

# Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

# NewsNotes

*a bimonthly newsletter of information on  
international peace and justice issues*

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*Peace, Social Justice and the Integrity of Creation*

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*Due to ongoing security measures, there is a significant delay in delivery of mail to Congressional offices. It is advised that constituents either use email or fax, or send mail to Congresspersons' home offices, rather than to the Washington, D.C. office.*

# U.S. elections: Sustainable communities of life

*In this issue of NewsNotes we continue our reflection on topics of concern in the approaching U.S. elections, looking at those related to ecology. Our intent is to evaluate the proposals of political parties and their candidates through a lens held by the communities around the world where Maryknoll missionaries live and work, and by the values articulated in the Gospel and in Catholic social teaching.*

The 2004 elections come at a time when the whole community of life is under attack. The very survival of this community – all of creation, including human beings – is threatened by war and other forms of destructive violence, by poverty and degradation, by a global economy that is not ecologically sustainable and by lifestyles of a wealthy minority that are consuming the future. Natural resources essential to life, like water and air, are being poisoned or commodified. Hunger is ever-present and starvation is one failed harvest away for millions of people. Food is being processed and traded to benefit a few people and nations, while the majority sit with empty bowls.

Maryknoll missionaries work with indigenous and traditional communities in the Americas and in parts of Asia and Africa. For centuries, their ecological wisdom and way of life that modeled alternative relationships between human beings and the rest of creation have been derided and destroyed. Debates over access to land, the privatization of water and intellectual property rights carry enormous weight for these communities.

Movement toward a new way of life in right relationship with the rest of creation and new national priorities for protecting the integrity of creation must be urgent priorities for the next president of the United States.

## Energy policy

Entirely missing from the public policy debate over energy policy have been values of environmental justice, creation stewardship and intergenerational responsibility. The present administration has endorsed new nuclear energy plants; provided

enormous subsidies for extractive industries; supported exemptions and tax shields that protect polluting industries and endanger clean air requirements; and failed to take seriously the threats associated with climate change and global warming. The U.S.'s repudiation of the Kyoto Protocol was a devastating example of its unilateralist posture and its unwillingness to challenge corpo-

rate U.S. America. Exploration and the exploitation of natural resources are valued over conservation and the rehabilitation of damaged ecosystems. From global warming to global warring we deal with the problems associated with fossil fuel use everyday. U.S. dependence on oil from foreign and domestic sources puts us into conflict with countries around the world and the environment which sustains us all.

*Suggested questions for candidates:*

- On what values have you built your proposals for U.S. energy policy?
- How would you address the issue of climate change/global warming? Would you support the Kyoto Protocol?
- Would you withdraw U.S. support in the World Bank and regional development banks for socially and environmentally destructive projects such as in oil, gas, mining and big dams?
- What would you do to decrease U.S. dependence on oil and to promote research, development, and use of renewable sources of energy?



*photo by Sean Sprague, courtesy of Maryknoll Fathers & Brothers*

## Water

Water is essential for all life on this planet. Clean, affordable water is part of the global commons and has long been recognized as a basic human right. Without it, life cannot be sustained. Nations go to war and relationships between neighbors often clash over access to water. Yet, the U.S. supports economic policies that promote the privatization of water in impoverished countries around the world. The management and distribution of water for profit by private companies – including in the U.S. – puts at risk the access of poor people and their communities to

a resource that is fundamental to life. The intense promotion and sale of bottled water is highly profitable for a few corporations. This practice, which is unsustainable and unjust, often depletes local water supplies, robbing local communities of a basic resource. Safe water is indispensable for all communities and should not be commodified.

*Suggested questions for candidates:*

- How would you balance public and private interests in proposing domestic and international water policy?
- Would you work to change macro-economic policy prescriptions, including the privatization of basic resources like water, given by the IMF and other creditors to impoverished countries?

### **Biotechnology**

Genetically modified, or transgenic, organisms (GMOs) are created through high-tech transfers of selected genetic material from one organism to another to create new varieties of plants and animals with chosen characteristics. This process is highly controversial. One concern most often identified is the potentially negative impact of GMOs on the natural world – for example, on the “insurance” provided by biodiversity against unforeseen natural disasters – and on food safety, especially for people with serious allergies to certain foods. The economic impact of GMOs on small farm owners and workers is also of

concern, as GMO technology is of most benefit to large scale, capital intensive agriculture and is likely to concentrate control over agricultural production. Promoters of GMO technologies claim that these technologies may be of use in addressing critical issues like hunger, drought, water shortages, poor soil and limited access to land. But serious questions must be asked about whether the present technological direction addresses these problems, what new problems it creates, and whether it is appropriate to the continuing evolution of the full community of life on Earth. At least, aid recipients, trading partners and consumers have a right to full disclosure regarding GMOs.

*Suggested question for candidates:*

- What is your position on genetically modified organisms in agricultural production, foreign aid and trade policies?

### **Conclusion**

Concrete political decisions can have enormous impact on peace, social and economic justice and the integrity of creation, moving our world closer to or farther from the biblical vision of New Creation. But too often, campaign rhetoric avoids discussion of issues that profoundly affect the well-being of people and the earth. We hope this brief review of some important policy decisions to face the newly elected president and U.S. Congress next year will contribute to an informed electorate and to a full and serious debate in the coming months.

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### **Election 2004 resources:**

*“In the Catholic tradition, responsible citizenship is a virtue; participation in the political process is a moral obligation.” U.S. Catholic bishops.*

- Contact the **Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns** for a copy of our 16-page 2004 election guide. Bulk orders are 25 cents each. Phone: (202)832-1780; email: [ogc@maryknoll.org](mailto:ogc@maryknoll.org); MOGC, P.O. Box 29132, Washington, D.C., 20017. It is also available to download from [www.maryknollogc.org](http://www.maryknollogc.org)
- Contact the **U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops** for a copy of “Faithful Citizenship: A Catholic Call to Political Responsibility.” The purpose of the statement is to communicate the Church’s teaching that every Catholic is called to active and faith-filled citizenship, based upon a properly informed conscience, so that each disciple of Christ publicly witnesses to the Church’s commitment to human life and dignity with special preference for the poor and the vulnerable. Phone: (202)541-3000; website: <http://www.usccb.org/faithfulcitizenship/index.htm>
- **NETWORK, the National Catholic Social Justice Lobby**, has a number of helpful resources available for U.S. voters in this election season. Go to [www.networklobby.org](http://www.networklobby.org) to download free articles, charts, action suggestions, group activities, and more. Contact NETWORK at 202-547-5556 to order by phone.
- **Pax Christi USA** produces “Peaceweavings,” which are brochures highlighting specific issues. Go to Pax Christi USA’s website to download the PDF files on these subjects:
  - “Mixing Politics and Religion”: <http://www.paxchristiusa.org/peaceweavings.pdf>
  - “Choosing a Presidential Candidate”: <http://www.paxchristiusa.org/candidate.pdf>

## Chile: Riggs Bank and the former dictator

*General Augusto Pinochet, the 88-year-old former dictator of Chile, was stripped of his immunity by a Chilean Court of Appeals in May and is now caught again in the limelight, accused of fiscal fraud, bribery, money laundering and other financial crimes committed with the help of Riggs Bank in Washington D.C.*

In July, the U.S. Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations revealed that former Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet maintained accounts in Riggs Bank from 1994-1998 with balances ranging from \$4-8 million.

The Subcommittee concluded that that “Riggs Bank assisted Augusto Pinochet, former president of Chile, to evade legal proceedings related to his Riggs Bank accounts and resisted OCC oversight of these accounts, despite red flags involving the source of Mr. Pinochet’s wealth, pending legal proceedings to freeze his assets, and public allegations of serious wrongdoing by this client.”

The Subcommittee elaborated that Riggs “deliberately assisted” Pinochet “in the concealment and movement of his funds while he was under investigation and the subject of a world-wide court order freezing his assets.” This, in reference to the October 1998 attachment order, issued by Spanish Judge Baltasar Garzón and upheld by the Spanish Audiencia Nacional, against all accounts in any country held by Pinochet, his family members, or third parties in any country.

In addition to the \$4-8 million Pinochet had in his accounts, Riggs indicated in a client profile that Pinochet had “an estimated personal net worth of \$50 to 100 million.”

In Chile, these revelations led to an outcry and the filing of new legal cases against the aging general. Immediately, Chilean lawyers Carmen Hertz and Alfonso Insunza filed criminal charges against Pinochet for fiscal fraud, bribery, money laundering and other financial crimes. The Chilean government designated a special judge, Sergio Muñoz, to investigate these allegations. The Chilean State Defense Council (CDE) has also begun investigations into Pinochet’s Riggs accounts and will be a party to the case pending before Judge Muñoz.

Chilean Judge Juan Guzmán, who oversees a number of human rights cases against Pinochet, has additionally accepted a request by the Association of Relatives of the Disappeared and a group of Chilean human rights lawyers including Fabiola Letelier, Julia Urquieta, and Hugo Gutierrez, to investigate and possibly freeze Pinochet’s assets with an eye towards potentially

compensating victims of human rights violations.

Two of Pinochet’s children, Marco Antonio Pinochet and Lucia Pinochet Hiriart, told the press that the money in Pinochet’s Riggs accounts came entirely from legitimate sources including donations for their father’s legal expenses during his arrest in London. A minister from Pinochet’s own government, Mónica Madariaga, told press that “no one” could have accumulated that kind of wealth as a public official.

Although some retired generals have disparaged suggestions that Pinochet obtained these funds illicitly, the commander-in-chief of the Chilean Army, Juan Emilio Cheyre, announced last week that the institution will support the legal investigations into Pinochet’s accounts, emphasizing that the Army itself no longer has accounts with Riggs Bank. According to Chilean press reports, some right-wing parties are also seeking to distance themselves from Pinochet in this matter.

Earlier this summer, the Santiago Court of Appeals released the text of their May 28, 2004 decision to strip former Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet of his immunity from prosecution for a case involving Operation Condor. For background on that decision, see Pinochet Watch #55: <http://www.tni.org/pin-watch/watch55.htm#1>.

Pinochet’s lawyers have appealed the ruling to the Chilean Supreme Court. The recent scandal over Pinochet’s secret bank accounts have led some to believe that there is a greater chance that the Supreme Court might uphold the Appeals Court decision to strip Pinochet of his immunity. In an article entitled “A Brilliant Demented Person,” Chilean journalists Jorge Escalante and Luis Narváez reported that the former dictator made at least 30 trips to the bank to carry out a number of different transactions even after being declared “demented” by the Chilean courts.

Human rights lawyer Nelson Caucoto told the press that these recent developments make it likely that the Supreme Court will “confirm a change in Pinochet’s mental condition and uphold the stripping of his immunity.”

For more information on “Pinochet Watch,” contact Sarah Anderson, Institute for Policy Studies, 733 15th St. NW, #1020, Washington, D.C. 20005, tel: 202-234-9382, fax: 202-387-7915, email: [saraha@igc.org](mailto:saraha@igc.org). For past issues, go to: <http://www.tni.org/pin-watch/watch.htm> The text of the *Washington Post* article that broke this story is available at: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A50222-2004Jul14.html>.

