



Service Committee

NEWS

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SERVICE COMMITTEE

WINTER 2004-2005

“A Sea of Disaster”

Humanitarian aid is directed to marginalized, neglected and politically oppressed communities

On Dec. 26, the Indian Ocean transformed itself from giver of life to terrible destroyer as the tsunami swept away lives and livelihoods all along coastal regions in South and Southeast Asia, and East Africa.



Associated Press

“We are born and live in this coastal village. This sea is our mother. She is our livelihood and the sustainer of life,” said Ganesan, who lives in a coastal village in India. “Our elders say that they have never experienced such a terrible face of this sea before, in their lifetime. This is the first time the provider sea has turned to be our destructor.”

With entire villages disappearing in the wake of the tsunami and tens of thousands of lives lost, the devastation in that part of the world is staggering. As the survivors struggle against loss, grief, disease, and lack of food, shelter and other basic resources, only time will tell what the ultimate toll on these communities and nations will be.

For some, the tsunami also brought harassment and human rights abuses and we are working with partners in the region to provide assistance. In Thailand, Burmese migrant workers often face discrimination and are prevented from searching for lost relatives. Instead of receiving relief aid from government agencies, they are being forced to leave the country because their identification papers were lost in the tidal wave.

“Thousands of Burmese workers are still hiding in the jungle, on rubber plantations and on islands in fear of arrest and deportation,” said Htoo Chit, a Burmese native who is coordinating relief programs for a UUSC partner.

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Above: Commercial district of Banda Aceh, Indonesia after the tsunami.

Below: Relief materials being transported by boat to Gummaladibba, India, as many roads are impassable.

Read more about the relief and rehabilitation work being supported by the UUSC-UUA Tsunami Relief Fund. Turn to page 18.

Photo courtesy of Sahiniva

Is water a commodity

or a human right?



UUSC President Charlie Clements
(Photo by Audubon Dougherty/UUSC)

What if your local water was privatized and the 30-year concession to run it (and your wastewater treatment facility) was sold to a foreign company? Suppose the winning bid was awarded because it promised the greatest reduction in rates combined with more investment than any of the competitors.

But what if the foreign company then turned around and convinced your city government to let them raise rates, so instead of a 25 percent reduction the rates ended up being 50 percent higher than when the negotiations began?

Suppose that the foreign company had agreed to invest more than \$1 billion in infrastructure to improve your water and wastewater systems. But what if they only provided \$60 million and then borrowed \$940 million from international lending institutions – the same lenders who refused your community these same loans, because they believe privately run utilities are more efficient?

What if the rate of return on water services was higher than that of sewer services, leading the foreign company to continue expansion of water services but not to extend sewer services to the same neighborhoods? Suppose further that it did not maintain the existing sewage treatment facilities. This resulted in large amounts of raw sewage being emptied into rivers, streets or open fields, leading to a significant increase in the disease burden in poor communities, where many have had their water services disconnected because of their inability to afford the now expensive services.

Suppose that the foreign company now defaulted on \$700 million of loans and got the international lending institutions to threaten your mayor, forcing him to authorize another 40 percent increase in rates.

Now suppose that the profit rate of the foreign company was made public and it was twice the average of for-profit companies in your town and three times higher than water companies in places like the United Kingdom.

Furthermore, suppose the main corporate shareholders in this foreign company were revealed to have faced criminal and civil lawsuits in their own courts with accusations of bribery of public officials, illegal political contributions, kickbacks, fixing prices, operating cartels and false accounting.

Privatization leads to disaster

This is not a hypothetical case study but rather the tragic tale of what happened in Argentina between 1993 and 2000 when the government was forced by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund to sell the right to run the Buenos Aires water and wastewater systems to a French consortium known as 'Aguas Argentinas.'

It is a disaster from which the people of Argentina have still not recovered and an economic burden they will be repaying for decades. The families of malnourished children who suffered from dysentery, cholera, hepatitis and other water-borne diseases often paid with their children's lives.

For years, World Bank and corporate literature portrayed the Aguas Argentinas nightmare as a success and touted it as a model for privatization for other poor countries. The Bush administration is doing the same thing in a neighborhood not far from you. The feds have made it difficult for municipalities to obtain loans for improving aging water and wastewater infrastructure.

Their stated strategy is to force privatization to any of six international water companies that are aggressively buying up utilities around the world. (Since Enron has gone belly-up, there are no major U.S. corporate players.) In privatized systems, decisions are made on the basis of profits, monies that used to remain in communities are then remitted overseas, and often a community's rights to their own water are jeopardized.

