

# Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

# NewsNotes

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

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## Peacemaking -- a learned, unifying power

In our search for peace, it has become imperative to reflect on human behavior, the source of war and all the conflicts the United Nations is at present working diligently to resolve. Dealing with one war at a time, each conflict as it happens, has left the world breathless and with the endless responsibility of putting out the next fire. While crisis may intensely motivate efforts towards reconciliation, wars are never the right atmosphere for true peacemaking. Contrary to what we see on television, there are no instant solutions to conflicts, no fast way to repair relationships; brief applications of either military pressure or peace diplomacy are doomed to failure.

The time has come, then, for all of us who claim this planet as our home to pause long enough to think deeply about our violence, whether it is inevitable, and what is it that can stop human violence other than more of the same?

Michael Nagler, who has studied these questions for several decades, clearly describes what human violence has done: "When we prey on each other something goes wrong and it has led to the devastation of whole societies." Violence has so much become a part of ourselves, our society, our culture, and our entertainment that it is now our way of life and thought. Additionally, our society's system of blame and punishment has become so violent that we can no longer rely on it for restitution or restorative justice. If this violence of ours is seen more like a sickness, an addiction, it opens up possibilities: of recognizing the causes, of prevention, of ways to stop it before it begins. One cause of violence has been named as failure, a failure to see that we all are one, and more tragically, a failure of imagination, a failure to go beyond ignorance to wisdom and to love.

Chuck Matthei, another innovative thinker who understood the connections between violence and economics, and the relation between justice and peace, said: "We may not always be able to choose our circumstances, but we can always decide how we will respond." (*Sojourners*, January-February 2003, pg 44) Understood correctly, this is a basic concept that can open the way to turn us around and find our way out of the consuming violence of our times.

Alain Richard, once part of the Pace e Bene Nonviolence Service program, would ask at workshops: "Have any of you ever used inner moral power against physical force?" We must begin to understand that nonviolence is integrative power. It is, like the intention to harm, first of all a question of mind, and only then an expression of a state of mind in action: it can be learned. During the months preceding the war on Iraq, many seemed willing to do this learning as they participated in nonviolence training or took a pledge of nonviolent resistance.

The need is still there and growing for individuals and groups to discover the deeper meaning of and to assimilate *Ahimsa*, the Gandhian word that means a profoundly positive and active power of the soul. According to French theologian Jacques Ellul, our age must realize, before it is too late, that nonviolence is the positive power that holds the solution to most of our major personal, social and global problems. Stopping our violence at its source is the only way left and so we must do all we are able to study those who can teach us the true meaning of nonviolence, to wrestle with its meaning in our society, to teach all and to personally live active nonviolence.

### *Suggested books, websites and programs on peacemaking:*

- *Is There No Other Way?* by Michael N. Nagler, Berkeley Hills Books, <http://www.berkeleyhills.com> .Contains notes and resources, and clarifies human violence, pointing out the efforts that are needed in order to learn nonviolence.
- *Mohandas Gandhi: Essential Writings* by John Dear, Orbis Books.
- "From Violence to Wholeness," a 10-part study program on nonviolence by Pace e Bene, 1420 West Bartlett Avenue, Las Vegas, NV 89106; ph: 702-648-2281; [www.paceebene.org](http://www.paceebene.org).
- *The Gandhian Wave, A Civil Disobedience Handbook*, a manual for nonviolence & civil disobedience by SOA Watch/CNY, 340 Midland Ave Syracuse NY 13202; [www.soaw.org](http://www.soaw.org) -- click on Resources, then click on Videos, Books and Manuals.
- *Decade Resource Manual*, edited by Neera Singh, available from Fellowship of Reconciliation, P.O. Box 271, Nyack, NY 10960; ph: (845) 358-4601; fax: (845) 358-4924; email: [for@forusa.org](mailto:for@forusa.org); [www.forusa.org](http://www.forusa.org)
- Pax Christi USA offers books/pamphlets/prayers on nonviolence: [www.paxchristiusa.org/shopsite](http://www.paxchristiusa.org/shopsite); 814-453-4955.
- Fellowship of Reconciliation offers nonviolence programs and a list of trainers as well as books and articles on nonviolence: [www.forusa.org/Programs/NVTraining/NVTrainers.html](http://www.forusa.org/Programs/NVTraining/NVTrainers.html)

We welcome readers' suggestions of book titles, articles and workshops that can guide us toward active peacemaking.

## Life in war: Devastating landmines, persistent faith

*The following piece was submitted by Fr. John Barth, MM. The story was adapted from a report written by Dr. Andy Pyott, MD, an ophthalmologist who worked with Fr. Barth at an eye clinic in rural Cambodia.*

In 1993 the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) was preparing for what was supposed to be a free and fair election. The Khmer Rouge would not participate, and did what they could to be disruptive. It was the harvest season, and 23-year old Pok Ky was with his family and friends in rice fields starting to bring in the crop. They were close to the forest where guerrilla forces were known to be at large, but so far the farmers had been relatively free from trouble. Ky brought his sickle down through the dry stalks of rice when there was a large explosion. Thinking that they were coming under a rocket attack he shouted to his friends to lie flat. He then saw a large hole in front of him, and that he no longer had a left hand. Blood was pouring everywhere. He passed out. His sickle had activated a trip wire attached to a landmine.

Eventually he was taken to a UN hospital in Phnom Penh where the remains of the lower part of his left forearm (his dominant side) was amputated. He had completely lost the sight of his right eye, which had to be removed. He had a small amount of vision in his left eye, but was, by the World Health Organization's definition, blind. He returned to his

family farm in Kampong Cham province. There they had a small plot of land, but it was insufficient to supply all their rice needs for the year. Work in the paddy was very slow for Ky because he had so little vision.

In 1998 Ky set off from his home to make the 200-kilometer journey to Phnom Penh. He had heard of organizations that could help blind people. Eventually he found Maryknoll social workers, and they directed him to Takeo Eye Hospital, started by Maryknoll missionaries a year earlier. That same day he was taken to the operating room and the lens of his left eye, which had become opaque due to penetrating shrapnel, was removed. The doctors were able to insert an artificial lens, and the next day he was able to see clearly for the first time in five years. He was able to work much more efficiently in the fields and get around on his own, and he was able to see his three-month-old daughter for the first time.

The first thing Ky said when the doctor removed the bandage from his eye was, "Augh khun, augh khun [thank you, thank you]."

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## Preemptive Peace: Beyond terrorism & justified war

Almost four years ago, Pope John Paul II said: "Wars are often the cause of further wars because they fuel deep hatreds, create situations of injustice and trample upon people's dignity and rights. Wars generally do not resolve the problems for which they are fought and therefore, in addition to causing horrendous damage, they prove ultimately futile." (World Day of Peace, January 2000)

On July 31, Pax Christi International and Pax Christi USA held a consultation entitled "Preemptive Peace: Beyond Terrorism and Justified War" at St. John's University in New York. It brought together people with experience of conflict from the global South, academics, theologians, peace activists and practitioners, and representatives of Catholic institutions. They participated in three facilitated "fishbowl" conversations, each around one of the following topics: 1) Just war or justified war? The use and misuse of just war criteria, including its application to the war against terrorism; 2) How can we respond to egregious human rights violations, threats to use weapons of mass destruction and other "just causes" for war without violence? Why

have we failed to develop nonviolent strategies at an international level adequate to such a task, and what can be done to advance their development? and 3) How can local or indigenous peace initiatives contribute to efforts to avoid war, even in the face of grave threats to peace?

The goals of the consultation were to explore the given topics from the perspective of different disciplines and experiences and to identify some of the key questions that need further exploration or public debate. Among the issues thus identified were differences between a strictly pacifist position and a conditioned use of force or coercion in situations of extreme violence. Another topic of great concern to those assembled was the role of a prophetic church in situations of unjust war.

The consultation proceedings will be documented and published in a variety of formats. The process will be repeated following the Pax Christi International Council meetings in New Jersey in May 2004.

## Bangladesh: "Eco-park" threatens culture

*Bangladesh has decided to go ahead with a proposed 1,500-acre "eco-park" on forest land occupied for centuries by indigenous people. The government says the park would help preserve the environment and spur economic growth.*

The project, the proposed Modhupur National Park, is planned 120 kilometers north of Dhaka. It would include a cultural village where the local indigenous people and their customs would be on display for tourists. In the process the government might also relocate 5,000 people -- some 1,000 Khasi and Garo families -- from seven hill villages.

The Forest and Environment Ministry says the project is meant for the people's "social improvement," but the changes would be far-reaching: the clearing of forest land to build permanent housing, roads, offices and a school, and probably the leveling of hills.

The government announced plans for the 2.5-square-mile eco-park in 2000 and initiated work a year later -- beginning on Easter Sunday. (Many local Christians marked the day by participating in a protest rally against the project.) The government did not consult with the indigenous people before announcing its proposal, and it later tried to assure the people that their lives would not be disturbed. Nevertheless, the *adivasis* -- the indigenous people -- asked authorities to use adjacent government-owned land as an alternative. Their request was ignored.

Protests against the project led to a moratorium in 2001, but the suspension was lifted this year. Preliminary work is under way, with a 61,000-foot boundary wall about one-fourth completed.

The eco-park proposal flies in the face of ILO (International Labor Organization) Convention No. 107, which guarantees the right of indigenous people to own the land they occupy, to be compensated if they are removed from their land, and to be consulted in matters affecting their lives. Bangladesh ratified the convention in 1972. The ILO is a UN agency that promotes social justice and internationally recognized human and labor rights.

The indigenous people live in villages called *punjees* on the top of hills, and they make their living by planting betel leaf and fruit trees. Although they have been paying land taxes to Bangladesh (formerly East Pakistan), the government rejects the land deeds they hold. The documents date back to colonial times, prior to the 1947 partition of India and Pakistan. Meanwhile, the forest dwellers say they are not

against the eco-park per se, but they insist on their rights as described in the ILO convention.

Local advocacy groups claim the forest ministry has been falsely accusing the tribals of "trespassing" in the forest, raising crops on forest land, illegally cutting wood and even of rape or murder, apparently in an attempt to force them from the forest. Tribals suggest the false charges were filed to hide the forest ministry decimation of the forest in collaboration with rich and influential people.

Avowed purposes of the eco-park include preserving rare forest animals and plants, replanting forests, improving recreation areas and promoting ecotourism while enhancing economic development. The designated area includes two beautiful waterfalls -- a likely reason for locating the park on tribal land rather than in nearby areas that are larger, uninhabited and environmentally endangered and seem more suitable for the project.

In contrast to the issue of their "social improvement," the forest dwellers view the proposed eco-park more starkly as a matter of life and death. As one tribal describes it: "The graves of our ancestors lie in this forest land. If we lose this forest, we will lose our life and our ancestors. Taking away our land is plucking out our life because we draw our life from this forest. We were born in this forest, and we want to die here."

### **Faith in action:**

Write to the prime minister of Bangladesh, with a copy to the minister for forest and environment. Ask the government to recognize the forest dwellers' ownership of their land. Urge that the indigenous people be consulted on the eco-park and that they not be relocated without compensation:

- 1) Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Office of the Prime Minister, Gono Bhaban, Shere-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka, Bangladesh
- 2) Md. Shajahan Siraj, Minister for Forest and Environment, Ministry of Forest and Environment, Building No. 6, 13th floor, Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh

## South Korea: Injunction might save wetlands

A South Korean court has issued an injunction to stop work on a project that would convert an important wetlands area for migratory birds to rice land. The government said it would appeal, and a decision is expected in two or three months.

