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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.*

## Shifting to inclusive human security

The current public debate about the role of the United States in the world is deeply disturbing. As we write, this debate is centered on the practice of torture and whether or not there are circumstances when the physical or psychological violation of detainees is justified (see page 22). A narrow definition of security, including national security, and a determination to maintain our “right” to wasteful lifestyles are driving this discussion.

We believe that U.S. foreign policy and the values that shape it urgently need radical transformation. During 2006, our opening reflections in *NewsNotes* will develop the Global Good Neighbor proposal introduced in our May-June 2005 issue, attempting to reframe the foreign policy conversation, especially around national security.

We do so, remembering that exactly 40 years ago, on December 7, 1965, the Second Vatican Council, in the opening words of The Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World, called us as Catholic Christians to global solidarity: *The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men [sic] of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts...*

Three months ago we watched a painful drama unfold in New Orleans that brought to the surface deep frustration and anger – and spectacular beauty. Immediately, there arose across the country – around the world – a gut level sense that life was precious and that everyone had a right to a dignified rescue from that dreadful situation. When it became evident that some people were much more vulnerable to the ravages of nature than others – that poverty (with its roots in racism) was the determining factor in how one fared, people across the country – around the world – were outraged. Their griefs and anxieties became ours.

To remember these moments and others like them is crucial. They contain the seeds of right relationship, even global solidarity – and for the United States, perhaps a new way of being in the world.

Deep in the human heart, we believe, is an indelible sense of the value of each human life and an instinct for solidarity that accompanies, responds to, needs to shape our approach to security, and our perspective on all dimensions of U.S. foreign policy including the use of torture..

According to theologian Bryan Massingale, “Security in the biblical worldview is an outcome of pursuing [a] more comprehensive vision of shalom. When shalom is established through the pursuit of justice, then true security is found...Security is a state of being that flows from the inclusion of all in the bounty of the earth.” Inclusive human security, as opposed to national security or personal financial security, guarantees access to food, clean water, healthcare, education and employment *for all*. It recognizes the right of people to deep democracy – to participate in important political, economic and environmental decisions that affect their lives and it respects the integrity of creation.

This kind of security – inclusive human security – would emerge from international cooperation to meet the basic needs of all people in a manner that nurtures right relationships within the community of all life – human and beyond.

Specifically, we need to shift from one definition of security to the other:

... from pursuing security by building higher walls and stronger fences, hiring fiercer guards, inventing more powerful weapons systems, or dominating the global economy

... to pursuing security through the adoption of a new cosmivision that sees and values the whole community of life – and through collaborative attention to ensuring that the basic needs of all human beings everywhere are met.

Such a shift in the paradigm or framework in which we discuss U.S. foreign policy is the basis for *A Global Good Neighbor Ethic for International Relations* (see [www.irc-online.org](http://www.irc-online.org)).

These are times defined by globalization with all that phenomenon implies; by excessive wealth concentrated in the hands of a small minority in almost every country of the world and intransigent poverty lived by a global majority; by increasingly evident ecological catastrophe; and by a growing awareness of the intrinsic interconnectedness of humans with each other and with the rest of creation.

U.S. foreign policy must be based on reciprocity rather than domination, mutual well-being rather than cutthroat competition, and cooperation rather than confrontation. The impact of such a shift on national security policy, budget priorities, immigration policy, trade policy, the PATRIOT Act, energy policy, foreign aid, and on and on would be tremendous.

## Middle East: Pope becomes citizen of Bethlehem

*Pope Benedict XVI has become an honorary citizen of Bethlehem. Mahmoud Abbas, president of the Palestinian Authority, presented him with a Bethlehem "passport" on Dec. 3 in the Vatican. The passport is part of the Open Bethlehem project, launched Nov. 9 to help attract tourists and investment to the ancient city (see [www.openbethlehem.org](http://www.openbethlehem.org)).*

The economy of both the West Bank and Gaza has been devastated by restrictions under the Israeli occupation. Bethlehem, whose major industry is tourism, has been cut off from East Jerusalem and other Palestinian communities by checkpoints and barriers, including a concrete wall 27 feet high.

The number of visitors to Bethlehem has drastically declined. Tourists visiting the city reportedly dropped from about 91,000 per month in 2000 to slightly more than 7,000 per month last year. Meanwhile, the number of people employed in the local hotel trade fell by 75 percent.

The economic doldrums have also fueled Palestinian emigration, especially among Christians. An estimated 3,000 Christians have left the Bethlehem area since 2000, many for the U.S., Canada or Australia. Overall, some 10 percent of the Christians in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza have emigrated in the past decade, leaving about 45,000, according to Bernard Sabella, a sociologist at Bethlehem University.

About 4,500 Muslims have also left Bethlehem in recent years, but their rate of departure has not been as high as that of Christians. "Turbulent times – these are pushing people out. It's not religion," Sabella says.

Former Bethlehem Mayor Hanna Nasser says the city was more than 90 percent Christian at the time of Israel's war of independence in 1948. By some estimates Christians comprise less than a quarter of Bethlehem's present population of 30,000. If the trend continues, Nasser says, "I'm afraid we'll come and see nothing but stones here – the stones of the churches, but no people."

The Open Bethlehem project is trying to reverse the city's economic decline, which could also help stem emigration. (The project's headquarters are at Bethlehem University, and it has offices in Washington, D.C., and London.) A citation on its new "passport" declares that honorary citizenship is open to those who "uphold the values of a just and open society (and) remain a true friend of Bethlehem, through its imprisonment."

Bethlehem today is "an open-air prison," says Leila

Sansour, the project's chief executive. "Over 400 entire Christian families have emigrated from the city in the last four years," she says. "We cannot allow the depopulation of Bethlehem and the erosion of a 2,000 year-old heritage that anchors Christianity in the Middle East."

Besides promoting tourism and investment, the Open Bethlehem project encourages Palestinians in the diaspora to return home – an idea that appealed to the present mayor. Victor Batarseh returned to Bethlehem after living for years in the U.S. The 70-year-old surgeon, a Catholic, was elected last May.

The posts of mayor and vice mayor are reserved for Christians under an agreement that dates back to Ottoman rule. The mayor is always a Catholic, and the vice mayor is an Orthodox Christian.

One member of the Palestinian diaspora, businessman Mike Odetalla, was 9 when his family moved to the U.S. in 1969. A native of Beit Hanina, just north of Jerusalem, and a Muslim, Odetalla recalls participating in Christmas festivities in Dearborn, MI.

"One of my favorite carols, since that early childhood, has always been 'Silent Night,' for it carries a pertinent message – one that sums up the atmosphere at the time of Christ's birth and reflects the true spirit of Christmas today," he says. But he adds, "While I happily participated in these activities, it always seemed that my teachers, and the world, did all they could to deny the Palestinian connection to this blessed holiday."

"For [many people], it was always about Israel," he explains. "Time and time again, I heard people say how nice it would be to visit the Israeli town of Bethlehem, ignoring the fact that Bethlehem is a Palestinian town, and Palestinian Christians and Muslims live there, tormented and imprisoned under the brutal military occupation of Israel."

Today, he says, Bethlehem is ringed by Jewish settlements – "virtually cut off from the rest of Palestine, its lands, water and other resources expropriated by the Israelis in a relentless effort to make life ever more unbearable for the Palestinian natives and refugees who call the village home."

While Israel claims the barrier is necessary for its security, it remains controversial. When Maria Dubiel, visiting from Poland, passed through the barrier to enter Bethlehem, she said, "It's like the Berlin wall. We are from Eastern Europe, and we know this kind of wall. We had such a wall between capitalism and communism. It is not necessary. It introduces misery."

## Middle East: Olive harvesters met with violence

*While peace negotiations hold out the promise of an olive branch between Israelis and Palestinians, peace proved elusive during the recent olive harvest in the occupied West Bank as many Palestinian farmers once again reaped only violence.*

Peace negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians had recently shown signs of progress. For instance, the border crossing at Rafah between the Gaza Strip and Egypt passed from Israeli to Palestinian control on Nov. 26. Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas hailed the event as signifying that “the Gaza Strip will not be a big prison.”

Well inside the West Bank, however, Israel’s separation barrier isolates many West Bank farmers and shepherds from their land. In some incidents their olive crop is stolen, their olive trees are destroyed, or they face intimidation and violence from settlers as IDF (Israel Defense Forces) soldiers stand passively by.

A 44-year-old Palestinian farmer, Kamal Shabaneh, described violent harassment during the harvest to B’Tselem, the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories. He said 10 Israeli women aged 16-18, most of them carrying knives, appeared one afternoon near Ramallah during the harvest. He said they cut open eight sacks of olives and also beat women in his group including Shabaneh’s mother with sticks, fracturing her arm. Ultimately six of the women were arrested. Over the next two days, 15 Israeli volunteers from a peace movement came and helped with the harvest.

Khalil Jaber, a 45-year-old farmer near Nablus, told B’Tselem he was accosted as he harvested olives by a settler who told him, “These olive trees are mine. Why are you here? They have belonged to my parents for years.” The settler allegedly struck Jaber with the butt of his rifle, breaking or damaging several bones in his face. Jaber was hospitalized for two weeks.

“(T)he amount of destruction that (residents of illegal outposts) manage to wreak – with no interference – on Palestinian olive groves is mind-boggling,” the Haaretz daily newspaper ([www.haaretz.com](http://www.haaretz.com)) said Nov. 30. “In the village of Salem alone, some 180 olive trees

were torched in May, while 250 trees were chopped down in July, and another 200 in October. ... In total, some 900 olive trees have been destroyed in Salem alone over the last half year.

“The destruction of olive trees is not just a mortal blow to the livelihood of rural Palestinians; it is primarily an evil act that reflects a desire to assail one of the most prominent symbols of the Palestinians’ hold on the land and an attempt to prove that the settlers indeed intend to inherit these lands and expel their inhabitants,” Haaretz continued. “But the destruction of these trees also symbolizes the apathy, not to say criminal disregard, for the settlers’ actions. The harm done to the trees is just the tip of the iceberg of the ongoing abuse that the outpost residents inflict on their neighbors. ... A spokesman for the Samaria and Judea [Biblical names for the West Bank] Police claims that 672 files have been opened about disturbances of the peace by Israelis against Palestinians, but this sizable number says nothing about the results. Most cases are eventually closed....”

“The Shin Bet security service, which is capable of capturing a wanted man hiding in the heart of a populous Palestinian city, would surely have no difficulty locating a few dozen Israelis who chop down 200 olive trees in broad daylight, with no interference, and then pack up their tools and go back to their illegal houses in an illegal outpost,” Haaretz said. “...One crime leads to another, and violence leads to more violence.”

More than 100 members of Congress signed a letter commending Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice for helping to broker the Israeli-Palestinian agreement on the border crossing at Rafah, and they urged her to continue to make peace between Israelis and Palestinians a priority in 2006. The agreement over Rafah was seen as an important step forward toward improving the Palestinian economy, increasing Israel’s security and fostering greater cooperation.

Meanwhile, intentional damage and bodily injury to Palestinians – like that committed during the olive harvest, seemingly with impunity – seem a far cry from the peace and harmony prophesied by the Psalmist (128:1,3): “Happy are all who fear the Lord ... you will be happy and prosper ... like olive plants your children around your table.”



