



Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

NewsNotes

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Guatemala: From genocide to femicide

On January 28, 2013 a Guatemalan judge ruled that former head of state Efraín Ríos Montt would be tried for genocide in a domestic court. As a military general who served as president for less than 18 months in the early 1980s, Ríos Montt is thought responsible for 1,771 deaths, 1,400 human rights violations and the displacement of 29,000 indigenous Guatemalans. While this precedent-setting decision was lauded internationally by human rights activists and NGOs, Guatemalan women in particular continue to live in an environment where impunity reigns. Br. Martin Shea, MM, who has lived and worked in Guatemala for many years, contributed to this article.

The decision to try Ríos Montt and former intelligence chief José Mauricio Rodríguez Sánchez for their assumed responsibility over the deaths of the mainly Mayan villagers in a series of massacres during March-August 1982 is a landmark verdict. Amnesty International researcher Sebastian Elgueta reports, “[T]his decision strengthens justice in Guatemala, as accountability for past crimes begins to emerge.” It raises hopes for families and victims of thousands of human rights violations that they may know the truth and see justice.

The 1999 Guatemalan Truth commission, backed by the United Nations, found that some 200,000 people were killed or disappeared in Guatemala’s 36-year armed conflict. The commission documented over 600 massacres – most of which happened during the presidency of Ríos Montt. Most of those who were responsible for this genocide, until now, have escaped justice. The Guatemalan military continues to refuse to hand over past records and documents which might lead to further prosecutions.

While the trial of Ríos Montt is good news, due to the history of repression and violence in Guatemala, impunity still reigns when it comes to the treatment of women in Guatemala.

Femicide – the killing of women – is a global problem with particular focus in this hemisphere; Mexico, El Salvador and Guatemala continue to rank among the world leaders in violence against women. In the last five years more than 3,000 people have been murdered in Guatemala be-

cause they are women. In 2011, 750 women were killed, which is the highest female mortality rate per capita in the world. In 2012, 638 were murdered, often their bodies dismembered. In January 2013, 53 were murdered as the madness continues unabated.

According to a January 2013 article on AlertNet (“Guatemala’s femicides show no signs of letting up”), Sebastian Elgueta, Guatemala’s researcher at Amnesty International, says that femicide is “‘a widespread problem that affects all sectors of society, from the middle class to the very poor.’ Roughly 60 percent of all femicides in Guatemala take place at the hands of former and/or current boyfriends or husbands using firearms.”

The article notes that a large part of why Guatemala has such a disproportionate number of femicide cases is due to impunity. Elgueta states that the conviction rate for murder ranges “‘from less than one percent to four percent.’ Such high levels of impunity create a culture where perpetrators of crime, including violence against women, believe they can get away with it. ...

“Because of Guatemala’s high levels of drug-fueled crime and murder rates - one of the highest in the world - overstretched local authorities and the [International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala, CICIG] have focused on tackling general violence in recent years, leaving fewer resources and officials to investigate gender-based abductions and killings. ...

“Guatemala’s high levels of violence against women also stem from the low social status of women, particularly indigenous women. It means some government officials still tend to blame the victims for gender-related crimes.”

Brother Martin Shea writes: “Will we even know Easter in this beautiful land? After a long history of genocide in Guatemala an art sculpture of a crucified woman by artist Manola Gallardo Rubio [*see image at left*] is awakening the national conscience to the reality that femicide continues. The sculpture is presently on display in a private gallery, only after its public display at the Miguel Angel Asturias Cultural Center was abruptly cancelled. As Easter approaches, this sculpture reminds us that Jesus continues to be crucified 12 times a week.” §



Ecuador: Criminalizing protest

In the last few years, Ecuador has experienced a disturbing increase in government, police and military crackdowns on peaceful protests held against the exploitation of natural resources. Amnesty International has released a report, "So that no one can demand anything – Criminalizing the right to protest in Ecuador?" (AI Index no: AMR 28/002/2012), on patterns of criminalization of community leaders who participate in these mobilizations.

According to Amnesty, article 129 of Ecuador's penal code allows up to three years of imprisonment for anyone who "illegally impedes the free transit of cars, people or merchandise" on public roads. Based on its present content, no exceptions are possible – not even for minimal interference resulting from the exercise of human rights, such as freedom of expression, assembly and association. Until nuances are made in the laws to protect one's human right to assemble and to exercise freedom of expression, authorities are using the legal system to suppress peaceful protests and opposition to extractive industry and natural resource projects. In most instances, these protests occur after the Ecuadoran state has failed to adequately consult communities affected by the projects.

Maryknoll Sister Elsie Monge, executive director of Ecuador's Ecumenical Center for Human Rights (CEDHU), notes several recent cases that highlight this pattern of criminalization and intimidation: For instance, on November 12, 2012, a judge ordered Manuel Trujillo and Manuela Pacheco, the president and a leader of the community of San Pablo de Amali, to serve jail time despite evidence that they were only exercising their right to protest the Hidrotambo Hydroelectric Project, which they have been peacefully protesting for years. Until now, however, the court never sentenced them to jail, but rather mandated alternative sentencing.

The historical resistance and peaceful protest of this project by the community is noteworthy. In 2005, Ecuador's National Council of Electricity (CONELEC) gave Hidrotambo S.A. an environmental license to proceed with the project. More than 70 indigenous and peasant communities live on the land where the project

would take place. The livelihood of these people depends upon agriculture and fishing, which the project would completely disrupt. The San Pablo de Amali community especially is impacted due to its location, where the project's heavy machinery and industrial construction is planned.

From the beginning, this community has denounced the project. They have made it known that they were never consulted and that an environmental impact study was never presented, calling into question CONELEC's granting an environmental license to proceed.

Between 2006 and 2008, as heavy machinery was brought in, signaling the initiation of the project, the local population and the Army Corps of Engineers faced each other in multiple confrontations. People from various communities opposed to the project confronted approximately 300 members of the military; protestors were arrested on a variety of charges (cleared in 2008). The project was halted until March 8, 2012, when CONELEC again granted permission for the project under the guise of a new contract.

Since March 24, 2012, the project has moved forward aggressively, without any legal authorization, with police and heavy machinery destroying homes and property located where the project is planned. Those who oppose the project have been detained by police who have entered private property without search warrants.

Faith in action:

Call on Ecuadoran authorities to drop charges and refrain from imprisoning those who organize and/or participate in peaceful protests. Urge Ecuadoran authorities to thoroughly consult with local populations in regards to potential laws, policies or measures that may affect communities. Send messages to Sra. Johana Pesantez, Minister of Justice, Av. Colón entre Diego de Almagro y Reina Victoria, Quito, Ecuador, fax: 011 593 2 2550 089 (State "me da tono de fax, por favor"); and Ambassador Luis Benigno Gallegos Chiriboga, Embassy of Ecuador, 1050 30th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20007; fax: (202)667-3482, email: embassy@ecuador.org. §



Indigenous march for justice in Quito/Photo attributed to Donovan & Scott

Honduras: Small scale farmers swept up in violence

Over the past year, Honduran indigenous and peasant people have been caught between the land grabbers and the “war on drugs.” In May 2012, four indigenous villagers, including a 14-year-old boy, were killed and three wounded during a drug raid in Honduran indigenous Moskitia land. The New York Times stated that Honduran police agents involved in the operation reported to government investigators that they took their orders from the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA). In late January paramilitary units assassinated two more peasants in Ahuas, another indigenous village, bringing the murder of subsistence farmers and indigenous leaders to at least 60 since the 2009 coup.

