



UNIVERSITY
OF PUBLIC
SERVICE
LUDOVIKA



PÁZMÁNY

Pázmány Péter Catholic University
1635

Just War and Just Peace:

Religious-based Armed Conflicts over Natural Resources

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

11 June 2025

08:00–16:45

Ludovika University of Public Service,
Hungary, 1083 Budapest, Ludovika Square



Programme

- 08:00-08:30: Registration
- 08:30-09:00: Opening**
Dr. Gergely DELI
Ludovika University of Public Service, rector
Rev. Dr. Géza KUMINETZ
Pázmány Péter Catholic University, rector
- 09:00-09:45 Plenary session**

H.Em. Rev. Card. Dr. Michael CZERNY SJ
Prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development
- 09:45-10:15 Coffee break
- 10:15-11:35 Panel I: Ethics, Resources, and Peace: Religious and Military Perspectives**
Chair: Dr. Ádám DARABOS
(Ludovika University of Public Service)

Dr. John Mark MATTOX
(National Defense University)
The Theological and Philosophical Foundations of Natural Resource Allocation

Rev. Dr. Lóránd UJHÁZI
(Ludovika University of Public Service)
The Bishops' Conference's Role in Catholic Understanding of the Protection of the Creation

Dr. József PADÁNYI
(Ludovika University of Public Service)
Civil-military cooperation

Dr. David WHETHAM (King's College)
Helping the Helpers: Teaching Military Ethics to Ukrainian Chaplains
- 11:35-12:00 Discussions
- 12:00-13:15 Lunch
- 13:15-14:15 Panel II: Reimagining Just War and Christian Peace through History**
Chair: Philippe PELLET
(Ludovika University of Public Service)



Dr. Tamás NYIRKOS

(Ludovika University of Public Service)
Rethinking the just war theory: from theology
to lists of criteria and back again

Rev. Dr. László GÁJER

(Pázmány Péter Catholic University)
The fact of war and the cry for peace
in the thoughts of Andrea Riccardi

Rev. Dr. Jacques OLIVIER

(St. Vincent de Paul Seminary)
Joan of Arc and king Charles IV: two saints facing war

14:15-14:35

Discussions

14:35-14:50

Coffee break

14:50-16:10

Panel III: Justice and War Today

Chair: András JANCSÓ
(Ludovika University of Public Service)

Rev. Dr. Jean Olivier Nke ONGONO

(Ludwig-Maximilian Universität)
Reconstruction of the Great Caliphate
[Kanem-Bornu Empire]. Religious war
or mere scramble for resources?
The appropriate response of the Church,
civil societies, and States

Dr. Avraham WEBER (Fordham University)

The Near East Peace and War as reflected
by Theological thoughts

Rev. Dr. Yuriy SHCHURKO

(Ukrainian Catholic University)
Why in the XXI Century Just War Theory
still relevant: The Case of Ukraine

Dr. Christian BRAUN (King's College)

Ukrainian Resources in Exchange for US Support?
A Just War Perspective

16:10-16:30

Discussions

16:30-16:45

Closing remarks



Abstracts

Dr. John Mark Mattox

The Theological and Philosophical Foundations of Natural Resource Allocation

Finding the solution to a major problem becomes much more difficult when one focuses solely on techniques—intermediate ways and means—while simultaneously losing sight of the circumstances that gave rise to the problem in the first place. When those circumstances are correctly understood, one can then identify the principles whose violation is likely the source of the problem. Fortunately, sacred scripture and the voices of divines throughout history provide invaluable insights with respect to both originating circumstances and the principles governing natural resource allocation.

Rev. Dr. Lóránd Ujházi

The Bishops' Conference's Role in Catholic Understanding of the Protection of the Creation

After the Second Vatican Council, Catholic theorists, including Pope Francis, affirmed that peace is threatened by many factors other than armed conflict. Environmental issues or creation is of paramount importance.