## Iraq: NETWORK urges U.S. constituent action

*NETWORK, a national Catholic social justice lobby, has urged the U.S. to ensure the delivery of basic public services in Iraq, to use highly trained Iraqis in the reconstruction of their country, and to declare U.S. intent to withdraw all U.S. forces and bases from Iraq. It also called on constituents to promote this policy in district meetings with their senators and representatives during January. NETWORK's five-point agenda for peace in Iraq through economic development, summarized below, was developed with the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL). It is posted at [www.networklobby.org](http://www.networklobby.org).*

The U.S. must first invest in Iraqi workers for reconstruction before issuing contracts to U.S. corporations, NETWORK says. It notes that many Iraqi citizens were highly educated in engineering and reconstruction in the U.S. and Europe. "U.S. and multinational corporations do not need to be the prime contractors or the beneficiaries of the reconstruction contracts," NETWORK says. "If they maintain their prime status as contractors, it will continue to be obvious to the Iraqi people that the U.S. is primarily interested in supporting U.S. business and not in the reconstruction of Iraq."

Second, the U.S. must make reconstruction of Iraq's infrastructure, including electricity and water, a priority. During 12 years of economic sanctions, Iraqi engineers repaired water purification, sewage treatment and electricity generating plants – damaged by U.S. bombs in the first Gulf war – as best they could. "However, since the 2003 invasion electricity generation is lower than pre-war levels," NETWORK says. "More than two years after the invasion electricity and safe water continue to be in short supply... Iraqis working in the reconstruction of utilities is likely to increase employment and decrease violence."

Third, the U.S. should maintain Iraqi economic structures intended to deliver basic services. "Democracy is not the same as free market capitalism," NETWORK explains, adding that, with Iraq's oil wealth, the government used to provide free or low-cost water, electricity, education and health care. "In order to support the Iraqis' unique form of democracy," NETWORK says, "the United States should maintain the existing economic structure... Thus, none of the previously government-run programs (including oil) should be privatized by the United States or the transitional

government."

Fourth, NETWORK focuses on food distribution as a special priority. During the years of sanctions, the Iraqi government tried to guarantee minimal nutrition to its citizens through food rations. CARE estimated in 2002 that the rations were the only food source for 40 percent of the population; and another 20 percent relied on the rations as a principal source of food. "Without a reliable food supply, people become more desperate and more prone to violence," NETWORK says. "Providing food on a regular basis is a small step toward creating a real peace."

Fifth, NETWORK says Congress should declare that it is U.S. policy to withdraw all American troops and bases from Iraq. It calls on the U.S. to "cease offensive military operations immediately and begin withdrawal of combat troops." NETWORK says many insurgent groups have expressed a willingness to dialogue if the U.S. declares its intention to withdraw from Iraq. "Only by making the long-term position of the United States unambiguous will the Iraqi people have faith in their nascent government," NETWORK says. "Then the U.S. must begin the withdrawal of combat troops to evidence our commitment to this point."

In an earlier document, NETWORK and FCNL proposed a three-point SMART (Sensible, Multilateral, American Response to Terrorism) security platform for the 21st century (see [http://www.networklobby.org/issues/smart\\_endorsement.form.pdf](http://www.networklobby.org/issues/smart_endorsement.form.pdf)). It urges multilateral diplomacy and support for international institutions such as the UN to help resolve international conflicts. It also calls for the rejection of unilateral preemptive war, and it recommends more funding for humanitarian programs to address the root causes of terrorism.

### **Faith in action:**

NETWORK urges constituents to contact their senators and congressional representatives and to visit them in their home districts during the first three weeks of January, if possible. It asks constituents to leave lawmakers with both documents summarized above: NETWORK's five-point agenda for peace in Iraq through economic development, and its earlier SMART security platform. Further suggestions for the meetings with legislators can be found at [www.networklobby.org](http://www.networklobby.org)

## Burma: Illegal timber trade impoverishes country

*The ruling junta in Burma risks serious environmental damage to the country by allowing China and Thailand to plunder its virgin hardwood forests, a British nongovernmental organization (NGO) says.*

After suffering major flooding and loss of life in recent years, both China and Thailand imposed logging bans at home. Nevertheless, in 2004-2005 Burma exported forest products valued at nearly \$428 million – 15 percent of all exports – making it the country's second most important export commodity, according to Global Witness ([www.globalwitness.org](http://www.globalwitness.org)).

In 1989, after a series of natural disasters attributed to logging had killed hundreds, Thailand's Prime Minister Chatichai Choonhavan announced a domestic logging ban. The government soon decided to increase its import of logs from Burma and Laos to make up the shortfall.

Flooding in 1996 and 1997 cost China's Yunnan Province an estimated \$1 billion in losses. In the following year severe flooding along the Yangtze River affected one-fifth of China's population, killing more than 3,600 people. The floods led to a nationwide logging ban in 1998. Since then, China has become the world's second largest timber importer after Japan.

Global Witness highlighted Burma's timber trade in its October report, "A Choice for China – Ending the destruction of Burma's northern frontier forests." The British NGO focuses on the link between conflict, corruption and natural resource exploitation.

The timber trade causes tension along the Burma-China border. "The local ethnic population of Burma's border areas still derive little if any benefit from the logging and more often than not are left poorer as a result," the NGO reports. "Widespread discontent and renewed instability on the border with China has occurred in recent years as local ceasefire groups seek to regain popular support and struggle for control of the valuable forest areas that remain."

Global Witness estimates that 98 percent of the multi-million-dollar timber trade between Burma and China is illegal, breaking both Burmese laws and Chinese customs and quarantine laws.

"On average, one log truck carrying about 15 tons of timber logged illegally in Burma, crosses an official Chinese checkpoint every seven minutes, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year; yet they do nothing," says Global Witness' Jon Buckrell.

The government seeks to manipulate opposition groups with the help of timber concessions, it says. "In the same way that the (government) has granted business concessions to reward groups, it has also revoked deals as a form of punishment, thereby ensuring that the ceasefire [opposition] groups are compliant," Global Witness explains. "All ceasefire groups engage, or have engaged in logging, and some of the most serious deforestation has occurred in ceasefire areas."

In the process, Burmese villagers are forced – by the government or by dire poverty – to work on logging projects, often for pitiful wages. They unwittingly contribute to the destruction of their homeland as they later face the prospect of increased soil erosion, landslides and climate change due to deforestation.

Besides the environmental problems stemming from deforestation, the timber trade is also tied to international crime. It facilitates both money laundering and the direct drug trade.

"Burma is today the world's second largest exporter of heroin after Afghanistan," Global Witness says. "Opiates and the trade in opiates is linked with conflict, AIDS and organized and petty crime. Logging on the China-Burma border, opium production and the trade in heroin are inextricably linked and are similar in many ways. Major drug traffickers have been known to invest heavily in logging businesses as a means of laundering drug money."

"The timber trade has been used as a more direct cover for the drug trade, where logs have been hollowed out and filled with heroin for export from Burma to China and to India," Global Witness adds. "In November 2001, for instance, police officers in Yunnan found 651 blocks of heroin inside two logs transported from Burma."

Environmentalists warn that the last habitats for some of Asia's most endangered flora and fauna are being destroyed. "Once the deciduous and teak woodlands are gone," M. McAteer warns in *Burma Issues* (see October newsletter at [www.burmaissues.org](http://www.burmaissues.org)), "the populations of rare animals that inhabit them such as the clouded leopard, silver leafed monkey, tapirs, tigers, the Asian elephant, and the Javan and Sumatran rhinoceros can never be reestablished."

It will not only be the Burmese people who pay the price, he says, "but also the rest of the world as one of the few remaining ecological paradises left on the planet will disappear forever."

## North Korea: Refusing aid invites disaster

*Some 80 percent of North Korea's land area is composed of mountains and uplands, with only small cultivated plains available for food production. More than one-third of the population is thought to be malnourished. Yet last September the North Korean government asked the UN to end all humanitarian aid programs by the end of 2005. The analysis below is by Mary Ann Cejka, who is editor, with Thomas Bamat, of Artisans of Peace: Grassroots Peacemaking among Christian Communities (Orbis 2003).*

In the mid 1990s, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) suffered from a series of natural disasters that both decimated food crops and aggravated the structural economic tailspin that had begun in the previous decade. By 1995, North Korea could not produce adequate food to feed its own population, nor did it have the resources to purchase food from other countries. As many as 2.5 million people died in the famine that ensued. With many more of its people facing starvation, the DPRK appealed to the international community for assistance in coping with its gross food shortages. A number of humanitarian agencies responded to the appeal, some becoming resident in the country, others operating from outside. Prior to the famine, the North Koreans and the agencies had no experience of working together. A United States Institute of Peace (USIP) Special Report [in 2002] titled "Overcoming Humanitarian Dilemmas in the DPRK (North Korea)" outlines what followed:

- Humanitarian agencies found common difficulties in the constraints placed by the government on monitoring, assessment, and evaluation and faced a dilemma about whether or on what terms to continue...
- The majority perspective was that the confidence building and a process of mutual comprehension had taken place and continues to evolve between the DPRK government and the humanitarian agencies...
- Donor governments should build on the channels opened by humanitarian assistance to further develop policies of constructive engagement, confidence building, and the slow but essential formation of trust that is crucial for bringing human and international security to the Korean peninsula (pp. 1-2).

In short, the curse of famine brought an unexpected blessing: the occasion for foreign governmental agencies and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to interact, for the first time in decades, with both the DPRK's

government and its people. It was, as the USIP citation suggests, an historic opportunity to move toward mutual understanding.

On Sept. 22, 2005, the government of North Korea formally asked the UN to terminate all humanitarian aid by the end of the year, accusing the U.S. of politicizing the relief programs by demanding overly strict monitoring systems. Among the programs affected by this request is the UN World Food Program (WFP), through which the U.S. Agency for International Development channels food aid to North Korea.

DPRK Deputy Foreign Minister Choe Su-hon cited a year of good crop production in North Korea and a reluctance to encourage aid dependency among the reasons for his government's ban on humanitarian programs. But given the fact that seven percent of the DPRK's 22.5 million people are believed still starving and 37 percent chronically malnourished (Reuters Foundation, AlertNet, Oct. 14, 2005, [www.alertnet.org](http://www.alertnet.org)), as well as the general sentiment among NGOs that the nation is still far from enjoying a safe level of food security, it seems clear that the North Korean government's true motivation is its anxiety, justified or not, about being monitored. Above all, it seems to fear intervention from the U.S.

The end of international humanitarian efforts in North Korea is potentially catastrophic. Food and health programs that were making an impact and saving many lives would be curtailed. Yet, a couple of technicalities in Pyongyang's decision are worth noting. First, as UN Under-Secretary-General Jan Egeland explained, it is only the programs that would have to leave – not the agencies providing them. Second, the DPRK government drew a distinction between the humanitarian programs, which it was ending, versus programs focused on development, which are still allowed.

Meanwhile, South Korea and China will continue to supply aid shipments of rice and fuel to North Korea as they do now, with few monitoring requirements.

### **Faith in action:**

Educate yourself about North Korea. Read books, follow the news, and check out websites that provide reliable updates on events pertaining to that country.

Urge Congress and the White House to place the welfare of the people of North Korea foremost in formulating U.S. policy toward that country. The people should not be made to suffer from punitive measures

aimed primarily at the government.

Donate time and money to humanitarian and developmental agencies that maintain a presence in or continue to provide assistance to North Korea. Among these are Caritas Internationalis ([www.caritas.org](http://www.caritas.org)), a confederation of Catholic relief, development, and so-

cial service organizations; and the EugeneBell Foundation ([www.eugenebell.org](http://www.eugenebell.org)), which coordinates the delivery of medications, diagnostic equipment and supplies to medical treatment facilities in North Korea, primarily to combat tuberculosis – the country’s most serious and most common health problem.