In early February, the U.S. Food Sovereignty Alliance (USFSA) condemned the killings of peasants by paramilitary forces and urged the U.S. administration to end its support of the Honduran government. The USFSA noted that most of the killings of small scale farmers and indigenous leaders took place in areas where large land grabs displaced Honduran small scale farmers, and it urged the administration to investigate. This follows a January 25 letter from 58 members of Congress to the U.S. Departments of State and Justice, calling for a credible investigation into the DEA-instigated killings of Honduran civilians.

Although Latin American governments heatedly denounced the Honduran coup in June 2009, several months later, amidst a political environment tainted by repression and fear, where mass arrests, illegal detentions and violence suppressed political organizing, Porfirio “Pepe” Lobo became president of Honduras. Since his election, Lobo has pushed through legislation favoring investments in agro-fuels, tourism, forestry and mining while continuing a reign of repression on those who would protest. During this time, security in Honduras deteriorated to the point that during 2011 and 2012 Honduras became and remains the most dangerous country in the world, with homicide rates over 85 per 100,000 habitants.

In Honduras one quarter of the most productive arable land is monopolized by less than one percent of farmers, the wealthy large producers, who would like nothing more than to acquire land still owned by small scale farmers. In the 1990s land grabbing attempts were foiled when peasant organizations fought back through legal means. Under President Zelaya, small scale farmers were making progress at reclaiming land but all these gains were reversed once Lobo came to power.

In January, the Honduran Congress passed the

Charter Cities law which will establish specialized development zones administered by more industrialized third-party donor governments and Honduran citizens. This essentially gives Congress the ability to transfer control of land (including specialized tourist zones) to foreign investors and ensures that land-grabbing will continue.

This is the second version of this legislation, and was passed after Congress fired four Supreme Court judges who had ruled the original law unconstitutional.

The Charter Cities law targets “uninhabited” lands, but these lands are actually the ancestral territories of Honduras’ Afro-Indigenous peoples. FoodFirst reports that one of the most attractive factors motivating the land-grabbing in Honduras is the global demand for palm oil. Thanks to renewable fuel targets in the U.S. and Europe, over the past decade annual demand tripled from two million to over eight million tons.

Honduran small scale farmers losing land ownership coincides with the intense militarization of the country over the past half a century. During the 1980s thousands of subsistence farmers were violently displaced when the U.S.-backed contras – at war with the Sandinista government of Nicaragua – occupied massive areas of the border zone. The militarization continues under the guise of the “war on drugs.” In 2011 the Pentagon increased its contract spending in Honduras by 71 percent. Five more military bases have since been upgraded, spreading the U.S. military presence to the entire country. This wave of militarization and increased foreign investment brings with it a growing number of paramilitary units at the service of those who will pay.

For more information, see FoodFirst’s new publication, *Grabbing power: The new struggles for land, food and democracy in Northern Honduras*, written by Tanya M. Kerssen. The book unravels the history of agribusiness in northern Honduras, from the United Fruit Company’s dominance in the early 20th century to the rise of landowner Miguel Facussé, the “oil palm grower of death.” 188 pages, \$14.99; available as an Ebook on Amazon. Download the table of contents and introduction, or buy a copy of the paperback version, on FoodFirst’s website, <http://www.foodfirst.org/en/Grabbing+Power.> §



Africa: Drone use increases

Grave moral and legal questions have been raised by the Obama administration's use of lethal drones in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Yemen, Libya and Somalia and by concerns that they will soon be used elsewhere in Africa for targeted assassinations on what amounts to a battlefield without boundaries. In mid-January, 33 organizations, including the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns, wrote to President Obama to express alarm at reports that his administration was seeking a new "Authorization for use of military force in certain African countries" in order to use lethal drones in Mali and elsewhere if necessary.

To execute people without due process or an opportunity to surrender violates the moral and legal sensibilities of people who believe in the value of every human life and the importance of due process. Likely violations of sovereignty; attacking weak targets far from a known battlefield; "signature strikes" aimed at a pattern of behavior rather than at specific individuals; and the practice of categorizing as militants all military-age males in a strike zone when counting civilian casualties have outraged people of conscience around the world. Furthermore, the use of drones in armed conflict, because they are relatively low in cost and exact few military casualties, will likely accelerate the move to war and military intervention in crisis situations.

To repeatedly terrify whole communities targeted by killer drones is an indiscriminate, inhumane and ineffective counter terrorism strategy that violates the principle of necessity and proportionality. The 24-hour-a-day hovering by drones over communities unable to protect themselves in any way has caused tremendous anxiety and psychological trauma among civilian communities and disrupted essential community activities. Evidence in a recent Stanford Law School/New York University study suggests that drone strikes have undermined U.S. relationships in the region, especially with Pakistanis; facilitated recruitment to violent non-state armed groups; and motivated further violent attacks. ["Living under drones: Death, injury, and trauma to civilians from U.S. drone practices in Pakistan," International Human Rights and Conflict Resolution Clinic (Stanford Law School) and Global Justice Clinic (New York University

School of Law), September, 2012]

The letter to the president expressed particular concern about the potential for expanded use of lethal drones for targeting militants in African countries. President Obama recently announced that about 100 U.S. troops have been deployed to the West African country of Niger, where defense officials said they are setting up a drone base to spy on al-Qaeda fighters in the Sahara. *Washington Post* reporter Craig Whitlock has published several stories, including on February 15, 2013, tracking the growth of U.S. military presence in Africa. He has reported on the establishment of "a network of

small staging bases," including drone installations in Ethiopia, the Seychelles, and now Niger, as well as a forward operating base for special operations forces in Kenya and a permanent base in Djibouti, "which serves as a hub for counterterrorism missions in Somalia and Yemen."

In their letter to President Obama, the 33 faith-based, human rights and other organi-

zations wrote, "Given recent reports of the U.S. Africa Command's expanding training programs and the nature of current U.S. military activity on the African continent, we recognize that additional operations would likely rely on significant military and counterterror assistance to and cooperation with partner governments and security forces. In Mali and Nigeria, vast human rights abuses have been committed by national security forces. In places such as Uganda and Ethiopia, oppressive governments continue to attack the civil and political rights of citizens. While the U.S. iterates its support for African democratic movements and efforts to achieve long-term stability, direct partnership with security forces and political leaders undermining those initiatives makes such claims ring hollow – and they will only continue to do so as these partnerships increase...."

"The causes and conditions of militant extremism are complex worldwide, and military solutions are as unlikely to address them in Africa as they have been after more than 10 years in Afghanistan. Your administration now has an opportunity to shift the policies that have led to these unconscionable costs, and we urge you to instead emphasize support for Africans working toward non-lethal solutions and long-term stability as you move forward." §



Kenya: The voice of the people

The following article was written by Sr. Teresa Hougnon, MM, who lives and works in Kenya, where elections took place on Monday, March 4, in mostly peaceful conditions, though some violence did occur. According to the New York Times, "The worst violence erupted on Kenya's coast, but it was not clear how connected it was to the voting. Police officials said that a large gang ... ambushed a patrol in the port city of Mombasa ... and killed four officers with machetes. At least two other police officers were killed elsewhere, and the authorities immediately blamed the Mombasa Republican Council, a fringe separatist group that opposed the elections and believes Kenya's coastal zone should be a separate country." At press time, it appears that Uhuru Kenyatta is ahead with 53 percent, followed by Raila Odinga, with 42 percent of votes.