These challenges are also territorially diverse. Thus, a deeper understanding of security challenges requires local church knowledge and experience. Because of the governmental primacy of the Roman Pontiff, little attention is paid to what local churches. Indeed, in recent years, there has been a tendency for lower-level church statements to influence the teaching of central authorities on peace, security, just war, and protection of the creation. In this presentation, I will focus on the bishops' conference. This Catholic institution has undergone significant theological and canonical, and then structural, development over the last hundred years. The conference is "an association of bishops from a country or a particular territory" that plays an increasingly important role in shaping the Church's ethical stance on war and the environment. Its statements and activities demonstrate that local churches are no longer passive recipients of the Holy See's message on war, but active shapers of it.

Dr. József Padányi

Civil-military cooperation

The use of military force is a key component in ending conflicts, but not the only one. In the last decades, the Hungarian Armed Forces has taken part in both peace-keeping (IFOR, SFOR, KFOR, AFOR) and peace enforcement (ISAF) operations. Deciding whether such an operation is justified has never been the burden of the soldiers, however, their moral approach to such operations must be evaluated, since this is a vital contributing factor to the success of the operation. Throughout history, such military science greats as Sun Tzu, Miklós Zrínyi, Montecuccoli or even Clausewitz all paid attention to these factors. It must also be considered from the point of view of the relationship of the military force and the civilian population, because civil-military cooperation is not only an opportunity, but a necessity.



Dr. David Whetham

Helping the Helpers: Teaching Military Ethics to Ukrainian Chaplains

In March 2025, I was privileged to teach Ukrainian chaplains in military ethics – the third time I have done this as part of UK support for the defence of Ukraine and its people. None of them were in the military before 2022 and none had any professional knowledge of military ethics until they found themselves on the front line and being used as a badly needed spiritual and ethical resource by the soldiers there. I will talk about some of their challenges and the important role that they, and their colleagues in countries around the world, can play in restraining the worst excesses of war, but also in building resilience by looking after the psychological as well as the spiritual well-being of their people, and the long term implications of this for societal rebuilding and reconciliation.

Dr. Tamás Nyirkos

Rethinking the just war theory: from theology to lists of criteria and back again

Contemporary attempts to reform the Christian just war theory sometimes overlook the fact that in its original, Augustinian form, this theory was not a list of criteria but a reflection on the complex ontological reality of humanity. The transition from Augustine's overarching - part metaphysical, part anthropological - theory to ever more simplified judicial conceptualizations seems to have started in the Middle Ages, and this process went on until the 20th century when the number of criteria was gradually reduced to one, leaving self-defence as the sole possible justification of war; or until the 21st, when even papal encyclicals such as "Fratelli tutti" suggested that their number might be zero. However, as the reality of enduring conflicts shows us, just war theory cannot be simply neglected or put aside because of emotional reasons. What we need is a theological re-evaluation of the just war theory: not in terms of criteria, but in terms of a general view of what it means to be part of God's creation, what it means to be a member of a human commonwealth, and what it means to be a human being at all.

Rev. Dr. László Gájer

The fact of war and the cry for peace in the thoughts of Andrea Riccardi

Andrea Riccardi (1950-), an Italian professor of history, founded the Community of Sant'Egidio in Trastevere, Rome, in 1968. The community defines its mission, as Pope John Paul II aptly put it, by the so-called "three P's", the initials of the words "pace", "preghiera" and "poveri". Standing up for the poor is therefore as important in the life of the community as the mission of peace. Neither of these is an end in

itself, but both arise from prayer. Professor Riccardi's books on peace can also be seen as statements on certain major historical events. Thus, *La pace preventiva* (2004) is an assessment of the war in Iraq, and *Il grido della pace* (2023) is a volume on Russian aggression against Ukraine. Nor should we forget the author's books *La forza disarmata della pace* or *La scelta per la pace*. In this lecture, I will try to summarise, on the basis of these books and Riccardi's articles and lectures, the pro-peace message of the historian-community founder, which has had such an impact on the pontificate of Pope Francis and which has also become the source of concrete peace missions in Africa or Ukraine.

Rev. Dr. Jacques Olivier

Joan of Arc and King Charles IV: two saints facing war

Sent by God to bring peace and a political message to the King of France, the earthly lieutenant of the King of Heaven, Saint Joan of Arc fights the English party and leads the army "in the name of God".