The injunction July 15 stopped construction of a 33-kilometer sea wall that would enclose an area of rich tidal mudflats more than one-third the size of Hong Kong. The reclamation project, at Saemangeum on South Korea's west coast, comprises 40,000 hectares. The wall is about 75 percent complete.

Saemangeum is visited by over 500,000 shorebirds every year. The birds feed for about two weeks before undertaking a journey of up to 4,000 kilometers to their summer home in Australia, New Zealand, Thailand or Malaysia.

"The Saemangeum tidal flats are one of the most important sites in the Yellow Sea region for migratory shorebirds," says Richard Grimmett, head of Birdlife International's Asia division. Environmentalists fear that, if the project is completed, a tenth of the visiting bird population could perish for lack of food.

Artificial 1,000-hectare lakes as well as 2,000 hectares of undeveloped water reserves are planned as part of the project, but ecologists disagree on whether artificial lakes behind the sea wall would save the visiting bird populations. "The species that belong there can only be supported by [the present] system," says British ornithologist Nial Moores. "It's an absolutely critical natural reserve."

The tidal flats also form a significant part of the Yellow Sea eco-region that is vital for 158 fish species, as well for crabs and seaweed. The mudflats support some 25,000 small-scale fishermen and their families.

The US\$2.3 billion project was conceived in the late 1970s when the government sought to turn South Korea, then a Third World agrarian economy, into an industrial power.

The government reasoned that, with about 30,000 hectares of prime farmland lost to creeping urbanization each year, it needed to create more agricultural land. Ironically, since the mid 1990s the country has consistently recorded an annual rice *surplus* of nearly two million tons. Improved rice varieties and changing dietary habits have led to a glut rather than a shortage.

Construction began in 1991, but local and international opposition mounted over the following decade. A government-appointed Expert Review Panel warned in 2001 of possible water pollution and damage to fisheries, and it recommended that the project be abandoned. Work was suspended, only to be resumed a year later. The wall, plagued by cost and time overruns, is now scheduled for completion in 2005, pending the outcome of the government's appeal.

Critics maintain that the reclaimed land would not be useful for farming, and they hoped that President Roh Moo-Hyun, elected this year, would stop the project. His administration announced instead that, if the land is found unsuitable for agriculture, it would be used for industrial development.

Opponents galvanized public protest earlier this year with a dramatic march from Saemangeum to Seoul. With some opinion polls running 81 percent against the project, Buddhist and Christian religious leaders undertook the 65-day march in a form of protest called *Samboilbae*. For every three steps during the 310-kilometer journey, they knelt and bowed to the ground. Some of South Korea's best known celebrities joined in the "Three Steps, One Bow" march, arriving May 31 at the Seoul City Hall amid 8,000 people.

The government, meanwhile, has given local fishing communities US\$400,000 in compensation, but residents take little comfort in the one-time pay-out. As one shellfish gatherer, who lives next to the mudflats, puts it: "The death of the mudflats is the death of me and the fishermen. The death of the fishermen is the death of the community. The death of the community is the death of the country."

### **Faith in action:**

Write polite letters to South Korean president Roh Moo Hyun, asking that the Saemangeum project be canceled. The reclaimed land would probably not be useable for agriculture, and 25,000 fishermen and their families would likely be displaced. In addition, an irreplaceable ecological resource would be lost. 1 Sejong-Ro, Jongno-gu, Seoul, South Korea 110-050; president@president.go.kr

## Pacific: Is compensation near for nuclear tests?

A court ruling in France linking the cancer death of a French serviceman to nuclear tests raised hope for compensation to other military personnel and civilians exposed to high doses of radiation in the Pacific. Nonetheless, French President Jacques Chirac denies that the tests were harmful to health.

The U.S., Great Britain and France tested nuclear weapons in the South Pacific for 50 years beginning in 1946. Islanders on Bikini and Enewetak had to relocate and three atolls completely disappeared, causing an unknown amount of human suffering and environmental damage overall.

The French case involved serviceman Francois Janas, who joined the navy in 1961. Janas was assigned to the Mururoa test zone in French Polynesia twice for a total of 18 months. He died of leukemia in 1999.

A tribunal assessing claims for military invalid pensions declared in February 2003 that Janas' leukemia was attributable to his military service. The court ordered his survivors, two daughters, to be paid a full invalid pension.

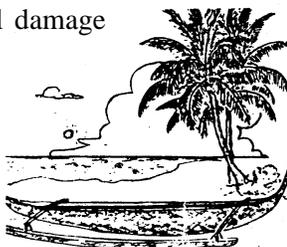
France conducted 193 nuclear tests on two atolls 750 miles southeast of Tahiti. From 30,000 to 40,000 military personnel worked at least temporarily at the two nuclear sites during three decades of testing. During a visit to the South Pacific in July 2003, however, Chirac declared that the tests had "no health consequences, either in the short term or long term," for islanders in the region.

Veterans groups have hailed the French case as a benchmark. Roy Sefton, chairman of the New Zealand Nuclear Test Veterans Association, said the ruling means that other governments around the world might now face legal action from veterans of nuclear tests.

New Zealand veteran Patrick Long agrees. Long blames his skin cancer on exposure to tests in Mururoa in 1973 while he was on the Navy frigate Canterbury. He also said that, while New Zealand has never acknowledged that his illness could be linked to his service at Mururoa, the government has paid all of his medical bills, including six major operations on his face and almost-weekly visits to his skin specialist.

Meanwhile British, New Zealand and Fiji veterans of British nuclear tests in the Pacific were reportedly preparing a class action against the UK Ministry of Defence. They claim that they and their children suffer from radia-

tion-induced illnesses and need costly medical care as a result of the 22 nuclear tests Great Britain conducted during the 1950s.



The U.S. conducted 101 nuclear tests in the Pacific and has offered islanders compensation to pay for medical expenses and to reclaim land contaminated with radioactive material. However, some island residents say the assistance is inadequate.

For example, officials of the U.S. and the Marshall Islands signed a 20-year extension of the Compact of Free Association between the United States and Marshall Islands in the spring of 2003. The agreement then went to the U.S. Congress and the Marshall Islands legislature for review and approval.

The newspaper *Marianas Variety* reports that the first Compact, which expires on Sept. 30, 2003, provided \$270 million in compensation, health care and radiological studies for the Marshall Islands, and acknowledged U.S. responsibility for damage caused by its nuclear tests. However, the new Compact has no such provisions.

U.S. officials contend that the nuclear compensation package in the first Compact satisfied the U.S.'s obligation to compensate the Marshall Islands for nuclear test damage, but some Marshall Islanders take exception.

"There's not even one sentence in the new Compact about help for the Marshallese affected by nuclear tests," says Johnny Johnson, Bikini. "Many people still can't return to their home islands, and have health problems. Why is the U.S. willing to rebuild Iraq, while it still owes Marshallese for what it did to the people here?"

### **Faith in action:**

Write to your lawmakers and insist that they retain funding in the Compact to meet the medical expenses of Pacific islanders suffering as a result of nuclear tests. Urge that the executive agreement also provide for a major cleanup of contaminated soil so that island residents can safely return to their homes.

## Indonesia: Human rights abuses continue

*Against the wishes of Congress, President Bush has released \$400,000 in training funds for the Indonesian military this year. Defense and State department officials contended that the training would help to professionalize the Indonesian military and reduce human rights violations.*

The concern for human rights is well placed, but the effect of U.S. aid is doubtful. Indonesia has been uncooperative in the investigation of an ambush in August 2002 in Papua Province in which three schoolteachers – two U.S. citizens and an Indonesian – died. Elsewhere, Indonesia is using U.S. weapons to attack separatists in Aceh Province in the largest military operation since the 1975 invasion of East Timor.



The TNI is using U.S.-supplied weapons in the fighting. These include OV-10 Bronco counterinsurgency aircraft to attack villages from the air, and C-130 Hercules transport planes to drop paratroopers. However, the United States Arms Export Control Act stipulates that weapons transferred to other countries may be used only for self-defense, internal security or participation in UN operations, and it seems debatable whether the conflict in Aceh fits any of those criteria.

The ambush in Papua -- on a road near the mining operation of the Louisiana-based Freeport-McMoRan Copper and Gold, Inc. -- also injured 12 persons, including eight U.S. citizens. Investigations by the Indonesian police and non-governmental organizations point to the TNI (Indonesian military) as being responsible.

In November 2002 the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported that U.S. intelligence agencies had “intercepted messages between Indonesian army commanders indicating that they were involved in staging an ambush at the remote mine in which three schoolteachers, two of them Americans, were killed.”

The TNI initially obstructed two FBI trips, but Indonesia recently allowed the FBI to return to carry out its own investigation of the Papua attack.

Aceh, on the northern tip of Sumatra, has seen one of Asia’s longest-running wars. For almost 27 years the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) has been demanding independence from Indonesia in a conflict that has claimed more than 10,000 lives. On May 19, 2003, Indonesian President Megawati Sukarnoputri declared martial law in the oil- and gas-rich province, ending a six-month ceasefire.

Some 45,000 Indonesian troops were dispatched to confront an estimated 5,000 rebels, but the TNI acknowledged that the war could drag on for another ten years. The TNI said it would relocate 200,000 people to military-supervised camps in the province of four million. Education seemed an early target, as more than 500 school buildings were reportedly burned during the first month of the offensive. The TNI blamed GAM for the arson.

Meanwhile, the full House and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee have acted to block \$600,000 in IMET (International Military Education and Training) funds to Indonesia for 2004. Amendments were adopted to ban IMET funds until the president certifies that Indonesia is “taking effective measures” to fully investigate and criminally prosecute those responsible for the Papua ambush. The full Senate was to take up the amendment after the August recess.

Defense and State department officials argue that funding military training programs facilitates U.S. officials’ access to foreign military leaders. They also say that exposing foreign officers to U.S. military standards encourages more professionalism and fewer human rights abuses.

The \$400,000 in IMET funds that President Bush released for the Indonesian military in July had already been appropriated for the fiscal year ending Oct. 1. After congressional protests, however, the president restricted the funds to so-called “expanded” IMET programs, which exclude tactical or field exercises. Only classroom training is allowed, covering such subjects as civil-military relations, humanitarian law, budget and accountability issues, and human rights.

### **Faith in action:**

Contact your lawmakers in Washington, D.C. Urge your senators to support a ban on IMET funding for the Indonesian military. Ask your senators and representatives to press Indonesia for a full investigation into the Papua ambush and for an end to military impunity and violations of human rights.

## Middle East: Security wall endangers road map

*Thirty-one members of Congress have urged President Bush not to reduce loan guaranties to Israel as a penalty for building a security wall on the occupied West Bank. The White House is considering financial pressure to encourage Israel to at least alter the route of a barrier that would put most of the West Bank under Israeli control.*

The lawmakers' Aug. 5 letter to the president urges that Israel's security and stability be the primary objective of U.S. involvement in the Middle East, and that Israel be allowed the right to make decisions affecting its own future.

Israel's separation wall, however, unjustly denies Palestinians the right to make decisions affecting *their* future -- especially the right to build a viable independent state. The projected 370-mile-long wall cuts deeply into Palestinian territory, and the farm land of more than 50 West Bank villages has already been confiscated or isolated due to the barrier.

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon initially opposed the idea of the wall. It would have been built along the Green Line, until 1967 the boundary between Israel and Jordan. The notion of a wall seemed to imply that Israeli settlements on the West Bank would have to be dismantled once permanent borders were established with the Palestinians.

However, settlers began demanding that the wall be re-routed to take in settlements on the Israeli side of the barrier. Sharon then proposed a second security wall along the Jordan Valley on the eastern side of the West Bank. The whole project would enable Israel to control more than 50 percent of the West Bank. (A map of the completed and projected portions of the wall, prepared by the Foundation for Middle East Peace, can be viewed at <http://www.cmep.org/documents/fencemap.htm>.)