On March 4, Kenyans [went] to the polls to choose not one leader, but six different agents to represent them in the new democratic structure of their government. The new constitution, ratified in August 2010, will be fully implemented by this new government. But moving a population of 40 million from electing a central government (one president and one minister of parliament) to electing a decentralized and more representative government will be a process that takes longer than the past two and a half years. And inspiring a country that has voted along tribal lines since multiparty politics in 1992 to now vote for candidates based on character and poten-

tial will take even longer.

The major concerns leading into the election have been documented by many credible sources including Amnesty International, International Center for Reconciliation, and the Kenya National Human Rights Commission. The concerns are the unpreparedness of voters to properly understand the process, the failure of the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission to complete its own preparation, the primaries that were fraudulent and violence provoking, the International Criminal Court cases hanging over Uhuru Kenyatta and William Ruto, and the training of tribal militias. I am concerned by all these indicators, but I want to offer another perspective, the voice of the people.

We work with the citizens of Kenya, the common *wananchi*, as they say, in Nairobi, Kisumu and in North Kuresoi District where the citizens have experienced cyclic election violence since 1992. Their voices, their stories, infuse hope into my analysis of the situation.

As results of the primaries came in and news of protests in constituencies were reported on January 18, I became quite discouraged. People were protesting for their democratic rights, not because their candidate lost. In some cases, the protester's candidate had won, and the party denied the certificate. In other situations the candidate was denied a place on the primary ballot. Such cases happened in both the major parties, TNA (Uhuru Kenyatta's party) and ODM (Raila Odinga's party). A positive sign is that people are speaking up even within



their own constituency for their right to be represented, indicating that they do not blindly support their party leaders, as before. In the past five years, and more so in the last three, people have been speaking out, calling out injustice or corruption on the part of their leaders. People of Kenya are beginning to take their rightful ownership of the country and government.

The desire for a peaceful election is in the air. People remember what happened in 2008, and do not want to repeat that. In Kuresoi, people tell us there is no tension. There is mistrust, yes, but not the tension of the past. People are wiser, more aware of their own part in creating their future. What gives me hope is that people are making choices. Some [traveled] to their ancestral homes to be safe, others [sent] their families to safe places. These are good choices, but for me, it is an indication that people are taking control of their own lives and not looking to leaders for direction. The protests indicate for me that people are speaking up for their own rights, not letting their leaders make the decisions for all.

I have seen civil society grow in power and influence in the six years I have lived in Kenya, and I know this trend began long before I arrived. Despite the mayhem and corruption that followed the 2007 election and continues today to some degree, many of the power-grabbing tactics of the politicians have been foiled by a strong civil society that has spoken out, organized the citizens in nonviolent protests, and demanded justice. One such example was the outcry following the Parliament's late night attempt to give themselves lucrative severance packages, including a state funeral, upon dissolving the 10th Parliament. Following a full media backlash, President Mwai Kibaki refused to sign the measure. The *wananchi* took the opportunity to send a

clear message to their politicians by sending the 10th Parliament out with a mock state funeral, burning 210 coffins outside the Parliament building.

Efforts were stepped up by civil society agencies, preparing the citizens for the election through civic education. I was privileged to be present during a presentation by one lawyer, educating her fellow citizens on the ballots and the new government structure. She made a commitment to herself and her country to use every day until March 4 to educate people, to get the information out to the citizens, to make their vote count. She was not alone in this effort. People educated their fellow citizens because they want a free and fair, peaceful election, and did their part to make it happen.

Peace was promoted by every agency, every church, every institution, and every person I met on the street. The Catholic Church launched its Lenten Campaign for Peace, and the Anglican Church [held] a Peace Walk on February 23, one week before elections. The media published issues and aired broadcasts dedicated to promoting peaceful elections. Even corporations promoted peace through their advertising. For example, a Crown Paint advertisement depicted a man and woman with a banner "Peace, Love, Unity," under the words "Uniting the colours of Kenya."

I believe sincere efforts have been made [to ensure] a free and fair election. Corruption will still be present to some degree, and it will take years to change that behavior. But I believe in the power of intention and in the voice of the people. Violence [is still here], as we see in the Tana Delta, but what we experienced in 2008 will not happen again. The people in Kenya will not participate. §

Korea: New windows of opportunity?

In February, North Korea tested an underground nuclear device, the third test since 2006. This illegal action, violating UN Security Council resolutions, brought North Korea back to the top of the world's list of peace and security concerns in Asia. For the past 60 years, since the 1950-53 civil war with South Korea ended in a truce, North Korea has been stuck in a vicious cycle, a strategic plan that can be described in short as oppression coupled with threats of insanity and aggression, all enabled by North Korea's economic lifeline: China.

On February 19, North Korean diplomat Jon Yong Ryong told the UN Conference on Disarmament: "As

the saying goes, a newborn puppy knows no fear of a tiger. South Korea's erratic behavior would only herald its final destruction." Intimating "final destruction" as well as any threat of the use of force, is prohibited by Article 2.4 of the UN charter and was immediately condemned by all conference members. But the point of the outrageous threat and the nuclear test was made: Do not underestimate the possibility of North Korean leadership making an insane and destructive decision, with no regard for the welfare of its own citizens.

How do we break this vicious cycle of oppression-insanity-aggression which has left the people of North Korea isolated, starved and imprisoned, and the "palace

economy” – “an international network of shadowy officials, banks and front companies [which] sustains the North’s ruling clan, military and internal security forces” (*The Washington Post*, Feb. 12) – humming along? Sanctions have proven to be ineffective and unethical. What are needed are positive incentives for peace that involve all the stakeholders: North Korea, South Korea, China and the U.S.

It is estimated that North Korea holds as many as 200,000 people in a massive gulag system known as kwan-li-so. One in 10 North Korean citizens may be imprisoned, labeled as either a dissenter, or the child or grandchild of a dissenter, who needs to be punished in order to eliminate the seeds of bad families. While release or escape from these prison camps is rare, horrific testimony by defectors has been trickling out of North Korea for decades. The North Korean gulag is an organized network of concentration camps focused on working and starving prisoners to death. The conditions are believed to be among the worst in the world.

Curtis Melvin, who publishes the website North Korean Economy Watch, [www.nkeconwatch.com/] has collaborated with 38 North, [www.38northdigitalatlas.org/], a website operated by Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, to create a digital atlas of North Korea, including the locations of prison camps, railroads and electrical grids, based on information collected from people who have visited or defected from the country. Google Maps recently added similar details.

During these past six decades, the U.S. and other countries have responded with sanctions, giving North Korea the distinction of being the most heavily sanctioned nation in the world. Sanctions against international financial transactions with North Korea have meant to isolate and starve the leadership, yet it is the oppressed citizens of North Korea who are the most isolated and starved.

When coupled with incentives and rewards for cooperation, sanctions may have a role in the conflict resolution progress. The key is to find the point where the value of the benefit exceeds the cost of compliance. The three principal sets of rewards are: (a) those that respond to economic needs, (b) those that respond to political needs for legitimacy and recognition, and (c) those that respond to needs for assurances and security guarantees.