## Bolivia: Referendum on oil and gas

*On July 18, Bolivian President Carlos Mesa Gisbert followed through on his promise to hold a referendum on management of the country's oil and gas reserves. Bolivia's gas reserves are estimated at 52 trillion cubic meters, the second-largest deposits of natural gas in South America, surpassed only by Venezuela. Mesa took over as president of Bolivia on October 17, 2003, when former President Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada was forced to resign (see NewsNotes November-December 2003). Sarah Brown, summer intern in the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns, contributed to the following article.*

Mesa brought a glimmer of hope to the people of Bolivia, calling for unity, reform, and peace, and vowed to hold a referendum on the gas deal as well as a popular constitution convention. In early March of this year, however, Mesa's appointed Minister of Hydrocarbons and Mining resigned and was replaced by the minister from the previous administration, raising the possibility that the promised referendum would be cancelled. By the time it did take place, new strikes and protests were threatening and Bolivians were losing hope in the ability of the Mesa administration to bring about change.

In the referendum, Bolivian voters were asked to respond to five questions:

1. Do you agree that the current hydrocarbons law should be changed?
2. Do you agree that the Bolivian state should have rights to hydrocarbons once they reach the ground?
3. Do you agree that Yacimientos Petroliferos Fiscales Bolivianos (YFPB) [the oil company privatized under former President Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada] should be re-established to control hydrocarbon production?
4. Do you agree that Bolivian gas should be used to regain useful or sovereign access to the Pacific?
5. Do you agree that Bolivian gas should be exported and that multinationals should pay 50 percent of projected profits for rights to exploit Bolivian gas, and that the government should invest those resources in health, education, and infrastructure?

A majority of the three million people who cast ballots voted "yes" on all five questions, supporting President Mesa's proposal to recover ownership of the country's natural resources. They agreed to the sale of oil and gas to foreign companies, but on terms much more favorable to Bolivia than the current terms.

The referendum results are seen as a victory for those indigenous Bolivians who protested the previous administration's proposed export of gas through Chile – the impoverished majority who would not benefit from increased foreign control of the country's natural resources. At the same time, upper class Bolivians and the U.S. government are also relieved at the results of the referendum. Had the outcome of the vote been negative, the supply of oil to the U.S. and other countries would have been severely restricted. Furthermore, a negative response to the referendum could well have resulted in new rounds of protest and upheaval.

Some organizations and leaders asked Bolivians to stay away from the polls, upset that Mesa had not included nationalization of the hydrocarbons industry as an option on the referendum. Felipe Quispe of the Movimiento Indigena Pachakuti (MIP) was one prominent advocate for a boycott.

In the July 30 issue of *NotiSur*, Forrest Hylton, a doctoral researcher of history in Bolivia, writes, "For the opposition, nationalization is considered the only hope for a future that would break with past cycles of nonrenewable natural-resource extraction (silver, tin, rubber), which enriched a small number of creoles and foreigners at the expense of urban artisans and Andean peasant communities."

The referendum process was largely peaceful, with widespread support and participation across Bolivia, but some of those in opposition did protest on the day of the referendum and others wrote nationalization across the ballot or turned it in unmarked. There was an isolated incident of stone throwing at the international election monitors, and in Achacachi, a village near the border of Peru, protestors threw sticks of dynamite into the main square. Other protestors tried to burn ballots in El Alto but were stopped by people who supported Mesa and the referendum.

The Mesa administration continues to stress that Bolivia is a peaceful country. The Minister of Indigenous Affairs and First Peoples, Ricardo Calla, in a Washington, D.C. briefing shortly after the referendum, noted that the violence of 2003 was the fault of the previous government and that the people of Bolivia are committed to nonviolent means of expressing their concerns about the country. Minister Calla said that the Mesa administration is committed to engaging with the citizens of Bolivia in dialogue and negotiation - that nonviolent social movements are strong in Bolivia and that the country seeks to follow the example

of Gandhi to achieve dialogue and democracy.

Already the debate has moved to the Congress. Recent negotiations between the Mesa administration and Argentina for an increase in volume of gas sales have evoked opposition from Evo Morales' MAS party in Congress and the Central Obrera Boliviana (COB) who insist that a new hydrocarbons law be passed before any new agreements are reached. They fear that

officials will again be selling Bolivia's patrimony with inadequate popular backing.

The government also will have to begin revising its contracts with foreign oil companies. President Mesa has assured them that there would be no expropriation or confiscation, and that the companies would have guarantees of judicial and investment security.

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## Brazil: Sugar with a taste of blood

*The Pastoral Land Commission of the Brazilian Catholic Bishops' Conference issued the following statement in response to the expansion of the sugar cane industry in Brazil.*

Called forth by the cries of excluded women and men of the earth, and by the voice of the Prophet who says "You who buy more houses and fields to add to those you already have: soon there will be no place for anyone else to live, and you alone will live on the land" (Isaiah 5:8), we have gathered on these days of Pentecost in Camaragibe, Pernambuco. We have come from 12 regions of the Land Commission who are most afflicted by the single-cropping of sugar. We have come to reflect and to strategize plans for confronting the problems which have come with the expansion of the sugar industry in our country, an expansion fueled by international policies demanding an increase of use of alcohol as a source of fuel.

We denounce this process as intrinsically flawed as it is based on exploitative practices and the violation of human and environmental rights, which serve as a basis for the financing of the expansion of the farming, industrial and technological sugar-alcohol sector. We denounce agribusiness as an economic generator of social inequalities, of environmental degradation, and slave labor. We denounce the support the current government is giving to this process, such as forgiving or refinancing current debts and the various forms of subsidizing and financing big businesses that are growing as a result of these practices. We condemn other practices such as land grabbing, frauds, embezzlement of public money, and impunity in cases of violence against workers.

We identify the consequences of this model: a growing precariousness of the life conditions and work of salaried, rural employees and the continuation of the migration of workers. Of special concern are those in the Northeast, who provide cheap

labor for the wealthy sugar cane factory owners and who leave behind their families, community and cultural roots. In the face of new technologies and new labels which try to hide the perverse face of this colonial system, rural areas continue to see violations of workers rights, illiteracy, hunger and increasing unemployment as a result of mechanization and the maintenance of an archaic, conservative model of the agro-industrial system.

We reaffirm the necessity for rural workers to continue a methodological struggle against this model. We reaffirm the urgency of an effective agrarian reform and the valorization of rural workers as part of the process of constructing another model of agriculture and society in general. We reaffirm our commitment to struggle against violence aimed at sugar cane workers, and we renew our commitment to prevent and combat slave labor. We support and invite all to adhere to a campaign in favor of a law which expropriates land where slave labor is happening. We reaffirm the necessity of all national and international organizations to align themselves with the defense of the rights of the poor of the land, especially those being crucified in the sugar fields.

We feel the challenge of articulating effective actions which denounce the pernicious results of the so-called sugar agrobusiness, just as we do the call to intensify our work together with the poor of the earth so that these may live with dignity in the new heaven, the new earth, the new time in which "the old ways will never again be remembered" (Isaiah 65:17).

Camaragibe, Pernambuco, Brazil, on the feast of Pentecost, May 30, 2004

*For excellent information and analysis on Brazil, see "News from Brazil" supplied by SEJUP (Serviço Brasileiro de Justiça e Paz) <http://www.oneworld.org/sejup/index.htm>*

## Venezuela: The pen is mightier than the sword

*The following article was written by Kate McCoy, a Maryknoll lay missionary from the class of 2003 now living in Venezuela.*

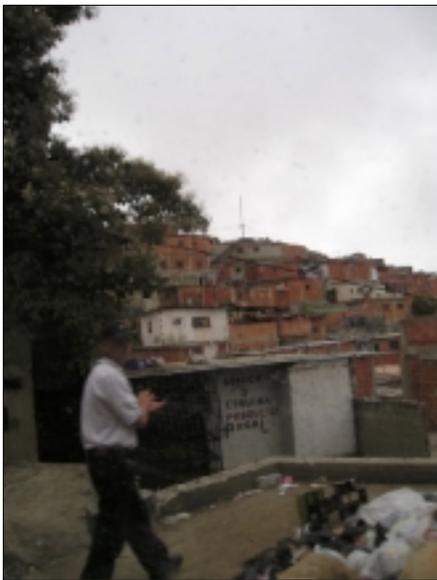
When I was first preparing to come to Venezuela several months ago, a young, middle-class Venezuelan woman living in the U.S. sighed and lamented to me, “It’s so hard to get rid of Chavez.”

Now that I live in rural Venezuela, in a community in which many houses don’t have running water or indoor plumbing, I am learning why it, indeed, has been so hard to get rid of Chavez. It is not for lack of funds (the political opposition has a seemingly endless supply, including from Washington), or due to the support of rogue states (while Venezuela and Cuba maintain a close relationship, Cuba is hardly a superpower), or because of heavy-handed repression (despite rumors to the contrary, the Chavez government has arguably shown greater respect for human rights and freedom of expression than any of its predecessors). In fact, the stumbling block to getting rid of Chavez are the 80 percent of Venezuelans who live in poverty and who roughly account for Chavez’s constituency—in effect, the problem is the democratic majority.

And so when, on August 15, there was a national referendum to decide whether Chavez’s presidency should be cut short, the poor came out in unprecedented numbers to wait up to ten hours in line to vote “NO.” While the opposition seemed stunned by their defeat, anyone who lives even near a poor community knew why people would go to such great lengths to support this government. Chavez’s political promises have taken shape in the “missions”—the massive health, education, employment and nutrition campaigns directed at poor communities throughout the country and funded by the state’s oil industry. Five nights a week, you can see adults of all ages carrying their pens and notebooks to a local house or community center to participate in Mission Robinson—the basic literacy course which has enticed millions of poor Venezuelans to learn to read and write (an elderly Mission Robinson graduate from a Barquisimeto barrio recently told an acquaintance of mine, “I’m voting ‘no’ because, for the first time in my life, I can read the question on

the ballot and answer the way I want.”) There is also the health mission, “Inside the Barrio,” which brings Cuban doctors to

communities where wealthier Venezuelan doctors dare not go. There is always a steady stream of patients waiting for their free medical care, including eye care and dental. And then there are the government-run stores with affordable, subsidized food staples, the organic community gardens, the employment “missions” offering intensive training courses in everything from ceramics to car repair...all leading to the Chavista slogan: “Vote NO—for the Missions!” Even the opposition to Chavez had to guarantee that if Chavez lost, their (still undetermined) candidate would have kept the missions in place.



*A barrio outside Caracas*

The missions have contributed to an evolving understanding of what this Chavez era is all about. On the one hand, and in combination with Chavez’s charisma, they seem to have contributed to “Chavez worship.” When I co-facilitated a youth retreat in a rural area in mid-July, Andres, a stoic young *campesino* confessed to me that the only time he has ever seen his grandfather cry was when Chavez was temporarily deposed in a two-and-a-half day coup in 2002. (The joke amongst Chavistas is that “on the third day, He rose again.”) “Chavez is the only president who has ever recognized that we exist,” Andres exhorted. At the same time that Chavez is cast as the liberator of the people, there is also a sense that the people liberated Chavez, and that they have taken ownership over the “Bolivarian” process towards creating a more democratic, just and inclusive society. It was People Power—along with a breakaway faction of the military—that brought Chavez back into power on that fateful third day. And it was people who came down from the urban slums and the rural areas in droves on August 15 to defend their Constitution, their missions, and their president. As often as you hear someone claim to be Chavista, you hear claims of being “with the Process”—an attempt to identify more with the massive social reforms underway than with Chavez as Christ or caudillo.