The website of the World Bank refers to privatization as "effective water resource management" and further states that water "be treated as an economic good." Water as a commodity directly contradicts the notion of water as a human right – a right first recognized by the United Nations on Nov. 27, 2002, when it stated, "The human right to drinking water is fundamental to life and health. Sufficient and safe drinking water is a precondition for the realization of human rights."

UUSC is committed to assisting communities at home and abroad to protect their human right to water.

Charlie Clements

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Defending the human right to water

New UUSC program targets a growing global dilemma

Forty-thousand Detroit families learned about the problems of water privatization in the time it took to turn on a tap. Nothing came out.

In 2002, the city government in Detroit had decided that the only way to repair and re-invigorate their old, debilitated public water system was to sell it to the corporate sector to run for profit. In order to make their faltering water system more marketable, they hiked up the rates and turned off the taps for those who couldn't pay.

Suddenly, the 40,000 families in Detroit, mostly African-American women-headed households became part of the 1.25 billion people in the world who do not have access to clean drinking water.

The United Nations recognizes access to adequate clean water as a human right because it is so essential to human life. That's why governments have built public water systems to provide this vital service to their populations.

However, in different parts of the world, these public water systems are now in need of repair and expansion. Cash-strapped governments, like the City Council in Detroit, are turning to private water companies to purchase water systems, upgrade them and operate them for profit.

In response, a vibrant movement has sprung up all over the world as people are defending their right to water. People are lobbying their own governments, and the World Bank, seeking a place at the table when decisions about water privatization are being made. With our new program focus on the human right to water, UUSC will work closely with grassroots organizations both in the United States and internationally, supporting their struggle.

"UUSC defends the human right to water and upholds equal access for everyone," says UUSC President Charlie Clements. "A key way to guarantee equitable right to water is to strengthen the grassroots organizations that defend it."

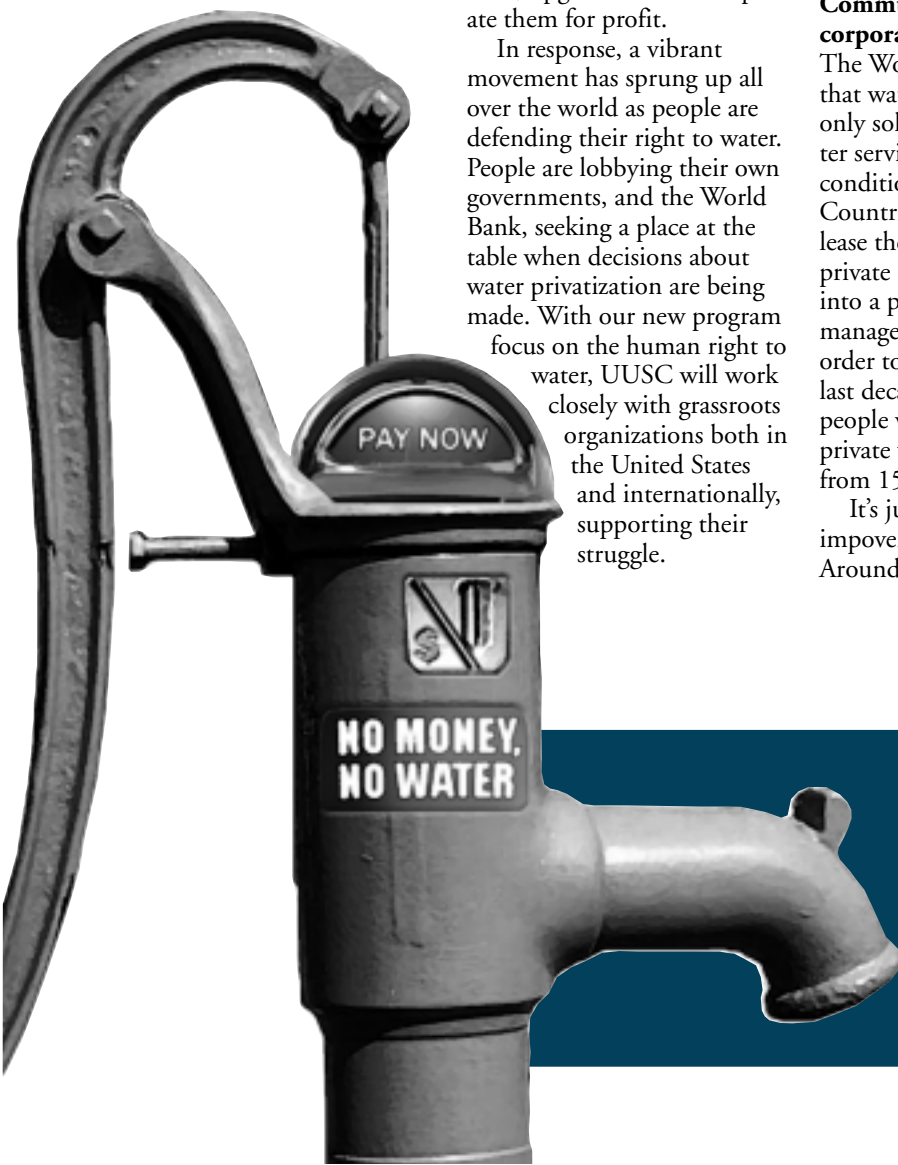
Communities battle corporations for control

