Toronto), Germany (Wuppertal, Berlin), Japan (Gifu), and The Netherlands (Amsterdam).
- Produced a DVD "Free from Fear: Voices of Women in Costa Rica," filmed by Catherine Margerin.
- Initiated and co-sponsored the First Conference of Women for the Abolition of Armies in Central America by 2020, with Latin American Institute of Peace Studies, the University of International Cooperation, Center of Friends for Peace in Costa Rica, at the Ministry of Culture, San José, Costa Rica in April 2007.
(<http://aworldwithoutarmies.blogspot.com>)
- Co-sponsored an international conference "Remembering Nanjing," on the seventieth anniversary of the Nanjing Tragedy. It was held at the Nanjing Normal University and the Nanjing University, Nanjing, China in November 2007.
(www.hwhj.org)

What is Demilitarization?

The abolition of military forces that have combating capability with canons, tanks, and fighter planes, while maintaining police forces, border control, disaster rescue units, and international peacekeeping forces.

Potentials and Obstacles for Demilitarization

Nations with no threat of a foreign invasion and civil war have a potential for abolishing their military forces. Nations that depend on weapons production and export face challenges to the process of disarmament and demilitarization.

Conditions for Demilitarization

Elements for nations' demilitarization include:

Regional Security

It is important to have a secure international environment where invasion by another country is not possible. An international body such as the United Nations, European Union, or the Organization of American States needs to ensure peace of the region.

Developed Military Establishment

The nation needs to have a developed military system where soldiers are highly trained and adequately paid. There must be a well-established civilian control.

Stable Political System

The nation needs to have a functional and uncorrupted government with strong and independent civilian institutions so that a military takeover will not be possible.

Public Opinion

It is important that the public supports abolition of their military forces.

Importance of Academic Studies

The first step for demilitarization of a nation is to have an academic study of its demilitarization potential. The topics should include elements favorable for and blocks against demilitarization. Once blocks are identified, sociologists, political scientists, and peace activists should create recommendations on how to remove blocks and proceed with the demilitarization process.

Merits of Demilitarization

Excellent examples on the benefits of demilitarization are provided by Costa Rica, which abolished its military forces in 1949, and Panama in 1994 and currently with no U.S. military bases:

Costa Rica

Costa Rican citizens and residents enjoy universal free healthcare and education (up to the university level). It is leading the world in environmental protection and the Latin American nations in human rights protection. Costa Rica has high life expectancy and almost universal literacy. It is number one on national happiness according to the Happy Planet Index.

Panama

Panama enjoys peace, political stability, and high economic growth. In current purchasing price parity (PPP) terms, GDP per person in Panama exceeded \$15,400 in 2012, the highest per capita income in Central America. Panama is projected to achieve a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 4.7 percent between now and 2032, compared with 3.2 percent for Latin America, and 3 percent for the world economy.

Cited from Deloitte, Competitiveness: Catching the next wave: Panama; data provided by Oxford Economics, April 2014.

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A WORLD WITHOUT ARMIES' CALL FOR YOUR SUPPORT

AWWA is the only international citizens' organization in the world that focuses on the demilitarization of nations. Your support is crucial for actualizing a world without war in a practical, step-by-step way.

Please send your tax-deductible donation to:

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ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE

AWWA is a project of the U.S. non-profit organization Inochi, 1520 Blake Street, Berkeley, California USA 94703. Inochi's Federal identification number is: 94-3175-526.