



**MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **POLICIES FOR PEACE, NOT PREPARATIONS FOR WAR**

### **UN International Day for Peace Possibly a Gimmick**

September 21 marks the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *United Nations International Day of Peace*, a global initiative to strengthen the ideals of peace among all nations. Hailed by the United Nations' Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon as "our highest calling", peace is also one of humanity's most precious needs.

Around the world, the UN's day of non-violence is supposed to set a goal for the rest of the year. But the Sydney Peace Foundation is cautious about commemorating only one day. The foundation says that support for peace on September 21 has to be followed by policies which respect all peoples' human rights and which cease to think that security is achieved by armed force.

Professor Stuart Rees, Director of the Sydney Peace Foundation, says,

"The only way to take International Peace Day seriously is to ensure that for all 365 days a year domestic and foreign policies reflect a commitment to universal human rights and the practice of non violence. That of course means learning a new language, and only a genius can learn a new language in a day.

"September 21 could seem hypocritical if we continue to treat asylum seekers cruelly; if the Australian Government refuses to support the Palestinian peoples' claims to a state of their own; if support for the independence of West Papua continues to be ignored. And those are only a few items on the human rights shopping list".

On September 21 the Sydney Peace Foundation will honour one of Australia's most significant peacemakers, the late Dr. Stella Cornelius. Her portrait at Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Sydney will be unveiled by author and filmmaker Anne Deveson.

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