The World Bank is so certain that water privatization is the only solution to improve water service that they make it a condition of their loans. Countries must either sell or lease their water systems to private companies or enter into a public-private sector management partnership in order to get their loans. In the last decade, the number of people who get water from private water companies rose from 15 to 400 million.

It's just not working for impoverished communities. Around the world, but

(continued on page 19)

Around the world, but especially in the global South, when water is privatized, the rates go up and usually service and quality go down.



WATER-FILLED FACTS

- One in 6 people lack access to clean drinking water.
- Every 14 seconds someone dies of a disease related to contaminated water. Most of them are children under five.
- Seventy percent of water-related diseases could be avoided with clean drinking water.

—Development and Peace

UUSC remembers Roger Flather and Alan Peters

UUSC is saddened to report the passing of two longtime supporters, Roger Flather and Alan Peters.

Roger Flather

Roger Flather of New York, N.Y., died Nov. 22, 2004. A former UUSC board member during the 1980s, he served as chair of the International Programs Committee. It was at this time that UUSC was active in bringing delegations to Central America that included members of Congress. Mr. Flather participated in one such delegation in 1981.

"We met heads of state, guerilla leaders, generals, clergy and union people at a time when there was tremendous violence," recalls Dick Scobie, UUSC's former executive director. "Roger didn't know Spanish but he loved to head out by himself into the neighborhoods and villages and engage with people. Some-

how, he communicated his warmth and interest in people's lives. He was completely bilingual with just one word: 'amigo.'"

According to Mr. Scobie, Mr. Flather was instrumental in the creation of UUSC's Human Rights Education department. He was also a member of UUSC's first Capital Campaign. Mr. Flather, who served a Navy fighter pilot, had a lifelong dedication to international service. He was a Peace Corps Director in Micronesia and was the first executive director of Oxfam America.

"Roger was an amazingly expansive person. I relied on him for the insight and energy he brought," says Mr. Scobie. "He had an effusive optimism that kept us going and he brought that spirit to the board."

Alan Peters

Alan Peters of Bainbridge Island, Wash., died Oct. 28, 2004. He was a longtime supporter of UUSC and participated in many key UUSC initiatives. His com-

mitment to UUSC's work was inspired in part by his childhood experience of being evacuated from Austria to escape the Nazi terror.

A retired United Airlines executive, Mr. Peters was an active Unitarian Universalist for many years. In addition to his work for UUSC, he served on the boards of Starr King School for the Ministry in Berkeley, Calif., and was active in his UU congregations in San Francisco and Bainbridge Island.

Mr. Peters played an active role in UUSC's Campaign Committee and Major Gifts committees. "He and I would visit donors and we became fast friends," says Mr. Scobie. "He had a warmth and real commitment to UUSC's goals."

Mr. Scobie credits Mr. Peters' work as a fund raiser with making it possible for UUSC to purchase its current headquarters in Cambridge, Mass.

by Sofia T. Romero/UUSC



The Service Committee is looking for a few good men and women

The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee is now accepting nominations for the Social Action Leadership Award, the Mary-Ella Holst Youth Activist Award and the Vision of Justice Sermon Award for the year 2005.

The Social Action Leadership Award honors creative, inspiring and effective leadership by an individual or group working for justice.

The Mary-Ella Holst Youth Activist Award recognizes and honors the achievement of an individual or group of youth and young adults who are advancing human rights and social justice through activism and leadership.

The Vision of Justice Sermon Award honors a sermon that reflects upon a combination of social action and spirituality by clearly expressing Unitarian Universalist principles as they are put into practice through current UUSC programs.



Last year's Mary-Ella Holst Youth Activist award recipient, Scott McNeill and Social Action Leadership award recipient, Katie Culbert.

For further information about the Social Justice Action Award or the Mary-Ella Holst Youth Activist Award, contact Dick Campbell at 800.388.3920. For information about the Vision of Justice Sermon Award, contact Rachel Binderman at the same number. To nominate yourself or another candidate, you may submit the nomination by e-mail to awards@uusc.org or by regular mail to 130 Prospect Street, Cambridge, MA 02139.