Maryknoll missionary Fr. Jerry Hammond has served in South Korea since 1960 and organizes medical humanitarian aid to North Korea. He spoke on Vatican Radio in November 2012 about the desire of the people in South Korea for unification with the people of North Korea. “Before unification,” he said, “there must be rec-

onciliation between the north and the south.”

Besides rewards for North Korea and South Korea to reconcile, the Obama administration needs to offer incentives and rewards for China to welcome a unified Korea on its border and to leverage its position as supplier of 90 percent of North Korea’s energy. China dislikes a North Korea with nuclear arms more than it dislikes a unified Korea.



Pres. Park Geun-hye, South Korea

Two developments make this a critical moment. The UN Human Rights Council is poised to take action when it meets again in March. It is expected to order an inquiry into North Korea leadership’s role in crimes against humanity. North Korea’s three biggest defenders, China, Russia and Cuba, have all stepped off the Council after serving the maxi-

imum of two consecutive three-year terms. They will be replaced by new Council members Kazakhstan, Pakistan and Venezuela. Secondly, the newly elected president of South Korea, Park Geun-hye, is open to shared development with North Korea, using a softer, carrot-and-stick approach to economic aid with the North. Park detailed her strategy in *Foreign Affairs* magazine: “In order to transform the Korean Peninsula from a zone of conflict into a zone of trust, South Korea has to adopt a policy of ‘trustpolitik,’ establishing mutually binding expectations based on global norms.” [www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/68136/park-geun-hye/a-new-kind-of-korea] Park’s trustpolitik is coupled with a New Year’s Day address by North Korea’s leader Kim Jong-un, the first such speech in person in 20 years, where he mentioned the desire for reconciliation with the people of South Korea.

The changes in the actors in both North Korea and South Korea leadership, as well as membership of the UN Human Rights Council, provided new windows of opportunity. We should not let North Korea’s outrageous statements and rocket launches distract the U.S. government and the UN Human Rights Council from the deplorable human rights situation in North Korea, which according to Navanethem Pillay, the UN high commissioner for human rights, “in one way or another affects almost the entire population and has no parallel anywhere else in the world.” §

Pax Christi calls for end to Israeli settlements

In early March, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) held its annual conference in Washington, D.C.; outside their meeting site, dozens of protesters participated in a public witness to call an end to illegal Israeli home constructions – settlements – on Palestinian land. The settlements have been a serious blow to the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians in recent years. In January, Pax Christi International, the Catholic peace movement, released the following statement. (The Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns is a member of Pax Christi International.)

Given an uncertain post-election political landscape in Israel, Pax Christi International calls attention to an issue which was largely neglected in the Israeli election campaign and is not nor looks to be a priority in the negotiations about the formation of a new Israeli government: the illegitimacy of the Israeli occupation and the continuation of the settlement policy.

1. In a recent statement, Pax Christi International urged the international community to avoid supporting in any way ... the settlement business. “In the Foreign Affairs Council of May 2012, the EU member states supported the correct labelling of Israeli settlement goods. As done by the UK and Denmark, each member state, should, as a minimum measure, come forth with concrete procedures to ensure correct labelling of all settlement products.” Pax Christi International asks the EU Foreign Affairs Council to urge its members to implement this principle of correct labeling.

2. Pax Christi International considers the above-mentioned appeal all the more relevant and urgent in

view of the Israeli announcement in December of the expansion of Jerusalem in northeastern (area E1) and southern (Bethlehem area) directions, making continuity between the northern and southern part of the West Bank increasingly problematic, and underlining Israel’s undeclared policy of making a two-state solution out of touch with reality on the ground.

3. Therefore, urgent action is needed by the international community to stop this process. In a new report the Palestinian Human Rights organization Al Haq pointed out that “although the EU repeatedly states that Israeli settlements in the West Bank are illegal under international law, it continues to allow settlement products to enter its markets. The EU is Israel’s largest trading partner, receiving about 20 percent of total Israeli exports.”

4. According to Al Haq, settlements in the Jordan Valley – the large swath of fertile agricultural land in the West Bank that is dominated by Israeli agribusiness – contribute 40 percent of herbs, 50 percent of grapes and 40 percent of dates exported by Israel. “The flourishing agricultural environment in the West Bank, particularly in the Jordan Valley area, coupled with the exploitation of water and other natural resources found in the occupied territory, has ... turned Israeli settlements into profitable corporations,” says the report.

5. Pax Christi International supports Al Haq’s statement regarding EU’s position: “As things stand, the EU is doing little more than ticking a box by acknowledging that settlements are illegal. Until they support this rhetoric with action and ensure that no assistance or recognition is provided to settlements, even indirectly, any such criticism will continue to be meaningless.”

6. While criticism by itself is a political and diplomatic fact and important, it is also clear that given the grave situation on the ground, additional urgent actions are required with regard to the settlement process.

Pax Christi International will therefore support new initiatives by international civil society towards the end of Israel’s settlements policy and the active ban of Israeli settlement products. §

Photo of activists outside AIPAC conference by Lena Ibrahim, courtesy of CodePink



Arms Trade Treaty: Pray for passage

From March 18-28, the United Nations will hold the final talks on the Arms Trade Treaty. During Holy Week, faith groups around the United States and the world will pray that a robust, strong Treaty will be signed. At stake are the lives of thousands of people massacred by arms and ammunitions traded and transferred illicitly or irresponsibly. One of the main functions of the Treaty would be to prevent atrocities and crimes against humanity. It targets nations not adhering to humanitarian law and arms brokers who make a fortune at the expense of tens of thousands of lives.

Maryknollers around the world accompany those who experience the devastation and suffering brought about by individuals and groups using weapons to terrorize. Loopholes in the international trade and transfer of weapons affect many of their ministries: For example, missionaries working to end human trafficking know that arms and ammunition are used to intimidate and control victims and those who try to help them. Those working to offer youth an alternative to gangs and drug trafficking understand that guns inundate this work. In some locations, Maryknollers work with refugees, people who are escaping armed violence often related to extractive industries and other land conflicts. Another horrendous reality linked to conventional arms and munitions are the thousands of youth kidnapped and forced to be child soldiers. South Sudan resident Elias Taban, bishop of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, himself a former child soldier, emphasizes that both weapons and ammunition

are the problem. He pleads to the world to include regulations on ammunition in the Treaty, stating that “guns are only sticks without ammunition.”

In the U.S., the National Rifle Association has circulated false and misleading information about the Treaty, namely that it would impinge upon the U.S. constitution’s second amendment, which states, “A well-regulated militia being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed.”

According to the Arms Control Association, the regulation or registration of domestic gun ownership is clearly outside the scope of the ATT: “The [treaty] was established by UN Resolution 64/48 in 2009. The resolution, which establishes the framework for negotiations, explicitly acknowledges ‘the right of States to regulate internal transfers of arms and national ownership, including through national constitutional protections on private ownership, exclusively within their territory.’”

The American Bar Association’s Human Rights Center issued a white paper indicating that the second amendment would not be affected. Find the paper here: http://www.americanbar.org/groups/human_rights.html.