If the wall were built along the Green Line, it might have encouraged the peace process in the short term (see *NewsNotes*, March/April 2003). Instead, however, the wall snakes its way up to four miles inside the West Bank, and in some areas might cut in as far as 10 miles. Overall, the area for a Palestinian state would be divided into three enclaves, not including the Gaza Strip, and would be walled in on all sides. In addition, 80 percent of the water aquifers would be under Israeli control.

Although Sharon told President Bush (July 29) that Israel would make "every effort to minimize the infringement on the daily life of the Palestinian population," construction of the wall is causing monumental harm.

Water pipes are being destroyed, with Palestinian villages losing their only source of water. Thousands of Palestinian families in the northern West Bank will live on the east side of the wall while their farmland is on the west side, putting their livelihood at risk.

Israel uses the euphemism "security fence" to describe the fortifications being built in the West Bank. In fact, components of the "fence" include a concrete wall eight meters high, wire fences and electronic sensors, ditches four meters deep on either side, a dirt path to reveal footprints, a two-lane road for army patrols, and watchtowers and firing posts at 200-meter intervals.

Israelis estimate the cost of the wall at US\$2 million per mile. "It is difficult to accept the assurance by some Israeli officials that this separation fence is not a predetermination of political borders and that it is a reversible action," Churches for Middle East Peace wrote July 21 to National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice. "The destruction of homes, the destruction of crops and the uprooting of trees are not reversible."

The wall seems to pose a major obstacle to the Israeli-Palestinian peace process begun several months ago. In fact, it appears sadly consistent with Israel's own "road map" thus far, marked largely by *construction* of roads and settlements in the Palestinian territories, *constriction* of the Palestinian population and the Palestinian Authority, and *consumption* of Palestinian land and water.

In reality, there is no hope of winning the hearts and minds of a people who feel increasingly oppressed. Yet this is precisely what is needed to guarantee real security -- while perhaps obviating the need for a separation wall.

### **Faith in action:**

Urge President Bush to oppose further construction of the wall, and to impose economic penalties if necessary. Point out that the wall seems intended to preempt the negotiation of borders of a Palestinian state. It also distracts from other important issues within the road map to peace such as settlements and the final status of Jerusalem.

## Burundi: Ceasefire but no peace

*There seems to be no end to Burundi's 10-year civil war. Despite the formal signing of an elaborate Peace Accord in 2000, followed by the installation of a new transitional government in 2001 and the publication of a partial ceasefire agreement in 2002, several fatal flaws continue to block the peace process in Burundi, and fighting continues to rage in this tiny central African country. The following article, contributed by Fr. Dave Schwinghamer, MM, provides an update on the bloody conflict which has claimed over 300,000 lives.*

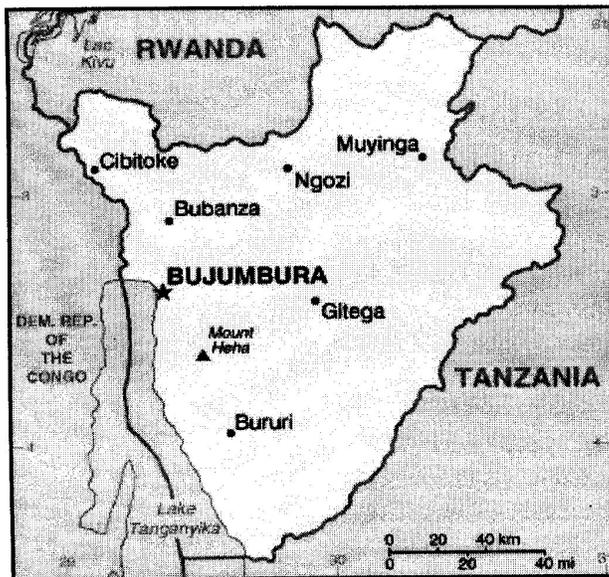
First, the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi (August 2000) was only agreed to reluctantly by President Pierre Buyoya and his supporters in the army. In addition, the two main armed opposition factions, the Forces for the Defense of Democracy and the Forces for National Liberation (known by its initials in French, FLN), were never included in the Arusha negotiations and have never signed the accord.

Second, the composition of the new transitional government gives clear advantage to the two traditional power blocks: the Hutu-dominated FRODEBU party and the Tutsi-dominated UPRONA party. As a result, other signatories to the Arusha Accord, most notably the Hutu-led CNDD, perceive that they have been excluded from effective leadership in the new government. Both the new Transitional National Assembly and the Transitional Senate are dominated by FRODEBU and UPRONA members. Thus, the spoils of government jobs have not been spread around and a new political exclusion has been consecrated despite repeated warnings by the Implementation Committee of the Arusha Accord.

Third, the ceasefire agreements have not been adhered to by either side. Despite numerous signed agreements between the transitional government and four out of the five armed opposition groups, fighting continues and the recent attack by the FLN (the one non-signatory) on Bujumbura has seriously damaged the entire peace process.

Another factor that contributes to the faltering peace process is the dilemma surrounding the provision of aid for reconstruction by the international community.

An essential part of the Arusha Accord is the Fourth



Protocol on Reconstruction and Development. The international community has promised aid for this program but has not granted it yet due to the lack of a ceasefire and lack of reforms by the transitional government. Both groups in the government – FRODEBU and UPRONA – have resisted reforms that would increase accountability or distribute more resources to the people directly. But with no reconstruction, there is no incentive to stop fighting, and as long as fighting goes on, no donor aid will be given.

Many Burundians are sick of the war and pessimistic about the ability of the current political establishment to bring peace. They see that no concrete changes have been made in the fundamental structure of political power within Burundi. The dominant oligarchy, supported by the army, struggles relentlessly to stay in power by any means necessary. The deal reached between the newly installed Hutu president, Domitien Ndayizeye, and the UPRONA/Army leadership illustrates the lengths both sides will go to maintain their respective power holdings. Ndayizeye was allowed to assume the presidency because he agreed that his vice president, Alphonse Kadege, a UPRONA hardliner, would be the only one to handle security matters and would have the power to finalize negotiations with the armed opposition.

Is there a solution to the present impasse? Many believe there is no military solution to the war in Burundi. Some close to the negotiation process think that for a non-military solution to come about, more concessions will have to be made so as to include the armed opposition in the peace process and to allow them to negotiate with the same rights and opportunities as the parties that negotiated the Arusha Accord.

## The cruel promise to Liberia

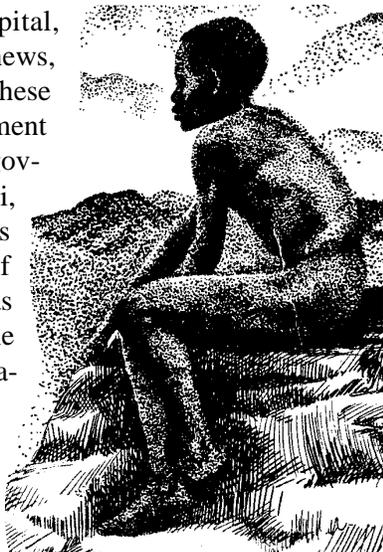
*Liberia is a symbol of a failed state, of anarchy and immense suffering and death, of child soldiers, refugees and displaced peoples. It is also a symbol of U.S. failed policies for Africa. These policies seemingly derive from a loss of historical memory and, as Raymond Salvatore Jennings remarks, "an attention-deficit disorder with respect to foreign affairs."*

Child soldiers in Liberia's capital, Monrovia, dominated international news, whether televised or printed. Some of these children are recruited by either government or rebel forces, while others join the government militias as volunteers. Boakai, who looks younger than 10 years old, is one of those eager to avenge the killing of his parents by rebel fighters. He was interviewed by *AfricaNews* (#87, June 2003) while smoking a cigarette and cradling an AK-47 automatic rifle.

While the sight of child soldiers like Boakai still shocks Westerners, U.S. indifference toward the Liberian situation angers most Liberians, especially given the historical connections and empty promises by President Bush. Before his trip to Africa this year, Bush vowed to "help the people of Liberia find a path to peace." Maintaining Navy personnel 1,000 strong and 2,300 Marines in ships off the coast of Monrovia to provide transport, equipment and communications for the West African forces (ECOWAS) seems terribly inadequate and a mockery of his promise.

Liberia was created in 1822 by the American Colonization Society with the idea of ridding the U.S. of Africans freed from slavery, and has been exploited ever since by the United States' global interests. During the final years of the Cold War, Washington financed a brutal military dictatorship which destroyed the country's social and economic infrastructure and Liberia was, for a time, the largest per capita recipient of U.S. foreign assistance in Africa. At the end of the Cold War, Washington walked away from the chaos following the killing of U.S. puppet dictator Samuel Doe, and ignored any U.S. responsibility to help solve the mess it had helped create. According to Salih Booker, director of Africa Action, in a July 30 National Public Radio interview, "the crisis in Liberia today is the direct result of that betrayal."

Only a long-term, multilateral commitment will overcome the present crisis and bring true peace and development to the people of Liberia. The U.S. must recognize its



historical obligation and act in cooperation with the United Nations, ECOWAS and the European Union.

Five things are needed. First, all combatants must be disarmed, demobilized and reintegrated into society. Second, there must be an intense program of reconciliation and trauma healing for child soldiers and victims of violence in general, both individuals and whole communities. The role of the churches is especially important here. Third, civil society on all levels must be involved in civic education and participation in democratic processes for future elections locally and nationally. Fourth, the Constitution and the court system must be reexamined to see if they are sufficient, along with adequate training of a police system and small military force. Finally, the fate of President Charles Taylor being tried for war crimes should be accompanied by a region-wide education and debate so that Africans feel they have full ownership of the process and so that any sentence meted out might serve as a warning for others.

### **Faith in action:**

Write to President Bush and to U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell. Urge the administration to provide funding to support a UN-led ECOWAS deployment. West Africans have already taken a key role in Liberian peacekeeping, and the U.S. must acknowledge their limited resources and substantially meet the cost of peacekeeping in the region. Finally the U.S. needs to take more of a leadership role at the UN Security Council to peacefully resolve the Liberian crisis.

For information on the impact of small arms and light weapons in the region, see International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA's) statement "Small Arms Controls Key to Preventing Ongoing Conflict in Liberia," [http://www.iansa.org/documents/2003/liberia\\_statement.htm](http://www.iansa.org/documents/2003/liberia_statement.htm) If you cannot access the internet, please contact the Maryknoll Global Concerns office for a copy.

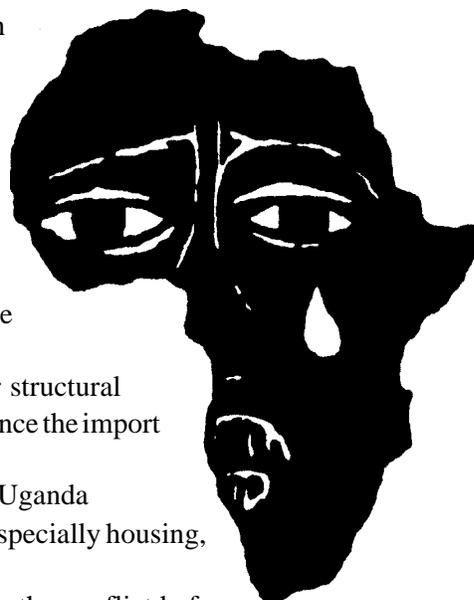
## DRC: MONUC must be extended

*Concerned over the dramatic and deteriorating situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo's (DRC's) northeastern province of Ituri, where a whole population is threatened with massacres, Pax Christi International sent a letter of grave concern to UN Secretary General Kofi Annan. It also encouraged its membership and others affiliated with Pax Christi to write similar letters to their national governments and to raise awareness of the unfolding tragedy in the DRC.*

In the letter to Annan, dated July 17, Msgr. L. Monsengwo, Archbishop of Kisangani and Vice President of Pax Christi International, together with Etienne De Jonghe, International Secretary of Pax Christi, asks for extension of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC) which was to terminate at the end of July. Pax Christi also asked for an extension of the European Union presence, Operation Artemis, which was to end on September 1, 2003.