Justice in the fields

Landmark agreement puts lid on pickle boycott

A long-standing UUSC-endorsed boycott of the Mt. Olive Pickle Company, the largest independent pickle processor in the country, ended in September with a landmark agreement between the North Carolina Growers Association and approximately 8,000 Mexican guest-workers.

This historic victory represents the first time that guestworkers in the United States have won union representation or a labor contract. The agreement covers more than 1,000 North Carolina farms, and increases wages to workers and prices to growers by more than 10 percent over the next three years.

UUSC has been organizing in support of the guestworkers since 2002. Volunteers participated in workcamps in 2002 and 2003 in North Carolina that gave them a chance to learn about and help improve the living and working conditions faced by migrant farm workers. Participants in the “Justice in the Field” workcamps also took part in organizing, leafleting and petitioning on behalf of the boycott at a local supermarket.

Putting values into action

“I attended the workcamp to put my faith and my dedication to UU principles into concrete action,” says participant Al Benford of Manches-

ter, Conn. “If I truly believe in the inherent worth and dignity of every person, then I cannot be silent when farm workers are being exploited.”

Eileen Harrington agrees. Now a Peace Corps volunteer in Namibia, she was the UUSC staff member who organized the workcamp in North Carolina. “This agreement involving Mt. Olive Pickle Company, the farmworkers and the farmers is an amazing step for the rights of farm laborers in North Carolina,” she wrote in an e-mail. “It recognizes that justice can only be achieved when all parties are brought to the negotiation table.”

Advocates also responded to an action alert issued by UUSC in collaboration with the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC) by writing letters to the president of Mt. Olive Pickle Co., urging the company to negotiate a fair contract with the farm workers that would provide them a living wage and an opportunity to improve the lives of their families.

“As each person takes action to live out our principles, the power builds,” says Mr. Benford. “And the rights of 8,000 farm workers have been sustained.”



In 2002, UUSC workcamp participants took part in a boycott and picketing in support of North Carolina farm workers. (Photo by Kelli Larsen/UUSC)

by Sofia T. Romero/UUSC



We're looking for “opinionated” youth and young adults

Are you a youth or a young adult with a passion for advancing human rights and social justice in the United States and around the world? Are you involved in community service projects in your congregation, school or community?

If any of these descriptions apply to you, we invite you to share your voice and experi-

ence with UUSC! We are looking for youth and young adults like you to be involved in planning engaging opportunities that bridge different communities and allow people of all ages to put their faith into action. Our programs focus on three specific areas: environmental justice, economic justice and civil liberties.

Interested in being involved in the process, and sharing your opinions and experience with us? Share your voice! Contact us and tell us a little about yourself, your interests and what you are doing locally. E-mail us at justworks@uus.org or call 800.388.3920, ext. 201.

by Nguyen Weeks/UUSC

STOP Campaign picks up speed

Public education drive, mock trial planned



The STOP (Stop Torture Permanently) Campaign is off to a busy start at UUSC. Throughout the fall, we issued a number of urgent action alerts on torture-related cases, held an intensive in-house training program, and met with many of our members and supporters at events around the country.

We are also developing plans for a strong public education drive on the issue of torture, as well as a future indictment ceremony and mock trial for high level administration officials responsible for authorizing and planning torture during the current war in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Taking urgent action

Our urgent action alerts began with the family of Otoniel De La Roca Mendoza in Guatemala. He was a key witness at the Organization of American

States (OAS) trial of Guatemalan military officials for the murder of Efraín Bámaca Velásquez, Jennifer Harbury's husband. Since his testimony, four of his cousins have been murdered. Ms. Harbury is seeking humanitarian parole for those remaining in Guatemala. (See related story, p. 7.)

UUSC members and supporters have also responded to action alerts protesting U.S. human rights abuses at Fallujah as well as the disturbing provisions of House Resolution 10, which would have permitted deportation of certain persons to nations permitting torture. Another alert voiced concerns about the nomination of Alberto Gonzales as U.S. Attorney General because of his authorship of the White House memos suggesting ways to evade the Geneva Conventions and other torture prohibitions.

Upcoming opportunities for involvement

Upcoming events in the STOP Campaign will include a public education campaign and more opportunities for action. In addition, UUSC staff members have been making public presentations across the country about the U.S. involvement in torture, the applicable laws and treaties, and the policy issues raised. (See related story, p. 7.)

We are also preparing in-depth written and visual materials to facilitate local events, press work, and public presentations by our grassroots network throughout the country.