In the days and weeks leading up to the referendum, there was much fear of fraud and violence—even hushed whispers of

civil war. While recent history has shown that the opposition is willing to do almost anything to get rid of Chavez (including the failed coup attempt and a two-month long sabotage of the oil industry in the hopes of crippling the country and causing popular upheaval), it was equally clear that the poor were not willing to go back to the way things were before Chavez, before they had the missions or a constitution that recognized the rights of the poor and disenfranchised. Sensing this face-off, Chavez likened the referendum to a famous battle against the Spanish during Venezuela's struggle for independence, and called on all "loyal" Venezuelans to "meet [him] at the Battle of Santa Ines." The role of the Spanish "devil" in this scenario was played by the Yankee imperialists, who are seen as the true face of the opposition to Chavez (this has not been helped by the fact that the opposition had no single candidate of its own, leaving President Bush as the proverbial devil). This sense of Washington as the true face of the opposition was reflected in another pro-Chavez graffiti which surfaced with the referendum: "Dile No al 'YES'" (say NO to the "YES"). While most Chavistas admit to knowing some good and decent people within the political opposition,

there was an overwhelming sense that this vote was not between Venezuelans of one political orientation versus those of another, but rather, of "true" Venezuelans vs. Washington and the Miami crowd (Venezuelans who have adopted more of a U.S. identity). This, in turn, made it easier to justify some of the battle rhetoric that Lt. Colonel Chavez adopted with regard to August 15. And statements by former President Carlos Andres Perez that Chavez should be removed by force and should "die like a dog" didn't exactly help matters. Fear was in the air.

But at the end of the day, it was voting lines, not battle lines that were drawn. Venezuelans of all political stripes resisted the temptation towards violence and instead shared coffee and conversation as they waited as never before to exercise their right to vote. When, at 4 a.m. on August 16, it was finally announced that Chavez had won, the streets rang not with gunshots, but with jubilant firecrackers. For Venezuelans, many of whom read the question on the ballot for the first time in their lives, the 15<sup>th</sup> was their way to show the world that the pen is indeed mightier than the sword.

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## U.S.: Hospitals must identify migrants to get aid

*The following article is based on an action alert from the National Council of La Raza ([www.nclr.org](http://www.nclr.org)), issued in early August.*

In late July, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Studies (CMS) issued a proposal requiring hospitals to ask emergency room patients their immigration status, along with their name, address, and phone number, in order to identify undocumented immigrants. This plan follows Congress's recent decision to give \$1 billion to hospitals which provide emergency care to undocumented migrants. For years, hospital administrators have argued that the federal government bore the responsibility of paying for the migrants' care.

In order to receive federal aid, CMS wants hospitals to ask these questions, among others: "Are you a U.S. citizen?", "Are you a lawful permanent resident, an alien with a valid current employment authorization card or other qualified alien?", "Are you in the U.S. on a nonimmigrant visa," and "Are you a foreign citizen who has been admitted to the U.S. with a 72-hour border crossing card?"

According to the National Council of La Raza (NCLR),

"immigrant families, regardless of their status, will likely be terrified and confused by the questions and accordingly avoid seeking emergency room care. If the proposal is finalized, fear and confusion will spread throughout immigrant communities, and many people will avoid emergency medical treatment, leading to aggravated illness, the spread of communicable diseases, and death."

In the *New York Times* (August 9), Janelle R. Howard, a spokeswoman for Carondelet Health Network, with hospitals in Tucson and Nogales, AZ, said, "Our emergency rooms see a lot of undocumented immigrants, including some picked up in the desert. But as a Catholic institution, we have never asked about their immigration status. It's our mission and philosophy to treat all without distinction."

There are no protections that guarantee that this information will not be used outside of medical settings.

On a related topic, migrant deaths continue along the U.S.-Mexico border. Over 30 people died in the desert trying to enter the U.S. during the first two weeks of August. In July, over 60 people died, and 33 people died during June. Most deaths were caused by severe dehydration.

## First Social Forum of the Americas

*The first Americas Social Forum (ASF) brought together as many as 8,000 participants in Quito, Ecuador from July 25-30, 2004 as part of the World Social Forum (WSF) process. Initiated in 2001, the WSF process has become an important, creative space for the articulation of social initiatives, the development of critical thinking, and the construction of alternatives to the neoliberal order, under the common belief that "Another World is Possible."*

The WSF, a permanent process of searching out and building alternatives, is more than a series of events. It is a process with a global character, and all the meetings that take place within its framework have an international dimension. The Americas Social Forum in Quito, like other regional forums, sought to tackle in greater depth the regional impact and specificities of neoliberal globalization and to have more space for regionally contextual expressions of critical thinking, experiences of resistance and construction of alternatives.

The broad themes addressed by the forum were the following:

- Gender and diversity were cross-cutting concerns.
- The economic order: human and environmental impoverishment, debt, corruption, the market (FTAA, WTO); the public space and economic rights; resistance, views of the future and the construction of alternative models.
- The violent face of the neoliberal project: imperial hegemony, militarism, strategic control over biodiversity, sexist violence; resistance and the emergence of new subjects.
- Power, democracy and the State: changes, continuity and views of the future; building democracy, sovereignty and human rights in a period of breakdown of international structures; power dynamics in national and local governments; in sub-regional, regional and world entities; in society and in the "private" sphere.
- Cultures and communication: resistance, memory, construction of identities; spaces and practice of creation; critical and alternative language; democratizing communication.
- Indigenous peoples and African descendents: territories; au-



*photo by Eric Wheeler, courtesy of Maryknoll Fathers & Brothers*

tonomy; diversity and multiculturalism; knowledge and intellectual property.

Participants presented an alternative country-risk index; proposed the region's first summit for immigrants; and held a mock trial against the World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

*NotiSur* (8/13/04) described the Índice de Riesgo País Alternativo (IRPA), or Alternative Country-Risk Index, which

seeks "to reflect the likelihood of social, economic, and environmental deterioration faced by Latin American countries," said Uruguayan economist Eduardo Gudynas, one of the creators of the new index. Two Uruguay-based nongovernmental organizations, Desarrollo, Economía, Ecología, Equidad-América Latina (D3E) and the Centro Latino Americano de Ecología Social (CLAES), developed the method as a response to the traditional investment-risk analysis by international credit-rating agencies to describe the credit-worthiness ratings on which investors rely.

Gudynas pointed out that country-risk ratings are used by governments in developing nations to guide economic policy in sensitive areas like the foreign debt. The traditional country-risk rating emphasizes economic and financial aspects, while the Alternative Country-Risk Index incorporates other dimensions, like social, political, and ecological indicators. Costa Rica is the only country in Latin America with a reasonable IRPA rating, while at the other end of the spectrum, two of the biggest economies in the region, Argentina and Brazil, are in a situation of outright social and environmental default.

Participants at the SFA also suggested that the first Americas-wide conference of migrants be held at the WSF in January 2005. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) reports that around 20 million Latin Americans are living outside their countries of origin, nearly two-thirds of them in the U.S. Those who emigrated to industrialized countries send their families back home an average of US\$200 a month. Remittances to the region totaled US\$25 billion in 2002. But missionaries in the region, including Maryknollers, know that the money wired to families back home can be enormously

destructive of family and community life.

At a mock trial against the IDB and World Bank, forum attendees accused the international lending organizations of social and environmental crimes. No representatives from the institutions were present, but said in a letter that they were open to dialogue on the issues at hand and maintained that their policies are based on sustainable development.

*Notisur* (8/13/04) also noted that most of the 700 indigenous people from around the region who took part in the Second Continental Summit of Indigenous Peoples and Nationalities of Abya Yala (America in the language of the Kuna Indians of Panama), which began July 21, joined the Social Forum when their meeting ended on the July 25. Representatives from 64 indigenous nationalities and peoples said they would seek to build alliances with other social sectors in the effort to overcome neo-liberal expansion.

Indigenous people want a democracy “based on coexist-

ence revolving around the community. In the community, we help each other, with solidarity, to build our houses, plant our crops, or build a road, and the decisions are taken collectively, in search of consensus,” which forces everyone to participate with their opinions and suggestions, said Luis Macas, a founder and former president of the influential Confederacion de Nacionalidades Indigenas de Ecuador (CONAIE).

Out of a total population of more than 500 million people in Latin America, there are around 50 million indigenous people, 80 percent of whom live in poverty. In Ecuador, ethnic Indians account for 30 percent of a population of 13 million people.

### **Faith in action:**

Take some time to look into the World Social Forum process, <http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/home.asp> or the Americas Social Forum, [http://www.forosocialamericas.org/ejes\\_en.php](http://www.forosocialamericas.org/ejes_en.php).

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## **Guatemala: Threatened steps back**

*An August 5 Reuters article written by Frank Jack Daniel describes with clarity the situation in Guatemala as efforts continue to account for the past and end impunity for those responsible for human rights violations. “A wave of threats against prosecutors, activists and even the president has shaken Guatemala, and officials blame shadowy groups fighting back against a crackdown on corruption and past rights atrocities. The threats and bomb scares follow significant cuts to Guatemala’s powerful army, efforts to prosecute corrupt former officials and a new government policy of accepting responsibility in international courts for past rights abuses.”*

Disappointingly, on August 5, 2004, the Guatemalan Constitutional Court announced that the agreement signed by their government and the United Nations to create the International Commission to Investigate Illegal Bodies and Clandestine Security Group (CICIACS) violates the Constitution, and thus could not be ratified by the Guatemalan Congress. After the proposal was rejected by the Congress in late spring, President Oscar Berger attempted to revive the agreement by sending it, and a number of questions regarding its constitutionality, to the court. According to one judge, “Essentially, nearly all of it is incompatible with the Constitution.” Another source indicated that “nearly all of the questions had a negative response.”

Unconstitutionality included an article in the agreement that would have granted diplomatic immunity to international CICIACS officials. The judges also denied an article that would have given CICIACS the authority to initiate criminal investigations, a power invested only in the Public Prosecutor’s Office, according to the judges’ interpretation of the Constitution.

The CICIACS agreement has created polemics since its proposal in January of last year (see *NewsNotes* March-April 2003). Human rights defenders who claim that the clandestine groups or modern-day death squads are responsible for the majority of the human rights violations and the escalation of violent crime in Guatemala, will continue to push for the commission. Human Rights Ombudsman Sergio Morales stated that the CC’s ruling is not the end of CICIACS, and he will work on a new proposal that would be in accordance with the Constitution. While Morales said that he would respect the ruling, he added that the CC will be responsible for the consequences of shooting CICIACS down, as so far this year there have been over 2,500 violent deaths in Guatemala.

For additional information, contact the Guatemala Human Rights Commission/USA, 3321 12th Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20017, 202-529-6599, [www.ghrc-usa.org](http://www.ghrc-usa.org)

## Bishops in U.S., Central America speak on CAFTA

*On June 23-24, 2004, a delegation of six bishops representing the Church in Central America and the Bishops' Secretariat of Central America (SEDAC) visited the United States, specifically meeting with members of the U.S. administration, Congress, multi-lateral institutions and civil society to discuss the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA). They joined the chairmen of Domestic and International Policy Committees of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) to express with one voice observations and concerns about CAFTA. The following is an excerpt of their statement.*

...In light of the values and principles that we have outlined as well as the situation of the people, we express some of our specific concerns about the potential impact of CAFTA on our countries, especially in Central America:

1. There has not been sufficient information and debate in our countries about the various aspects of CAFTA and its impact on our societies. This troubles us deeply given the obvious imbalance in power and influence that exists between the United States and the Central American countries and the impact the agreement will have on our peoples, especially in Central America. This lack of dialogue and consensus regarding the treaty is also leading to growing discontent. In Central America, this could lead to violence and other civic unrest, which would further hinder true democratic reforms and respect for the rule of law.