Drawn unwillingly into a world war, Blessed King Charles IV proposed a separate peace, which was refused and ultimately deprived him of his throne.

How did the saints, witnesses to the Gospel, put into practice the words of Christ: "Peace I leave for you; my Peace I give to you. Not in the way that the world gives, do I give to you." (Jn 14:27)?

Rev. Dr. Jean Olivier Nke Ongono

Reconstruction of the Great Caliphate [Kanem-Bornu Empire]. Religious war or mere scramble for resources? The appropriate response of the Church, civil societies, and States

The outbreak of Boko Haram in the early 2000s, with the openly declared intention of reconstructing the historically renowned Muslim kingdom of Kanem-Bornu, which for centuries covered northern Nigeria, northern Cameroon, parts of Niger, Chad and Libya, has caused much death and suffering. This paper will alternately question the authenticity and feasibility of such a project, given the actual religious landscape of the region, and discuss the appropriate response of the Church, civil societies, and states.

Dr. Avraham Weber

The Near East Peace and War as reflected by Theological thoughts

Two sides exist in the near east story. The first, is peace building and intra religious work between mainly Israel, as the Jewish State, and the Block of Sunni countries led by Saudi Arabia, all in the framework of the so-called Abraham Accords signed in 2020. The second, would be the conflict between The State of Israel and the radical forces within Palestinian society backed by Shia Iranian influence such as Hamas

and Jihadist Islam movements dominating the Gaza Strip since 2007. Dealing with needs to fight in zones with non-combatants, which raises moral dilemmas in the field of humanitarian aid, protection of civil population all this in the course of a War. The talk will assist in showing how religious moral thinking is integrated in the decision making process, and conducting War and Peace negotiations.

Dr. Yuriy Shchurko

Why in the XXI Century Just War Theory still relevant: The Case of Ukraine

God created humanity for peace – a biblical concept of *šālôm* encompassing completeness, health, salvation, and contentment. While Jesus' followers are called to establish peace through personal pacifism, the presence of evil sometimes necessitates force to preserve peace, giving rise to just war theory. In recent decades, international focus shifted toward just peace-making theory to prevent war altogether. However, Russia's full-scale invasion has renewed the urgency of legal defense through just war principles. This article examines why this theory remains relevant and how we should interpret its principles in today's context.

Dr. Christian Braun

Ukrainian Resources in Exchange for US Support? A Just War Perspective

More than three years after Russia launched its full-scale invasion, the war against Ukraine remains a central issue in international security. NATO countries have provided billions of dollars in military aid to support Ukraine while simultaneously seeking to avoid direct involvement in hostilities. Amid discussions of President Trump's much-debated peace plan, the new US administration has reportedly pressured Ukraine to sign a deal granting the US rights to exploit the country's vast mineral resources. While Ukraine initially proposed a mineral partnership to secure a long-term security arrangement with the US, some rhetoric from the Trump administration suggests a form of coercion—essentially, “pay us back, or we will withdraw our support.” As one Ukrainian observer put it: “It's as if we lost the war to America. This looks to me like reparations.”

The prospect of a mineral deal raises significant ethical questions, which this paper seeks to explore. First, is it morally justifiable to make weapons deliveries—critical for Ukraine's just war against Russia—contingent on reimbursement? Additionally, the issue of reparations introduces broader *jus post bellum* (justice after war) considerations. In theory, restoring justice after war may require the defeated aggressor to compensate the victim—and potentially the nations that aided the victim's success. However, in Ukraine's case, forcing a ceasefire and “freezing” the conflict would not constitute a just peace; it would reward aggression while allowing Moscow to evade reparations. Moreover, a reparation-style agreement between the US and Ukraine would, in effect, invert the victim-aggressor dynamic.



MINISTRY OF ENERGY

Supported under the project
„Sustainability, resilience – the societal
challenges of climate change
and adaptation”.

Funded by
the Ministry of Energy –
ID: EKPPF/922/2021-ITM-SZERZZ