## South Korea: Conscientious objectors face prison

*Every young South Korean male is required to undergo military service for up to 26 months. The South Korea Constitution guarantees freedom of conscience. However, refusing to undergo military service or to take up lethal weapons during military training because of one’s religious belief is considered a criminal offense. A man who refuses to serve in the military is tried in civil court and might be sentenced to 18 months in prison. Earlier, a three-year term was typical. On Oct. 19 Ko Dong-Ju (Pius Ko), a 25-year-old conscientious objector, gave the following statement at a news conference in Seoul to explain his position.*

“I declare myself a conscientious objector. I am a Catholic, and when I entered college I joined the Catholic Students’ Association. I studied how Jesus lived. I believe up to this day that we must live our lives like Jesus. Through living as Jesus lived we can hear the Good News ourselves and share it with others.

“For me, the Good News means loving one another. And that love is an unconditional love, even of our enemies. If we live without loving one another, what happens? We become fearful of one another, and we hate one another. At worst it can bring war. Think of the faces of all the people hurt and killed in the Iraq war. I don’t think the army is something that can stop these kinds of evil situations. Actually, the army helps increase this kind of evil. You would not create an army if you did not fear someone. If someone threatens me and I think I can survive only by stopping that threat, I must have more strength than the other person to lessen that threat. Therefore, military competition will not end. And expenditures for military purposes will increase at the cost of expenditures for the welfare and security of the people.

“If I entered the army, it’s no longer a matter of loving another person. I would have to accept the reality that I must be afraid of someone and hate someone and be willing to kill someone. Think about military training. A person entering would have to go through train-

ing. Using a straw man, he would have to shout and practice killing someone, for example by throwing a hand grenade or shooting someone. Just thinking about it is repulsive. If I accept this kind of training, I will have to throw away the Good News that Jesus has given me. And if I throw this away, there will no longer be real meaning for my life. Therefore I am refusing to enter military service. This is because I have heard the Good News about loving one another, and I want to share this with other people.

“‘They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; One nation shall not raise the sword against another, nor shall they train for war again.’ (Is 2:4) If you read this verse, this is what our country will be in the future. Vatican II also talks about war in Article 79 of the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World: ‘(I)t seems right that laws make humane provisions for the case of those who for reasons of conscience refuse to bear arms, provided however, that they agree to serve the human community in some other way.’ I want to live in the coming reign of God now. Therefore, rather than to go into the army, I want to do another form of service. I believe this is a way that I can help to bring the reign of God.

“In our country today, it is not legal to be a conscientious objector. Therefore, in the past 60 years more than 10,000 persons have gone to jail as conscientious objectors. At present 1,000 of those persons are suffering in jail. The Constitutional Court of Korea and the Supreme Court have upheld the legality of sending people to jail for refusing to serve in the army. But there is a minority in the country working to get this changed and get conscientious objectors recognized. I think we need a law that would harmonize the needs of the country and the individual conscience. It is not appropriate for conscientious objectors to go into the army, and it is a waste for the country to have them languish in prison. I hope the National Assembly will soon pass a law to provide for alternative public service so I can contribute to society through civilian public service.”

## China: U.S. bishops protest beating of nuns

*The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) demanded action by the Chinese government after 16 nuns in the city of Xian in central China were severely beaten, allegedly by government-hired thugs.*

The bishops decried the Nov. 23 attack to Chinese Ambassador Yang Jiechi and said it was an egregious example of “the frequent suppression of religious practice, especially of Christians, in your country.” They requested a response from the ambassador, noting that similar protests during the previous two years had gone unanswered.

“These Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart were seeking peacefully to prevent the destruction of their former school by occupying the premises when a group of some forty men, allegedly sent by the district education office, proceeded to attack the nuns,” the bishops wrote Dec. 5. “Sixteen of them were severely beaten with sticks and clubs and five of them still remain hospitalized.”

On the night of the attack, 200 sisters were at the school to guard it against demolition, according to AsiaNews (see [www.asianews.it](http://www.asianews.it)). When the assailants appeared, the nuns went out to stop them. Several men told them they had been sent by the district education office and began beating the women with sticks, one sister related. Calls to the police went unanswered.

Writing for the USCCB, Bishop Thomas G. Wenski of Orlando, FL, said one sister was expected to undergo spinal cord surgery and risked permanent paralysis. Another lost her sight in one eye. Others sustained severe injuries to the head, back and extremities, with one sister suffering a fractured arm and another a dislocated shoulder.

“(T)his barbaric behavior calls for a thorough investigation and appropriate sanctions against those responsible,” Bishop Wenski wrote. “Government offers to pay for part of the hospital expenses incurred is implicit acknowledgement of official involvement in the attack and is a thoroughly inadequate response.”

City officials in Xian promised to pay 3,000 yuan (\$370) to each of the five nuns who remained hospitalized nearly two weeks after the attack. However, some Catholics protested that the sum would not even meet medical expenses.

In the days following the attack, Catholics in Xian

expressed a fear of retaliation after agents from the Religious Affairs Bureau tried to determine who had taken part in the protest and who had released photographs of the incident. As a result of media coverage, some Catholic websites in China were blacked out, and news about the attack was removed.

The Nov. 23 protest involved a sit-in against plans to tear down the Diocesan School of the Rosary. The Xian city government had taken over the school in 1952 and left it vacant a few years ago. City authorities recently sold it to a developer in violation of Chinese law instead of returning it to its rightful owners.

In the 1980s, the Chinese government adopted a law by which all confiscated church property should be returned to its rightful owners. However, many convents, schools and hospitals have not yet been returned to the Church. Some are still used by the Communist Party, and others have been sold by local party bosses for a profit.

Some Chinese cities are currently in a real estate frenzy as they try to upgrade their downtown areas ahead of the 2008 Olympic Games. In some instances the government has granted developers the right to seize land and expel residents and rightful owners.

Following a rally of some 600 people on Nov. 27, Xian city authorities offered to sell the land to the Church for 6.5 million yuan (\$804,000). The property is located adjacent to the sisters’ convent and the Xian Cathedral.

Many Catholics said they would consider such a transaction as legalized theft. However, Anthony Dang Mingyan, coadjutor bishop of Xian, told UCA News (Union of Catholic Asian News, [www.ucanews.com](http://www.ucanews.com)) Dec. 12 that the Church had agreed to the city’s price and had paid the Education Bureau of Lianhu district for the land.

Bishop Dang also said water and electricity had been restored to the convent and the rest of the church compound in which the convent is located. The utilities had been cut Nov. 22.

Of the five nuns who were hospitalized, three had recovered and been discharged, while the other two were still being treated. Meanwhile, 11 suspects believed to be involved in the beating of the nuns were detained on Dec. 6 and were in police custody.



*Photo of nuns protesting attack on convent courtesy of Union of Catholic Asian News*

## Sudan: Between death and new life

*A new constitution for Southern Sudan, signed in early December, marks an important milestone in the implementation of the Sudanese Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). But violence continues elsewhere in the country, especially in Darfur. The following is based on IRIN reports.*

The new constitution was signed in Juba by Salva Kiir Mayardit, the Sudanese first vice president and president of southern Sudan, in the presence of thousands of people. It represents an important step in fulfilling aspirations in Southern Sudan for greater political autonomy and the decentralization of power. In addition, the UN has begun to return large numbers of refugees from Kakuma camp in northern Kenya.

But progress toward peace in Southern Sudan contrasts with increased violence in Darfur, including attacks on humanitarian aid workers and on women in general, and clashes between two communities of Arab nomads, the cattle-herding Hotiya-Baggara and the camel-herding Newiba-Aballa, near the town of Zalingei in West Darfur.

In a report released on Dec. 11, 2005, Human Rights Watch (HRW) claimed that Sudanese President Umar al-Bashir and other senior officials should be investigated for crimes against humanity in Darfur and placed on a UN sanctions list. The report, "Entrenching Impunity: Government Responsibility for International Crimes in Darfur," was published in advance of the Dec. 13 UN Security Council meeting, where the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), Luis Moreno Ocampo, was scheduled to report on his investigation into atrocities in Darfur.

"Entrenching Impunity" documents the involvement of more than a dozen civilian and military officials in directing and coordinating attacks by the Janjawid militias and the Sudanese armed forces since mid-2003.

The looting and destruction of villages was not just condoned by government officials, the report noted, it was also methodically organized, with troops and militia members permitted to take land, livestock and other civilian property after killing, raping and torturing tens of thousands of people.

Despite several government initiatives, including an inquiry into the crimes, numerous committees established to investigate rape and other crimes, and a tribunal to try the perpetrators of crimes in Darfur, not a single mid- or high-level civilian official, military com-

mander or militia leader had been suspended from duty, investigated or prosecuted, according to HRW.

Likewise, in March 2005, the UN Security Council established a Sanctions Committee to enforce a partial arms embargo and impose sanctions on individuals committing abuses, but, according to HRW, not a single person has thus far been sanctioned by the UN either.

Meanwhile, other international attention to the Sudan continued. Activists decried China's increased arms sales to the Khartoum government and urged the U.S. Congress to appropriate \$50 million in funding for African Union peacekeepers before the end of the year.

The UN, U.S., European Union and African Union sent a mission to the country to assess what potential military solutions to the crisis in Darfur might look like, including the possibility of introducing a UN peacekeeping force some time in 2006.

The assessment team concluded that the presence of the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) had contributed to reducing the number of ceasefire violations and afforded some level of protection for the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

The delegation noted, however, that the prevailing security situation did not allow for the return of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees in significant numbers. It said banditry, harassment of civilians, as well as skirmishes between ethnic communities in Darfur remained an unresolved security challenge.

The findings will form the basis of recommendations the AU Commission will make to the AU Peace and Security Council early in January 2006 on how to further enhance the effectiveness of the 53-nation bloc's forces in Darfur.

### **Faith in action:**

Download HRW's report "Entrenching Impunity: Government Responsibility for International Crimes in Darfur" at [www.hrw.org](http://www.hrw.org); or order a hardcopy for \$10 from HRW, 350 Fifth Avenue, 34th floor, New York, NY 10118-3299; 212-290-4700.

On January 12, the Save Darfur Coalition and partners will launch the "Million Voices for Darfur" campaign, a coordinated effort to raise awareness of the genocide taking place in Darfur and promote action to help end it quickly. Participating organizations will promote events and provide postcards or other tools for action. Contact the Save Darfur Coalition for more information, [www.savedarfur.org](http://www.savedarfur.org).

## Tanzania: Elections seal CCM's dominance

*Tanzanians voted on Dec. 14 in presidential and parliamentary elections, the third since the adoption of multiparty politics in 1992. The elections were initially scheduled for October 30, but were postponed following the death of a running mate of one of the presidential hopefuls.*

Some 16 million registered voters chose from a field of 10 presidential hopefuls and candidates of the 18 parties vying for 232 parliamentary seats.

The opposition parties were up against the Chama Cha Mapinduzi-CCM (or Revolutionary Party) that had ruled Tanzania since 1977, following the TANU party (1961-77) of former President Julius Nyerere. CCM was certain to retain power, but the opposition was hoping to gain a significant number of parliamentary seats and erode the CCM's seemingly overwhelming dominance.

In fact, CCM and its presidential candidate, Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, swept to victory. With most votes counted, the main opposition party, CUF, had won no seats at all on the mainland, and other opposition parties had won only four.

On Zanzibar, the opposition CUF swept all 18 seats on the northern island of Pemba while CCM took all but one seat on the main island of Unguja.

This indicates roughly the same breakdown for the 232 constituency seats in the new Parliament or Bunge as in the old.