2. In the area of agriculture, there is insufficient attention given to such sensitive issues as the potential impact of U.S. farm supports on Central American farm producers. It seems likely that poor farming communities in Central America will suffer greatly when subsidized agricultural products from the United States expand their reach into these markets. Any reform of such supports should address the needs of small and medium-sized farms and farm workers in the United States and in Central America, for whom farming is the principal means of support. Even when such reforms take place, Central American countries should be able to implement responsive trade policies that enable farmers to produce food for their people, maintain a stable income and help develop the rural sector.

3. While certain labor and environmental provisions are included in the agreement, it is not clear that the enforcement mechanisms within CAFTA will lead to stronger protection of fundamental worker rights and the environment. Many have claimed that CAFTA will lead to a significant increase in jobs.

However, these jobs could principally be in assembly plants (*maquilas*), which mainly employ women and which offer an unstable form of employment. Without proper worker protections we know from our own experience that this type of employment will not foster authentic human development. The likely loss of jobs in the countryside and the resulting migration to the cities or out of the region must also be considered. Increased trade, consumption and economic growth can impact the environment. Therefore, environmental protections within the agreement should ensure the sustainable use of natural resources such as water and forests.

4. The treaty will have effects on intellectual property rights. The proposed legal framework could jeopardize the right of Central American countries to exercise proper stewardship of their natural resources. If the use of generic drugs is limited, this would lead to further increases in the cost of health care.

Taking into consideration the concerns of the poor – who make up the majority of the people in Central America – and before any possible ratification of the U.S. - CAFTA takes place by the national legislative bodies, we respectfully request:

1. That the Free Trade Agreement should contribute to sustainable human development, especially among the poorest and most vulnerable sectors. This agenda should include adequate financial resources that will enable the countries of Central America to invest not only in their trade capacity, but in social and human development.

2. That the countries' governments take as much time as necessary to provide adequate information and foster broad debate about the content and impact of the Free Trade Agreement that will serve as the basis for discussion in our respective legislatures.

3. The moral measure of any trade agreement should be how it affects the lives and dignity of poor families and vulnerable workers whose voice should receive special attention in this discussion....

*For the text of the bishops' statement and for more information on CAFTA, go to: [http://www.tradejusticeusa.org/issues/trade\\_agreements/CAFTAOverview.htm](http://www.tradejusticeusa.org/issues/trade_agreements/CAFTAOverview.htm) and [http://www.tradejusticeusa.org/issues/trade\\_agreements/BishopsOnCafta.htm](http://www.tradejusticeusa.org/issues/trade_agreements/BishopsOnCafta.htm).*

## Romero murder conspirator to be tried *in absentia*

*The following article is excerpted from a media advisory from the Center for Justice and Accountability, a San Francisco nonprofit organization that empowers survivors of torture and other atrocities by helping them bring legal actions against perpetrators responsible for human rights abuses. CJA was founded in 1998 with the support of Amnesty International USA and the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, and is an independent non-profit organization. Information about CJA is available at [www.cja.org](http://www.cja.org).*

A federal court will conduct a historic evidentiary hearing in Fresno, CA, August 24-27, examining the assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador.

The hearing is the culmination of a lawsuit brought against Modesto, CA resident Alvaro Rafael Saravia for his role in organizing the March 1980 assassination. Saravia, a former captain in the Salvadoran military, was the right-hand man to reputed Salvadoran death squad leader Roberto D'Aubuisson.

New evidence will be presented at the hearing to establish Saravia's liability for the assassination, as well as to determine the amount of damages to which his victims are entitled to reflect the profound impact of this notorious crime. Saravia has gone underground and is not expected to participate in the hearing. However, we hope that evidence produced at the trial may lead to his eventual arrest by the immigration service.

Juan Carlos Cristales, executive director of El Rescate in Los Angeles, one of the leading organizations in the U.S. that defends the rights of Central Americans, commented: "It is particularly offensive to Salvadorans that men who were responsible for those crimes are allowed to live openly and with impunity in the United States, when so many genuine refugees were kicked out. The failure to bring to justice those most responsible for the crime has weakened the whole structure of our rule of law."

Witnesses will testify at the hearing about Saravia's responsibility for the killing, the role that Archbishop Romero played in defending the rights of poor Salvadorans, and the impact of his assassination. New evidence about those most responsible for the assassination will be presented.

Witnesses include Detroit Auxiliary Bishop Thomas Gumbleton; the Rev. John Fife, one of the founders of the Sanctuary Movement; and Maria Julia Hernandez, head of the Human Rights Office of the Archdiocese of San Salvador.

Robert White, U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador at the time of the assassination, will testify via a videotaped deposition. Members of Congress and other leaders from around the world, including three Nobel Peace Prize laureates, have submitted written declarations, which will be offered in court and made available thereafter to the media.

The current Archbishop of San Salvador, Monsignor Fernando Saenz Lacalle, welcomed the reopening of the investigation in the U.S. into the assassination of Monsignor Romero. He commented that the investigation could provide enough elements to establish the circumstances under which he was murdered, which would help to justify his martyrdom.

An amnesty law passed in 1993, when El Salvador's Legislative Assembly was still dominated by the political party of the death squads, prevents those who suffered during the military's reign of terror from obtaining justice in the Salvadoran courts.

"This lawsuit demonstrates that the courts of the United States can play an important role in the world-wide struggle against impunity," said Patty Blum, a Boalt Hall law professor, emeritus, who has advised the legal team. "Even though this administration has pulled the U.S. out of the International Criminal Court, fortunately, we have laws upheld recently by the U.S. Supreme Court that make it possible for foreigners to join with U.S. citizens in holding human rights abusers responsible."

The UN Truth Commission and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights both concluded that Saravia was actively involved in planning and carrying out the assassination. Saravia was detained in the United States in 1987 when Salvadoran prosecutors sought his extradition for his role in the Romero assassination. The Salvadoran Supreme Court later withdrew the extradition request in a decision denounced as dubious and politically motivated by the UN Truth Commission, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and many human rights organizations. Saravia was released from federal prison on bond in 1988 and has since lived in California and Florida. Amnesty International and other groups have denounced Saravia's presence here.

The case is being brought under two federal statutes, the 1789 Alien Tort Claims Act, and the more recent Torture Victim Protection Act of 1991, which allow suits against foreign nationals in the United States for summary killings and torture committed abroad.

## Indonesia: Repression or self-determination?

*This report on several separatist movements in Indonesia is based on a document from Uniya, a Jesuit social justice center in Sydney, Australia. The full document, "View on Indonesia: the political and human rights situation," can be found at [http://www.uniya.org/research/view\\_indonesia.html](http://www.uniya.org/research/view_indonesia.html).*

The winner of Indonesia's presidential election on September 20 will face the challenge of how best to hold the republic together while responding to persistent local demands for self-determination. The country's unity has been threatened by separatist movements almost from its inception 60 years ago.

Sukarno declared Indonesian independence from Dutch colonial rule in 1945, but four years of armed struggle with the Netherlands ensued before he consolidated his rule. Today the archipelago comprises more than 17,000 islands (6,000 inhabited). Its population of 238 million is 90 percent Muslim.

Sukarno had to use force at times to combine Indonesia's federal states into a republic and realize his vision of a Greater Indonesia (Indonesia Raya). However, his policies put him into conflict with some of the country's 300 ethnic groups that resisted consolidation under Jakarta.

No sooner had he established his Indonesia Raya than Sukarno was confronted with armed rebellion throughout the archipelago. In 1950 the central authority suppressed a breakaway regime in Ambon, whose largely Christian population had benefited under Dutch rule. In the same year Sukarno annexed Aceh, sparking years of guerrilla fighting. He later demanded that the Netherlands surrender Irian Jaya (now Papua); power was transferred to him in 1963 under a U.S.-brokered agreement.

Former Canadian diplomat Peter Dale Scott observed that there are two Indonesias. The first is one of the most tolerant Muslim cultures in the world; the other is a country with a history of ruthless repression by the government and the military. The difference lies between an Indonesian tradition that favors human rights and regional self-determination as a basis for unity, and a tradition that resorts to enforcing national unity through coercion and state terror. Indonesia has not yet resolved these two competing tendencies.

A summary of recent events in Ambon, Aceh and Papua follows.

Violence broke out in April 2004 on the eastern island of Ambon, threatening to undermine a February 2002 peace pact after three years of violence that had left 5,000 dead. The violence

in April left dozens dead and wounded, hundreds of homes burned and several churches destroyed. The conflict was sparked when a small independence party, the Moluccas Sovereignty Front, hoisted banned flags in celebration of the anniversary of the short-lived breakaway Moluccas republic in 1950. Some Muslims see the party as an arm of the Christian community, seeking independence from Indonesia, a charge the churches deny.

In May, bombs and snipers claimed still more lives. There is no evidence to link the upsurge in violence with the independence party, but the government responded by cracking down on supposed separatists among the 350,000 residents of Ambon.

In Aceh, on the northern tip of Sumatra, more than 10,000 people have died in 27 years of fighting between government forces and the Free Aceh Movement (GAM). An investigation by Indonesia's National Commission on Human Rights concluded that the military had committed gross human rights violations against civilians and children such as murder, torture and rape. The government established an ad hoc tribunal to hear the cases, but the court sentenced only low-ranking military personnel. The Human Rights Commission found that GAM had also perpetrated human rights violations during the conflict.

The government declared martial law in Aceh in May 2003 and launched a major military operation involving 40,000 troops and police to crush the estimated 5,000 armed GAM members. Civil rule has since been restored in the province of 4.2 million, but it is estimated that as many as 2,000 people were killed in the operation.

Indonesia reneged on a popular referendum on independence in Papua in 1969, instead choosing about 1,000 tribal representatives, who voted unanimously for integration. Independence activists have contested the action ever since. Recently declassified U.S. documents reveal that the U.S. believed "Indonesia could not win an open election" and dismissed the vote as a farce.

Rather than independence, the central government proposed special autonomy including the return of a large share of natural resource revenue to the eastern province. Instead of full implementation of the special autonomy law, however, a controversial presidential decree was issued in January 2003 subdividing the province and reportedly causing conflict, uncertainty and administrative confusion among the population of 2.1 million to 2.5 million.

## Cambodia: Child workers miss out on education

*Cambodia's National Institute of Statistics, Ministry of Planning, and the International Labor Organization conducted a Child Domestic Worker Survey in late 2003 in Phnom Penh. The full text of their report, on which this story is based, can be found at [http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/asro/bangkok/download/yr2004/child\\_domestic.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/asro/bangkok/download/yr2004/child_domestic.pdf).*

Young Cambodians' dream of an education fuels their hope of escaping poverty. Yet it is that very poverty that often prevents them from realizing their dream.

The study estimates that 27,950 Cambodians aged 7-17 have become child domestic workers (CDWs) in Phnom Penh alone – often at the behest of their parents – in pursuit of their dream of a better life. They represent nearly 10 percent of their age group in the capital city of 1.2 million. Many of them work seven days per week for nothing more than food and lodging.