Msgr. Monsengwo and De Jonghe pleaded for active involvement in the search for a broad approach to peace in the region. Pax Christi International, along with its local partners in the DRC, helped to develop a number of recommendations in this pursuit. In principle, any EU or UN operation in Ituri Province or the DRC should aim to:

- Disarm child soldiers, militias and other parties involved in the conflict
- Strengthen civil society and initiate reconciliation among different groups
- Develop a broad political peace process that would include all of the African countries in the Great Lakes region
- Develop new instruments of international law to address economic or structural causes of the conflict, and stop the exploitation of natural resources to finance the import of weapons
- Bring necessary political pressure on the governments of Rwanda and Uganda
- Expedite development aid to rebuild the country's basic infrastructure, especially housing, schools and health centers
- End impunity by bringing warlords or other leaders of armed groups in the conflict before judicial structures at either the national or the international level



In tandem with this broad approach to peace, it was urged that MONUC:

- Advance the demobilization and repatriation program, while remaining alert to cease-fire violations, movements of Congolese or foreign troops and the support of belligerents with arms or personnel
- Receive a new mandate (under Chapter 7 of the UN Charter) without the geographical limitation of Operation Artemis, in order to protect the wider population
- Be given all necessary means — political support as well as personnel — to fulfill its mission, including the power to impose sanctions such as freezing assets or refusing visas

### **Faith in action:**

Send your own letter to His Excellency Kofi Annan, UN Secretary General, United Nations Room S-3800; New York NY 10017. And send a similar letter to U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell asking that the U.S. work through the UN and its security council to bring peace to the eastern DRC. To read the press release from Pax Christi International, go to [www.paxchristi.net](http://www.paxchristi.net), or contact the Maryknoll Global Concerns office for a copy.

## Bush's "compassionate conservative" excursion

*From July 7-12 President Bush made his first trip to Africa, stopping in Senegal, Botswana, Nigeria, Uganda and South Africa. While Bush avoided detailed comment on aid to the conflict-ridden countries of Liberia and Zimbabwe, he spent much of his time promoting his five-year, \$15 billion AIDS program, the only compassionate topic in January's State of the Union address. Still, while touring a continent wracked with security concerns, economic problems, hunger and the scourge of AIDS, Bush's promises of U.S. support for African crises are yet to be realized. Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns intern Timothy Dougherty contributes the following analysis of the impact of the president's visit to Africa.*

President Bush's speedy visit to Senegal was the first stop on his planned five-day tour. There he sailed to Goree Island, via President Abdoulaye Wade's yacht, to view the slaves' temporary quarters before they sailed across the Atlantic to the Americas. While Bush appealed to African Americans whose ancestors suffered the curse of slavery, saying "[a]t this place, liberty and life were stolen and sold," the Senegalese paid a high price for this visit. Local citizens complained of disturbances caused by low-flying U.S. Army jets and of the destruction of the local ecosystem when 100-year old trees were cut down to provide safe passage for Bush on this journey.

Bush's stop in South Africa was intended to promote his AIDS program, and to pressure South African President Thabo Mbeki to denounce Zimbabwe's oppressive regime led by President Robert Mugabe. Before the trip, Bush and Secretary of State Colin Powell both voiced the necessity of Mugabe's removal and appealed to Mbeki to supply pressure from within southern Africa. While in South Africa this topic was not mentioned, and the two presidents spent most of their time discussing the importance of strong trade relations between the U.S. and the African continent through the U.S.'s African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). Bush received an unfavorable reception by many South African citizens who took to the streets protesting his forceful handling of the war in Iraq and U.S. opposition to joining the International Criminal Court.

Bush's stop in Botswana, like that in Senegal, was only six hours long. Some consider Botswana a model for the continent: It has a stable record of economic progress, mostly due to the fact that diamonds were discovered after it became independent, which gave Botswana a strong middle class and the economic freedom necessary to develop political stability as well as its own economic priorities. Botswanan President Festus Mogae discussed his desire to see the U.S. completely open its market to African products, while eliminating unfair trade practices, including the granting of large subsidies to U.S. big business farms. U.S. and European subsidies make it difficult for

Africa to compete in agricultural trade markets (see this issue of *NewsNotes*, pages 24, 25).

In Uganda President Bush praised President Yoweri Museveni for being a man of peace. Many critics wonder why Bush, so concerned with democracy and security, never raised questions about Museveni's role in prolonging the war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo by supporting the rebels, nor Museveni's direct violation of the Ugandan constitution with his plans to seek the presidency for a third term.

Bush also visited a Ugandan AIDS clinic, commenting, "...Uganda, by confronting AIDS aggressively and directly, is giving hope to peoples all across the continent of Africa." Although Uganda has drastically reduced its number of AIDS cases, it lacks the ability to treat the majority of those who are ill. Only 4,500 of the 1.5 million infected receive AIDS drugs.

Many felt that Bush's last stop in Nigeria was meant to persuade Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo to opt out of OPEC to ensure a U.S. hold on the country's oil. Presidential spokesperson Remi Oyo refuted the claim, stating Nigeria will be explore multiple opportunities in other markets.

Perhaps of greatest concern to many Africans was the fact that Bush's trip was scheduled at the same time as the Africa Union meeting. Instead of respectfully acknowledging the importance of the African Union's second session being held in Maputo, Mozambique, he scheduled meetings in the capitols of five other African nations, creating logistical challenges for African presidents who bowed out of the AU meeting to receive President Bush in their home country.

While Bush planned on flying to Africa and being congratulated for his new AIDS program, Africans are waiting for his promises to be kept. Before his trip, several African NGOs wrote to President Bush demanding "deliv-

ery not spin on HIV/AIDS.” While welcoming the public pledge of \$15 billion to a unilateral U.S. Global AIDS program, they noted the administration’s request for 2004 as “a miserly \$450 million.” Full funding (\$3 billion) for the authorizing legislation for the president’s plan is expected to

be decided in September by the Senate Appropriations committee, but with such a low White House commitment it is unlikely to be fully funded. While waiting for real commitments to flesh out his promises, Bush’s compassionate side is still unknown to Africans.

### **Faith in action:**

See the NGO letter to President Bush at [www.woafrica.org/BushLetter1.htm](http://www.woafrica.org/BushLetter1.htm). For action alerts on fully funding the president’s AIDS initiative, see the Global AIDS Alliance for action alerts at [www.globalaidsalliance.org/cd\\_Action.html](http://www.globalaidsalliance.org/cd_Action.html). If you cannot access the internet, contact the Maryknoll Global Concerns office for a copy.

## **Sudan: Familiar patterns prevent peace**

*Over the years, many attempts to end the conflict between the Khartoum government and the southern rebels have witnessed the government littering the path to peace with obstacles such as walk-outs, threats or new conditions. Unfortunately, these evasive and shrewd tactics continue. The following looks at the current moment and role the U.S. could play to influence the negotiations.*

On July 12, 2003, in Nakuru, Kenya, the Sudan government rejected the draft peace proposals on outstanding issues including security arrangements, power and wealth-sharing. It accused mediators from the regional Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) of siding with the rebels.

High-level government officials raised additional concerns. They want the capital, Khartoum, to follow the Islamic Sharia law even if secular laws are in place for the rest of the country. They insist that other groups from the south be represented in the new interim government besides the Sudan Peoples Liberation Army. They demand that national elections take place in eighteen months, not after six years as previously agreed.

At the same time, Egypt’s President Hosni Mubarak fears that granting independence to southern Sudan would tear the region to shreds and endanger both sides. This view is creating anxiety since the Nile River, which flows through southern Sudan, is crucial for Egypt’s survival. The U.S. government seems to support Egypt’s position against southern separation.

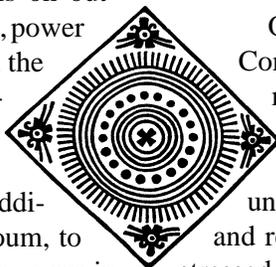
There are a few movements afoot to woo the people of southern Sudan to vote for continued unity after the six-year transition period, in case a peace agreement is ever reached. An Arab summit in Beirut last year set up a special \$450 million fund to develop southern Sudan. It will be interesting to see whether such a fund will actually be used for development of the south. In the past, Khartoum has bought off key influential southerners by making such

promises with the express purpose of dividing the south.

On July 26, 2003, Sudan’s ruling party, the National Congress, made its first public commitment to democracy since it took power in a military coup in 1989. At an organized mass rally, members of the party pledged themselves to equality, national unity, power-sharing and the redistribution of wealth and resources. A key officer in the government also stressed the need for a multiparty system to avert further chaos in the country. The rally may have been simply a ploy to bring back into the fold the northern opposition parties, but the seeds of change are there.

On August 1, 2003, the Catholic and Episcopal bishops of Sudan spoke about the IGAD peace process. They said the process had reached a critical point, making this a decisive moment for the people of Sudan. They encouraged the people to stand firmly together, not to give up the peace process, and to ignore the threats of those who talk about going back to fighting. The U.S. government could use its influence on Khartoum to help end the 20-year war, which has killed two million people and caused suffering to millions more. We in the U.S. must pressure our government to make a long-term commitment to peace and development for the people of the Sudan.

Read the joint statement made by the Catholic and Episcopal bishops of Sudan entitled “Enough Is Enough: The War Must Stop” at: [www.maryknollogc.org](http://www.maryknollogc.org). If you cannot access the internet, please contact the Maryknoll Global Concerns office for a copy.



## Zimbabwe churches apologize for inaction

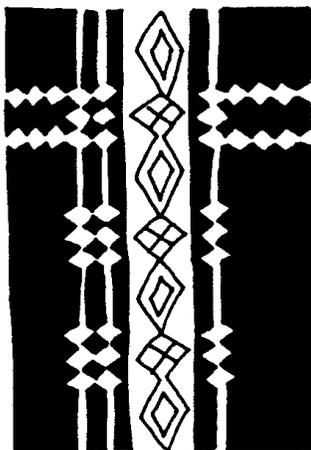
*At the 37th Annual General Meeting, held July 2, 2003, the Zimbabwe Council of Churches issued a communiqué on the socio-economic and political situation in Zimbabwe in its current state of decline. In the communiqué the ZCC names the situation and apologizes for its inaction in the face of such a dire situation and resolves to take action in the future. The following communiqué is extremely important since very few religious leaders have spoken out. Archbishop Pius Ncube of Bulawayo stands alone in the Zimbabwean Catholic Council of Bishops in sharply critiquing President Robert Mugabe's government for the pain and suffering that Zimbabwean people have endured.*

... Delegates to the Annual General Meeting noted that this [annual general meeting], like the last two, was held at a time when the socio-economic and political situation in the country continues to decline.

We, as a church, have

- Been witness to and buried our people who have starved to death due to food shortages;
- Watched as the level of poverty has increased, leaving more and more children on our streets;
- Seen our young people churned out of the school system becoming victims of political patronage due to lack of employment;
- Witnessed the productivity of the nation fall due to scarcity of fuel and other basic commodities that have fueled a parallel market;
- With our own eyes, watched as violence, rape, intimidation, harassment, various forms of torture have ravaged the nation. Yet some perpetrators have been set free;
- Watched as polarization, especially on the political front has caused divisions amongst our people;
- Continued to monitor and observe elections that precluded us from declaring them free and fair.
- Watched as the health delivery system continues to crumble.
  - Taken a back seat on the constitutional reform; and
  - Looked on as the land reform program has progressed without proper infrastructure, under-utilized land, resulting in decreased production.

