Editorial Preface

In the beginning of the second decade of the twenty-first century, deadly conflicts continue to plague the world with loss of lives and destructions. In 2012, there were 26 deadly conflicts which continue until the present, an increase of two cases from 2011 (Jamal 2012). The Global Burden of Armed Violence estimates that more than 500,000 people are killed annually by armed violence—an average of one death per minute. The vast majority of those killed are civilians deliberately or indirectly targeted by combatants in armed conflicts or victims of urban criminal violence (Ebbs 2014). Apart from loss of lives, these conflicts have thus far caused mass displacement, suffering, destruction of infrastructure, ruin of economies and erosion of community solidarity. In 2012, it is estimated that violence costs the global economy USD 9 trillion per year. The number skyrocketed in 2014 where USD 14.3 trillion or 13.4 per cent of world GDP was spent on wars and weapons (Institute of Economics and Peace 2012, 2014). Conflicts are no longer confined to a state territory. For example, violent power struggle that began after the Arab Spring in 2011 has displaced more than ten millions, half of the entire Syrian population. The shockwave is felt in Europe where almost 350,000 Syrians have applied for asylum seeker status in the European Union (UNHCR 2015).

Though deadly conflicts in East Asia seems to be declining, Thailand is facing three different deadly conflicts simultaneously: governance conflict, border conflict with Cambodia, and ethnic conflict in the Deep South which together claimed more than 6,000 lives in the past decade (Tonnesson and Bjarnegard 2015). On August 17, 2015, the country witnessed the unprecedented explosion in the heart of Bangkok, killing twenty innocents, tourists as well as locals, and injuring 130 people. Speculations as to what motivated the bomb plotters varied. Thailand's political conflict could trigger this act of terror, or the horrifying incident could be connected to global criminal and/or insurgent networks. If the latter is indeed the case, Bangkok will sadly join other global cities-New York, London, Madrid, Boston and Paris, as theatres of terror where innocent lives are at risk, and normality in society undermined.

The ostensible ubiquity of violence should not trap us in despair, however. In fact, in recent past the world has seen numerous glorifying moments of nonviolent conflict transformation. The Asia-Pacific is rich with stories of peoples who choose to engage deadly conflicts with nonviolent alternatives. A cursory glance at the Asia-Pacific stories of nonviolent conflict in the past five decades include: Gandhi's legacies and Abdul Ghaffar Khan's nonviolent red shirts against British imperialism; democratic movements in the Philippines, China, Myanmar, Cambodia, Indonesia, West Papua, Nepal, Tibet, Hong Kong, Malaysia, and Thailand, among many others; and the anti-dam movements in Tasmania, India and Thailand.

Though the Asia-Pacific Peace Research Association (APPRA) has organised its bi-annual meetings since 1980, and there have been research papers dealing with nonviolent actions

in those meetings, the APPRA Bangkok conference in 2013 marked the very first time APPRA peace researchers explored peace research landscape with the theme of *engaging deadly conflicts with nonviolent alternatives*. We believed that by underscoring these nonviolent experiences in dealing with various types of deadly conflict, peace researchers could come up with a wealth of knowledge that would meaningfully help lessen the impacts of deadly conflicts and foster peace in Asia-Pacific.

And they did. One hundred and forty-four peace scholars and practitioners from twenty countries, five continents, submitted their papers for presentation at the conference. The topics were immensely diverse, ranging from ethnic conflict, territorial dispute, nonviolent social movements and social change, post-violence peace talks and reconciliation, conflict prevention, disarmament and de-militarisation, religions and nonkilling, international conflict resolution mechanisms, peace education, migration, human security, gender violence, and music and peacebuilding. These presentations not only analysed the protracted and emerging issues jeopardising negative and positive peace around the globe, they also advanced recommendations for policy makers and civil society groups to explore ways by which armed conflicts and other forms of violence could be mitigated and/or prevented at the levels of agency, structure and culture. While the intrinsically connected processes of peacekeeping, peacemaking and peacebuilding have been underscored in these research, creative ways to help transform potentially deadly conflicts with nonviolent actions and tactics of re-humanisation have been examined and at times proposed.

From all the papers presented at the APPRA Bangkok conference in 2013, and through the international peer-reviewed process, fourteen articles are selected. They are published in the two special volumes of *Thammasat Review* focusing on two different themes*:* politics of nonviolent conflict transformation, and conflict transformation and peacebuilding.