Researchers interviewed 293 children engaged in domestic work in Phnom Penh. Too often, the study found, “The preparation for adult life other than domestic skills is absent. CDWs are likely to be denied the chance of going to school. If they are overworked, neglected or abused, they have no one to turn to for help. Many feel isolated and trapped.”

National law sets the minimum age for employment at 15, but applying the law to domestic work can be controversial. Some argue that domestic work is not “employment” but “light work.”

Obstacles to applying the law include both cultural values and economic straits. “It should be realized that since many people in Cambodia still live below the poverty line, children of impoverished households have no choice but to contribute to supporting the family or look for better opportunities,” the report states. In fact, “Very poor parents are relieved that the child will be fed and will have good shelter. It is hoped that the child will receive an education and may be able to marry somebody better off.”

“In Cambodian culture, children are regarded as under the control and guidance of their parents. There is no widespread recognition that children have “independent rights,”” researchers explain. “Thus, it is common for employers of CDWs to be seen as looking after them and providing them experiences as well as food and shelter. As such, exploitation or even child servitude (in the case of ruthless employers) can escape from public scrutiny; the real situations may never be revealed.”

Meanwhile, employers who are related by extended family

to a child working in the household often do not regard the young person as a domestic employee, according to the report. All of the CDWs interviewed lived in their employers' households, and 60 percent said they were closely related to the head of the household in which they worked.

Poverty and being orphans were the reasons most often cited for becoming CDWs. Researchers found, however, that nearly three-fourths of the CDWs receive no monthly cash salary. Otherwise incomes range from 100 riels (US\$.025) to more than 100,000 riels (\$25) per month.

In addition, CDWs work an *average* of four hours per day, six days per week. However, most work seven days per week, and one in 10 works between nine and 13 hours per day. More than 60 percent do not have even an hour of rest during their workday.

The young people interviewed also said they were seeking greater educational opportunities in the capital, or had simply migrated to Phnom Penh with their families. Researchers found that more than 85 percent of the CDWs in Phnom Penh are literate. More than half were attending or had completed primary school (grades 1-6), and a third were attending or had completed secondary school (grades 7-12). About five percent had no education.

An estimated 8,525 CDWs would like to change jobs. Most of the boys interviewed said they would like to work in machinery repair, animal raising, sewing or bicycle repair. Most of the girls wishing for another job indicated they would prefer sewing, hair dressing, wedding services or agricultural employment.

The report makes two principal recommendations. First, legislation is needed to provide guidance in employing children 15 years or older as domestic workers; those under 15 should not work. Provision for both the physical and mental development of children should be guaranteed. “However, this option should not be detrimental to children from economically poor families who may then turn to other worst forms of child labor,” the report states. “Judicious regulation should be used to control such things as hours of work per day and days per week.”

Second, a feasible policy should be developed to improve the situation for CDWs that would be in keeping with Cambodia's socio-economic conditions. The report cites the issue of adequate compensation in particular. “Despite the privacy of the home,” researchers said, “measures are needed to regulate and improve the working conditions of child domestic workers.”

# Cambodia: Opposition party activists under threat

*The following story was released July 28 by Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International. The text can be found at <http://www.hrw.org/english/docs/2004/07/29/cambod9163.htm>*

Cambodia's Prime Minister, Hun Sen, is trying to silence his political opponents by accusing them of forming an illegal rebel force, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International said [on July 28]. Following the allegations, members of the opposition Sam Rainsy Party have gone into hiding, and many others fear arrest.

Hun Sen's allegations were first made public on July 18, just three days after parliamentary approval of a new coalition government. The political atmosphere in Cambodia has been deteriorating ever since.

Hun Sen has accused members of the Sam Rainsy Party's Committee No. 14 of establishing a militant armed force. The party has made no effort to conceal the existence of Committee No. 14, a body of Sam Rainsy Party activists that monitors national defense, veterans' affairs, demobilization and public security. Chaired by Sam Rainsy Party parliamentarian Cheam Channy, the committee is modeled after "shadow ministries" created by opposition parties around the world to monitor the performance of government ministries.

"In a blatant attempt to eradicate political dissent, opponents of the ruling party are being accused of plotting to use force to overthrow the government," Amnesty International said. "Threats and intimidation by senior political leaders are seriously challenging people's rights to freedom of association and expression."

As yet, the only evidence that has been produced of a military plot against the new government has been a series of supposed confessions from low-level alleged plotters that were broadcast on state-controlled media. Credible sources have reported that the confessions were extracted through the promise of money and jobs, and the threat of arrest and imprisonment.

"Obtaining confessions by force or by enticement has long been a feature of Cambodian politics and the judicial system,"

said Sam Zarifi, deputy director of the Asia Division of Human Rights Watch. "Similarly, accusing political dissidents of plotting the violent overthrow of the government has been a well-worn tactic for intimidating the opposition."



Prime Minister Hun Sen has threatened to seek the removal of Cheam Channy's parliamentary immunity, so that he can be prosecuted. Hun Sen has also suggested that the Sam Rainsy Party's 24 members of parliament may not be allowed to resume their seats in the National Assembly once they return from abroad. All 24 left the

country to boycott a parliamentary session to approve the new coalition government.

Civil society organizations, including human rights activists, have also come under fire from the new government. This has renewed fears that the current political campaign will broaden its range of targets to include others seen as opposing the government.

"There is a disturbing pattern of thinly-veiled threats against government critics or others who seek to exercise freedom of speech and association in Cambodia," said Amnesty International. "Rather than creating a climate of fear and instability, the new government should be protecting and promoting fundamental human rights."

On June 30, the incumbent Cambodian People's Party led by Prime Minister Hun Sen reached a power sharing agreement with the royalist Funcinpec Party of Prince Norodom Ranariddh. This followed a year-long political deadlock after inconclusive National Assembly elections in July 2003, in which Hun Sen's party failed to win the two-thirds majority required to form its own government.

The National Assembly – minus all 24 Sam Rainsy Party politicians, who boycotted the session – approved the coalition government on July 15. The Sam Rainsy Party and some nongovernmental organizations have questioned the legality of the new government, which was formed on the basis of controversial amendments to the Constitution.

## India: HIV/AIDS affects poverty-stricken children

*Discrimination against HIV/AIDS-affected children hinders India's fight against the disease and compounds the suffering of a vulnerable segment of the population, Human Rights Watch (HRW) says. HRW released its report "Future Forsaken: Abuses Against Children Affected by HIV/AIDS in India" on July 29. The full text can be accessed at: <http://hrw.org/reports/2004/india0704/FutureForsaken.pdf>*

It is estimated that hundreds of thousands of children in India are living with HIV/AIDS, and more than one million have lost one or both parents to the disease. Yet HIV/AIDS-affected children are "nearly invisible" in the government's response to the devastating epidemic, HRW says. Children affected by HIV/AIDS are discriminated against in education and health services, denied care by orphanages, and pushed onto the streets and into the worst forms of child labor – all of which puts them at greater risk of contracting HIV.

"Doctors, both government and private, have refused to treat and sometimes even touch HIV-positive children," researchers found. "Discrimination, combined with corruption and a failing public health system, leaves many children living with HIV/AIDS without even the rudiments of health care."

"There is a direct connection between children not being treated for HIV and being discriminated against in schools and the community," the study says. "[I]n addition to suffering pain and disfigurement, untreated children are more likely to be identifiably ill, and teachers, classmates, and parents of other students are more likely to suspect them of being HIV-positive. Schools have expelled or segregated children because they or their parents are HIV-positive."

Children as well as adults have a right to age-appropriate information to protect themselves against transmission, HRW says. Beyond formal education, however, "the government is utterly failing to provide information to millions of India's children who are not in school but on the streets, at work, in institutions, in non-formal schools, and at home. Thus, the children who are most vulnerable are the least likely to get lifesaving information about HIV/AIDS."

Field research for the study was conducted primarily in Kerala, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu states and in Delhi. Fifty-one children were interviewed, besides government officials and activists. In accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the study uses the word "child" for anyone under 18.

Perinatal transmission is the most common source of the

disease among young children, the study found. Older children are acquiring HIV mainly through blood transfusions, sexual contact including sexual abuse, and unsterilized syringes including injection drug use.

Hindering an effective response, some government officials deny that children engage in behavior that puts them at risk. "If not simply overlooked, children who face high HIV risk, such as street children, are not seen as innocent victims but instead, like adults, are blamed for their 'bad behavior' and are especially stigmatized," the study says.

As a result, researchers found that some children are double victims – first by virtue of being street children, young workers, children of sex workers, children from lower castes or Dalits (so-called "untouchables"), and second by contracting HIV/AIDS.

The study says that government officials often look to orphanages and other institutions as the first and virtually only solution for children whose families are unable to care for them. At the same time, the study cautions that "many orphanages and other residential institutions reject HIV-positive children or deny that they house them, suggesting that children in state care who are HIV-positive may not be getting needed services."

The poor are particularly victimized by the epidemic, the report says. "AIDS-affected families face both discrimination and the economic devastation of increased medical expenses and the loss of family wage earners to AIDS," researchers explain. "The government's failure to provide basic medical care for people living with HIV/AIDS impoverishes those who are forced to pay for private practitioners willing to treat them and forces those who cannot pay to go without care."

HRW urges the Indian government to:

- Proscribe discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS, guaranteeing the right of children who are HIV-positive to continue attending school.
- Ensure that children living with HIV/AIDS receive medical care, including anti-retroviral treatment.
- Address the issue of school fees and related costs that keep children, especially girls, from going to school. Children in school are generally less vulnerable to HIV/AIDS.
- Provide care and protection for children whose parents are unable to care for them because of HIV/AIDS.
- Provide all children, in or out of school, with comprehensive, accurate and age-appropriate information about HIV/AIDS.

## Sudan: Update on current crisis

*As early as March, observers in western Sudan were saying that immediate action must be taken to stave off a disaster of epic proportions in the Darfur region. At that time, the predictions included massive displacements and death due to the conflict and weather conditions, making humanitarian access impossible. These warnings were all too familiar for Sudan. Similar catastrophes, ignored at the onset, have left an estimated two million people dead and another four million displaced. The following article looks at some of the advocacy efforts underway to address the current crisis.*

Much of the crisis in Darfur came to a climax in April as commemoration services around the world marked the tenth anniversary of the Rwandan genocide. Since a small number of well-trained troops could have stopped most of the killings, many still blame the magnitude of the genocide on inaction. It is this reminder of inaction in the face of genocide that has activated the United Nations, the African Union, the U.S. government and a number of U.S. people from different constituencies to pay close attention to the situation in Darfur.

**The United Nations** threatened unspecified sanctions if Sudan cannot prove that it has restored stability by August 31. The Government of Sudan and its allies opposed the deployment of foreign peacekeeping forces to protect civilians. As of mid-August, monitors were not happy with the progress being made by the Sudanese government.

**The African Union (AU)**, still a young organization, has struggled to respond appropriately. At stake are questions of respect for national sovereignty and the diversity of African peoples, as well as an urgent need to respond to an impending disaster. The AU invited the Sudanese government and two Darfur rebel groups to negotiate peace. Talks are scheduled to restart on August 23 in Abuja, Nigeria.

After an April 8 ceasefire agreement between the Government of Sudan and two rebel movements in Darfur, the AU sent in ceasefire monitors and later deployed 154 Rwandan troops with a mandate to protect these monitors. In April, as he inaugurated a genocide memorial in Rwanda, President Paul Kagame vowed that genocide would never happen again. While the Rwandan troops sent to Darfur were not authorized to protect civilians, Kagame insisted that Rwandan troops would intervene if civilians are threatened.