While the church has noted all these developments, and while we have continued to pray, we have not been moved to action. James says "... and I by my actions will show you my faith!" We as a Council apologize to the people of Zimbabwe for not having done enough at a time when the nation has looked to us for guidance.



The ZCC therefore resolves to:

1. Lobby government to remove barriers and deregulate the importation of food aid by churches.
  2. Intensify self-reliance and vocational skills programs and call upon the Government to create a conducive environment for investors.
  3. Set up a task force to investigate the National Youth Service program.
  4. Lobby Government to make available, at affordable cost, fuel and other basic commodities.
  5. Condemn all acts of violence perpetrated against citizens and call upon law enforcement agents and the judiciary to be recourse for all Zimbabweans regardless of political affiliation;
  6. Condemn and desist from observing elections whose conditions prior to polling days will preclude us from declaring them free and fair.
  7. Advocate for resuscitation of a health delivery system that has sufficient drugs and equipment and personnel that is well remunerated; and
  8. Actively participate in the constitutional reform process.
  9. Gather information on what has taken place in the land reform process and to make recommendations on the way forward.
- Council further agreed to:
10. Intensify our work on HIV/AIDS prevention, care and support; networking; and document what individual member churches are doing.
  11. Investigate the possibility of establishing hospital chaplains.
  12. Engage the heads of denominations, ministers and laity on issues affecting the economy linked to NEPAD.
  13. Hold more workshops on negotiating and conflict resolution skills.
  14. Intensify civic education programs countrywide.

## Peru, Chile, Argentina: Toward truth & justice

*According to the Washington Post (September 1, 2003), 24 countries have created official truth commissions in the last 20 years to help them understand the political strife and human rights violations that engulfed them and to take some steps toward a different future. Some have done a better job than others at achieving a measure of reconciliation; several have enacted amnesty laws that have precluded prosecution of those identified as responsible. Chile and Argentina, struggling with the ongoing obstacles created by such laws, have recently tried to move beyond impunity, while Peru has just received the report of its truth commission and will now face the enormous challenge of balancing justice and forgiveness, punishment and restitution.*

### Peru

In solemn ceremonies during the last few days of August, Peru's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (CVR, its Spanish acronym) delivered to the Peruvian public its nine volume report that concludes that more than 69,000 Peruvians died or disappeared between 1980 and 2000. The report named the Shining Path terrorist group as responsible for a majority of the crimes, but concluded that state security forces carried out 28 percent - and that Peru's political class carried heavy responsibility for its indifference, which allowed the violence to continue. The majority of those who were killed or disappeared were impoverished and from rural communities.

Anticipating the release of the report, a group of prominent religious and human rights leaders in Peru, including Maryknoll missionary Tom Burns, Laura Vargas, director of the Episcopal Commission for Social Action (CEAS) and a member of Pax Christi International's Executive Committee, and Francisco Soberón, director of the Coordinadora of Peruvian human rights organizations, wrote a public statement calling Peruvians to a new social pact that would address the root causes of the violence and lead Peruvian society through a deep transformation. They said that this transformation must be made visible in greater participation of an organized society in the democratic processes; in the unwavering attention of the state to the needs of the people; in the subordination of the police and armed forces to civilian authority; in respect for the different cultures that exist in Peru; in the break-up of the subversive groups; and in the universal and effective recognition of all human rights, including economic and social rights.

They emphasized the need to reduce the sharp inequalities that characterize Peru-

vian society through a commitment to fighting poverty and exclusion, expanding and improving education, expanding and improving health care and sanitation, fighting corruption head-on and substantially increasing taxes to enable the just redistribution of wealth.

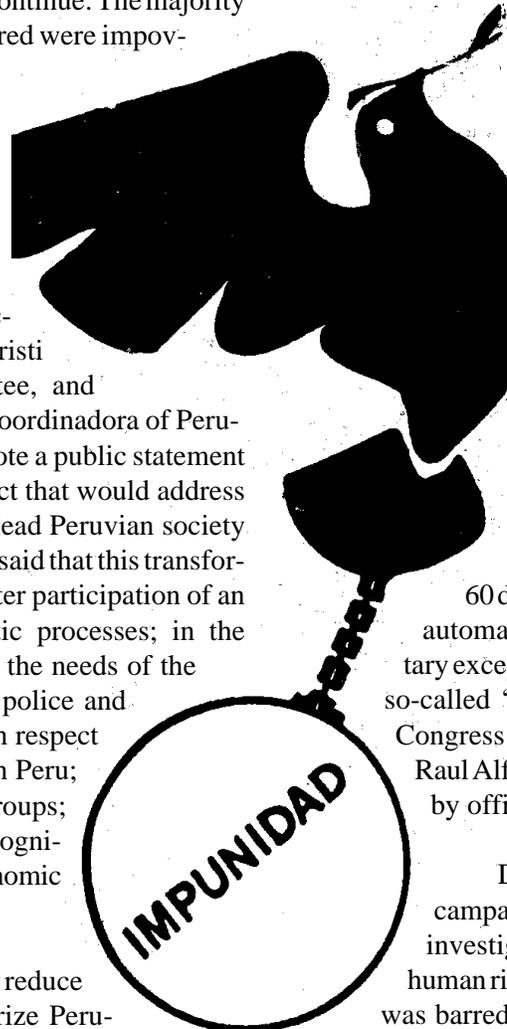
Peru has a long journey ahead toward justice and reconciliation, but the report of its Truth Commission is a step in the right direction.

### Argentina

In early August the Argentine Chamber of Deputies (comparable to the U.S. House of Representatives) voted to annul two laws that shielded the military from prosecution for past human rights violations. It is estimated between 15,000 and 30,000 people were killed or disappeared during a brutal dictatorship that ruled there between 1976 and 1983.

According to Human Rights Watch ([www.hrw.org](http://www.hrw.org)) the Full Stop Law prevented the hearing of cases filed with the courts after a deadline of 60 days and the Due Obedience Law granted automatic immunity to all members of the military except those in positions of command. These so-called "impunity laws" were rushed through Congress in 1986 and 1987 by the government of Raul Alfonsín in order to quell a military rebellion by officers angered at human rights trials.

During the 1990s human rights groups campaigned and litigated to ensure that judicial investigations into disappearances and other human rights continued, even though prosecution was barred. The Chamber of Deputies action has



been sent to the Supreme Court to test its constitutionality.

## Chile

In Chile, as the 30th anniversary of the coup that brought the brutal dictator Augusto Pinochet to power approached, efforts were again mounted to bring him to trial on a number of specific cases. Unlike average Chilean citizens, Pinochet cannot be indicted or tried until his special immunity from prosecution is removed by the courts. Thus far they have refused to do so, but hope for justice endures.

In June, Pinochet traveled to northern Chile for vacation. During his visit to the town of Iquique, a woman whose brother was killed during the dictatorship made headlines when she approached Pinochet on the street and screamed "murderer" at him from just a few feet away. "If Pinochet had been tried and jailed," she explained to press, "I would never have...done what I did because he would have been paying for what he did. But he comes here to Iquique to have a good time as though he were a tourist, and if there is no justice in this country, then people have to take things into their own hands."

## Honduras: Environmental activists threatened

*On July 18 environmental activist Carlos Arturo Reyes was murdered in the Department of Olancho, Honduras, raising concern for the safety of other community leaders threatened for their work to protect the environment against the interests of loggers and other commercial enterprises.*

According to Amnesty International, on Monday July 14, armed men in a dark blue car without license plates and with blacked-out windows were seen taking aim at community leader Gilberto Flores as he entered the offices of the Catholic Church's Pastoral Social in Juticalpa. The men were unable to carry out the assassination at that time, but the same vehicle and another with similar characteristics were seen parked outside the Pastoral Social for the following two days. Police protection had been ordered for Gilberto by the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights in May, following a campaign of harassment against him, but the protection was withdrawn on June 20, 2003 by the Honduran Ministry of Security.

A few days later, Carlos Reyes was murdered at his home in the municipality of El Rosario. At the same time, the home of environmental activist Father Osmin Flores was under surveillance by men armed with AK-47s.

These attacks are believed to be connected with death threats against a list of environmentalists following a June 2003 march of 2500 people from Olancho to Tegucigalpa, the capital of Honduras. On the 200-km, seven-day March for Life, demonstrators called for a moratorium on further logging in central Honduras until a "forest audit" could be conducted and plans developed for sustainable use of forest resources. The marchers



claimed that indiscriminate logging has dried up water sources and worsened poverty in the region. The death list was allegedly drawn up by sawmill owners in Olancho. It included the names of Carlos Arturo Reyes, Father Osmin Flores and Gilberto Flores.

The killing of environmental and grassroots activists, including indigenous people, is part of a pattern of human rights abuses against those involved in defending the environment in Honduras. Illegal logging of the forests there and the construction of dams are causing grave environmental damage, which the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights acknowledged has a serious impact on human rights.

### **Faith in action:**

Write to president of Honduras Ricardo Maduro, Casa Presidencial, Boulevard Juan Pablo Segundo, Palacio Jose Cecelio del Valle, Tegucigalpa, Honduras (fax 011-504-221-4552) expressing concern for the safety of the activists mentioned above and for their colleagues; urging authorities to protect these persons and to investigate the murder of Carlos Arturo Reyes; and asking the Honduran government to respond to the concerns raised by community leaders on the recent March for Life.

## Colombia: Alien Tort Claims Act & Coca-Cola

*The Alien Tort Claims Act, part of the Judicial Act of 1789, which permits victims of international human rights abuses to sue in U.S. courts, is now under attack. Organizations representing powerful multinational companies are seeking to repeal or sharply limit the law. According to EarthRights International, the Bush administration is seeking to reverse 23 years of well-established legal precedent allowing foreign victims to sue human rights abusers in U.S. courts. They write, "For over two decades, the Alien Tort Claims Act (ATCA) has offered a remedy for victims of serious human rights abuses in U.S. courts, many of whom would have no other recourse anywhere else in the world... The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), seeking to shield human rights abusers, especially corporations and 'friendly' foreign officials, from liability for their brutal acts, claims that ATCA has far exceeded its originally-intended reach."*

In March 2003, U.S. District Court Judge Jose E. Martinez ruled that cases brought by Colombian plaintiffs under the ATCA for human rights violations committed by paramilitaries on behalf of Coca-Cola bottlers Panamerican Beverages, Inc. (Panamco) and Bebidas y Alimentos (Bebidas) in Colombia can go forward. The court held that the allegations were sufficient to allow the case to proceed on the theory that the paramilitaries were acting in a symbiotic relationship with the Colombian government. This satisfies a technical requirement of the ATCA that there be a component of "state action" in the acts of violence against the plaintiffs, which allows the international law claims to proceed against the private actors Panamco and Bebidas.

While the ATCA asserts the jurisdiction of U.S. courts to try certain cases filed by aliens, a related but modern law -- the Torture Victim Protection Act (TVPA, 1991) -- goes considerably further.

A federal appeals court stated in a judgment in 2000 that the TVPA "creates liability under U.S. law where under 'color of law of any foreign nation' an individual is subject to torture or 'extra judicial killing.'" It also held that the TVPA "extends its remedy not only to aliens but to any 'individual,' thus covering citizens of the [U.S.] as well."

The corporate defendants in Colombia had argued that the TVPA's coverage is limited to "individuals," and that this excluded corporations from liability.