On Zanzibar, voting was less smooth than on the mainland. Police from the Tanzanian union fired into the air to disperse protesters who tried to stop people from other constituencies voting in their area. In Stone Town, capital of Zanzibar, a 27-year old man opposing the intrusion of outsider voters was stabbed by a member of the Janjaweed, allegedly a pro-government gang.

Apart from the union security and defense forces based in Zanzibar, the archipelago has its own security forces, known as the Vikosi, who are widely blamed for human rights abuses. The Zanzibar chapter of the CCM has been accused of using the Vikosi to recruit hundreds to intimidate the political opposition. The CCM has repeatedly denied the allegation.

After two consecutive five-year terms, Tanzanian President Benjamin Mkapa will now retire. Known as a brilliant socialist politician, he nonetheless adopted tough macroeconomic reforms approved by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank in his efforts to

improve the country's economy.

In 1995, Mkapa succeeded President Ali Hassan Mwinyi, a Zanzibari who served two terms (1985-95) after Nyerere. Mkapa's detractors initially dubbed him Nyerere's "errand boy" and accused him of being unable to shake off the chains of socialism. While not completely abandoning socialist tenets, Mkapa aggressively pursued some capitalist policies, winning him accolades from the World Bank and the IMF.

At the start of his administration, Mkapa endorsed economic recovery programs, robust macroeconomic policies and structural reforms, including the privatization policy initiated by his predecessor. The results measured at a macro level were positive: inflation lowered from 27.1 percent in 1995 to four percent in 2004 and the annual economic growth rate increased from 3.6 percent when Mkapa took office to 6.7 percent in 2004. In addition, over \$2 billion of Tanzania's debt to foreign creditors was cancelled in November 2001.

Mkapa's critics, however, say the country's so-called economic success is nothing more than a mirage, since a huge proportion of Tanzania's 36 million people earn less than \$1 day and are left almost completely out of the formal economy.

For example, Mkapa liberalized the financial sector. Today there are at least 30 commercial banks, dozens of community banks, scores of bureaux de change and about 100 non-bank financial institutions, microfinancing NGOs and community-based organizations. However, the banks cater to urban-based industrialists, traders and the elite, ignoring millions of farmers, craftsmen, artisanal miners and fishermen in the rural areas.

Bankers claim it is too risky to extend loans to clients who lack tangible assets. In response, the government initiated a program to formalize assets, including homes and other properties built in so-called squatter areas or on land that has not been surveyed. This initiative will bring about legal recognition of such properties that economists call "dead assets."

The economic challenge for the new government of Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete is huge and the need for effective solutions immediate, as local communities in Tanzania reel from the impact of HIV/AIDS and struggle to meet basic needs for food, water, health care and education.

For additional information see [www.irinnews.org](http://www.irinnews.org).

## Namibia: Old wounds opened

*The following report was published by the UN's Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN) news service in November 2005, [www.irinnews.org](http://www.irinnews.org)*

The white sand of northern Namibia glittered in the hot sun when villagers of Eenhana were finally allowed to view the mass grave discovered by chance when bulldozers unearthed layers of sand for a new sewerage system near an old South Africa military base, which is now occupied by former freedom fighters who are soldiers of the Namibia Defense Force.

"It hurt me when I was informed about the mass graves. It still hurts, these are [the remains of] our people lying there," said President Hifikepunye Pohamba when he visited the site.

"I call on all former fighters on both sides to come forward and inform the government of further grave sites," Pohamba pleaded. "Nothing will happen to you, nothing, we adopted the policy of national reconciliation at independence in 1990."

But it might be exactly because of this policy that many have been denied the knowledge of what happened to their loved ones during the country's protracted liberation struggle.

Calls for a truth and reconciliation commission, to allow for revelations and forgiveness, were met with the standard phrase, "we have the reconciliation policy," recited like a mantra by the ruling SWAPO party, which has won every election since independence in 1990.

"For over fifteen years the government kept silent on these graves," said Phil ya Nangoloh, himself a former SWAPO fighter, now the executive director of the National Society for Human Rights.

"Immediately after independence the new government should have unearthed the liberation fighters for possible identification and reburial, so that we all could deal with the past," noted Ya Nangoloh, who is at the forefront of calls for a South African-modeled truth and reconciliation commission.

When a year of transition towards Namibia's independence started on April 1, 1989, South African army and police contingents were confined to their bases in northern Namibia. All SWAPO combatants were supposed to be north of the 16th parallel in southern Angola.

Some UN military observers were already in the country, but not deployed in the north, which had seen some of the most intense fighting during the war.

It remains a mystery why hundreds of heavily

armed fighters from SWAPO's military wing PLAN (People's Liberation Army of Namibia) crossed the border from southern Angola into Namibia on the night of March 31, 1989, triggering heavy clashes with South African army and para-military forces that lasted for nine days.

UN special representative Martti Ahtisaari reluctantly gave the go ahead for South African troops and police units to leave their barracks to stop the incursion. The fighting nearly derailed the peace process and intensive diplomatic negotiations were necessary over the next two weeks to get the peace process back on track.

Since then, each side has blamed the other for having fired the first shots and breaching the UN peace accord.

The engagement cost the lives of some 300 PLAN fighters and 26 South Africans. Yet neither side has given a proper account of what transpired.

Instead, former president Sam Nujoma, who still holds the SWAPO presidency, has laid the blame at the door of the apartheid regime in Pretoria and former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

"It was a plot designed in Pretoria to attack our combatants," Nujoma said. "Thatcher sneaked into Namibia on 31 March and in a meeting with then foreign affairs minister of South Africa, Pik Botha, that country's administrator general Louis Pienaar and UN representative Martti Ahtisaari, where it was decided to attack the PLAN fighters."

The PLAN combatants had simply wanted to report to UN bases and hand in their weapons, Nujoma maintained.

But there were no UN bases defined at that time in the north and he did not explain why the 1,900 combatants chose to cross over the border at night.

It is not only the fate of those who died in 1989 that remains unclear. PLAN fighters killed in skirmishes since the 1970s were hastily buried by local villagers, often on the instructions of the South Africans and at gunpoint.

But their graves were not marked and remain so since independence.

Only after the recent appeal of President Pohamba, villagers and former "Koevoet" (Crowbar) members - the notorious South African-trained paramilitary unit that had several hundred Namibians on their payroll - have come forward anonymously to give information on likely burial sites.

Apart from the seven sites identified in the first two weeks of this month, three more were dug up and human remains found, the local Namibian newspaper reported.

“Altogether 11 [new] places were identified, but our units only managed to dig at three of them so far and remains were found,” regional police commander Christoph Nakanyala told the newspaper.

A local villager told the Namibian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) that he had to bury seven PLAN

fighters around 1983 near a cattle kraal (pen).

“They came with their casspirs [armoured vehicles] and got stuck in the mud, it was the rainy season. To make the vehicle lighter, they dropped the corpses of seven combatants and told us to bury them, which we did,” the man told NBC.

He had kept silent until this month.

Namibians have yet to come to terms with this troubled chapter in their country’s turbulent history.

## Kenya: Aftermath of the “No”

*The following article is based on reports from IRIN and AfricaFiles, a project of the Inter-Church Coalition on Africa (ICCAF) and the Toronto Committee for the Liberation of Southern Africa (TCLSAC).*

In a November referendum, Kenya’s proposed new constitution was rejected despite the fact that it was strongly supported by President Mwai Kibaki and other key figures in his government. About 3.5 million people voted against the constitution and about 2.5 million voted for it. The rejected draft constitution would have replaced the country’s charter, which came into force when Kenya gained independence from Britain in 1963.

The debate over Kenya’s draft constitution split Kibaki’s administration. The president and his camp favored the new constitution, but six cabinet ministers spearheaded a campaign to reject the document in the referendum. They argued that the draft maintained a presidency with overriding powers, pointing out that Kenyans started agitating for a new constitution more than 15 years ago because they believed that Kibaki’s predecessor had misused presidential powers to undermine democracy and weaken the economy.

Supporters of the draft constitution, on the other hand, maintained that presidential powers had been significantly curtailed in the proposed basic law. They pointed out, for example, that under the new document all presidential appointments were to be subjected to vetting by parliament and that the president was required to share executive power with a prime minister, various constitutional commissions and proposed district governments.

The two sides also differed on the details of the proposed devolution of powers from the national gov-

ernment to district governments.

The rejection of the proposed constitution was a significant blow to Kibaki and a boost for his Roads and Public Works Minister Raila Odinga, the de-facto leader of the ministers who waged an unrelenting campaign for the rejection of the draft constitution.

After the referendum, Kibaki sacked his entire cabinet and rejected demands for early elections. His efforts to reconstitute an administration encountered huge obstacles, as a number of people invited to serve in ministerial posts rejected the appointments. Those who opposed the Constitution and emerged victorious from the referendum had pressed President Kibaki to negotiate positions in the new Cabinet with the group and not individuals. They

had declared that they would decline to take the posts if some and not all were taken and that they would still refuse to take them if some of the tainted ministers in the previous Cabinet were going to be included.

Among those who refused to sit in the new cabinet were the leader of the Forum for the Restoration of Democracy (FORD-Kenya) Musikari Kombo; Orwa Ojode, a member of the Liberal Democratic Party who had been given the environment portfolio; and former Health Minister Charity Ngilu, leader of the National Party of Kenya.

About 15 assistant ministers also rejected their posts, citing various reasons. Some said their political parties had not been consulted before the appointments. Others apparently refused to accept the offers because they belonged to the Orange Democratic Movement, a loose alliance of politicians from various parties that spearheaded the campaign against the draft constitution.



## Zimbabwe: NGOs appeal for help, prosecution

*The United Nations has appealed for \$276 million in aid for Zimbabwe, saying that the humanitarian situation in the country is likely to continue deteriorating in 2006, with at least three million people requiring food aid. Meanwhile, the UN World Food Program announced that it had concluded an agreement with the Zimbabwean government on the delivery of food aid to the millions in need. The following article is based on reports from IRIN, [www.irinnews.org](http://www.irinnews.org)*

At about the same time, UN Emergency Relief Coordinator Jan Egeland visited people affected by the “eviction campaign” in the capital, Harare, during a five-day fact-finding mission to Zimbabwe and concluded that Africa should be “more outspoken on Zimbabwe.” The African Union has been taken to task by human rights bodies for its failure to criticize the Zimbabwean government’s controversial clean-up campaign, Operation Murambatsvina, begun in late May (see *NewsNotes* July-August 2005), which left more than 700,000 people homeless or without a livelihood. The UN has begun construction of temporary and permanent shelters for those left homeless by the campaign.

The Zimbabwean government initially rejected the UN offer to build temporary shelters, saying there was “no humanitarian crisis,” only to make an about-turn last month. In its acceptance letter the government laid down specifications for the construction of permanent brick and concrete one-room shelters and insisted on drawing up the list of beneficiaries. Egeland was sharply critical of the government’s rejection of the UN’s offer of tents and, in response to concerns of potential donors, said the UN would now compile the list of beneficiaries. Subject to funding, the UN intends building 20,000 units at a total cost of US\$18 million in the next few months.

Egeland underlined that the UN could not “become a policeman,” but had the “moral authority of the global community” to criticize the “disastrous” eviction campaign, which he described as “wholly irrational in all of its aspects.”

Meanwhile, Zimbabwe’s National Association of Nongovernmental Organizations (NANGO) has called on the International Criminal Court (ICC) to prosecute government officials responsible for Operation

Murambatsvina and another coalition of NGOs has appealed to the African Union’s human rights body (ACHPR) to help the hundreds of thousands of people left homeless by the operation.