Faith in action:

Check ControlArms.org for resources on promoting the ATT. Organize a prayer vigil on March 27 for a strong Arms Trade Treaty; the following day, March 28, is the closing day of the ATT talks at the UN. §

Pax Christi USA National Conference 2013 **June 14-16, Atlanta GA**

After originally planning to hold the conference in Washington, D.C., Pax Christi USA (PCUSA) national leadership decided to move the event following concerns regarding labor justice at the hotel where the conference originally was scheduled to be held. Responding to hotel workers’ request for people of conscience to boycott Hyatt Hotels, PCUSA made the decision to seek another venue and chose the Sheraton Gateway Hotel in Atlanta, GA. PCUSA is excited to be heading to Atlanta, birthplace of one of our nation’s greatest nonviolent heroes, Martin Luther King, Jr., and to celebrate PCUSA’s 40th anniversary and the 50th anniversary of *Pacem in Terris*. Learn more details at PCUSA’s website, www.paxchristiusa.org.



Immigration: Security along U.S.-Mexico border

The ongoing struggle for just and humane immigration reform in the U.S. will probably stretch out all spring; it is unlikely that legislation will be available for a vote until mid- or late May, so advocates still have time to contact members of Congress and urge support for laws that provide paths for citizenship for undocumented people in the U.S., preserve family unity, and address root causes of migration, such as persecution and economic disparity in countries of origin. A great frustration for many who work on these issues is the tendency to use “border security,” i.e. increased militarization along the U.S.-Mexico border, as a trading card for other humane immigration improvements. But what does “border security” mean? The following analysis is taken from the Latin America Working Group, of which the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns is a member.

President Obama, Congress, and a growing majority of U.S. voters agree that this country’s immigration system is broken and must be fixed. However, more than a month into the president’s second term and an unending national debate, the question remains: will anything actually happen on immigration reform? Recent events, including the February 13 Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on “Comprehensive Immigration Reform” provided us with an inkling of what we might have in store. Committee Chair Patrick Leahy (D-VT) echoed President Obama saying, “Now is the time” for immigration reform. Meanwhile, Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-AL) saw “overconfidence on this [immigration reform] bill” and asserted that he and others will continue to fight it over issues of earned legalization, enforcement, and border security. Jeff Flake (R-AZ), one of the bipartisan “Gang of Eight” senators working on their own comprehensive immigration framework, indicated support for making reform happen, he also noted that any discussions thus far include “triggers that need to be tripped in terms of border security...”

On Feb. 26, the House Committee on Homeland Security continued the immigration discussion with a hearing entitled “What does a secure border look like?” That title question cuts closer to the substantive disagreements over border security, but can it possibly be answered in such a polarized political atmosphere? Certainly no one, including border communities themselves, would propose an “insecure” or “unsafe” border, but on Capitol Hill, consensus regarding the definition of “secure” is elusive, as Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano acknowledged during the recent Senate hearing.

What do people mean when they talk about “border security”? Typically, it refers to “boots on the ground (i.e. the number of border agents) and border fencing. In past legislative proposals, Congress laid out border triggers that had to be met before other aspects of immigration reform could move forward. However, recent studies have shown that these triggers have been either met or exceeded, including those laid out by Senate Bill S. 1348, the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2007.

When asked by Congress, Secretary Napolitano has said, “Our borders have in fact never been stronger.” Plenty of numbers and statistics float around regarding the massive number of enforcement agents and infrastructure deployed at the border, but here are a few widely corroborated figures evidencing that the previously proposed border triggers have already been met, and then some.

- The U.S. government spending on border enforcement, including U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), surpassed \$17.9 billion, more than that of all other principle criminal federal law enforcement agencies combined.
- As of February 2012, the Border Patrol had 21,370 agents, exceeding the 2007 goal; and the combined staff of ICE, CBP and US-VISIT numbers 81,000 to date.
- About 651 miles of fence have been constructed along the U.S.-Mexican border, one mile short of the Secure Fence Act mandate.
- There are nine drones for air surveillance and 333 video surveillance systems on the southern border.
- Fewer and fewer non-citizens are apprehended at the border despite better surveillance—down to 365,000 in FY 2012.

These numbers should indicate that the current border trigger debate is misdirected. The focus keeps returning to personnel and unmanned aerial vehicles when these requirements have been met. The focus of a secure border should shift toward real security and safety for all involved.

In a letter sent in February to President Obama, border groups and allies, representing faith, labor, immigrant rights, and human and civil rights groups around the nation, called for a shift in U.S. border policy and a re-envisioning of the term “border security.” The groups underscored the “senselessness of continuing to build a border enforcement regime,” citing that at least 22 people have been killed or seriously injured by CBP

officials since January 2010. Such incidents of excessive use of force which continue to rise aren't going unnoticed. PBS's "Need to Know" uncovered footage in which CBP agents beat and tased Anastasio Hernandez, who died shortly thereafter. The Mexican government, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights have all urged the authorities to investigate these abuses, including incidents of excessive use of lethal force, and take steps to ensure that they do not happen again. "As employees of the nation's largest law enforcement agency," reads the letter, "CBP officials should be trained and held to the highest professional law enforcement standards." We agree. Human rights, for non-U.S. citizens as well as citizens, should not be the casualty of border security triggers.

The bipartisan Senate framework commendably includes the promise to "strengthen prohibitions against racial profiling and inappropriate use of force, enhance the training of border patrol agents, increase oversight, and create a mechanism to ensure meaningful opportunity for border communities to share input, including critiques." No question, members of border communi-



ties should be invited to testify in congressional hearings and express their concerns -- concerns which seem to be less about the number of drones and more about the lack of resources dedicated to ports of entry and how the lack of accountability over abusive enforcement officials and operations harms families and communities.

Fernando Garcia, executive director of the Border Network for Human Rights summed up the misconception of the physical border security buildup: "We are living under the massive buildup of enforcement from the last several years on the border. And while these politicians want to talk border security, they seem unwilling and unable to talk about the consequences of it. These consequences include civil and human rights violations in our communities, migrant deaths and families torn apart."

As long as any members of Congress continue to equate more boots-on-the-ground or fence as border security, the effects will continue to be harmful to border communities and environments, migrants themselves, and the progress of effective legislation to create a pathway to citizenship and shape the future of immigration in the United States. They should not allow immigration reform to be held hostage by ill-conceived, outdated triggers. §

Documented failures: Consequences of immigration policy on U.S.-Mexico border

In February, the Jesuit Conference of the United States, Jesuit Refugee Service/USA and the Kino Border Initiative published a report regarding abuses and other issues of concern related to the issue of migration along the U.S./Mexico border. The report was prepared by Michael Danielson, American University.

The executive summary of the report notes five common problems experienced by Mexican and Central American migrants before and during migration and upon apprehension, detention and deportation by U.S. migration authorities: 1. The separation of migrants from family members they were traveling with when apprehended and deported by the U.S. Border Patrol; 2. Family separation as a driver of migration and a continuing complication

for families of mixed-legal status; 3. Violence as a cause of migration and abuses and physical security threats experienced by migrants during northward journeys, border crossing, and after deportation from the United States; 4. Abuses and misconduct committed by the U.S. Border Patrol and other U.S. migration authorities; and 5. Abuses and misconduct committed by local police in Mexico.

The report shares some staggering statistics about the violence and deprivations suffered by migrants (specifically in the Nogales region), and details a number of specific suggestions for both U.S. and Mexican authorities. Find the entire report (44 pages) and its executive summary (four pages) at the Kino Border Initiative website, www.kinoborderinitiative.org.

Water: Life source, not commodity

“The lack of clean water is a major problem for millions of people in our world,” writes Maryknoll lay missionary Flavio Rocha, who lives and works in São Paulo, Brazil. In Flavio’s reflection on Jesus’ life, below, he asks how Jesus would respond to the ways in which water has been privatized and polluted. The article continues with some of the suggestions for action put forward by the Global Concerns committee of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) and by faith-based organizations working with Congress to promote safe drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH).

