

A message from the chair of the board, Jeremy Lester

Over the last year, large political shifts and increasing tensions have made the world seem less stable and more insecure. Deepening polarisation between communities, ideologies and states brings people into conflict with each other – in some cases, leading to outbreaks of violence. Leaders do little to provide the responsible guidance that citizens deserve and that the world needs, often opting to feed off the divides between people rather than finding ways to solve the underlying problems.

I'm extremely proud of what Saferworld has accomplished in this challenging environment. Together with our partners, we have shown that government responses that reinforce repression and deepen grievances are counterproductive and damaging. In 2017-18, the organisation has worked globally, regionally and locally to ensure that voices for peace are heard in an increasingly military-focused environment. We have worked on the world stage to counter short-term securitised responses to terrorism. Nationally, in Africa, Asia and the Middle East we have worked with communities so that they can get the

tools they need to resist being pulled into geopolitical rivalries and so that they can find peaceful solutions to their own disputes.

I'm excited to become the chair of the board of trustees at this time when Saferworld's message of peace and inclusion is more necessary than ever. It's also a time of great change for the organisation – many of our programmes around the world are growing and taking on new challenges. What Saferworld has achieved, often in volatile and dangerous places, is a testament to the competence and dedication of our staff, partners and the communities we work with.

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Jeremy Lester, Saferworld's chair of the board of trustees.

And none of this work would be possible without the consistent support provided by donors. We are grateful for their continued recognition of the importance and effectiveness of our work.

It is a pleasure and an honour for me to take on this new role, and to inherit a strong legacy from my predecessor, Owen Greene. My task is made lighter by the wisdom and commitment of my fellow trustees and the Saferworld staff. Thanks to them, this past year was one of achievement in the face of formidable challenges.

Jeremy Lester, chair of the board of trustees

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Syrian refugees work in a field on the outskirts of Rawda village in the Bekaa Valley, Lebanon.