In rejecting that position, the court held that "the legislative history does not reveal an intent to exempt private corporations from liability ... and that the term 'individual' is consistently viewed in the law as including corporations ..."

Four separate actions have been filed by different sets of plaintiffs. In all of the cases, SINALTRAINAL, the union of food and bottling workers in Colombia, is a plaintiff,

and alleges injuries due to a campaign of violence directed at the union by paramilitaries employed by the Coca-Cola bottlers.

In allowing the case to go forward against Coca-Cola bottlers Bebidas and Panamco, the court dismissed Coca-Cola Co. and Coca-Cola Colombia from the case on the ground that the company's bottling agreement did not explicitly give Coca-Cola control over labor relations issues of its Colombian bottlers.

However, Terry Collingsworth, executive director of the International Labor Rights Fund (ILRF) and co-counsel for the plaintiffs, indicated that plaintiffs would appeal that portion of the decision. "We are absolutely convinced as a factual matter that one word from Coca-Cola would stop the campaign of terror against trade union leaders in the Coca-Cola bottling plants in Colombia."

In a similar situation in Guatemala in the early 1980s, Coca-Cola was forced by a consumer campaign to terminate its bottling agreement with a Guatemalan bottler who had used right-wing death squads to murder union leaders at that facility.

The ILRF has also asked Attorney General John Ashcroft to prosecute Panamco and Bebidas under 18 U.S.C. § 2339B, which makes it a crime to provide material support to terrorists. The paramilitary groups working with Panamco and Bebidas have been designated terrorist organizations by the U.S. State Department.

Social organizations, human rights groups, religious communities, and activists who participated recently in three sessions of the "SINALTRAINAL Clama Justicia - Héctor Daniel Useche Beron" Public Tribunal Against Impunity announced an international consumer campaign against Coca-Cola. In addition, the World Social Forum declared July 22 as the International Day of Action against Coca-Cola, and the start of a boycott of all its products.

## Haiti: IDB releases humanitarian aid

*The Let Haiti Live Coalition, which includes the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns, works to change U.S. policy on Haiti, particularly the withholding of humanitarian assistance to the Haitian government. The coalition believes that withholding aid to Haiti, rather than pressuring an already majority-elected democratic government, only helps to increase poverty and death throughout the country. Maryknoll Global Concerns intern Melanie Similien wrote the following article. Sources include the Miami Herald (July 16, July 25) and Haiti Reborn, [www.haitireborn.org](http://www.haitireborn.org)*

In July the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) released \$146 million in loan money to Haiti that had been held for three years. During a period of three to five years the money will be dispersed directly to private contractors and will be monitored on the condition that Haiti reduce deficit spending and inflation. Plans were finalized to receive this amount, plus another \$317 million in loans from the IDB, at a ceremony on July 25. The funds will help to rebuild over 300 miles of roads in southern Haiti as well as provide potable drinking water and health and educational projects. Although the money will not actually go to the Haitian government, it will help to support the government agencies that are running low on funding.

Haiti helped to unlock this money by paying \$30 million, out of a total of \$40 million, in arrears on loans acquired from the IDB during the dictatorship years. During the 1990s, Haiti paid more on debt service than on education or healthcare. In order to pay off these arrears, Haiti used its reserves which equal only \$50 million.

Money from the IDB was held after legislative elections in the spring of 2000, due to both the Organization of American States' misgivings about the votes' accuracy, and to opposition to President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, who was reelected by a majority vote. A political crisis started at this point and has lasted for three years, causing the Haitian government to run low on funding and support.

Aid from the IDB was not the only aid held from the

Haitian government during this time. It was part of a total package of \$500 million in much-needed aid from the international community, lead by the U.S., which has been withheld in large amounts from Haiti in order to push for fair elections.

Current U.S. policy regarding Haiti is fourfold: (1) strengthen democracy; (2) provide humanitarian assistance; (3) stop flow of narcotics through Haiti; and (4) stop illegal migration of Haitians to the U.S. However, the U.S. has withheld aid since it believes that Haiti is not complying with OAS Resolution 822, which states that Haiti would follow steps to make the country secure and ready for fair elections in 2003. Without proof that the Haitian government is moving toward this goal, the U.S. government will continue to withhold the humanitarian assistance.

The people are the ones who suffer the most in this serious situation. With only one doctor for every 10,000 patients and HIV/AIDS infecting six percent of the population, healthcare is greatly needed. Currently, humanitarian assistance is received through NGOs which do not have a national reach. The country itself does not produce enough exports or food for it to be sustainable. Money received through the government is the only way that more people living in poverty will be reached.

For more information, visit the Let Haiti Live coalition's website at [www.lethaitilive.org](http://www.lethaitilive.org) or call Haiti Reborn (a project of the Quixote Center) at 301-699-0042.

***Border Pilgrimage: A journey of hope and life along the U.S.–Mexico border  
San Diego, CA/Tijuana and Brownsville, TX/Matamoros to El Paso, TX/Ciudad Juarez  
October 26/27–November 2, 2003***

Co-sponsored by the Border Working Group and the Maryknoll Border Team, the Border Pilgrimage will start on October 26 in San Diego/Tijuana and October 27 in Brownsville/Matamoros. Along the way people on both sides of the border will build community, ask for forgiveness and provide and receive hospitality. There will be stops including Calexico, Yuma and Tucson where celebratory events will take place. Organizations along the border are invited to participate by hosting events.

For more information, contact: Border Pilgrimage, Maryknoll Border Team, 109 N. Oregon #302 El Paso, TX 79901; 915-543-6771; [borderpilgrimage@yahoo.com](mailto:borderpilgrimage@yahoo.com). To download an education packet on the border or a registration form, go to the Religious Task Force on Central America and Mexico's website: [www.rtfcam.org](http://www.rtfcam.org)

## Guatemala: Current political panorama

*Guatemalan elections will take place in November 2003. Powerful army and ex-army officials, who were forced to accept the peace accords and subsequent changes that weakened their power, are now trying to re-establish power through politics. They are involved in all of the major political parties as candidates to congress, advisors and as major contributors. In addition, parallel power structures, hidden powers and organized crime groups continue to be key actors in a country where the rule of law is totally disrespected.*

Everywhere in Guatemala, common crime is on the rise. In some instances, the high crime rate masks direct attacks on human rights workers. Police quickly name every break-in, mugging or violent attack "petty crime." Many Guatemalans feel that the reason for the institutional breakdown in the country is the infiltration of military and quasi-military operatives in all sectors of government and society.

Since the beginning of 2003 there have been several incidents of human rights workers under attack. Recently, Nobel Peace Prize laureate Rigoberta Menchu Tum and other staff members at the Rigoberta Menchu Tum Foundation (FRMT) were harassed by several individuals, one of whom wore military issue boots and carried a revolver. On August 8, Menchu was followed by a white pickup truck as she drove to the FRMT offices. This intimidation culminated on the evening of August 10 when Francisco Menchu, who works as a security guard at FRMT, was violently attacked by two unknown men. He was severely beaten and eventually abandoned on the street, after having his identification papers and credit cards stolen. The two men who attacked him were dressed in the style of military intelligence agents, but their identities are still unknown.

Civil society and NGOs continue to press for the fulfillment of the Peace Accords, and in a call to end the violence of the past two years, they demanded the timely creation of the Commission to Investigate Illegal Bodies and Clandestine Security Forces (CICACS) to purge the country of a network of "parallel powers" (groups that have significant influence within government but are not officially in power).

Adding to this tension is the controversial Constitutional Court decision to allow the former dictator and current president of the Guatemalan National Congress, Efraín Ríos Montt, to become a candidate for president. Ríos Montt, a founding member of the political party Guatemalan Republican Front (FRG), came to power in Guatemala in the early 1980s and was named by the 1998 Church-sponsored "Recovery of the Historical Memory" (REMHI) Project report as responsible for a large number

of the massacres against civilians during that decade.

Prior to the decision, political violence precipitated by Ríos Montt's supporters (upset by moves to reject his candidacy made by the Citizens' Registry, the Supreme Electoral Tribunal and the Supreme Court) provoked a rash of riots culminating in "Black Thursday." On the morning of July 24, about 3,000 rural farmers and indigenous people were bussed into Guatemala City to participate in violent riots financed, directed, organized and coordinated by FRG officials. Along with them were masked people with radios, some identified as members of the FRG, the government or the army. They handed out sticks, clubs, gasoline and tires that were used to besiege the Supreme Electoral Court, the Constitutional Court, the Supreme Court, the business center of town, the offices of the daily newspaper *El Periódico*, the house of Constitutional Court magistrate Rodolfo Rohrmoser (who had voted against the registration of Ríos Montt) and the house of former president Alvaro Arzú (current mayoral candidate for Guatemala City with the Unionist party).

### **Faith in action:**

Urge Guatemala's President Alfonso Portillo to abolish the Estado Mayor Presidencial (Presidential Guard or EMP), one of Guatemala's most notorious military intelligence agencies. Since its inception in the 1980s, the unit has been involved in serious human rights abuses, including the harassment and extrajudicial execution of human rights defenders. President Portillo has repeatedly announced his intention to abolish the EMP, yet failed to keep his own deadlines for its abolition. An electronic postcard is available at: [http://www.amnestyusa.org/countries/guatemala/actions/peace\\_accords/emp.html](http://www.amnestyusa.org/countries/guatemala/actions/peace_accords/emp.html).

Urge Guatemalan officials to protect Rigoberta Menchu Tum and her staff. See Amnesty International's information at <http://takeaction.amnestyusa.org/action/>

President Portillo's mailing address is: President Alfonso Portillo Cabrera, 6a Avenida A 4-46, Zona 1, Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala.

## Peace lobby must hold government to account

During a recent hearing on Capitol Hill (sponsored by Pax Christi and the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns) that focused on grassroots efforts to build peace, a witness from Tanzania called the question. If a government goes to war despite the public protest of millions of people, who holds the government accountable?

A corollary might be: Now that the U.S. invasion of Iraq is past, where should the U.S. peace lobby go from here?

The United States' unilateral foreign policy reverses a trend since World War II toward greater collegiality among nations, a spirit that is most visible in the United Nations.

The inadequacy of President Bush's policy of going it alone is glaringly apparent in Iraq. The recent invasion was launched on the strength of false reports that Iraq had tried to buy uranium in Niger, the still unproven allegation that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction, and the doubtful assumption that Iraqis would welcome U.S. troops and embrace democracy within months.

The history of world empires challenges an underlying principle of the president's National Security Strategy: "Our forces will be strong enough to dissuade potential adversaries from pursuing a military build-up in hopes of surpassing, or equaling, the power of the United States." (Sept. 20, 2002)

If this unilateral strategy is truly a product of our time, is it any wonder that individual U.S. citizens who have prominently figured in the news recently have sought to become a law unto themselves, with scant regard for the rights or the privacy of others?

The *New York Times* reported earlier this year that Jayson Blair had fabricated three dozen stories as a reporter with the newspaper. The scandal rocked the profession, and two *Times* editors resigned in the aftermath. What had come to light is rare in journalism, which after all could be considered a public trust much like police or fire protection.

However, the revelation also followed instances of major malfeasance in other professions and industry in recent years, including public accounting, stock trading and energy.

In another area of concern to millions of U.S. citizens -- computer users, at least -- admitted spammer Ronald Scelson testified before the U.S. Senate Commerce Committee. Scelson boasted of sending out between 120 million and 180 million e-mails every 12 hours. While his testimony raised the hackles of committee members, he argued that banning his activities would amount to censorship, as it would infringe his freedom of speech.