**The U.S. government** has responded with careful attention. In July, the U.S. Congress passed legislation calling the

situation genocide (see *NewsNotes* May-June 2004). Colin Powell's visit to Darfur in June was a desperate effort to preserve one diplomatic success for Bush administration. Before becoming the U.S. ambassador to the UN, John Danforth served as a special envoy to Sudan and started a negotiation process that ended in May 2004 when warring parties signed a comprehensive peace agreement which has the potential to end more than 20 years of fighting between northern and southern Sudan. In Darfur, the Government of Sudan resurrected old strategy of arming ethnically Arab local militia groups to fight against rebels. This revival of this "divide and conquer" strategy and the absence of southern influence in the process puts into question the government's commitment to reconciliation on a national level.

**Civil society action:** At the end of July, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum issued its first ever genocide emergency. In mid-August the museum's committee on conscience was among a number of U.S. faith-based, humanitarian, secular civic, and human rights organizations that issued a unity statement and a call to action in response to the massive crisis in Darfur. The statement commended the U.S. government's involvement in the peace process, generous humanitarian aid, and its congressional actions on Darfur.

At the same time, the statement called on "people of conscience everywhere to take any and all actions permitted by each individual's or organization's abilities and constraints to: encourage worldwide efforts to stop the displacement and end the crimes against humanity; demand massive worldwide governmental humanitarian support and access to match the need; help in the relief efforts by supporting organizations giving aid; promote efforts to rebuild villages and return the displaced; call for a UN Commission of Inquiry to investigate war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide."

### **Faith in action:**

Please see the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns' website for an action alert with several suggestions: [www.maryknollogc.org](http://www.maryknollogc.org)

To see the Unity statement, signed by a diverse coalition, go to: <http://www.nccusa.org/news/04savedarfurcoalition.html>

For information on the Save Darfur Coalition see: <http://www.savedarfur.org/>

## Kenya: People need constitution, end to corruption

*During a 20-minute conversation in 1987 between former U.S. president Jimmy Carter and a Maryknoller in Nairobi, Carter remarked that he had just come from visiting President Daniel arap Moi. Knowing Carter was interested in human rights, Moi had let him know that Kenya "still had a long way to go." Carter agreed. Even 17 years later, there is still a long and hard journey ahead. Two of the biggest areas of concern, a new constitution and persistently high levels of corruption, are intertwined as members of parliament discuss the new constitution, and donor countries threaten to withdraw their support on grounds of government corruption.*

The constitutional review process remains mired in political in-fighting. Parliament, rather than showing leadership, has become part of the problem. Arguing over the powers of the president, those presently in office do not favor a proposal made during Moi's 24 dictator-like years, limiting the role of the president to become more of a ceremonial figure while giving most of the authority to the new office of prime minister. For more details on this issue, see the article "Kenya Struggles for a New Constitution" in the last *NewsNotes* (July-August 2004).

Traditionally in Kenya, the ethnic group of the sitting president has prospered economically more than other ethnic groups. This is possible in a context where power is concentrated in the hands of the executive. During the Jomo Kenyatta era (1964-78), the Kikuyus were favored, while during Moi's (1978-2002) term, it was the Kalenjin who prospered

President Mwai Kibaki, a Kikuyu, rose to power through political maneuvers made by Raila Odinga, a Luo who flirted with merging his political party with Moi's before the 2002 election. Odinga expected to be appointed prime minister once Kibaki was elected. Since this did not happen, some analysts attribute political standstills to Odinga, still an influential minister in the Kenyan government, blocking any of Kibaki's attempts to make good on his political promises. Others blatantly blame Kibaki for inaction. However, initiatives from below remain active in at-

tempting to push the constitutional process ahead. A coalition composed of a number of non-governmental groups, *Katiba Watch*, is attempting to collect three million signatures to force President Kibaki to put the draft constitution to a referendum.

Corruption has received a lot of attention from foreign donor countries. Eight embassies, including those of Britain, Canada, Japan and the United States, expressed alarm at the extent of high-level graft within the Kibaki government. Edward Clay, the British High Commissioner, estimated that the present

government had entered into corrupt deals worth \$192 million since their election victory in December 2002.

But Kenyans do not act alone when it comes to corruption. According to a study commissioned by Transparency International, foreign investors recognize "the weakness of formal governance institutions and seek to establish relationships with key players in the informal power structure to secure their investments." So in many cases, key mutually beneficial relationships with the head of state, his relatives and cronies generally become deciding factors in investment making. Structural adjustment programs attempted to curb

government corruption with their emphasis on reducing central government economic spending, but the privatization process itself created opportunities for corrupt deals, proving that economic reforms need to be backed by political reform for their success.

While Kenya struggles with the need for economic and political reform, the lack of rain and the failure of crops in Kenya's Coastal, Eastern, North Eastern and Rift Valley provinces threaten many Kenyans with famine and starvation. Over one half of the people of Kenya try to survive on less than one dollar a day. Most Kenyans are trapped in poverty, unemployment, insecurity, violence, ill-health and the effects of the HIV/AIDS crisis. The government must take bold steps to enact a new constitution approved by the people and get rid of the cancer of corruption so that the people can live in hope and peace.



## Burundi: Massacre threatens renewed violence

For over ten years, violent conflict between majority Hutus and minority Tutsis has negatively branded the Central Africa region. Rwanda is known for the 1994 genocide, Burundi for a brutal war raging since 1993, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has struggled to bring an end to a war which has claimed the lives of over three million people. Major steps toward peace have been taken in the region, but the recent massacre of at least 160 Tutsi refugees (ethnically known as Banyamulenge) challenges peace activists to (again) redouble their efforts.

On August 13 the National Liberation Forces (FNL) claimed to have attacked the Gatumba refugee camp, looking for Burundian troops and Tutsi militias from the DRC the FNL believed were hiding in the camp. The governments of Burundi and Rwanda believe that the FNL did not act alone and accuse Congolese and Rwandese armed political groups based in eastern Congo of participating in the attack.

With the August 13 massacre, old tensions and fears (present throughout the past seven years of failed DRC peace talks) were ignited. The Congolese peace process was seriously threatened when both the Burundian armed forces and the Rwandese government publicly announced the possibility of sending in troops if the DRC government fails to disarm Hutu rebels and their allied militia who still remain in eastern Congo. Tutsis in Rwanda and Burundi have consistently claimed that their security cannot be guaranteed until the Hutu extremists who fled to eastern Congo after killing 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus in the 1994 Rwandan genocide have been rooted out and brought to justice.

The DRC peace process was further threatened when the Congo pulled its diplomats out of Burundi following violent protests outside of its embassy where the Congolese Tutsis broke windows and shredded the Congolese flag. The UN peacekeeping chief, Undersecretary-General Jean-Marie Guehenno, warned that threats of retaliatory action by Burundi, Congo and Rwanda following the mass killing of 160 refugees in Burundi could lead to renewed fighting throughout central Africa. He called on all actors to exert maximum restraint saying, “[t]here has to be justice, not revenge.”

Burundi’s peaceful future also remains in the balance after the attack. At the August 16 Summit of the Great Lakes Regional Peace Initiative on Burundi held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, African heads of state and Burundian rebel and government leaders present ratified a timetable for Burundi’s elections to be held before November 1, when the country’s transitional government three-year mandate expires.

However, some observers in the region question whether the elections can really move forward. Kizito Sabala, program officer at the Africa Peace Forum, a Nairobi-based non-governmental organization, warns “[i]f Burundi goes on with the elections without taking into consideration the views of the FNL, more massacres will be witnessed...” The FNL is the only rebel movement in Burundi that has not put down its weapons in accordance with a peace agreement concluded in Arusha in 2000. Sabala recommends postponing the election with a view to getting all groups to endorse the power-sharing agreement – which would provide for a new government and national assembly that is 60 percent Hutu and 40 percent Tutsi and two vice-presidents from different ethnic communities and political groups.

Burundians look forward to the elections and a future of peace. But in the wake of current events, peace builders in the region have their work cut out for them. Activist Zénon Manirakiza, of the peace-building and nonviolence training organization *Nduwamahoro Le Non Violent Actif* (translated as “I am for peace”), vows that “education for truth and justice, tolerance and forgiveness are crucial.” *Nduwamahoro* is planning a series of activities in mid-October to promote peaceful elections in Burundi with the motto “Give Peace a Chance.”

### **Faith in action:**

1. Pray for the people of Burundi that they have a safe and free election.

2. Send emails of solidarity to *Nduwamahoro Le Non Violent Actif*. Their email address is: [nonviolentact@yahoo.fr](mailto:nonviolentact@yahoo.fr)

For an edited version of an article on peace in Burundi by Zénon Manirakiza, the country representative of *Nduwamahoro Le Non Violent Actif*, go to [www.maryknollogc.org](http://www.maryknollogc.org).



## N. Uganda: Advocacy strategies to end conflict

*Religious and cultural leaders representing northern Uganda and southern Sudanese civil society met in Gulu, Uganda at the end of July to discuss northern Uganda's 18-year old conflict involving the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the Ugandan military. They affirmed three top priorities for advocacy, and presented them to Ugandan parliamentarians on July 29, 2004. Here in the U.S., Congress passed "The Northern Ugandan Crisis Response Act" condemning the situation, asking the U.S. administration to pressure the government of Uganda to resolve the situation using non-military means and directing the U.S. State Department to report to Congress on northern Uganda, especially citing the use of U.S. assistance in the protection of civilians who have been displaced by the conflict.*

When religious and cultural leaders in northern Uganda and southern Sudan met to discuss the conflict in northern Uganda, they identified a number of concerns including: the absence of a coherent and coordinated national and international strategy for peacefully resolving the conflict; the continued abduction and use of children as soldiers; the loss of civilian lives; and the geographic expansion of the conflict and the displacement of millions of civilians in Uganda and southern Sudan. In response to these concerns, three top advocacy suggestions were identified: 1) a need for international assistance and interest; 2) a peaceful settlement based on dialogue and amnesty; and 3) the Government of Sudan to halt all support to LRA.

On July 19, the U.S. Congress directly responded to the top two advocacy suggestions by passing "The Northern Uganda Crisis Response Act" which was presented to the White House for President Bush to sign on July 23. Rep. Betty McCollum (D-MN) urged members of the House International Relations Committee to support for the passage of S 2264, stating "[t]he crisis in northern Uganda has been described as one of the most under-reported and neglected conflicts in the world ... [M]illions of innocent civilians have been victims of the deteriorating humanitarian and human rights situation." (See *NewsNotes* July-August, 2004 for background information on the conflict.)

Members of Congress, like the religious and civil society members of northern Uganda and southern Sudan, are calling for a peaceful settlement to the conflict, and an investigation into how U.S. assistance is being used. S 2264 calls on the United States to work with the international community and non-governmental organizations to protect security, monitor human rights and ensure that humanitarian resources are available for

this conflict ridden area of Uganda.

As this article is being written it is unclear whether the Bush administration will sign the Northern Uganda Crisis Response Act. Uganda is the U.S.'s African "darling." Its effective AIDS and poverty alleviation programs and support for the U.S. war against terrorism cause the U.S. to turn a blind eye to Uganda's slowness to adopt a multiparty political system and to the suffering the Ugandan government has caused by insisting on a military solution in the north.