Ms. Harbury has completed her book on the history of U.S. involvement in torture abroad, documenting such cases from Vietnam to Central America to Abu Ghraib, and discussing the laws and policy issues raised. The book will be

published by Common Courage Press this spring.

We are also planning a formal and public "mock trial" of U.S. officials responsible for the torture in Iraq and Afghanistan. This will take place in Washington, D.C., in the fall, and we invite everyone's participation. We'll be busy, and look forward to working closely with everyone!

by Jennifer Harbury/UUSC

To learn more about the STOP Campaign and for resource materials regarding U.S. links to torture, visit our website, www.uusc.org/stoptorture. You can also sign up to receive regular e-mail updates about the STOP Campaign that include more ways to become involved in putting a stop to U.S.-sanctioned torture. E-mail stoptorture@uusc.org for more information.



Torture survivor Ibrahim Bah speaks to UUSC staff about his experiences. (Photo by Dick Campbell/UUSC)

Surviving torture

Ibrahima Bah of Guinea recently spoke to UUSC staff about his experiences as a torture survivor. As a prisoner in that country, he endured such torture as electric shock, cigarette burns and beatings. These are his words.

ABOUT TORTURE

"Three days after my arrest, I was in the interrogation room. They said, 'We have many ways to extract the truth.' I couldn't say their truth, not the truth they wanted. I started giving names. I give names of people who do not exist.

"I spent four days without food, drink, nothing. That was to put people in condition for the interrogation. They gave us food once a day, just to keep us alive. I know I am lucky. Many people did not survive. I saw people die in front of me because of lack of medicine, lack of attention."

SURVIVING TORTURE

"By night, I cannot sleep. I can close my eyes, I can stop thinking, but I am not sleeping. I don't think someone can pass through the torture and be a normal person. After the torture, you are not normal anymore. You lose confidence, you don't trust anyone. Even yourself you cannot trust."

Guatemala: Justice in the line of fire

Death stalks family members of key witness

Building a peaceful and just society is not easy work. Nor does it follow a predictable path. Guatemala has long been the focus of UUSC programs, yet despite peace accords ending decades of civil war, and a recent, fairly-conducted presidential election, the country has far to go before true peace or justice can take root.

Consider the case of Otoniel de la Roca Mendoza, a key witness in the 1992 abduction and killing of guerrilla commander Efraín Bámaca Velásquez. Since 2000, four members of Mr. de la Roca's family have been murdered in what appears to be an attempt to retaliate for his crucial testimony.

Jennifer Harbury, Bámaca's wife, and director of UUSC's STOP (Stop Torture Permanently) Campaign, has brought charges against the Guatemalan government in the Inter-American Court, and Mr. de la Roca's testimony that he saw

Mr. Bámaca being abducted and tortured at a Guatemalan military base is a key element in her case. The court ruled in her favor in 2000.

Truck driver Jesús Mendoza, a cousin of Mr. de la Roca, was the latest victim. Shot dead in July as he returned from making a delivery, his body was found slumped over the wheel of his truck. Jesús Mendoza was the father of Byron Mendoza, who was killed in 2002, and a cousin of Galindo Alvarado Mendoza, killed in September 2003. A fourth cousin "disappeared" in 2000.

"The Guatemalans will continue their struggle for justice no matter what it takes," says Ms. Harbury. "They will someday prevail."

Retaliation for testimony

According to Ms. Harbury, Mr. de la Roca and her husband were prisoners of war together in Guatemala during the early 1990s. Both were secretly detained and tortured. Before he escaped from Guatemala in 1997, Mr. de la Roca gave detailed and crucial human rights information to both MINUGUA (United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala) and the U.N. Truth Commission. Despite threats

to his family, he also testified in front of the Organization of American States, and then later to the Inter-American Court in the case involving Ms. Harbury's husband.

Ms. Harbury is presently attempting to gain U.S. humanitarian parole for a dozen relatives of Mr. de la Roca, all of whom are currently in hiding in Guatemala, living an underground existence in fear for their lives.

There has been an alarming increase in human rights violations in Guatemala in the past few years. For example, during Ms. Harbury's January visit to Guatemala, a two-year-old was strangled to death to punish his father. UUSC is concerned that the wave of attacks on human rights defenders and others involved in key human rights cases may be part of a systematic campaign to silence those who have sought justice and resisted attempts to grant impunity for human rights abuses.

by Paul Steven Stone/UUSC and Dick Campbell/UUSC

For more information, or to learn what you can do to help, visit www.uusc.org/news/alert080904.html.