UN special envoy Anna Tibaijuka visited Zimbabwe in July to assess the aftermath of the campaign, and compiled a scathing report that called on the government to punish those who, “with indifference to human suffering” had carried out the evictions and subsequent destruction of homes and informal markets.

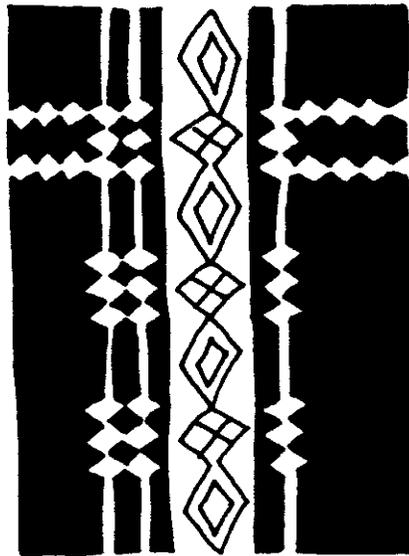
The envoy, also the director of UN-HABITAT, labeled Operation Murambatsvina a “breach of both national and international human rights law provisions guiding evictions.” NANGO wants Tibaijuka’s report to be implemented, and the perpetrators brought to trial.

The ICC, unlike the International Court of Justice, can try individuals and investigate crimes, such as drug trafficking and genocide, referred to it by governments as well as the UN Security Council.

Operation Murambatsvina was part of the government’s “urban renewal” program, which critics have claimed was a poorly planned, pre-emptive security-led strike against the disgruntled urban population, carried out amid fears of a post-election uprising against government.

NANGO welcomed the Zimbabwean government’s recent acceptance of UN assistance in providing shelter, food and basic needs to those affected by the clean-up exercise. But relations between government and NGOs have deteriorated since the announcement of a new policy last month, which makes it mandatory for all NGOs to apply to their respective provincial governor’s office for permission to operate. NANGO has ordered its members to ignore the policy, seen as an interim measure until the controversial NGO bill of 2004 is approved.

The bill, which will ban the activities of organizations involved in human rights and civic education campaigns, also outlaws foreign funding of NGOs, and would subject NGOs to strict vetting by a committee appointed by the government, with minimal NGO representation.



## Africa: The Multilateral Initiative on Malaria

*The Multilateral Initiative on Malaria (MIM) is an international organization dedicated solely to building a sustainable malaria research infrastructure in Africa. In 2006 MIM will officially move its headquarters to Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, under the auspices of the African Malaria Network Trust (AMANET).*

A 1999 MIM survey reported that there were only 752 trained malaria researchers in sub-Saharan Africa, the area of the continent that each year endures the brunt of the world's 500 million malaria infections and 2.7 million deaths. According to MIM, the number of scientists in Africa with expertise in malaria research is growing, but many more are needed, and to keep them in Africa, they must be supported by a system that can provide sustainable long-term funding and adequate facilities.

MIM's move to Tanzania means that mobilization, capacity building and coordination of malaria research will be directed from Africa - the continent which has the highest incidence of malaria and suffers most from the devastating human and economic impact of the disease. Malaria places a continued unacceptable burden on health and economic development in over 100 countries. An estimated 350-500 million cases of malaria occur per year - children, pregnant women, people living in poverty and people living with HIV/AIDS being particularly vulnerable to the disease. More than one million people die from malaria every year. Estimates suggest that malaria accounts for up to 40 percent of all public expenditures on health and 20-50 percent of hospital

admissions in many countries.

MIM is calling for a new initiative that would focus on competitively awarded long-term grants that would be dedicated to developing new "centers of excellence" in malaria endemic areas of Africa. These centers would serve as hubs for training new scientists and assembling interdisciplinary teams for conducting malaria research. In addition, an African malaria research and control forum will be established to translate malaria research results into action which will be coupled with renewed advocacy to promote malaria awareness to the general public and among policy makers and politicians for political goodwill and increased African investments in malaria research and control.

Training and capacity building would occur within the context of new investigator-driven research projects directed by African scientists and aimed at developing better tools for fighting malaria. These would include new drugs, vaccines, diagnostic tests, treatment strategies, and mosquito control techniques.

Given the complex questions that must be answered to defeat malaria, a wide spectrum of specialists will be needed. These include scientists with expertise in parasite biology, entomologists who can focus on insect control, toxicologists who will understand the effect of drug compounds, epidemiologists, biostatisticians and experts in bioethics, plus experts in information technology and other resources that will make the research results accessible to local communities for practical use throughout the continent.

### Challenging Disparity: The Promise of God – The Power of Solidarity

The fourth annual Ecumenical Advocacy Days for Global Peace with Justice Conference will be held March 10-13, 2006 in Washington, D.C. Last year, more than 800 people of faith joined together to advocate for a world that better reflects Christian faith and values. This year, the world is even more in need of our joining together in the spirit of hope and solidarity. Registration: \$140. Visit the Advocacy Days' website [www.advocacydays.org](http://www.advocacydays.org) for information, registration, and updates. Ecumenical Advocacy Days, c/o Office of Public Life and Social Policy, United Church of



Christ, 100 Maryland Avenue NE, Suite 330, Washington, D.C. 20002; 202-230-2276; [info@advocacydays.org](mailto:info@advocacydays.org).

## Voices from the South: Mexican farmers tour U.S.

*A recent tour of two Mexican farmers from Oaxaca and Chihuahua to the corn belt of the U.S. and to Washington, D.C. confirms that Mexican and U.S. farmers have a great deal in common in this era of free trade.*

Sponsored by the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns, Catholic Relief Services of Mexico and the Maryknoll Mesoamerica Global Concerns group, the visit aimed to bring the voice of poor Mexican campesinos, in crisis due to 10 years of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), into the public debate in the United States. The tour also aimed to explore the possibility of creating alliances with U.S. farmers who also suffer from the effects of NAFTA and U.S. farm policy.

Jesus Leon, president of the Center for Integral Campesino Development of the Mixteca, an indigenous campesino organization from the southern state of Oaxaca, and Pedro Torres, past president of the Democratic Campesino Front of the northern state of Chihuahua, began their tour in the Midwest corn belt. At the University of Illinois they met with agricultural students and professors, and community development groups working to help farmers reduce costs by using local inputs and develop systems to market diversified products to local consumers. The challenges to small and medium-sized U.S. farmers closely resemble the problems for Mexican farmers.

Leon and Torres shared how since NAFTA, their corn prices have decreased 40 percent to 60 percent, while the price of fertilizers has risen 400 percent to 500 percent. At the same time, free trade's promises of cheap food to poor consumers in Mexico have not been realized. On the contrary, Leon and Torres reported that the price of a kilo of tortillas has risen as much as 500 percent across Mexico. After signing NAFTA, the Mexican government had to cancel its price controls and subsidies that had assured cheap food staples for the Mexican poor.

During the Mexican farmers' tour, general audiences at their presentations seemed surprised by the negative effects of NAFTA on poor people in Mexico,

but U.S. farmers were not. Students from farm families at both Iowa State and the University of Missouri recounted similar stories of U.S. farmers struggling against market prices that are below the costs of production and increased costs of agricultural inputs.

Farmers from the Missouri Farmers Union echoed the struggle of U.S. farmers and were well aware of the effects on their fellow farmers in Mexico. Suggesting farm bills and trade policy that would free farm prices from reliance on international markets controlled by huge concentrations of agro-industries, they laid a basis for alliances with Mexican farmers to work for prices tied to cost of production and for farm set asides to reduce oversupply.

On the east coast, Leon and Torres met with students and faculty at Penn State University and

with small farmers, including Amish family farmers.

From experimental farms in Missouri to Pennsylvania they found many ideas on alternative production techniques and farming systems which are similar to their own efforts to diversify production, use local inputs and develop production and marketing cooperatives to retake local markets that still make up 80-90 percent of the Mexican agricultural market.

Toward the end of their trip, Leon and Torres had a lively meeting with representatives of 15 congressional offices on Capitol Hill. They also experienced a moving encounter with a group of farmers from Thailand who were also visiting Washington, D.C. to share how free trade policies, patent regulations and genetically modified seeds were threatening small farmers and rural Thai culture.

In 2006, both the U.S. Farm Bill and Mexican Agricultural Law will be deliberated. Both are likely to prove problematic for small and medium farmers.

### **Faith in action:**

Contact the National Catholic Rural Life Conference to learn ways that you can support small farmers in the U.S. and abroad: National Catholic Rural Life Conference, 4625 Beaver Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50310; 515-270-2634; [www.ncrlc.com](http://www.ncrlc.com); [ncrlc@aol.com](mailto:ncrlc@aol.com).



*Pedro Torres and Jesus Leon in Washington, D.C.; photo by Dave Kane.*

## Brazil: Assassins of Dorothy Stang found guilty

*The following article combines reports from the Brazil Justice Net ([www.braziljusticenet.org](http://www.braziljusticenet.org)) and from the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur ([www.sndden.org](http://www.sndden.org))*

On Dec. 9-10, 2005, two of the five accused of the murder of missionary Sr. Dorothy Stang were put on trial in Belem, Para, Brazil. Rayfran das Neves Sales, 29, who did the actual killing, was found guilty and received 27-year prison term. Clodoaldo Carlos Batista, 31, who was with Sales at the moment of the shooting, was also found guilty and given 17 years. Sales will be able to appeal the decision because in Brazil law, anyone receiving more than 20 years is automatically given the opportunity to appeal.

The 73-year old nun had been stationed for years in the Amazon region, working with small farmers to implement environmentally sustainable projects. She and her colleagues often found themselves in conflict with ranchers and logging companies who are devastating the rainforest. The ranchers and loggers tried to get her expelled from the country, accusing her of inciting the locals to riot. She had also received various death threats.

On Feb. 12, 2005, Stang was on her way to a meeting with local farmers. In Sales' version, when the two men approached the nun, Stang open her purse, and Sales thought she had a gun. He claimed that he therefore acted in self-defense. However, Batista claimed that Stang reached into her purse and said, "My only weapon is the Bible," and she began to read out of the Gospel of Matthew. Sales shot Stang six times.

Both of the men claimed that Amair Feijoli da Cunha ordered the killing of Stang, but denied that there was any payment promised. However, federal investigators revealed a promise of \$US30,000 made by two ranchers, Vitalmiro Bastos de Moura and Regivaldo Pereira Galvao, for the murder of Stang. Feijoli da Cunha was acting as the intermediary, according to federal sources. The trial of these three men will happen sometime next year. A conviction at this trial will be much more difficult as ranchers and loggers in Para are notorious for controlling the state's political and judicial systems.

More than 100 people filled the small auditorium of the Criminal Forum of Belem, including Hina Jilani, representative of the United Nations, and Mario Mamde,

National Secretary of Human Rights. Other dignitaries attending the trial included the Archbishop of Belem, Bishop of Marajó, and president of the Land Pastoral Commission. Outside of the forum, hundreds from various social movements gathered to demand a guilty verdict for the two men.

"We are grateful that the process of justice has begun," said Elizabeth Bowyer, SND, spokesperson for the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur. "Our attention now turns to the trials of those charged with ordering and arranging the execution."

"The city was alive with posters of Sr. Dorothy lining the streets," said Betsy Flynn, SND, describing the atmosphere around the courthouse in the days preceding and during the trial. "Hundreds of people camped out in the pouring rain in front of the Judicial Tribunal building, many had traveled from all over of the state. One-hundred had come from Anapu, where Sr. Dorothy lived, which is 24 hours away," she said.