Since passage of S 2264, the government of Uganda has showed little signs of pursuing a peaceful resolution to the conflict. To the contrary, Ugandan military forces launched a major offensive in northern Uganda wreaking havoc on an already suffering population and killing several leaders of the LRA, but not Joseph Kony, its central leader.

At the end of July, Ugandans received the news that the International Criminal Court (ICC) began its formal investigations into war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by the LRA insurgents in the north (see *NewsNotes*, March-April 2004 for details). Prosecuting LRA combatants reverses a move toward reconciliation made three years ago when Ugandan President Museveni established an amnesty commission to encourage LRA rebels to give up their arms.

Critics in Uganda and in the advocacy community in the U.S. feel that Museveni asked the ICC to bring LRA leaders to trial to create a smoke screen masking the government of Uganda's deep involvement in the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) (see *NewsNotes* November-December 2003). The DRC would have been the ICC's first war crimes investigation, if the Ugandan request did not "trump" the DRC request." (*NewsNotes*, March-April 2004)

### **Faith in action:**

Contact your member of Congress and thank him/her for the passage of S 2264, the Northern Uganda Crisis Response Act.

Contact the State Department. Urge Secretary Powell to consult with local religious and civil society leaders as the conflict in northern Uganda is investigated.

For a complete copy of the Cross-Border Advocacy Workshop's "Joint Statement on the Conflict in Northern Uganda," go to [www.maryknollogc.org](http://www.maryknollogc.org).

## Zimbabwe: Elusive international action

*Catholic bishops of Botswana, South Africa and Swaziland who make up the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference (SACBC) issued a statement August 11 decrying the ongoing human suffering in Zimbabwe and Sudan, and called on the African Union (AU), the United Nations and other international organizations to "take stronger action, including the consideration of targeted sanctions, to prevent further suffering." At least in the short run, decisive action will not be taken.*

The SACBC contended that "[t]he Zimbabwean situation of starvation and malnutrition, willful political violence and intimidation, and the immoral use of food aid by the Zimbabwean government demands stronger and transparent intervention by African governments through the AU... With more than three million people displaced as a result of the crisis in Zimbabwe, a generation of exiles and refugees has been created. This situation cannot be allowed to continue. The Government of Zimbabwe must care for its own people."

In addition the bishops stated that "strong measures must be taken by the international community to ensure a meaningful and honest election in Zimbabwe in 2005 ... ." The SACBC's statement comes just as Zimbabwean NGOs explore making a submission to Southern African Development Community (SADC) leaders in Mauritius. These same activists had hoped that in the face of failed attempts to solve the crisis within Zimbabwe that the AU would step in.

In early July it looked as if the Africa Union's (AU) Executive Council would finally address the situation in Zimbabwe when it adopted a critical report on President Robert Mugabe's regime. But in late August, the AU suspended publication of the report compiled by the AU's Commission on Human and People's Rights in 2002 "until authorities in Zimbabwe had time to respond to the allegations raised." The commission report is on a visit made to Zimbabwe from June 23-28, 2002 following the presidential elections.

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## Make hunger history

*Hunger, the world's number one killer, is more deadly than AIDS, malaria and TB combined. Every four seconds, someone in the world dies of hunger. Each day over 840 million people go to bed hungry and today, 18,000 of the 24,000 people who will die of hunger will be children. Two events, one on September 22, sponsored by United Against Hunger and the other on October 16, sponsored by World Food Day, will bring together people from across the U.S. calling for action on hunger.*

On Wednesday, September 22, a growing group of partners including the American Red Cross; Feeding Minds, Fighting Hunger; Friends of the World Food Program; Global Food & Nutrition Inc.; and the UN World Food Program (WFP) invite humanitarian organizations, faith-based groups, corporations, service clubs, schools, individuals and any group with an interest in addressing hunger to join in the **United Against Hunger** campaign. All day on September 22, individuals and groups across the country will come together to raise awareness on the issue of hunger and how to eradicate it.

For more information, go to the United Against Hunger website: <http://www.unitedagainsthunger.org/activities/activities.htm>. Individuals are invited to organize or join an event (activities will be planned in every state) or show your support by

adding your name to the growing list of United Against Hunger partners and supporters. To get involved send an e-mail to: [Press@unitedagainsthunger.org](mailto:Press@unitedagainsthunger.org), or call: 1-877-937-0019.

**World Food Day** is a worldwide event designed to increase awareness, understanding and informed, year-around action to alleviate hunger. It is observed each October 16 in recognition of the founding of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in 1945. The first World Food Day was in 1981. In the United States the endeavor is sponsored by 450 national, private voluntary organizations.

World Food Day planning is done at the community level. Individual groups can hold a special event, but the most successful observances happen when organizers work together with affiliates of national sponsors. Local coalitions, representing the diversity of national sponsors, can share ideas that will involve schools, businesses, worship centers, government offices, service groups, the media, etc.

To get involved in World Food Day on October 16 contact: U.S. National Committee for World Food Day; 2175 K Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20437; tel: 202-653-2404; fax: 202-653-5760; [www.worldfooddayusa.org](http://www.worldfooddayusa.org)

## Debt cancellation on the agenda this fall

At the G-8 summit in early June (see *NewsNotes* July-August 2004), world leaders considered for the first time a proposal that would provide 100 percent multilateral debt cancellation for impoverished nations. Debt cancellation is still desperately needed. This year alone, three million people in Africa will die due to the HIV/AIDS pandemic, yet countries on the African continent will send an estimated \$15 billion in debt service to the IMF, World Bank, and wealthy creditor nations.

The next month is critical in the struggle for freedom from debt. Though they failed to take action at the June summit, G-8 leaders directed their finance ministers (including the U.S. Treasury Secretary John Snow) to consider additional measures in the coming months. Their next meeting will take place on October 1, 2004, just before the annual meetings of the IMF and World Bank in Washington, D.C.

The Jubilee USA Network and others working for debt cancellation are pressing the U.S. government and other G-7 nations to announce support for 100 percent cancellation of multilateral debt (IMF, World Bank, regional development banks) for all impoverished nations (not just those countries in the current HIPC Initiative), without harmful economic policy conditions attached.

Even if this is accomplished, it will not be the “end of the

story” (debate on issues of illegitimate debt, a fair and transparent process for resolving debt disputes, reparations, and so on will continue), but it will be a big step along the way.

### **Faith in action:**

Fax President Bush and Treasury Secretary Snow, c/o Undersecretary John B. Taylor using the following letter as a sample. For additional information contact the Jubilee USA Network at [www.jubileeusa.org](http://www.jubileeusa.org). White House fax: (202) 456-2461. Treasury Department fax: (202) 622-6415.

*I am writing to ask for your support for 100 percent debt cancellation for the world's most impoverished countries. Please take the critical opportunity at the G7 Finance Ministers meeting on October 1 to call for 100 percent multilateral debt cancellation for impoverished nations without harmful conditions.*

*Thank you for your past support of debt cancellation. Some debt relief has been given, and it is working wonders in places like Uganda, Mozambique and Honduras where savings from debt have been used to increase school enrollment and provide life saving medicines to combat AIDS.*

*However, debt relief has not gone far enough. Half of all African countries continue to spend more on debt than on health. Many countries have had debt relief delayed or do not qualify for relief according to current criteria. We need to do more. Please support 100 percent debt cancellation at every opportunity.*

*In addition I would like you to delink from debt cancellation the harmful World Bank and IMF conditions that prevent poor people from having access to clean water, health care, adequate education or good jobs.*

*Complete debt cancellation is needed for the fight against HIV/AIDS and to ensure global security through poverty eradication. I look forward to working with you to resolve this pressing moral issue. I look forward to reading your response to this request and your commitment to build a better and more secure world through debt cancellation.*

### **Important note:**

Even if the World Bank and International Monetary Fund agree to cancel 100 percent of the debt of many countries using their own resources, the work of advocates for jubilee debt cancellation will not be done. Destructive and unjust creditor-debtor relationships reveal a structural imbalance of political and economic power that must be transformed. One step toward that would be to establish a mechanism for an impartial assessment and negotiation of mutual obligations of debtor and creditor countries. To be just and effective, any such mechanism must create a decision-making process that is unbiased and able to address issues of illegitimate debt and reparations. Proposed mechanisms include Fair and Transparent Arbitration Processes (FTAPs), ad hoc or standing debt tribunals, international insolvency courts, etc.

The Jubilee USA Network has said that the most important contribution of such a mechanism would be to “re-focus the questions surrounding debt, away from the ‘obligations of the debtor’ and ‘rights of the creditor’ to the fundamental human rights of the people in debtor countries ... [A] key feature of this proposal is that the arbitrators would be independent of the creditors.”

Additional information is available at [www.jubileeusa.org](http://www.jubileeusa.org), [www.erlassjahr.de](http://www.erlassjahr.de), [www.new-rules.org](http://www.new-rules.org), [www.cidse.org](http://www.cidse.org), [www.afrodad.org](http://www.afrodad.org).

# UN evaluates Millennium Development Goals

*When the United Nations General Assembly met in September, 2000, 189 governments from the North and South signed the Millennium Declaration after much debate and discussion. A central challenge was to ensure that globalization become a positive force for the world's people, where 1.2 billion people live in extreme poverty on one dollar a day or less. Globalization must be made "fully inclusive and equitable."*

The centerpiece of the Declaration is the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), but other important issues are stressed like peace, security and disarmament, human rights, democracy and good governance, the specific needs of Africa and strengthening the UN. The fundamental values in international relations underlying their concerns read like the social doctrines of the church: freedom, equity, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature and shared responsibility.

The MDGs to be achieved by 2015 are:

**1. Halve extreme poverty and hunger:** Reduce by half the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day and by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger

**2. Achieve universal primary education:** 113 million children do not attend school. Ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary school.

**3. Empower women and promote equality between women and men:** Two-thirds of the world's illiterate people are women. Eliminate gender disparity so that all girls can finish secondary education by 2005 and at all levels by 2015.

**4. Reduce under-five mortality by two-thirds:** At this time 11 million young children die every year.

**5. Reduce maternal mortality by three quarters:** In the developing world overall, the risk of dying in childbirth is one in 48; in Sub-Saharan Africa it is 1 in 16.

**6. Reverse the spread of diseases, especially HIV/AIDS and malaria:** Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS as has happened in Brazil, Thailand, Senegal and Uganda. Halt and begin to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases.

**7. Ensure environmental sustainability:** Reduce by half

the number of one billion people who still lack safe drinking water. Improve the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers.

**8. Develop a global partnership for development, with targets for aid, trade and debt relief:** Without economic development there will be little reduction of poverty.

Progress toward the eight MDGs will be evaluated by the

UN General Assembly in 2005. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) connected to the UN, such as Maryknoll, will meet September 8-10, 2004, at the UN headquarters in New York to see how they can assist this process.

To date, progress has been minimal. In fact, 2003 was a lost year for these goals, which were eclipsed by the war in Iraq. Rich countries, for example, have failed to follow through on

their commitment to give 0.7 percent of their GNP for official development assistance. Statistics indicate that the U.S. gives, at most, 0.12 percent of its GDP to economic aid. The current U.S. administration estimates that it spends 3.9 percent of the GDP on military expenditures, but other sources would place that figure much higher. (The Bush administration has a proposed FY2005 military budget of \$420.7 billion; the national deficit is \$445 billion.)

Although higher levels of development assistance are important, systemic and structural injustices in the global economy will have to be addressed if the MDGs are to be reached. Each person and community can make a difference by informing themselves about the MDGs and knowing what their government is doing to implement them.