STOP Campaign takes "ticking bomb" on tour

Jennifer Harbury, Charlie Clements and other UUSC staff members have been making special presentations across the United States about U.S. involvement in torture, related laws and treaties and the policy issues that are raised. So far, they have appeared at special events such as the 20th Annual Latin American Encuentro, organized by the Southern California Unit of UUSC in November at the UU Community Church of Santa Monica.

"The purpose of the annual Encuentro is to educate UUs and others on the effects of U.S. policies on countries in Latin America and encourage them to

take action," says Ruth Shapin, Southern California Unit co-chair. "Ms. Harbury spoke eloquently about the use of torture in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras, sometimes in the presence of North Americans."

Another special event in Santa Fe was cosponsored by the UU Congregation of Santa Fe and Veterans for Peace. "Jennifer Harbury stunned the audience with her description of America's history of support for torture by despotic regimes favored by American administrations," comments Kenneth Mayers, one of the event's organizers.

by Sofia T. Romero/UUSC

UUSC just says “No!”

Rejects U.S. terrorist “blacklist,” joins legal action

UUSC has joined more than a dozen organizations, including the American Civil Liberties Union and Amnesty International USA, in withdrawing from the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) and pursuing legal action against the U.S. government’s new “anti-terrorist” regulations.

UUSC withdrew from the CFC, a workplace-giving program, in protest of the new federal policy that requires participating organizations to certify they do not employ or provide funds to people or organizations identified on lengthy government lists as suspected terrorists.

A “misguided” policy

The lawsuit, filed in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, states that the policy is vague and misleading, that it violates the First and Fifth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution and that the government did not follow appropriate procedures in creating it.

The lawsuit argues that the policy is

“a misguided, unduly burdensome process that is vulnerable to abuse for political purposes. It leaves the door wide open for politicians and bureaucrats to misuse the lists to retaliate against political opponents, since there is no accountability or oversight regarding who is put on the blacklists.”

“UUSC does not condone any human rights abuse, including actions defined by the International Criminal Court or other international institutions as acts of international terrorism,” says UUSC President Charlie Clements. “Terrorism is antithetical to our mission.”

For many years, UUSC has been a member of Global Impact, a coalition of 50 of the most respected international charities. It is through Global Impact that UUSC had established its connection to the Combined Federal Campaign and other workplace giving programs. UUSC had anticipated receiving nearly \$100,000 from its participation in Global Impact this fiscal year, approximately

\$60,000 of which is in jeopardy because of our decision to withdraw from the Combined Federal Campaign. UUSC has received nearly \$1 million from Global Impact over the past 10 years.

The shadow of McCarthyism

The method by which the screening lists are developed is very questionable. The lists contain many common names that can cause confusion. In addition, there is no clear, established method by which a person can appeal his or her listing.

In withdrawing from the federal giving program, UUSC hopes to ensure that the lessons learned by its forebears during the era of the late Sen. Joseph McCarthy are not forgotten. At that time, as a result of the U.S. government’s anti-communist witch-hunts of the late 1940s and 1950s, people’s names were placed on “blacklists” and their reputations and livelihoods were often shattered without being given a chance to defend themselves.

by Marty Scherstuhl/UUSC

Enter A Contest Where Every Competitor Is A Card

It’s UUSC’s Holiday Card Design Contest 2005!

You’re invited to submit your designs for UUSC’s 2005 holiday cards. As you can tell from last year’s winning entries, your card should be attractive, engaging and thoughtful.

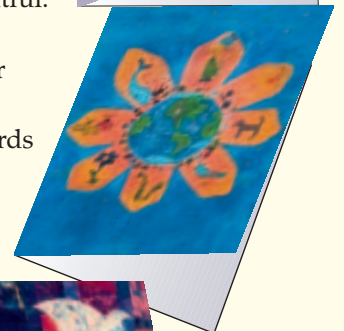


Winners’ names and congregations will appear on their cards which will be sold to UUSC members and supporters nationwide. Visit www.uusc.org/holidaycards for more details and submission guidelines. Proceeds benefit UUSC’s worldwide efforts to advance human rights and social justice.

Submissions must be received by UUSC on or before May 6, 2005.

Mail submissions to:
UUSC Holiday Card Contest
130 Prospect Street
Cambridge, MA 02139-1845

E-mail submissions to: volunteerservices@uusc.org



Last year’s
winning
entries.

Activists score victories for human rights in Burma

Unocal court case settled, university tours canceled

The work of UUSC human rights activists resulted in major victories in recent months.

Due in large part to the public attention initiated by activists, the multinational corporation Unocal agreed to settle the lawsuits brought by 15 Burmese villagers seeking to hold U.S. corporations accountable for human rights abuses committed by the Burmese military for the benefit of the corporation.