Those who had come to be close to the trial participated in activities prepared by the Dorothy Stang Committee, an ecumenical group which has, since Sr. Dorothy's death, worked to help make known the facts surrounding her life and death.

At the time of her death, Sr. Dorothy, a native of Ohio, was working with the Project for Sustainable Development (PDS), a government initiative created through Brazil's national institute for agrarian reform (INCRA), which helps landless families benefit from sustainable farming systems. The land was granted for the farms by the government, but was highly coveted by the powerful ranchers.

Sr. Dorothy, who lived in the transamazonian region for 30 years, was named "Woman of the Year" by the state of Para in 2004 for her work on behalf of the people in the Brazilian state. Shortly before her death, she received an "Honorary Citizenship of the State" award from the state of Para. Following her death, Sr. Dorothy was honored for her life and work by the United States Congress. In mid-December, she received posthumously the Alceau Amoroso Lima award in Rio de Janeiro, named for the Catholic writer.

The violence against rural workers has continued. Since Stang's death, at least six other leaders of rural workers have been assassinated in the state of Para, three of them in the month of November.



## Venezuela: U.S. delays Posada's extradition

*In a serious challenge to the U.S.'s commitment to the "war on terror," a well-known international fugitive is avoiding expatriation to Venezuela by seeking asylum in the United States. Luis Posada Carriles is connected to the 1976 downing of a civilian airliner that killed all 73 passengers and crew – the first act of airline terrorism in the Western hemisphere. He is also linked to a series of bombings of hotels, restaurants, and discotheques in Havana, including one in 1997 that killed an Italian tourist, as well as a plot to assassinate Fidel Castro five years ago, and has been jailed in Venezuela and Panama for these activities.*

Many think that the lack of action on the part of the U.S. government is due to Posada's long history of involvement with the CIA, as shown in its own internal documents discovered by the National Security Archive. In 1961, Posada, as part of the CIA's 2506 Brigade, participated in the invasion of Cuba's Bay of Pigs. From 1963-65, he received training from the U.S. military, including classes at the School of Americas, and then trained other Latin American paramilitary forces in the mid-1960s. CIA documents show that he was terminated as an asset in July 1967, but was reinstated four months later and remained with the CIA until 1974. He continued to maintain contact with the agency until at least June 1976, three months before the plane bombing.

Shortly after the bombing, Posada was arrested and imprisoned in Venezuela where he repeatedly appealed his case for many years through the notoriously slow Venezuelan legal system. Finally, in 1985, on the eve of the pronouncement of his final sentence, he escaped from prison (dressed as a priest) with assistance of the U.S. government-funded Cuban American National Foundation. No verdict was entered in his case as Venezuelan law requires the presence of the accused, so the court issued a warrant against him, which is the basis of Venezuela's request for extradition today.

After escaping from prison, Posada went directly to Honduras, where he worked with Oliver North to supply arms and materials to the contras in Nicaragua. After the defeat of the Sandinistas in 1990, Posada participated in sporadic bombings and other terrorist activities in Cuba aimed at weakening the Cuban economy by diminishing tourism to the country. These activities were funded by wealthy Cubans in Miami, according to Posada in a 1998 *New York Times* interview.

In November 2000, Castro accused Posada of

planning to assassinate him during an international conference in Panama. Posada was arrested and found with 33 pounds of C-4 plastic explosive and given an eight-year prison sentence for "endangering public safety." He served his sentence until November 2004, when he was pardoned by outgoing Panamanian president Mireya Moscoso after a request from U.S. Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL) to pardon him and three other Cuban exiles imprisoned in Panama. Ros-Lehtinen is closely tied to the Cuban exile community; her Congressional campaign included a call to "Free Orlando Bosch," a Cuban exile who worked together with Posada on a number of terrorist campaigns including the 1976 plane bombing.

Posada came to the United States in March 2005 and had no problems until May 17, when he appeared in a press conference and was arrested by Department of Homeland Security officials. His request to post bond was denied; he currently sits in a Texas jail awaiting trial on charges of "entry without inspection" (a basic immigration charge). Posada's lawyers have requested political asylum based on his service to the CIA during the Cold War and his fear of political persecution should he be deported to his native Cuba. They have also requested that he not be extradited to Venezuela, for fear of being tortured or killed there despite guarantees from Venezuelan officials that Posada will be well treated and that he could have daily consular visits while in prison.

The U.S. government has three options in this case: grant Posada asylum, jail him for illegal entry, or grant Venezuela's extradition request. If it refuses the extradition request, it will be in violation of the 1922 extradition treaty between Venezuela and the U.S., the 1971 Montreal treaty dealing with terrorism against aircraft, and a 1997 international convention dealing with the suppression of terrorist bombings. The already tenuous diplomatic ties to Venezuela could be damaged, as Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez has threatened to "reconsider our diplomatic ties" with the U.S. if Washington does not extradite Posada.

Much speculation exists about what will happen in this case if it continues in the spring of 2006. With today's "war on terrorism," it would be difficult for the Bush administration to grant asylum to a known terrorist. The Immigration and Nationality Act also bars the granting of asylum to people who have been involved in terrorist activities.

## Haiti: Toward a just, peaceful, reconciled society

On November 30, 2005, the Executive Committee of Pax Christi International ([www.paxchristi.net](http://www.paxchristi.net)) issued the following statement of solidarity with the people of Haiti.

As the Haitian people, especially the residents of impoverished neighborhoods, continue to suffer under extreme violence and rampant poverty; as the political situation in Haiti continues to defy a just resolution; and as the human rights situation in Haiti remains catastrophic, Pax Christi International wishes to express clearly our solidarity with the people of Haiti.

Based on the observations of a Pax Christi International delegation to Haiti in July 2005; the guidance of Pax Christi International partners in Haiti; and Pax Christi International's own commitment to reconciliation and peace, we support the call of those sectors within Haitian society for clear steps toward a just, peaceful and reconciled society.

- We plead for all sectors of Haitian society to renounce publicly the use of violence for political or economic gain; for all armed groups in Haiti to disarm immediately.

- We urge that the government of Haiti, in coordination with the international community, implement immediate measures consistent with international human rights standards to quell the violence and restore security in Port-au-Prince and throughout the country.

- We insist that an independent, thorough and transparent investigation into violent attacks on civilian communities and popular neighborhoods, such as on July 6 and August 20, 2005, be completed promptly, with those groups and individuals accused being brought to justice.

- We recommend that the international human rights community conduct an independent, thorough and transparent investigation into accusations about the practice of politically motivated arrests and detentions in Haiti; that all political prisoners be released immediately or charged and brought to a fair trial for criminal activity about which there is credible evidence.



Photo by Fr. Joe Towle, MM, courtesy of Maryknoll Fathers & Brothers

- We support national elections as a necessary step toward reconciliation, but insist that all Haitian citizens, including those living in popular and marginal neighborhoods, be able to participate fully, freely and without fear. Political parties should make minimal commitments and agreements prior to the elections.

- We urge that independent sources of investigation and accurate information be strengthened to replace rumor, hearsay and biased reporting; that human rights investigators and journalists be protected from harm and arbitrary arrest.

- We plead that a process of national dialogue be initiated that will give voice to all sectors of Haitian society and identify steps toward a new, inclusive political consensus built on truth and reconciliation.

- As a step toward national reconciliation, we encourage competent and independent authorities to investigate and report publicly on events immediately surrounding the irregular departure of the elected Haitian president, Jean Bertrand Aristide, as earlier was urged by some Caricom member countries.

At the same time, Pax Christi International commits to

- Accompany and support the people of Haiti as they move toward reconciliation, political peace and social justice;

- Support concrete peace-building and conflict resolution programs in Haiti;

- Denounce the abuse of power by national or international authorities (both in and outside of the country), as well as by local, violent individuals or organizations;

- Support the dissemination of accurate information about Haiti in Haiti and internationally;

- Accompany whatever national dialogue process is initiated, facilitating support, as needed, from Pax Christi International through its network of relations;

- Act in solidarity with Pax Christi International partners in Haiti.

## Bolivia: President-elect Morales

*In a surprising show at the polls, Evo Morales, a former coca grower leader, was elected in the Bolivian presidential elections on December 18, thus avoiding a run-off vote in the congress. It is unclear as of this writing if he won more than half of the vote, but his principal competitor, Jorge Queiroga, has ceded defeat.*

Morales is the first modern Bolivian president to win in the first round of voting and the first indigenous elected as president in this overwhelmingly indigenous country. The U.S. has portrayed Morales as a dangerous radical, but because of many internal difficulties, he will most likely be unable to make many of the significant changes that the U.S. seems to fear. It is unclear how much patience outside influences, like the U.S. and Brazil, and internal ones, like the very active social movements, will have with Morales. One thing is clear: his administration will not be an easy one.

Morales' election is a sign of two significant social changes that have occurred in Bolivia in the last decades. First, there is general dissatisfaction with the neoliberal economic policies that have been adopted by previous governments — the vote represents a clear mandate for change. These policies have succeeded in bringing in foreign investment, but the economic benefits have not trickled down to the poor. The result has been 64 percent of the population living in poverty, the privatization of resources like water and gas, a disastrous “war on drugs” and an ever increasing foreign debt. In the last five years, protests have become increasingly strong, most recently resulting in the ousting of two presidents and the demand for this election.

Morales' election also represents the increased influence of the indigenous population in Bolivia. Although more than 60 percent of Bolivians are indigenous and speak Aymara and Quechua, only Spanish-speaking whites and mestizos hold leadership positions in the government, military, or judiciary. Only in the 2002 elections were a significant number of indigenous representatives elected: 35 from Morales' Movement Towards Socialism (MAS) party and six from the Pachakutik Indigenous Movement (MIP) party. Much of the unrest has been related to the demand for the writing of a new constitution that will guarantee a greater recognition of the rights of the indigenous population.

Two crucial issues during the election were the control of Bolivia's natural gas and the establishment of the constitutional assembly. A national referendum in 2004 found that over 90 percent of Bolivia wants a larger

control over its natural gas resources, the second largest in the Americas, and a poll in June of this year showed that 75 percent support the writing of a new Constitution. Morales differed from the two other candidates in calling for the nationalization of the oil and gas industries. He has not detailed his nationalization plan, but apparently advocates the creation of a public sector company like Petrobras in Brazil, as opposed to a more radical, Cuban-type expropriation of assets owned by foreign companies.

In the 2002 elections, when the U.S. ambassador threatened that a vote for Morales would result in cuts in U.S. aid, he only gained more votes from nationalistic Bolivians. In this year's election, U.S. influence has been more indirect, mostly through the National Endowment for Democracy and efforts to connect Morales with Cuba and Venezuela.

Despite Morales' strong showing at the polls, he faces many difficulties ahead. Perhaps the biggest problem is the heightened expectations for change brought on by his election — expectations that Morales may not be able to fulfill. The national congress and the majority of governors will continue to be dominated by opposition parties, making significant change difficult. In addition, any significant change will most likely take longer than the social movements may be willing to accept.

Another problem confronting Morales is that his political party (MAS) has very few people with any significant administrative experience, unlike the Broad Front of Uruguay or the Worker's Party of Brazil who were recently elected with years of experience in state and local governments and are encountering their own serious problems.

In addition, as Alvaro Garcia Linera, Morales' vice president, said in a recent interview, the MAS is not really a political party but rather, “a coalition of flexible social movements that has expanded its action to the electoral arena. There is no structure; it is a leader and movements, and there is nothing in between ... How can you govern through social movements?”