Growing up in a semi-arid region, Jesus knew the importance of water for his people. No wonder he refers to water in countless metaphors in his teachings. A few examples are his conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well when he was thirsty and his first miracle transforming water to wine at the wedding at Cana.

One of the first acts in his mission was to be baptized by John. This act is full of symbolism. Jesus humbled himself to be in solidarity with the people that John was baptizing, the less fortunate in that society. Today, the site of Jesus’ baptism, the Jordan River, is suffering. Every day sewage is dumped into it from nearby cities, and plantations’ irrigation canals deplete its water. Today, it would be difficult for John to baptize anyone in this slowly dying river.

Jesus chose to live in Capernaum, near the Sea of Galilee, a lake where scores of people who Jesus accompanied made their living as subsistence fishermen. Currently this lake – which served as the setting for so much of Christ’s preaching – is being destroyed by plantation agriculture that both drains its water for irrigation and pollutes it with agro-toxins. Because they are sources for the Dead Sea, unchecked water siphoning from this lake and the Jordan River have caused the Dead Sea levels to drop one meter of water each year.

Water is a symbol of commitment in Christianity. It is essential for all life on the planet, but it has been privatized, sold, polluted and seen as any other commodity in our society. How would Jesus respond to this model of development? How can Christians challenge this situation and make water the fountain of life and not the cause of death?

Sr. Kathleen Ries, CSA, president, Board of Directors, UNANIMA International (an NGO comprised

of 17 congregations of Roman Catholic sisters) writes about the right to water in “Resolutions to Action” by the LCWR Global Concerns Committee: “Water has a double-edged dynamic: beneficial/destructive; clean/polluted; and wasted/conserved. Water occupies a complex place in the global community.” On water commodification, Ries states that the story changes depending on whether one is talking about an industrialized country like the U.S. where people will pay for water services and a less industrialized country where people cannot afford the connection charges required by the private provider.



Ries gives the example of Bolivia where people could not afford the connection charges required by the privately owned provider. “Some 200,000 people in Cochabamba, a quarter of the population, were not connected. After street protests and riots resulting in killings, the government cancelled the agreement with Bechtel and United Utilities.”

Ries reflects that “water must be recognized as a human right and a critical environmental issue. To ensure that everyone has access to safe drinking water and sanitation, several measures need to be taken: guarantee the right to water; decentralize the responsibility for water management to local and regional agents; develop communication networks to provide up-to-date information to people at the local level; Increase and improve financing for infrastructure and sanitation maintenance; train local populations in water harvesting; and develop eco-sanitation—turning waste into a resource.”

She concludes saying that “the need is clear; the issue is critical. What is lacking is the political will to address these difficult issues and to secure the financing necessary to address them.

U.S. advocates for WASH focus on the Senator Paul Simon Water for the World Act, which seeks to apply lessons learned by improving U.S. programming for safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene education in order to ensure that taxpayer dollars are used in the most effective and efficient manner and provide the greatest benefit to people in need.

Faith in action:

World Water Advocacy Day is March 22; learn more at www.unwater.org. Read *Blue Covenant: Global Water Crisis and Fight for the Right to Water* by Maude Barlow; available on Amazon and other book sites. §

Climate: Rally to challenge Keystone XL

The following report was written by Sr. Mary Ann Smith, MM, who, with other Maryknoll missionaries, Affiliates and staff members from the Global Concerns office, joined a multi-faith contingent organized by Sojourners and Interfaith Power and Light at the February 17 rally on climate change in Washington, D.C., attended by tens of thousands of people.

It was a clear, cold and windy day which would have prevented less informed and committed people from standing, jumping and marching for four hours. A roster of inspiring speakers and organizers reinforced the reasons why a line in the sand has been drawn to demand that President Obama block the Keystone XL pipeline and move forward toward responsible climate action. Participants circled the White House and back to the Washington Monument for a final send off to continue the struggle to protect our fragile planet for present and future generations. Standing in the midst of those who came often at great expense and sacrifice to support a cause much greater than any individual or group was challenging and inspiring.

Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) urged participants to keep the pressure on their legislators to demand

responsible action on climate change. Congress, he said, is sleepwalking through this crisis and that is unacceptable and unconscionable. Billionaire investor Tom Steyer laid out reasons why Keystone XL is a bad investment. Chief Jackie Thomas of the Saik'uz people spoke about the toll tar sands development has on her neighbors and the tribal lands that are being destroyed in Canada. Van Jones said that Keystone XL will be the only decision of President Obama's presidency that will matter 20 years from now. These and other speakers spoke loud and clear about the urgency of the climate crisis.

"By itself, Keystone won't have much of an impact on the climate, but it is not happening on its own. The Keystone XL is part of the carbon infrastructure that will take us to dangerous levels of climate change," says Simon Donner, a climate scientist at the University of British Columbia. The only way that could be true is if "national interest" is equated with profits for the oil industry, according to Steve Kretzman of Oil Change International. Since the pipeline crosses international borders the president must sign a permit declaring it serves the "national interest." (Quote source: "Climate rally draws 'line in the sand' on Canadian pipeline," Stephen Leahy, Inter Press Service.) §

Our lunch counter moment

Following are excerpts from a reflection written by Ted Glick, National Campaign Coordinator of the Chesapeake Climate Action Network.

Rev. Lennox Yearwood, leader of the Hip Hop Caucus ... talks all the time about this being the climate movement's "lunch counter moment." And, thank God, it looks like he has been prophetic.

"Lunch counter moment" refers to the point in 1960 when the African-American freedom movement took off. It did so when young black people all over the South began sitting in at segregated public lunch counters, refusing to leave until served. For these actions, they were beaten, spat upon, arrested and more by white racists and racist power structures, but their courage and nonviolent direct action galvanized a south-wide and then national movement which, five years later, forced the federal government to pass a Civil Rights Act and Voting Rights Act outlawing legal segregation. ...

[A few reasons why the February 17 rally in Washington, D.C. possibly can be considered the climate movement's lunch counter moment:]

Unity: The Sierra Club is to be commended for their

courage in calling for this action right after the November election and for the resources which they threw into it, as is 350.org, the Hip Hop Caucus and many of the 168 organizations that both formally supported it and worked hard to mobilize. ...

Diverse leadership: [Speakers included] Rev. Yearwood; ... Canadian First Nation leaders Chief Jacqueline Thomas and Crystal Lameman, and Van Jones ... Although the crowd did not have the full diversity needed, it is important that the surging climate movement is supporting and bringing forward leadership coming out of communities of color on this issue.

Not just the pipeline: The ... Keystone XL pipeline was the prime issue that brought this effort together, but it was much more. It was a vision of a future where our energy sources are clean, renewable and democratically controlled by the people, not dirty fossil fuel, corporate honchos. It is a vision which opposes all of the extreme energy extraction industrial processes: mountaintop removal, oil drilling in the Arctic ocean and in deep water offshore, fracking, as well as tar sands. Everyone understands that victory on the pipeline is just the first step, the turning point, towards what we urgently need.