And in response to a major letter-writing and telephone campaign by UUSC's Human Rights Defenders, four major universities and several cultural institutions cancelled planned alumni tours to Burma. The ac-

tions came after activists' protests about the relationship between tourism and the Burma military regime, which has been described as one of the most brutal and destructive in the world.

The victories are a clear sign that prominent United States institutions are starting to pay attention to Burma's democracy movement, led by the world's only incarcerated Nobel Peace Prize recipient Aung San Suu Kyi.

Victories through activism

The settlement of the Unocal case is a major advance for human rights activists seeking justice for the atrocities committed during construction of Unocal's \$1.2 billion natural gas pipeline across Burma. The lawsuits were filed on behalf of the 15 plaintiffs by several nongovernmental organizations, including UUSC colleague, EarthRights International.

The lawsuits were filed under the Alien Tort Claims Act (ATCA), which was passed by the first United States Congress in 1789 to allow foreign citizens to sue Americans in U.S. courts to hold them accountable for crimes committed abroad.

The claims against the giant multinational had been vigorously opposed by influential business interests and the Bush administration, which wanted to repeal, amend or otherwise dismantle the ATCA. Last June, the General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association overwhelmingly approved a UUSC-sponsored resolution to endorse the ATCA and express its support for the Burmese victims.

In the other major victory, the universities which cancelled their alumni visits to

the Asian country include Stanford University in California, the Wright Institute of Chicago, the University of Washington and the University of Wisconsin. They came on the heels of similar cancellations by the Smithsonian Institution, Asia Society, and the American Museum of Natural History in New York City.

"Burma will be here for many years, so tell your friends to visit us later," said Aung San Suu Kyi. "Visiting now is tantamount to condoning the regime."

The Burma Democracy Movement led by Ms. Suu Kyi has called for the boycott of all travel to Burma as a way of expressing opposition to the military regime. The National League for Democracy led by Ms. Suu Kyi won a landslide victory in Burma's 1990 election but the military regime has never honored the results and allowed democratic government to prevail.

The United Nations has linked forced labor to Burma's tourism industry and the government receives over 30 percent of the funds spent on tourism. Tourism is an important source of income that the military regime needs to finance its terror and to enrich the ruling junta. They receive money from visa fees, government-controlled entities and license fees from international flights.

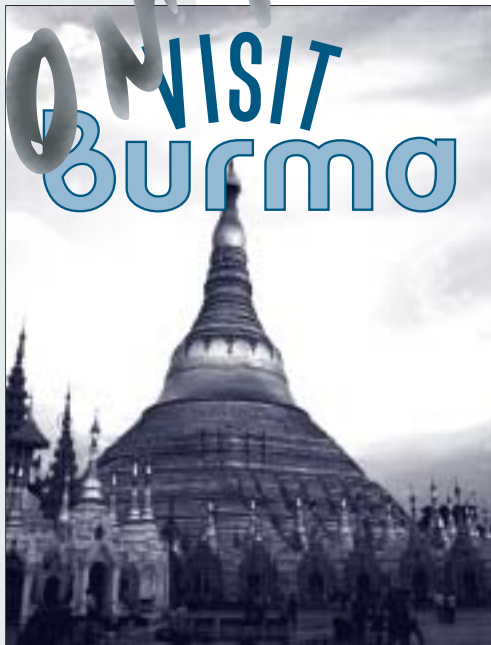
According to the International Labor Organization, the military regime uses forced labor to develop its tourist infrastructure and thousands of Burmese people have been forcibly removed from their homes to make way for tourism development or so-called "beautification" projects.

by Dick Campbell/UUSC



Burma

DON'T VISIT Burma



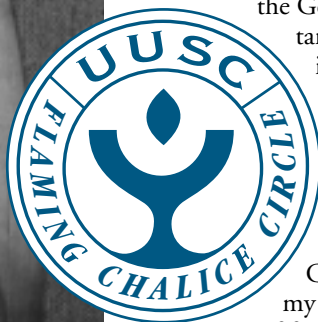
“Bye bye, Hilda!”



After ten years as the “voice of UUSC,” receptionist Hilda Marrigan (seated center) is feted by staff members on the eve of her retirement. (Photo by Audubon Dougherty/UUSC)



UUSC Board Chair Todd Jones



STAFF notes

by Audubon Dougherty/UUSC



Senior Associate for Major Gifts and Foundations Eric Kreilick

UUSC welcomes **Eric Kreilick** as the new senior associate for major gifts and foundations. With a long history of work for economic and environmental justice, Mr. Kreilick has managed the Donor Advised Fund for Equity Trust in Connecticut, worked in grantmaking with the Pond Foundation in Santa Fe, N.M., and helped fund sustainable agriculture and solar energy projects in Haiti, working with organized peasants to provide their communities with access to water.