Finding appropriate responses to these questions will be key to the success of the Morales government. If Morales is unable to bring about notable change quickly, social movements will likely return to protests that will make change even more difficult. At the same time, if he is able to enact changes quickly then he could encounter increased pressures from the U.S., or Brazil, who has significant oil and gas interests in Bolivia. Morales will have to walk a very fine line.

## Torture: An unthinkable policy prescription

*In early December, 25 U.S. Christians in the non-violent tradition of Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker set out from Santiago, Cuba on a solemn march to Guantanamo Bay. They sought to “defend human dignity” by visiting with the hundreds of detainees who have been held for more than three years under horrific conditions by the U.S. government. They walked 107 kilometers before setting up an encampment at the closest point they could get to the prisoners. After repeated appeals to the White House and the Guantanamo Base commander, they were denied permission to visit the prisoners, but held a three day vigil and fast near the perimeter of the base before returning to the United States.*

This action gave focus to a bizarre debate that has been taking place in the United States since 9/11 – a debate about whether or not there are exceptional circumstances when the use of torture to extract critical information from a prisoner would be justified. If we believe in the sacredness of every human life and in the rule of law, then outrage in the face of torture is an appropriate reaction; justification and rationalization are not - ever.

No one speaks more eloquently about that fact than survivors of torture themselves. Gathered by Sister Dianna Ortiz, OSU and the Torture Abolition and Survivors Support Coalition International (TASSC), survivors representing more than 60 countries and ethnic groups:

- Work towards the abolition of torture and ill treatment currently practiced by more than 150 governments.
- Work toward the implementation of Article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human rights, and all other treaties and conventions pertaining to the eradication of torture
- Break the silence surrounding torture through education, advocacy, and legislation.
- Call for an end to military assistance and arms sales to governments that use torture.
- Call for an end to impunity for those who torture and order torture.

Their demands ring true in many corners of the world, but they resonate especially with not-powerful people and their allies in places with painful memories like Guatemala, El Salvador, Argentina and Chile. There the brutal techniques of torture were learned too well –

including from manuals promulgated by the U.S. Army School of the Americas, inflicting a deep wound near the heart of the Americas. The experience of being tortured, of having loved ones tortured - and years of difficult work to expose the truth and stop abusive practices in these American countries and in too many other places around the world provoked an outcry at the current suggestion from high level U.S. officials that sometimes torture is a “necessary evil,” or that some forms of cruel or abusive treatment of detainees are not “technically” torture and are therefore acceptable.

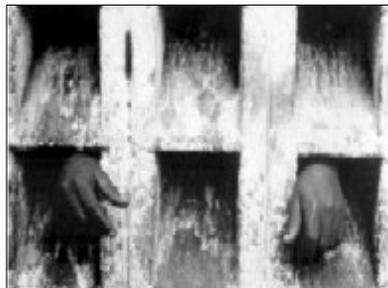
In addition to compelling moral and legal objections to torture, the evidence is overwhelming that information obtained through the use of torture is unreliable. The resistance of the White House to Senator John McCain’s legislation prohibiting the use of torture was indefensible and was finally dropped at the eleventh hour as overwhelming Congressional support for the measure made it virtually veto-proof.

However, according to Human Rights Watch, even as the U.S. Congress banned “the use of cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment by U.S. personnel anywhere in the world,” it was adopting legislation that would strip the judiciary’s ability to enforce the ban on torture.

In addition to the McCain Amendment, the Defense Authorization bill included another provision – the Graham-Levin Amendment – that would deny the five hundred-some detainees in Guantánamo Bay the ability to bring legal action seeking relief from the use of torture or cruel and inhumane treatment. And it implicitly authorized the Department of Defense to consider evidence obtained through torture or other inhumane treatment in assessing the status of detainees held in Guantánamo Bay. This is the first time in U.S. history that Congress has effectively permitted the use of evidence obtained through torture.

### **Faith in action:**

Contact the Torture Abolition and Survivors Support Coalition (TASSC) at [www.tassc.org](http://www.tassc.org) and support their efforts to stop torture around the world, including the use of cruel, degrading and inhuman treatment by U.S. personnel anywhere in the world.



## Debt cancellation: Deadly delays

*Much discussion in the World Bank and IMF about implementation of the G8 multilateral debt relief agreement (see NewsNotes November-December 2005), now called the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI), has taken place since July. Recent documents posted on the IMF web site explaining how the IMF intends to implement the deal evoked strong negative reaction from debt campaigners around the world.*

Basically, 100 percent IMF debt cancellation will be granted to all those countries that have completed the HIPC process (currently 18) – plus all those other member countries at or below the income per capita threshold of US\$380. This means that Cambodia and Tajikistan will also receive IMF debt cancellation (though not World Bank debt cancellation). In principle, this means that a total of 20 countries are currently eligible for IMF debt cancellation.

However, sources report that IMF staff are recommending that immediate debt cancellation be denied for six of the countries eligible, including Ethiopia, Madagascar, Mauritania, Nicaragua, Rwanda, and Senegal.

In describing its “entry conditionality,” the IMF website said that debt cancellation can be delayed if a country is deemed to have faltered in its “macroeconomic performance,” ceased to implement a poverty reduction strategy, or experienced problems with “public expenditure management” since it completed the HIPC program. The debt cancellation plan adopted in September, however, makes no provision for “entry conditionality,” specifying only that countries should have kept up their debt payments since their graduation from HIPC.

Adopting “entry conditionality” would enable the IMF to maintain control over southern countries’ economies. Full cancellation, on the other hand, would allow governments more political space to reject IMF advice and determine their own economic priorities. This is extremely important given strong evidence of the devastating impact on impoverished people and their communities of many of the macroeconomic policies promoted by the IMF.

A recent Jubilee USA Network report entitled *Deadly Delays: How IMF and World Bank Economic Conditions Undermine Debt Cancellation* provides illustrative examples.

Economic policy reforms required by the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and other loan instruments include privatization of government-run ser-

vices and other entities, increased trade liberalization, and budgetary spending restrictions. *Deadly Delays* notes that such policies have not been shown to increase per capita income growth or reduce poverty over the last twenty-five years in which they have been carried out throughout Africa and Latin America. As a result, donors and international financial institutions (IFIs) are beginning to take a second look at the conditions that are tied to aid and debt relief. The UK, for example, has taken a position that future aid will not be “conditional on specific policy decisions by partner governments” including privatization or trade liberalization.

Two of the countries examined by the Jubilee USA Network, Nicaragua and Zambia, have already implemented the required reforms to reach the HIPC “completion point.” Unless the IMF holds them up, which it is threatening to do -- at least in the case of Nicaragua — they should obtain debt cancellation under the G-8 debt deal in 2006, but their stories offer lessons for other countries. (See full report at [www.jubileeusa.org](http://www.jubileeusa.org))

The other two, Cameroon and Malawi, have remained at the “decision point” since 2000, and must undertake additional reforms to reach the completion point in the HIPC Initiative. According to Jubilee, they are facing deadly delays because, while countries like Cameroon and Malawi are held up from receiving debt cancellation, people in these countries are dying because of lack of access to health care, to HIV/AIDS drugs, and to clean water. UNICEF estimates that in 2003 alone 240,000 children were orphaned in Cameroon due to their parents dying of HIV/AIDS.

It is critical that resources released by debt cancellation reach those who need it most. As a result, the Jubilee USA Network works closely with partner organizations in indebted countries to assure accountability and transparency. Jubilee USA writes, “While we support accountability and transparency, we do not support the imposition of economic conditions on impoverished countries by the IMF and World Bank as a condition of debt cancellation. We call on the U.S. government, along with the IMF and World Bank, to provide 100 percent cancellation of the debts of all impoverished countries without requiring those countries to implement harmful economic conditions such as privatization of essential services and restrictive social sector spending. Especially for impoverished countries like Cameroon and Malawi, delays to debt cancellation cost lives.”

For additional information see: [www.50years.org](http://www.50years.org) and [www.jubileeusa.org](http://www.jubileeusa.org).

## Trade: Flawed proposals to TRIPS Agreement

*The following statement was prepared by nongovernmental organizations concerned that a flawed provisional agreement for providing impoverished people and countries access to essential medicines will be made permanent. It was directed at participants in the WTO ministerial meeting in Hong Kong in December, but identifies a crucial issue easily overlooked due its complexity.*

The WTO General Council is considering proposals to amend the TRIPS Agreement in order to permit the exportation of generic medicines produced under compulsory license to supply countries with insufficient or no manufacturing capacity.

According to health, in particular AIDS, activists, the proposals are flawed, and poor countries should not accept a permanent amendment that has not been shown to work in practice.

In 2001, the WTO signed the Doha Declaration on TRIPS and Public Health (the Doha Declaration), which affirms the right of countries to prioritize access to medicines and public health over intellectual property rights. However, the Doha Declaration left unfinished the issue of how countries with insufficient or no manufacturing capacity can make use of these rights. Indeed, most poor countries are not adequately equipped to do efficient domestic production of medicines, while those which have capacity require the economies of scale of a large, global market in order to reach prices that the poor can afford. However, under the TRIPS Agreement, there are significant limitations on exports of generic medicines made under compulsory license.

On August 30, 2003, the Members of the WTO finally agreed on a mechanism with many procedures for allowing trade in compulsory-licensed medicines. The procedures have been criticized by generic industry experts and activists alike for being too burdensome and unworkable in practice. However, the U.S. and the EU are pressuring developing countries to accept that the flawed August 30 agreement be locked in as a permanent amendment to the TRIPS Agreement - despite the fact that the mechanism has not been used since its introduction more than two years ago and its workability is uncertain.

Following the August Decision, the Africa Group submitted a formal proposal that removes many of the procedural requirements and this proposal received wide support from civil society as well as developing

countries as a basis to rethink the mechanism that was agreed to on August 30, 2003. This proposal is also in accordance with the African Health Ministers' recent call in the Gaborone Declaration on "the Ministers of Trade to seek a more appropriate permanent solution at the WTO that revises the TRIPS agreement and removes all constraints, including procedural requirements, relating to the export and import of generic medicines."

Unfortunately although the Africa proposal enjoyed much support, in the current negotiations, this proposal does not seem to be discussed at all. ...

In addition, while the discussion in the TRIPS Council and the General Council have mainly been around the legal status of the Chairman's Statement, we feel that a more in-depth focus has also to be shown on finding a mechanism that works to facilitate access to medicines. It must be borne in mind that the lives of millions of people depend on finding [such a mechanism] ...

Thus the current [August Decision] mechanism needs to be tested and shown to work, before it is turned into a permanent feature of the TRIPS agreement. If the mechanism proves ineffective in achieving its stated goal - enhanced access to affordable medicines for countries with insufficient or no domestic manufacturing capacity - then WTO members should return to the drawing board and agree to a mechanism that is more effective.

For now the [August Decision] mechanism is a waiver that, according to paragraph 11, only terminates "on the date on which an amendment to the TRIPS Agreement replacing its provisions takes effect for that Member," thus effectively it is a permanent waiver for Members to use.

This issue is too important for countries to quickly agree to an amendment just to be able to claim that the WTO system still works and can deliver for development. The developed countries, in particular the U.S. and EU, are desperate to deflect attention from their lack of movement in agriculture and their anti-development proposals in NAMA and Services. If the price of making that claim is the lives of people living with treatable but deadly diseases, then developing countries should not pay it.