Multi-tactical: Finally, it was striking to experience the activities which took place in the week leading up to February 17. It began with a civil disobedience action on [Feb. 13], close to 50 people locking themselves to the White House fence, highlighted by Sierra Club leader Mike Brune taking part, the first time in their 120-year history that they have done so. The next day, with Bill McKibben and Mike Brune there to offer words of support, U.S. Senators Bernie Sanders and Barbara Boxer publicly announced their introduction of a “gold stan-

dard’ fee-and-dividend bill that Boxer hopes will go to the floor of the Senate this summer...

The students who sat in at the lunch counters in February 1960 ... were clear that to defeat segregation they would need to engage in essentially non-stop organizing and action. Today’s climate movement must do the same, and more need to figure out how they can do more on a personal level. We need to step up nationally coordinated actions at the scale of the problem, this year, this spring. ... §

Climate: Carbon pricing controversy

In his 2013 State of the Union address, President Obama committed to fighting climate change, and referred to a bipartisan market-based solution. This is essentially a cap-and-trade system, not unlike the failing Emissions Trading System (ETS) implemented in the European Union (EU) in 2005. As the EU seeks ways to reform the ETS, and the U.S. considers implementing a similar system, it is important to identify the failures of market-based solutions to climate change.

On February 19 the EU voted to reform the ETS despite civil society’s critique that the ETS has increased carbon emissions and diverted attention from our collective need to transition away from fossil fuel dependency to alternative energy sources. In a joint declaration, over 125 civil society groups identified key structural flaws in the ETS and called on the EU to abolish the system in order to open space for truly effective climate policies.

A serious flaw with the ETS is the use of offset projects which allow Western companies or governments to buy carbon credits from a project in the south instead of reducing emissions at source. Isaac Rojas, Friends of the Earth Latin America and the Caribbean, states that “offset projects ... [have] actually increased emissions while causing land grabs and human rights violations, community displacements, conflicts and increased local environmental destruction.” But, in spite of growing evidence of the problems, offset use in the ETS grew by eight percent in 2011 alone.

Unfortunately, the EU ETS failures will now be exported to other countries. China plans to link a similar national system to the EU ETS, and Brazil, South Korea, Australia, the state of California and the province of Quebec are looking for ways to implement the model.

In their declaration in February, the civil society organizations conclude: “It is time to look at the facts and figures and stop fixating on ‘price’ as a driver for change.

We need to scrap the ETS and implement fair climate policies that work for the climate by making the necessary transition away from fossil fuel dependency.”

As the U.S. administration looks for ways to address climate change it is important that President Obama also reminded Congress in his State of the Union that he did not have to wait for Congress to act. Truly there are several ways that the president could make more of an impact than any cap and trade system would make.

First and foremost, his administration has the authority to deny TransCanada’s request for permission to build the Keystone XL pipeline to carry toxic tar sand oil across several U.S. states to polluting refineries in the Gulf of Mexico (see related article on page 15).

Secondly, through the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) President Obama could regulate power plants. The EPA has power and tools to regulate new and existing power plants and industrial plants that emit greenhouse gasses including methane, nitrous oxide and soot. This has been true since the Supreme Court ruled in 2007 that greenhouse gasses are pollutants.

Thirdly, the Obama administration could curb natural gas exports. An immediate way of doing this would be to direct the U.S. Trade Representative to withdraw from negotiations on the Trans Pacific Partnership, which would open exports of natural gas from the U.S. to Asian countries. Additionally, the Department of Energy can reject licenses for oil and gas industry to expand their export of liquid natural gas to countries with which we do not already have free trade agreements.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the administration could instruct the climate team at the State Department to negotiate a global climate deal in good faith. It would make a huge impact in our global community if the United States returned to the negotiating table ready to compromise in order to reach international consensus for a strong and equitable 2015 climate treaty. §

Slowing climate change by working less

The following piece is written by Jennifer Svetlik who currently is working with the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns' Faith-Economy-Ecology project.

To adequately address the climate crisis, a vast global mobilization is needed to urgently and radically reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This effort, according to economist David Rosnick at the Center for Economic and Policy Research (CEPR), could include reducing work hours.

In the report released in February, *Reduced work hours as a means of slowing climate change* (found at <http://tinyurl.com/WorkHoursClimateChange>), Rosnick estimates that a reduction in work hours by .05 percent annually through the rest of the century “would eliminate one-quarter to one-half of the global warming that is not already locked in.”

Productivity is increasing in many parts of the world, and Rosnick demarcates the response of Europe (shorter work weeks and more vacation days) and that of the U.S. (increased consumption) over the past 30 years.

While stating that the variables are complex and the association not fully understood, previous studies also “have found that shorter work hours are associated with lower greenhouse gas emissions and therefore less global climate change,” Rosnick notes.

A 0.5 percent decrease in work hours annually from 2013 to 2100 would mean that, beginning at a baseline of 40 hours per week for 50 weeks annually, by 2100 the work week would be 30 hours per week with seven additional weeks of vacation.

He suggests that the negative economic effects of reduced work hours are minimal because of their additional positive effects. For example, reducing work hours may increase hourly productivity and the employed percent of the population. Higher levels of employment can in turn reduce the cost of unemployment benefits. At the same time, lower levels of production will reduce greenhouse gas emissions through keeping factories and office buildings open less.

The report offers calculations based on four scenarios included by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's 2007 assessment which describe various projected progressions of the global economy. Rosnick's calculations seek to determine the climate's response

when increased leisure time is introduced into the various scenarios. He suggests that while 40-70 percent of future warming is already locked in, reducing work hours, alongside other policy changes, would have a substantial effect on the amount of warming humans can still influence.

The way workers spend additional leisure time is a significant variable not addressed in the report. Leisure time dedicated to biking rather than driving, to gardening and purchasing from the farmers market, for example, would further contribute to reducing emissions.

Leisure involving increased airplane travel, of course, would have the opposite effect.

Rosnick asserts that reducing work hours would be difficult in countries with high levels of inequality, where such policies would mean that the majority of workers would face reduced living standards as a result. In the U.S. “just shy of two-thirds of all income gains from 1973-2007 went to the top one percent of households” he notes. Those households could easily absorb a reduction in wages associated with reduced work hours, but many households could not.

The problems with economic inequality, those related to morality and to social and economic stability, have received more media attention in the past two years, but have yet to be addressed meaningfully through policy efforts. The challenges of enacting a reduced work policy in a highly unequal society only further highlight that economic inequality in the United States must be urgently addressed.

Furthermore, for people of faith, increased leisure for workers should be of concern. The command to honor the Sabbath seeks to limit work and provides both an opportunity and an obligation to rest, reflect, and offer thanks. A rhythm of life which includes rest, prayer, time with loved ones, and participation in community life is a God-ordained right to which every worker should be entitled. Jesus' practices of going away for reflection and enjoying frequent meals with friends should be an example that each worker has an opportunity to emulate.

Reduced work hours and increased leisure can have positive benefits for families, communities, and, according to Rosnick's report, the environment. Creative policy solutions such as reducing work hours should be brought to the forefront of the conversation on addressing climate change. §



Photo by Steve Rhodes

Shareholder advocacy on climate continues

In the 1980s, when members of the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR) first began talking to companies about global warming, they urged companies to adopt the “precautionary principle” as the science was still in debate. At the same time, members asked companies to leave the Global Climate Coalition, an industry association that was discrediting climate science and actively opposing calls for reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

Shareholder advocacy calling on corporations to be accountable for their GHG emissions and to take steps to address climate change continues. In 2012, ICCR members filed 28 climate-related shareholder proposals for the 2012-13 shareholder proxy season. Several proposals focus on obvious industries like extractives and utilities. Others, targeting big box retailers, food retailers, the energy-intensive IT sector, and the financial services sector – with its power to drive investments in green energy solutions – move into new territory.