## ***Faith in action***

1. Call your local newspapers and ask that they cover at the UN the Department of Public Information and NGO session in September, and regularly report on what their government is doing to implement its commitment to the MDGs through the UN General Assembly review on the MDGs next year.

2. Contact the State Department and remind them of their pledges to the MDGs: U.S. Department of State, 2201 C Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20520; [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov)



## Carnegie proposes U.S. nonproliferation strategy

*The following story is based on a draft proposal for a U.S. nuclear nonproliferation strategy released in June by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. The complete text of the study, "Universal Compliance: A Strategy for Nuclear Security," can be found at <http://wmd.ceip.matrixgroup.net/UniversalCompliance.pdf>*

The Carnegie study concludes that the possible acquisition of nuclear weapons by terrorists poses the greatest danger to the U.S. It calls for a new U.S. strategy on nuclear nonproliferation whose first requirement must be "to develop greater international consensus on threats and the division of labor needed to diminish them."

The draft report includes recommendations for U.S. nuclear policy toward many states, including Iran and North Korea. The authors, after eliciting critiques of the plan, will publish a final report in December.

The study says the strategic aim of U.S. nuclear nonproliferation policy should be universal compliance. The policy should aim to preclude new nuclear weapon states, provide for the securing of all nuclear materials, and stop the transfer of technology, material and know-how needed for nuclear weapons.

The study notes that, a decade after the end of the Cold War, thousands of warheads in Russia and the U.S. remain on hair-trigger alert and could be launched by mistake or as a result of faulty intelligence. It warns that regional conflicts, such as fighting between India and Pakistan over Kashmir, could also lead to a nuclear catastrophe.

The credibility of the world's acknowledged nuclear powers could be an important factor in promoting a nonproliferation regime, according to the report.

Many countries believe that China, France, Russia, the UK and the U.S. "do not intend to fulfill their end of the NPT (Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty) 'bargain' – the pledge to eliminate nuclear weapons," the authors explain. It could be difficult to convince other nations to follow a non-nuclear path "when nuclear weapon states reassert the importance of nuclear weapons to their own security, develop new uses for nuclear weapons, resist progress toward disarmament, or make veiled nuclear threats."

The study recognizes a U.S. right to take preemptive military action against an imminent threat to its national security. However, it calls for guidelines both to clarify standards of "imminence" and to distinguish between "actions to target

weapons and to remove regimes."

Warning that at least 46 countries possess weapon-grade uranium and upwards of a dozen possess military plutonium, the report offers recommendations to help block this material from falling into the wrong hands. It calls for securing all poorly guarded fissile material in 2-4 years, developing a global nuclear accounting system, and guaranteeing fuel supplies to states that agree not to pursue domestic nuclear material production.

The report also urges close cooperation among the five permanent members of the UN Security Council to broaden, toughen and enforce nonproliferation rules. And it calls on leading states that have forsworn nuclear weapons – such as Argentina, Brazil, Germany, Japan, South Africa and Sweden – to help in that effort.

Russia and the U.S. have already dismantled hundreds of ballistic missiles and retired thousands of nuclear warheads. The two countries have also "down-blended" hundreds of tons of highly enriched uranium (HEU), but diluting plutonium is more complex and time-consuming. Meanwhile, hundreds of tons of HEU remain to be treated – enough to produce thousands of nuclear weapons.

The report cites the urgency of forestalling nuclear weapons programs in states such as Iran and North Korea, in part because such programs could fuel a nuclear arms race among their respective neighbors.

The study recommends that the European Union offer Iran economic benefits if it meets European nuclear nonproliferation demands, and that the U.S. should warn Iran of possible sanctions in the UN Security Council if it refuses to comply with a nuclear nonproliferation regime. However, it also says the U.S. should assure Iran that it would desist from efforts to change regimes if it gives up any nuclear weapons program.

The study urges the U.S. to pursue high-level negotiations with North Korea through a presidential envoy. It also proposes that the U.S. be prepared to establish diplomatic relations with Pyongyang and offer reconstruction assistance in return for North Korea dismantling all nuclear weapon capabilities.

The report urges the U.S. to make clear to North Korea that any attempt to export nuclear materials or weapons would be considered an act of war against the U.S., ending the Korean War ceasefire. It also suggests that the U.S. strengthen its alliances with Japan and South Korea to enhance its security objectives in the region, including the absence of nuclear weapons.

## “Water for the World” resolution introduced

*On June 25, 2004 Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) and 32 co-sponsors introduced the Water for the World Resolution (H. Con. Res. 468), calling the U.S. government to recognize water as a global public good and fundamental human right in trade, development and international financial policies.*



H. Con. Res. 468 affirms that water is a global public good and should not be treated as a private commodity. It recognizes that government policies should ensure that all individuals have equitable access to water to meet basic human needs, and that no one is cut off from water due to economic constraints.

Today, more than a billion people lack adequate access to safe drinking water, and 2.5 billion have no proper sanitation. Thousands, mostly children, die each day from preventable waterborne diseases. According to the World Health Organization, 48 nations will face severe water shortages due to increasing pollution and a rate of global water consumption that doubles every 20 years.

A key issue preventing access to safe drinking water is an increase in water privatization schemes. Historically, water has been treated as a public good, not a market commodity. Most of the world's people receive water and sanitation services from publicly owned and operated facilities mainly because private companies, seeing little or no profit making possibilities, were not interested in owning or managing water utilities. But, with the threat of freshwater scarcity, major global corporations have been moving into the “water market.”

Recent U.S. trade negotiations have included investment provisions that facilitate the privatization of publicly owned services like water. H. Con. Res. 468 recommends that U.S. international, regional, and bilateral trade agreements should exclude conditions that would result in reducing access to water for human use. Such a recommendation could make water more affordable and accessible impoverished people in urban settings like KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa where privatized, pre-paid meters were linked to a massive cholera outbreak in 2000. Pre-

paid meters stop delivering water when payment is exhausted. Once they are unable to pay, families risk serious waterborne illnesses when they collect their drinking water from polluted rivers or other contaminated sources.

Around the world, millions of dollars in World Bank and International Monetary Fund loans prop up water privatization schemes that do little to help those who need access to clean water. The Water for the World Resolution contends

that U.S. executive directors of the IMF, World Bank and other international financial institutions should not approve loans requiring privatization when those policies result in reduced access to water and increased water rates.

By some estimates it will cost \$20 billion annually for the next 20 years to build, repair and maintain water systems in the U.S. As a result, funding gaps lead local governments to turn systems over to private companies, where water is managed for a profit. In Detroit, MI., more than 50,000 people had their water shut off during the past two years because of their inability to pay.

At the United Nations, the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has adopted the General Comment on the right to water, which states that the human right to drinking water is fundamental for life and health, and sufficient and safe drinking water is a precondition for the realization of all other human rights. H. Con. Res. 468 begs the U.S. to take step in the direction of protecting this essential human right.

### **Faith in action:**

Urge your representative to co-sponsor H. Con. Res. 468, the Water for the World Resolution. For further helpful information, visit Public Citizen's Water for All Campaign at [www.wateractivist.org](http://www.wateractivist.org) or contact Sara Grusky at (202) 454-5133.

Religious organizations at the UN have also called for governments to declare water a human right. For information see <http://fi-na.org/waterforlife.html>. The text of the Water for the World Resolution can be seen at <http://afjn.cua.edu/news/water%20resolution%202004.cfm>

## Resources

- 1) **Rainbow peace flag:** Available through Pax Christi USA, this flag, with the word "Peace" embroidered on its front, is an international symbol of hope, solidarity and joy in a time of war and terrorism. Noah's rainbow is used to remind us of God's covenant with all living creatures. Perfect for rallies, demonstrations and vigils, or fly it outside your house. \$15.00. Pax Christi USA, phone: (814)453-4955; [www.paxchristiusa.org](http://www.paxchristiusa.org)
- 2) **Syllables of the Perfect Word: Advent Reflections 2004:** Pax Christi USA's annual Advent reflection guide. Written by Rose Marie Berger, with photographs by Ryan Beiler, who are both with *Sojourners* magazine. During Advent we leave the place of our birth to journey to the birthplace of another. It is an invitation to renewal - to receive comfort and hope in the deep of winter, and be immersed in the eternal unchanging nature of God. These reflections include a phrase from the daily scripture, a reflection, the daily scripture references at the bottom, and the name of a saint or holy person of God who the Christian community remembers on that day. \$2.50. Pax Christi USA, phone: (814)453-4955; [www.paxchristiusa.org](http://www.paxchristiusa.org)
- 3) **Teaching to Practice Gandhian Nonviolence: Perspectives from Academics and Activists:** This first annual Gandhian nonviolence conference will be held **October 8-9, 2004** in Memphis, TN. Presented by the M.K. Gandhi Institute for Nonviolence, the National Civil Rights Museum, and the National Conference for Community and Justice. Hosted by Christian Brothers University and Rhodes College. In addition to plenary speakers and a keynote speaker, the conference will feature five concurrent sessions organized around major themes in relation to Gandhian nonviolence militarism, poverty, racism, ecology, and personal nonviolence. Go to [www.gandhiinstitute.org](http://www.gandhiinstitute.org), or email [gandhiconference@yahoo.com](mailto:gandhiconference@yahoo.com).
- 4) **The New Patriots:** This video by Robert Richter is available from Maryknoll Productions. U.S. military veterans speak out about terrorism, patriotism and their opposition to the U.S. Army School of the Americas (SOA) - now the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHISC) - where Latin American soldiers are trained in counter-insurgency techniques aimed at terrorizing civilian populations. \$14.95. Contact Maryknoll World Productions at (800)227-8523; [www.maryknollmall.org](http://www.maryknollmall.org)
- 5) **Policy Matters: Educating Congress on Peace and Security:** This nuts-and-bolts guide to the inner workings of Congress (including institutional structures and procedures, who does what in a congressional office, and how to frame an issue to garner interest) arms engaged citizens with the insights they need to help put long-term, balanced solutions to the nation's most pressing foreign policy and international security challenges on the radar screens of their elected leaders in Congress. The book covers themes including: the support among the U.S. public for active U.S. engagement in the world and the disconnect on this issue between the public and Congress; the importance of long-term, pragmatic solutions to post-Cold War and post-September 11<sup>th</sup> security challenges; and the need for bipartisan consensus on such solutions in a highly polarized political environment. It is available in hard copy from the Stimson Center for \$10, plus shipping and handling, by calling (202) 223-5956. In order to make this tool available to as many people as possible, the guide is also available for free PDF download on the Stimson Center website at [www.stimson.org](http://www.stimson.org).
- 6) **I Didn't Do It Alone: Society's Contribution to Individual Wealth and Success:** This new report spotlights successful entrepreneurs and concludes that the myth of self-made success is destructive to the social and economic infrastructure that fosters wealth creation. Written by Chuck Collins, associate director of United for a Fair Economy; Scott Klingler, co-director of Responsible Wealth and a Chartered Financial Analyst; and Mike Lapham, co-director of Responsible Wealth. Responsible Wealth is a project of United for a Fair Economy (UFE), an independent national non-profit that raises awareness that concentrated wealth and power undermine the economy, corrupt democracy, deepen the racial divide, and tear communities apart. Download "I Didn't Do It Alone" at <http://responsiblewealth.org/notalone/>. Contact UFE at [www.faireconomy.org](http://www.faireconomy.org); phone (617)423-2148.