*For additional information and to see whether any decisions were made at the WTO regarding TRIPS, see Oxfam International ([www.oxfam.org](http://www.oxfam.org)), Christian Aid ([www.christian-aid.org.uk](http://www.christian-aid.org.uk)) or the Third World Network ([www.twinside.org](http://www.twinside.org)).*

## Trade: Sixth WTO ministerial in Hong Kong

*In mid-December, the 150-member World Trade Organization (WTO) met for its sixth ministerial meeting in Hong Kong. The meeting's main purpose was to continue the ongoing round of negotiations known as the Doha Development Agenda (DDA) (launched by the ministers at the WTO's fourth ministerial conference in Doha, Qatar in November 2001) after its near-derailment at the last ministerial meeting in Cancun, Mexico in 2003. The goal of the DDA is to reduce barriers to trade in agricultural products, non-agricultural products and services along with formulating rules and trade facilitation regulations. The following article is written by Maryknoll Fr. John Casey, who lives and works in Hong Kong.*

What was meant to be a smooth development during the ministerial meeting turned out to be anything but. At issue in general was the distinction between “free” and “fair” trade with the basic issue the trade inequities between rich and poor countries. The “fair” trade issue is what brought most non-governmental organizations (NGOs) into the equation, some championing the rights of the “little people” with others championing various business ventures.

As the meeting began, everyone was aware that the dominant area to be addressed was agricultural trade. For maximum clout, ministers divided themselves into a number of different negotiating groups, some overlapping. For instance, the African Union Group was headed by the Egyptian Trade Minister Rachid Mohamed Rachid, as was the G-20 group of developing countries. Rachid was quoted as saying that the two groups, while almost identical, had some minor differences.

Even before the meeting's first day, it was understood that a negotiations obstacle was the farm subsidies paid by the U.S. and the EU to its farmers which undercut prices of farm products worldwide. Particularly hurting were nine African nations, among the poorest in the world, which have cotton as their principal export product. On Dec. 12 and 13, both the EU and the U.S. tried to diffuse the situation somewhat by offering large packages of trade-related monetary assistance. But the desire of the poorer countries was to lower import tariffs on their agricultural products and the export subsidies in the EU and U.S. But the richer countries wanted poorer countries to cede in other areas such as services and industrial tariffs. By this time, it looked as if the conference was doomed to failure and some, including the U.S. Trade Representative Rob Portman, began looking be-

yond this meeting and calling for another meeting early next year.

On Dec. 15, the U.S. offered duty-free and quota-free access to the C-4 cotton producers, Benin, Burkina, Faso, Chad and Mali. Oxfam called this offer “disingenuous” since African countries do not export a single gram of cotton to the U.S. and have not done so in years. Meanwhile, China, which was keeping a low profile during these discussions, was stung by the U.S.'s comment that China was not living up to its WTO commitments. In response, their commerce minister claimed that China was the biggest victim of unfair anti-dumping practices and the rest of the world should treat it as a developing country with a genuine market economy.

On Dec. 16, 110 countries put aside their enormous differences in an exceptional show of unity to put pressure on the wealthy nations which they accused of dominating the agenda and marginalizing their legitimate concern. On the same day, Argentina, Brazil, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, the Philippines, South Africa, Tunisia, Namibia and Venezuela — all of whom were concerned about the lack of debate on non-agricultural market access — began a new grouping of countries called the NAMA 11.

After an all-night session, at dawn on Dec. 17 a draft text was produced. Unfortunately it failed to address key demands such as a time line for eliminating government subsidies on agricultural exports. But late in the day this gloom was overshadowed by pandemonium which broke out within the convention center when it was sealed off by police reacting to a group of protestors led by Korean rice farmers who had charged within yards of the Convention Centre. Scuffles with the police blocked off all key access routes.

On Dec. 18, the last day of the meeting, a compromise was reached when trade ministers agreed to the elimination of farm export subsidies by 2013, a date backed by the EU, although Brazil and the U.S. lobbied for 2010. Least developed nations got support by duty-free and quota-free access to wealthier markets by 2008, but many countries will continue to protect “sensitive” industries. In a concession to the C-4 African nations, the U.S. committed to ending export subsidies for cotton by 2006. However, it can continue subsidizing the production of cotton which will continue to distort market prices.

*For more information, check the website of the Interfaith Working Group on Trade and Investment, [www.tradejusticeusa.org](http://www.tradejusticeusa.org).*

## Guidelines recommended for video game sales

*The following article is from the Christian Brothers Investment Services, Inc. (CBIS). See related article in NewsNotes, January-February 2004. For more information, contact the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR), a leader of the corporate social responsibility movement. ICCR's membership is an association of 275 faith-based institutional investors (including the Maryknoll Fathers & Brothers and the Maryknoll Sisters). ICCR and its members press companies to be socially and environmentally responsible. Each year ICCR-member religious institutional investors sponsor over 100 shareholder resolutions on major social and environmental issues. The combined portfolio value of ICCR's member organizations is estimated to be \$110 billion.*

In December 2005, Christian Brothers Investment Services, Inc. (CBIS) and other members of the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR), representing more than \$110 billion in assets, outlined recommended guidelines for U.S. retailers to keep "Mature" (M)-rated video games out of the hands of youths. The new guidelines arrive among continuing concerns that retailers have not done enough to prevent sales to minors of video games containing graphic violence, strong sexual content and racist themes.

After working effectively with major retailers that have policies and programs in place, including Best Buy, Target, Wal-Mart, and Circuit City, ICCR shareholders pulled together the "best practices" from these policies into one cohesive set of guidelines, and now call for their strict implementation. Shareholders challenge retailers who have not yet done so, to create strong and effective policies.

Cathy Rowan, co-chair of the ICCR Violence and Militarization of Society Working Group and representative of ICCR member Trinity Health said: "While we've seen improvement among retailers on this issue, much more work needs to be done. We are urging all video game retailers to create and enforce video game sales policies that reflect the best practices in the industry to ensure that M-rated video games for audiences ages 17 and older are not sold to minors."

The newly recommended guidelines address in-store and online violent video game sales and call on retailers to:

- Post video game sales policies prominently in stores and online;

- Display signs and brochures to raise awareness among parents and others;
- Restrict advertising of M-rated games in youth-oriented media;
- Establish an online method of checking the age of buyers;
- Train employees on the video games sales policy;
- Program cash registers to remind cashiers about age rules;
- Conduct "mystery shopper" programs and other internal audits; and
- Separate M-Rated video games from youth-oriented video games.

Dawn Wolfe, Social Research and Advocacy Analyst, Boston Common Asset Management, LLC said: "While parents play a key role in ensuring that their children are purchasing and playing age-appropriate video games, retailers also have a role to play. Over the past year, ICCR shareholders worked with many retail stores to help them keep content that glorifies violence and is labeled "mature" out of the hands of children. These guidelines can provide retailers with benchmarks and goals for developing new policies or strengthening existing policies."

While shareholders recognize that the sale of appropriate video games to children requires the cooperation and collaboration of the entire video game industry including the retailers, game developers and producers, the ESRB rating system, government legislators and consumers, they believe that retailers can better protect shareholder value by making a genuine commitment to keep video games with graphic violence, strong sexual content, and racist themes from minors. Research on violent media that is interactive — such as video and computer games - suggests that it has a stronger and more lasting effect on violent behavior of youths.

In recent years, members of ICCR have addressed retailers in corporate dialogues and shareholder resolutions to develop, strengthen, and implement their policies. On May 19, 2005, CBIS and its co-filers announced that they had withdrawn a violent video games shareholder resolution filed with Best Buy Co., Inc. (NYSE: BBY), since the company agreed to publicly outline one of the toughest violent video game policies introduced by a major U.S. retailer to restrict the sale of mature-rated video games to children and teens.

For the full text of the ICCR guidelines, go to [www.cbisonline.com](http://www.cbisonline.com) or [www.iccr.org](http://www.iccr.org).

## Resources

- 1) **Economic Way of the Cross: Order now for Lent!** Published by the Religious Working Group on the World Bank/IMF (RWG), the "Economic Way of the Cross" presents the traditional Lenten prayer service with a modern twist: each station in the Economic Way of the Cross focuses on an oppressive economic reality and highlights some aspect of the liberating work of Christ's passion. Each station names one or more institutions complicit in injustice, and each invokes a commitment on our part to work for change. Prices, including postage: \$3.50 for one copy; \$7.50 for ten copies; \$12.50 for 25 copies; \$17.50 for 50 copies; \$25 for 100 copies. Please make checks payable to the Religious Working Group on the World Bank/IMF. Contact the RWG at [rwg@maryknollogc.org](mailto:rwg@maryknollogc.org), or send your order to the RWG, c/o P.O. Box 29132, Washington, D.C., 20017, or call 202-832-1780.
- 2) ***Erasing the Lines***: This report, published by the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA), the Latin America Working Group (LAWG) and the Center for International Policy (CIP), is a study of current U.S. military assistance in Latin America, and highlights several disturbing recent trends. The lines separating military and civilian governance roles, firmly drawn by many Latin American governments after decades of conflict and military dictatorships, are being erased both in U.S. policy and in the region. These changes are taking place as security doctrines are applied to a broad range of social problems and governance challenges. Go to [www.wola.org](http://www.wola.org) to download a copy, or contact LAWG for a copy: [lawg@lawg.org](mailto:lawg@lawg.org), 202-546-7010.
- 3) **Rights on the Line: Vigilantes at the Border**: This new production from the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) offers a provocative look at the growing role of armed vigilante groups and their attempts to play on anti-immigration scapegoating. Filmed by legal observers and human rights activists at the U.S.-Mexico border, this new video was produced in partnership with ACLU and WITNESS, a group using video activism to defend human rights. Developed as a tool for community education and human rights advocacy, "Rights on the Line" explores the true nature of the vigilante movement, contrasting their media-savvy public message with the reality of their night-time raids against border crossers and threatening posture toward border communities. This 25-minute video includes interviews with border residents, border crossers, human rights activists, and members of the Minuteman Project themselves. (A 12-minute abridged version will be available soon.) Available now on VHS and DVD, in both English and Spanish, from AFSC, [www.afsc.org](http://www.afsc.org), 1501 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102; 215-241-7000; [afscinfo@afsc.org](mailto:afscinfo@afsc.org). Those planning programs on immigrant rights may also be interested in AFSC's documentary video, "Echando Raices/Taking Root: Immigrant and Refugee Communities in California, Texas, and Iowa."
- 4) **Three resources from Pax Christi USA:**
  - i) ***Consumerism Issue Packet: Through the Eye of a Needle***: Newly updated! Pax Christi USA's consumerism issue packet is more than educational on the epidemic of consumerism. It's a five-week process focused on five aspects of consumerism: affluenza, overconsumption, sweatshops, the environment and simple living. Suitable for use by small groups as well as individuals, each session contains prayers, reflection questions and action suggestions. The process encourages participants to examine potential purchases in light of a purchasing check-list. Great for introducing social justice issues to your parish or small group. \$8.00.
  - ii) ***Breaking the Cycle of Violence: A Prayer, Study and Action Packet on the Death Penalty***: This redesign of our death penalty organizing packet features 17 new and updated pieces, in partnership with Catholics Against Capital Punishment. Includes study and reflection pieces from people who have been on death row, those who work with death row inmates and more. Also includes resources on working to end the death penalty, including action suggestions and prayers. \$8.00.
  - iii) ***Living Under Occupation***: This packet draws on the experiences of the Pax Christi International delegation to Israel/Palestine in December 2003. Contains maps and information sheets on: Background to the Occupation, checkpoints, the Occupation Wall, soldier choices, the Israeli arms trade and much more. \$18.00.  
Contact Pax Christi to order: 532 W. 8th Street, Erie, PA, 16502; 814-453-4955; [www.paxchristiusa.org](http://www.paxchristiusa.org)