TU Review special issue on nonviolence's theoretical foundation is shaped by two papers, both keynote addresses at the APPRA Bangkok conference. Kevin Clements' and Erica Chenoweth's papers reflect the classic debate of nonviolence scholarship–whether it should be principled/way of life or preferably political strategy – is critically brought to light. The remaining articles tell us the dynamics of methods and actors of nonviolent struggle. While Craig Robertson elucidates the crucial impact music can have on building movements working towards peacebuilding and social change, Rajib Timalsina illuminates how the armed Maoist movement in Nepal was transformed into a political group participating in parliamentary politics with their shift to utilise nonviolent methods of struggle. In China, Alex Tu demystifies a general belief that the Chinese Communist Party could take complete control over society by showing us activism of customer rights movement that has challenged the Party's authority for many decades. But nonviolent action does not only stem from the peoples. The state can resort to it when encountering a crisis of legitimacy as shown in S.Y. Surendra Kumar's article on the Indian

nonviolent response to the Naxalite conflict. Lastly, Ellen Furnari suggests the international aspect of nonviolent politics, identifying the knowledge of unarmed peacekeeping that helps facilitate their operation in the (post-)war zones.

The second *TU Review* special issue on conflict transformation and peacebuilding looks at different stages of peace processes: pre-, during and post-violence. Through the use of positive indicator such as good governance and life quality, Anis Y. Yusoff and Shamsul A.B point out that the construction of early warning system to prevent the escalation of communal clash should capitalise on the existing structures of peace to amplify the ability to coexist. While the conflict between China and Japan regarding the sovereignty over the East China Sea seems difficult to resolve,

Tatsushi Arai suggests that this is due to both countries being locked in the logic of state sovereignty. Transforming this intractable dispute requires the transcendence of the mutually exclusive nature of territorial sovereignty and prioritisation of a practical and mutually beneficial use of the resources and maritime space in the East China Sea. Travis Ryan J. Delos Reyes, Mossarat Qadeem and Yutaka Hayashi discuss factors that undermine peace negotiations and facilitate their success in the Philippines, Pakistan and Afghanistan respectively. While Reyes point out that the Philippines government's oscillation between 'stick' and 'carrot' responses to the Moro National Liberation Front and Moro Islamic Liberation Front hinders the achievement of ongoing peace talk, Qadeem and Hayashi bring to the fore the important role including extreme youth and rural communities enable the sense of inclusiveness conducive to the success of peacebuilding. M.P.Pathai and S.M. Aliff's articles show us ongoing efforts of reconciliation in post-communal violence in India's northern Kerela and post-counter insurgency war in Sri Lanka. In India, Gandhian organisations played a pivotal role as the third party intervening to mitigate communal misperception while strengthening communal ties through interreligious dialogue, among other things. The Sri Lankan experience reminds us that decentralisation of state power could address the Tamil minority's grievances and potentially preclude the reoccurrence of insurgent struggle. Last but not least, Stein Tønnesson and Elin Bjarnegård of the Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University, posit an intriguing question: do Thailand's territorial dispute with Cambodia, ethnic strife in the Deep South and conflict over governance set in motion the defiance of the East Asian peace tendency? Through profound analysis, they found that the key reason why Thailand is notoriously known as 'the sick man of East Asia' has to do with the lack of civilian control with the military, which has weakened state capacity and made it possible to topple elected governments in coups, court decisions and street-based campaigns.

Taken together, these two special issues of *TU Review* reiterates an age old problem/solution in peace and conflict research, the relationship between conflict problem and the end sought by concerned parties and the means by which those ends could be reached. Peace Research at its core is a normative discipline. But to pursue peace, with its myriad meanings

and dimensions, it is always important to carefully take the means used into serious considerations. Nonviolent actions as the preferred means for peace research has a lot to offer in identifying possible and creative avenues of how deadly conflicts might end and how reconstruction of societies after deadly conflict might be better fostered.

As editors of these two special issues, conveners of the 2013 Bangkok APPRA conference (Chaiwat Satha-Anand and Janjira Sombatpoonsiri), and former secretary generals of APPRA (Akihiko Kimijima and Vidya Jain), we would like to thank all participants at the conference, reviewers of the papers, sponsors of the conference–the TODA Institute for Global Peace and Policy Research, the International Center for Nonviolent Conflict, Thailand Research Fund (TRF), and especially Thammasat University as well as its Faculty of Political Science – for their generous supports in making the conference a success.

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