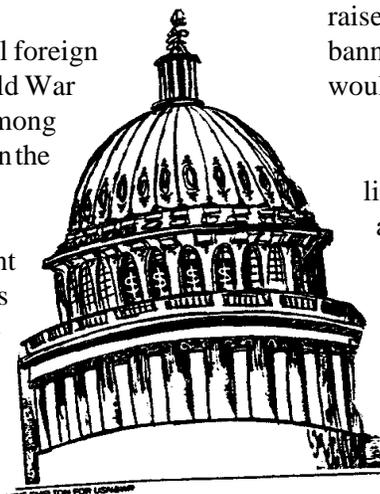
Blair said he was planning to write a book that some literary agents estimated could bring him a six-figure advance. Scelson said his clients get a response rate to his e-mail of a profitable one to two percent. Clearly we have become a society that greatly rewards audaciousness, arrogance, and lying. And that's the truth.

Meanwhile, a popular revolt might indicate that U.S. Americans are trying to reclaim their rights and assert more control over their lives. The Federal Trade Commission opened a do-not-call directory in late June to block telephone solicitors. Ten million telephone numbers were registered in the first four days. (Sen. Charles E. Schumer, D-NY, advocates a similar nationwide do-not-spam registry.)

Noting the overwhelming public response, the peace lobby might feel encouraged by an old French riddle. "At first there is only one lily pad in the pond, but the next day it doubles, and thereafter each of its descendants doubles. The pond completely fills up with lily pads in 30 days. When is the pond exactly half full?" Answer: on the 29th day.

The peace movement could conceivably be entering the dawn of the "29th day." Despite the disappointment over Iraq and possible frustration in seeking new directions, the peace lobby might be on the verge of success. For their part, the Jayson Blairs and Ronald Scelsons will be held accountable under applicable laws. But President Bush, too, will be held to account for his policies before an appropriate tribunal: the electorate.

Perhaps a part of the peace movement's agenda is crystal clear, after all.



## Fishing, farming, free trade: CAFTA's consequences

*Shrimpers and social activists marched side by side in New Orleans the last week of July, protesting negotiations for the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) being held in the city. The fishing community, represented by these fishermen and others around the world, is concerned about how further decreases or elimination of trade protections will affect the shrimp trade and their lives.*

Recently the flow of shrimp from impoverished countries has been the main cause of a drop in prices, which has triggered economic distress and bankruptcy for many fishermen. They point out that not only is their livelihood being threatened, but the quality and safety of food U.S. residents consume is decreasing. Shrimp entering U.S. markets from impoverished countries is often contaminated with pesticides and antibiotics banned in the U.S. In addition, say the shrimpers, mangrove forests in the countries where shrimp are increasingly produced are being destroyed for shrimp farms.

At the same time, food security in poorer countries is also undermined as locally grown staple items such as rice, beans and corn are forced to compete with cheap imports. Agriculture often shifts to the production of export commodities, such as shrimp. People are left dependent for food and income on the international market, highly susceptible to price fluctuations, which decreases the stability of their lives and changes the culture of small rural communities.

This situation illustrates some of the problems often caused by free trade agreements, problems that will specifically be aggravated by CAFTA's enactment (See p. 23 for more on the detrimental effects of international trade).

CAFTA is an accord currently being negotiated among the United States and five Central American countries: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, with recent talk of including the Dominican Republic. As with other free trade agreements, it aims to eliminate tariffs and other barriers to trade among these nations, eventually allowing for the unrestricted flow of goods and services. The meeting in New Orleans was the sixth of nine rounds of negotiations taking place this year which will shape the final draft of the agreement, set to be finished in December 2003.

While progress was made on certain aspects of CAFTA, negotiations continue around sensitive issues. For the agreement, goods and services are being divided into categories, or "baskets," based on the time frame for the elimination of trade restrictions on those items. There are four "baskets" of goods: immediate, short term (five years), long term (10 years), and undefined (10+ years). While the

U.S. pushes for goods to go in the short-term baskets, many Central American countries want more items, especially sensitive goods and services, in the fourth basket.

The elimination of trade restrictions on these goods and services has the potential to cause major problems in developing nations, especially for small farmers, fishermen, and others. If all agricultural goods competed on the open market with imported products, small farmers and fishermen would be driven out of business (in both Central America and the United States). Families would have to find new work, often leaving behind their culture and ancestral lands.

The privatization of services such as water, utilities, health and education, also being pushed in CAFTA negotiations, is another source of major concern. Privatization decreases the accessibility of such services to the poor, and decreases accountability to the public as it shifts control of services from the government to private corporations.

Under CAFTA, more and more aspects of daily life would be placed under the control of the international market, which is not accountable to individuals, and which creates efficiency, not justice. Currently CAFTA does not require or include strict or enforceable labor or environmental standards, and, judging by the effects of NAFTA (the North American Free Trade Agreement, passed in 1994) the conditions it will create have the potential to encourage exploitation of workers and the environment.

### **Faith in action:**

Close on the heels of CAFTA is the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), an even larger agreement that aims to link 34 of the 35 countries in the Americas. Postcard campaigns throughout the U.S. ask citizens to vote on FTAA participation. For postcards, contact the Maryknoll Global Concerns Office at (202)832-1780 or [dana@maryknollogc.org](mailto:dana@maryknollogc.org).

The Office of the U.S. Trade Representative has created a website devoted to the 2003 Ministerial Meeting of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) in Miami. For information on the U.S. official positions and events around the FTAA see [www.ustr.gov/ftaa2003.htm](http://www.ustr.gov/ftaa2003.htm)

## Just trade: Local impact of global economics

*In March 2002, the Maryknoll community issued its statement on trade, called Trading in Justice. It speaks from Maryknollers' lived experience and the values of Catholic social teaching about international trade and investment. Below are excerpts; the document in its entirety can be found online at [www.maryknollogc.org/ecojustice/trading.htm](http://www.maryknollogc.org/ecojustice/trading.htm).*

### **Costs of trade**

The importing of highly subsidized agricultural products, especially from the United States, has destroyed smaller farms in many countries. Entire cultures are transformed overnight because they cannot compete with products dumped into their markets at such a rapid rate.

Meaningful work that connected people to the earth and to the community has been replaced most often by assembly plant jobs that undercut family and community life, are dehumanizing, and do not pay the workers a living wage. All workers, both organized labor and the informal sector, seem to be in a "race for the bottom" as highly mobile corporations pursue the cheapest labor sources in every corner of the world. ...

Because of their tremendous responsibilities, women often do not have leisure time to pursue training to increase their levels of education and skill. Thus they swell the ranks of a non-union work force that will take the most undesirable jobs where human rights, safety standards and health conditions are often ignored. Women also make up the bulk of unpaid (child rearing, care for the sick, housekeeping) and informal-sector labor.

### **Culture, traditions, languages**

The pace of globalization, driven by the relentless pursuit of new markets, is creating an abrasive interface between the cultures, traditions and languages of wealthy and powerful societies and those with less capacity to project themselves beyond a local or regional context. The potential loss of identity and vision, as traditional languages, values and practices are devalued or lost, is a tragedy of immense consequence for the whole human family.

### **Integrity of creation**

The environment is also threatened by trade agreements that see environmental protection laws as trade barriers or promote unsustainable development such as highly industrialized, mono-crop farming of cash crops for export. This type of farming is usually wrought with environmental consequences as the small farmer's intimate connection to the land is lost and with it a theology of care for creation and knowledge of the most locally-

appropriate and sustainable farming practices.

### **Intellectual property rights**

For generations subsistence farmers have developed their own varieties of seeds, picking the strongest, most flavorful, pest-resilient varieties. They never sought patents on these, but kept them within the community as shared common wealth, or passed down the knowledge to their children in rich oral or folkloric traditions. The World Trade Organization developed laws to protect intellectual property on inventions to ensure that inventors of technological, medical and artistic advances could be ensured 20 years of exclusive marketing rights — so that they could have enough profit to provide incentives for further research. Such laws are now being used to steal this traditional communal knowledge from indigenous populations, who do not often have the resources or access to get patents, nor the motivation in societies where such knowledge is traditionally shared.

Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) agreements have also been a stumbling block to providing life-saving drugs to people suffering with diseases including HIV/AIDS in epidemic proportions around the globe.

### **Terms of trade**

The valuing of goods and services for trade is also prejudiced against the poorest countries, who often depend on raw materials, basic agricultural products, and human labor for export earnings. The free market alone cannot be assumed to assign just value to these products. Powerful nations protect their own markets and subsidize products while forcing more vulnerable countries to eliminate market protections and subsidies for domestic products.

### **Process and participation**

Most important decisions about trade and investment are being made by powerful nations, institutions, corporations and individuals to benefit a minority of the global population. Poor nations and organizations of impoverished people are regularly excluded from a meaningful role in these decisions. People negatively impacted by private sector activities have almost no way to hold corporations accountable.

## Agriculture: Growing WTO concern

*As the World Trade Organization's (WTO) Ministerial Conference in Cancún approaches, "developing" countries and "developed" nations alike are congealing their positions, and deciding how they will navigate the waters at the fifth ministerial conference. The outcome of the negotiations will affect people around the world, as the decisions made will significantly impact the rules governing the global economy. Although free trade seems to be the goal of WTO members, there is disagreement on how to achieve it, and how to shape just trade agreements. Dana Hill, a Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns intern, wrote the following article.*

Although least developed countries (LDCs) have not made proposals to the Special Session of the Committee on Agriculture, a number of issues of particular interest surfaced at the LDC trade ministers meeting held in June in Bangladesh. LDC trade ministers contended that subsidies in "developed" countries have depressed world commodity prices, undermining the competitiveness of agriculture in LDCs. They agreed on the need for increased market access for LDCs' agricultural products, and called for "developed" countries to provide duty-free and quota-free market access to all LDC agricultural imports. They agreed that LDCs need enhanced flexibility in the Agreement on Agriculture to ensure food security.

They also claimed that after the WTO ministerial in November 2001, tariffs and quantitative barriers to LDC exports have been reduced, but that some countries are resorting to non-tariff measures to advance their interests. As the news service AllAfrica.com reports, "Anti-dumping measures have now become common... Meaningful improvements in market access for LDCs would require elimination of non-tariff barriers." Interestingly enough, the U.S. press has covered the case of Vietnamese catfish as one of these "anti-dumping" cases.

Vietnamese fisherfolk have been accused of "dumping" or selling catfish below the cost of production in the U.S. Vietnam insists the prices result from its comparative advantage in the industry. In a move seen in the "developing" world as a protection of the U.S. catfish industry, the International Trade Committee (ITC) ruled that the importation of Vietnamese catfish had caused losses to the U.S. market, and subsequently imposed higher tariffs on imports from Vietnam. The U.S. Commerce Department had also ruled that Vietnamese catfish fillets were "dumped" or sold in the U.S. market at unfairly low prices.

African trade ministers will come to the Cancún meeting with a common position, which was developed at their meeting in Mauritius June 19-20, and endorsed by the African Union at their meeting in Maputo, Mozambique, in July. Their position articulates many of the same agricul-

ture and trade concerns raised at the LDC meeting in Bangladesh.

Subsidies in "developed" countries will certainly be a hot topic. West African cotton-producing countries filed a formal complaint with the WTO for damages that European and U.S. subsidies to rich farmers have exacted on their cotton industries. In a statement submitted to the House International Relations Subcommittee on Africa in July, Mali President Amadou Toumani Toure commented, "We have decided to pull the alarm bell," as he talked of the damage that \$300 billion in U.S. and European subsidies has caused African agriculture around the continent.

In their final declaration, African trade ministers expressed serious concern regarding the general lack of progress in the current negotiations, as evidenced by missed deadlines for resolution of issues important to Africa, such as agriculture, the Trade Related International Property Rights (TRIPS) agreement, and public health.