While climate change resolutions have garnered increasing support over the years, industry as a whole has been slow to adopt meaningful changes in spite of intensifying weather events and the documented savings that result from a reduced carbon footprint. ICCR members are exhorting shareowners to exercise their votes this proxy season in order to send a signal to management that heel dragging on climate change will no longer be tolerated.

Shareholders filed proposals at ExxonMobil and ConocoPhillips calling for the companies to adopt goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in their operations and products.

Chevron and ExxonMobil received proposals requesting a report on their disaster risk management and the adaptation steps they are taking to reduce exposure and vulnerability to climate change.

Natural gas producers Oneok, Range Resources and Spectra were asked to deal with the problem of methane leakage by measuring, mitigating and disclosing methane emissions and setting emission reduction targets.

Shareholders called on Continental Resources, with operations in the huge Bakken shale oilfield in North Dakota, to adopt goals to reduce/eliminate flaring in all its operations and facilities.

IBM, which has invested in re-

ducing carbon emission from its own operations, but has fallen behind other IT companies by not having targets to increase sourcing of renewable energy, is urged to set company-wide targets to increase renewable energy sources and/or productions.

The financial sector was also addressed. PNC Bank, which finances four of the top nine coal companies involved in mountain top removal mining, received a proposal calling on the bank to assess the GHG emissions resulting from its lending portfolio and its exposure to climate change risk. Shareholders asked the board of JP Morgan Chase, one of the largest financiers of energy worldwide and the leading underwriter in the global coal industry, to give an assessment of, and develop programs to address, the greenhouse gas emissions related to its lending, financing and investing portfolios.

Dean Foods, Yum! Brands and Starbucks received proposals requesting the companies adopt and implement a comprehensive sustainable palm oil policy. Deforestation and the burning of peatlands caused by industrial palm oil production is one of the main reasons that Indonesia is now the third largest global emitter of greenhouse gases.

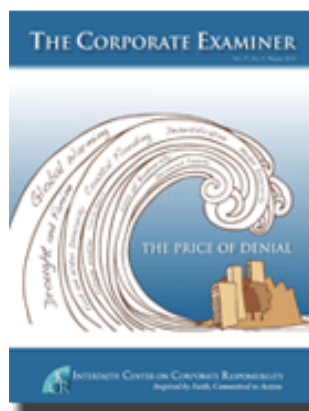
Starwood Hotels, Men’s Warehouse, Gentex, Emerson, Simpson Manufacturing and Coherent, Inc. were among the companies getting shareholder proposals calling for sustainability report that describe the company’s environmental, social and governance performance including greenhouse gas reduction targets and goals.

Sr. Patricia Daly of the TriState Coalition for Responsible Investment and a leader in ICCR’s climate efforts, said: “Climate change is a moral issue for many, but particularly so for the religious investors at ICCR who have made it a priority since the 1980s. While some companies we engage, like ExxonMobil, clearly lag behind their peers, there are others, like Ford, that are setting the bar for their sectors on emissions targets and

on new product development. As a result of ICCR’s advocacy, climate risk calculations and GHG reduction targets are now accepted industry norms.”

ICCR calls on shareowners to use their voices and their votes to push for stricter GHG reduction goals and to accelerate investments in renewable energy.

For more information on the history of shareholder advocacy and climate change, see the ICCR Corporate Examiner issue, “The Price of Denial” which can be downloaded for free at <http://www.iccr.org>. §



Resources

- 1) **Praying *Pacem in Terris*: A prayer, study, action guide from Pax Christi USA:** Pope John XXIII's encyclical *Pacem in Terris* (Peace on Earth) helped to root the growing Catholic peace movement in the United States and gave birth to Pax Christi USA 10 years after it was written. On PCUSA's 40th anniversary and the 50th anniversary of *Pacem in Terris*, PCUSA has designed a prayer, study, action process that interweaves the encyclical with its four initiatives. This free resource includes a leader's guide, background sheet, reference sheet, prayer services for four months, discussion questions, and action suggestions. Go to the Pax Christi USA website to download the "Praying *Pacem in Terris*" resource.
- 2) **Way of the Cross for Economic and Ecological Justice:** Based on the Economic Way of the Cross, written by the Religious Working Group on the World Bank/IMF, this updated version is meant to provide a prayerful way to walk the steps of Jesus in this time of financial and ecological crisis. Similarly to past Economic Ways of the Cross, each station symbolizes institutional roots of this suffering in government, in transnational corporations, in international financial institutions, in trade agreements, macroeconomic policies and financial transactions that give shape to economic activity around the world. Download a copy from the MOGC website, or contact the office: <http://www.maryknollogc.org/way-cross-economic-and-ecological-justice>.
- 3) **SOA Watch lobby days, April 8-10:** The School of the Americas Watch movement will return to D.C. to take the message that "We are One America" to the lawmakers and politicians in the halls of power. SOA Watch voices echoed the millions of people in the Americas who are creating change. Activists are encouraged to start planning your trip to Washington and to set up meetings with your members of Congress today. Check the SOA Watch website for more information: www.soaw.org.
- 4) **Global Day of Action on military spending, April 15:** As part of a Global Day of Action on military spending, people around the world will raise awareness about the imbalance between military and social spending. In 2011, global military spending surged to \$1.74 trillion. Given the numerous crises facing the planet - economic, environmental, health, diplomatic - a vibrant global movement is needed to shift this money to meet urgent human and environmental human needs. In 2012, about 100 events took place in more than 40 countries: videos, powerful public displays, performances, press conferences, seminars. To follow what is planned in your area this year, or to get involved, go to <http://demilitarize.org/action-events/>.
- 5) **President for a day:** This new interactive web game was developed by ActionAid USA -- users have an opportunity to make policy choices to end the global food crisis while playing the role of U.S. president for one day. Complete a quiz comprised of colorful graphics and interactive images representing various policy choices that impact food security. At the end of the quiz, a newspaper is generated with headlines demonstrating the combined outcome of the entries. The game demonstrates to wider audiences how corn ethanol mandates, climate change, foreign aid, and agricultural models impact food security. Find it at www.presidentforaday.com.
- 6) **Foodopoly: The battle over the future of food and farming in America,** a new book by Wenonah Hauter of Food & Water Watch, presents a shocking account of how agricultural policy has been hijacked by lobbyists, driving out independent farmers and food processors in favor of companies like Cargill, Tyson, Kraft, and ConAgra. From economic stagnation in rural communities at home to famines in poor countries overseas, the crisis will require a complete structural shift: a grassroots movement to reshape our food system from seed to table. Learn more at www.foodopoly.org.
- 7) **Hidden lives: The untold story of urban refugees:** This project uses photographs, refugee testimonies, and video to document the reality that over half the world's refugees now live in large towns and cities. The traditional image of life in tented, sprawling camps no longer tells the full refugee story. As urbanization reshapes much of the world, refugees too are increasingly moving to large towns and cities, where vulnerabilities and potential humanitarian crises. Photographer Andrew McConnell spent months documenting this new reality in eight countries: U.S., Haiti, Great Britain, Jordan, Burundi, Kenya, Malaysia, and Thailand. See video clips and learn more about the exhibit at www.hidden-lives.org.uk.