Regarding TRIPS, the African Common Position states that "work on the relationship between the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Protection of Traditional Knowledge and Folklore and the TRIPS Agreement should be given more impetus and emphasis in the implementation of the Doha Mandate." Africans are concerned that patenting seeds benefits only large agricultural companies at the expense of small farmers, who comprise most of the African agricultural sector. Seed patenting threatens to rob small farmers of their self-sufficiency and traditional practices, leaving them dependent on seed companies and the cash economy.

Growing from these concerns, the African Common Position emphasizes the Doha round's mandate to review Article 27.3(b) of the TRIPS agreement, which regulates the patenting of life forms, especially seeds. At the 1999 Ministerial in Seattle the Africans were prepared to advocate strongly to completely review this clause, arguing that it is improper to patent life. They will remain firm in the call for review in Cancún.

## World Food Day: A look at African food INsecurity

*According to the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization, an estimated 840 million people suffer from chronic hunger. Of that number, 799 million live in the developing world, where Maryknoll missionaries live and work. The following article, contributed by Timothy Dougherty, a summer intern at the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns, highlights this year's World Food Day activities, which will focus on Africa. It also offers an African perspective on food security based on local hunger research and activism carried out by KIHACHA ("Food Security Organization") in eastern Tanzania.*

The devastating suffering and loss of human life in sub-Saharan Africa due to insufficient nutrition is the theme of the 2003 World Food Day. As in years past, the October 16 activities will offer the opportunity to learn more about global hunger from competent authorities. The 20th Annual World Food Day Teleconference will feature UNICEF Regional Director for Eastern and Southern Africa Urban Jonsson and several cameos by experts offering various perspectives on the current status of Africa's food security. The goal of World Food Day is education for advocacy. Participants are encouraged to act either by giving or by advocating on behalf of the millions who go hungry due to ineffective development initiatives.

In Tanzania, activists focus on curbing hunger on the local level. In the villages of Shinyanga and Njombe, KIHACHA's surveys revealed that high production costs, and an absence of adequate rural roads, seriously hinder the production level of many poor farmers, causing household food insecurity. In Ngorongoro, activists report that expensive livestock medicines, high farm inputs and dangerous roads impede farm production. Overall, gender discrimination is seen as another serious problem that hinders progress in access to food since women, the majority of whom are farmers, are denied equal access to land, capital and other resources.

For farmers the rising cost of production was met with government subsidy cutbacks. Without adequate subsidies the farmers could not afford inputs and were forced to stop using fertilizer on soil that has been depleted from over-use. Without fertilizer, many farmers were not able to produce enough to sustain their families, therefore they called for government intervention in the form of reinstated subsidies. Under these kinds of circumstances many African governments lack any real power to aid their people as international financial institutions and development schemes dictate uncompromising policies that force them to cut subsidies and other social programs in favor of debt repayment.

Many farmers in even the most remote villages now know that their inability to access credit and inputs (which

has negatively impacted production) has its roots in macro economic policies such as structural adjustment programs. Such programs are meant to stimulate prosperity with a free market approach, but have an adverse effect as Africans have little access to credit and markets. Farmers, who were once able to sustain themselves with occasional government support, now lack the means to provide for their own basic needs.

As we have seen over the years, structural adjustment and other similar programs have severely limited African governments' power to act on behalf of their people, and have proved to be counterproductive in many African countries. The latest development plan for Africa, known as the New Partnership for African Development or NEPAD, is being questioned by many Africans who ask how this is different from other development schemes. NEPAD is an African initiative proposed and developed by three African presidents, but its claim that the global free market will lift Africa out of poverty has left hungry farmers in doubt.

Africa needs development programs that will work for the most vulnerable people. Given the current symptoms of famine, food shortages and hunger, and the fact that so much more must be done, it might be time to consider new models of development.

### **Faith in action:**

This year's World Food Day National Teleconference takes place on Thursday, October 16. For additional information on the Teleconference nearest you and other World Food Day resources please contact Patricia Young, National Coordinator, U.S. National Committee for World Food Day, 2175 K Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20437; tel: 202-653-2404; fax: 202-653-5760 or go to <http://www.worldfooddayusa.org/>

For more information on KIHACHA hunger research and activism write to: [ed@africaonline.co.tz](mailto:ed@africaonline.co.tz)

## Small arms proliferation: Let them starve?

*The following article explores one of the most overlooked causes of world hunger, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. Maryknoll Affiliate Frank Murray contributed to the article.*

A grim scenario, potentially the greatest human tragedy in history, is unfolding beyond our borders. Over 40 million people in Afghanistan, southern Africa, northeastern Africa, North Korea and Central America alone, with the numbers rising daily, are currently experiencing the severe pangs of hunger. Many of them are being kept alive thanks to massive distributions of tons of food expedited by the UN's World Food Program (WFP), USAID, CARE, Oxfam, and others. Unfortunately, the supplies of food available for this emergency distribution are moving closer to exhaustion. Even though the world as a whole has ample food to rescue these millions from a slow, painful death by starvation, availability of food where people are hungry is shrinking fast, largely because the contributions of rich country governments to the WFP have fallen far short of what they pledged.

Most affected by this disaster are the peoples of Africa. Millions upon millions are being killed or crippled by the famine. Other millions are driven from their homes and livelihood, fated to be wandering refugees. Horrendous floods or widespread drought deprive more millions of food.

What has happened to produce a catastrophe of such dimensions? Some of the factors responsible for this grim situation are: destruction of crops by consecutive years of severe drought followed by extraordinary floods; farmers so weakened by the scourge of HIV/AIDS that they are unable to cultivate; inevitable political instability due to the colonial heritage (a striking example of its impact can be seen in Zimbabwe these days).

A very significant but less recognized factor is the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, mainly automatic weapons and landmines. With landmines exploding in their fields and conflicts raging about them, people have had to flee from their homes and abandon the fields that provide their livelihood. The statistics are appalling. The number of refugees condemned to a life of wandering and malnutrition has soared to over 30 million. In the last 12 years another 50 million, mostly noncombatant women and children, have been killed in conflicts fueled by the international trade in small arms and light weapons.

What is the source of these weapons of destruction? An Amnesty International study has revealed that at least

two thirds of all global arms transfers in the years 1997-2001 came from five members of the G8, the group of eight nations with the world's largest industrialized economies. The top supplier was the U.S., accounting for 28 percent of global arms transfers. Second in line was Russia, with 17 percent. France was third with 10 percent, followed by Britain with 10 percent and Germany with five percent.

Obviously the failure to control international arms transfers wreaks tragedy on the poorest countries. The proliferation of small arms and light weapons expands and prolongs conflict and eventually boomerangs on the U.S.

Both the U.S. and the UN have begun to address the issue. Congress acknowledged the need for greater restraint on arms sales by the U.S. and its allies with the passage of the "International Arms Sales Code of Conduct Act of 1999." The Act calls for restricting arms transfers to countries that support terrorism, help spread weapons of mass destruction or resort to armed aggression in violation of international law. The president was directed to negotiate with other nations to implement the code and to report his progress to Congress every six months.

Meanwhile, the first major follow-up to the 2001 UN Small Arms Conference was held in July. The 2003 biennial meeting called for progress reports on meeting global norms to reduce small arms proliferation. For example, the 2001 conference called for marking small arms at point of manufacture for tracing and identification, keeping track of legally-held guns, destroying stocks of surplus weapons, and making the production or possession of illegal guns a criminal offense.

More than 90 countries reported that they had adopted laws governing the illicit manufacture, possession or trade in weapons. While this is a beginning, chilling statistics reveal the scope of the challenge: small arms and light weapons kill more than half a million people each year, including 300,000 in armed conflict and 200,000 in homicides and suicides. Of the victims, 90 percent are civilians.

U.S. citizens can help by writing to their representatives in Washington, D.C., and demanding further action to shrink the small arms trade and eliminate stocks of illegal weapons.

## Resources

- 1) **Faith in Practice: Connecting the Dots for Global Economic Justice:** The Religious Working Group on the World Bank/IMF invites grassroots activists to a two-day conference on promoting action for global economic justice in religious communities and organizations, **September 18-19**, in Washington, D.C. Workshops will be held on issues such as health policy, environmental issues, debt, structural adjustment programs, privatization and private sector development, hunger, militarism and globalization, corruption and governance, among others. \$60 registration fee. For more information, contact Ms. Susan Thompson with the Medical Mission Sisters, 703-624-1454; susanstarrstompson@juno.com, or go to the RWG's website: [www.sndden.org/rwg/](http://www.sndden.org/rwg/)
- 2) **Global AIDS Action Conference: Catalyzing Grassroots Action to Stop Global AIDS:** a weekend-long AIDS activism opportunity - **Friday, September 26 through Monday, September 29, 2003**. The weekend includes AIDS activism workshops followed by a Capitol Hill Lobby Day on Monday and will be an excellent networking opportunity to connect AIDS activists from all over the U.S., Africa, Asia, and Europe. The event is sponsored by GAA (Global AIDS Alliance), and co-sponsored by over 15 Washington-based organizations. Registration is \$30 and \$10 for students or low-income participants. For more info contact GAA at 202-296-0260, or go to [www.globalaidsalliance.org/conference.html](http://www.globalaidsalliance.org/conference.html) for details about affordable housing and accommodations, transportation, and a preliminary conference agenda.
- 3) **The Legacy of Conflict in Africa educational packets:** As part of WOA's Millennial Campaign for Africa, this newest educational packet touches on a variety of social justice concerns including child soldiers, gender violence, landmines, resource exploitation, small arms, and the International Criminal Court. These educational aides provide thorough background information, profound analyses, prayer resources and action suggestions. The reader friendly language simplifies the most complex issue for the beginning social justice advocate. *The Legacy of Conflict*, WOA's latest packet, is available online at <http://www.woafrica.org/legacy1.htm>.
- 4) **Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador:** Written by Elisabeth Jean Wood. This account of insurgent collective action in El Salvador is based on oral histories gathered from peasants who supported the insurgency and those who did not, as well as on interviews with military commanders from both sides. She explains how widespread support among rural people for the leftist insurgency during the civil war in El Salvador challenges conventional interpretations of collective action. Paperback: \$23.00 Cambridge University Press; <http://us.cambridge.org/titles/catalogue.asp?isbn=0521010500>. Order by phone 800-872-7423, or by fax 845-353-4141.

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### School of the Americas Watch

#### November 21-23: Vigil and Nonviolent Civil Resistance Action

Join thousands from across the Americas from November 21-23, 2003 at the gates of the U.S. military base Fort Benning in Georgia - home of the notorious School of the Americas (renamed Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation) - to stand in Solidarity with the victims of the School of Assassins and to speak out against terror and violence. Cross the line - engage in nonviolent direct action to make your voice heard, to close the SOA/WHISC, and to change oppressive U.S. foreign policy.

For over a decade, students, religious, labor, veterans, human rights, and social/global justice groups have been converging every November at the gates of Fort Benning, GA to speak out in solidarity with the people of the Americas and to engage in nonviolent direct action. We will gather again this year on November 22 and 23, 2003 and continue together in the struggle until the School of the Americas is closed and the policies it represents are changed forever. The events this year will be preceded by teach-ins, trainings, and caucuses on Friday, November 21.

**What you can do:** Organize nonviolent direct action trainings, talks about the SOA, video showings or other educational events in your community in the months leading up to November. Write to your Members of Congress and ask them to support legislation to close the SOA/WHISC. Organize a bus, vans or car-pool to Georgia, publicize the vigil action in your region and invite others to join you. Discern together with family and friends and consider engaging in nonviolent civil resistance in November.

**Go to [www.soaw.org](http://www.soaw.org) or call 202-234-3440 for more information.**