“I came to UUSC for the opportunity to be part of an organization that will emerge as a real force,” he explains. “UUSC constituents are dynamic, incredibly smart people who really have a voice.”

Anna Bartlett joins UUSC as the new administrative assistant for the Programs Department. A recent graduate of the University of Dayton, Ohio, Ms. Bartlett brings to her position a background in Middle Eastern Studies and an interest in human rights advocacy. She has worked in Appalachia, El Salvador and Morocco as a social justice volunteer.



Administrative Assistant for Programs Anna Bartlett

Investing in your values

Todd Jones, chair of UUSC’s board of trustees, explains why he has included UUSC in his estate planning

“I’ve been a local representative for UUSC in my home congregation, a regional coordinator and national co-chair for the volunteer network,” says Todd Jones, and now he serves as the chair of UUSC’s board of trustees. In addition, he is a member of the Service Committee’s Flaming Chalice Circle, which was established to recognize those who have created planned gifts that will benefit UUSC’s work for generations to come.

After attending a UUSC program at the General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association in 1995, Mr. Jones decided that supporting the Service Committee was the best way he could live his UU values. In addition to being a volunteer, he decided to join the Flaming Chalice Circle. “It was just that time in my life, you know, I was entering my fifties,” Mr. Jones explains, “and that’s when you begin to get your estates in order. I began to think about what’s enduring, what has meaning, and for me,

it was the Service Committee’s work for justice.”

There are many ways individuals can include the Service Committee in their estate plans. From giving a gift that results in an income for the rest of the donor’s life to a simple bequest, the Service Committee provides the tools people need to accomplish both their financial and philanthropic goals.

“We have an opportunity to influence the future,” Mr. Jones says. “You can do your estate planning in a way consistent with your values and ensure the next generation has the resources to continue to advance justice. I know whatever I contribute to UUSC will be used in a way consistent with my values and will have a real effect on the world as we go forward.”

by David Riley/UUSC

For more information about charitable planning, please contact David Riley, senior associate for donor relations and charitable planning at 617.868.6600, ext. 205, or by e-mail at driley@uusoc.org.

Advancing justice one network at a time

UU state advocacy networks taking root, taking action

Is it possible to move the world toward justice? Is it possible to reach an agreement about public policies? Do Americans have common ideals and goals?

UUSC-supported statewide Unitarian Universalist advocacy networks are answering these large questions and developing strategies for change based upon what they know and learn. These advocates for social justice search for common goals and ideals, come to mutual agreement on issues, and then advocate for changes that move the world toward justice.

These unique collaborations are not merely UUSC or Unitarian Universalist Association networks. Networks in California and Michigan were already in existence before we began organizing for the elections. UUSC initiated the formation of new networks in New Hampshire and Florida, and supported the growth of networks in Wisconsin and in Minnesota.

These networks were instrumental in electoral activism in key states during the November presidential election campaign. Networks worked to register voters, helped get them to the polls and provided access to educational material for this critical election year.

Going forward, the networks will mobilize on national or international issues such as the STOP (Stop Torture Permanently) Campaign and similarly for UUA issues such as same-sex marriage.

California

The Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of California (UULMC) advocates for social justice issues selected annually by its board. Rev. Lindi Ramsden, Executive Director, reaches out to Unitarian Universalists around the state and will begin working with UUSC's Southern California Unit to protect the human right of access to water in 2005. Contact lramsdn@uulmca.org or call 916.207.6970.

Florida

Led by Rev. Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley, a cluster of congregations in the Tampa, Fla., area created a UU advocacy network. They received

support from the Service Committee and the UU Funding Program.

"Despite four devastating hurricanes, floods and widespread power blackouts, Florida congregations joined an overwhelming effort by nonpartisan groups to get-out-the-vote in November," says Rev. Dee Graham. "Defending Democracy Florida contributed volunteers to well-organized coalition efforts coordinated largely by National Voice in the state."

To discover how you can advocate for social justice in Florida, contact Rev. Dee Graham at DeeGraham@aol.com or call 727.522.3907.

New Hampshire

Just about every New Hampshire congregation participated in the network's "Take the Pledge" campaign, working to get-out-the-vote through Election Day until the polls closed. Learn more about the network and their "Take the Pledge" campaign by visiting their website, www.nhfaithfuldemocracy.org.

To join like-minded UU advocates throughout New Hampshire, contact Pam Kelly at PamelaSKelly@comcast.net or by calling 413.774.3150.

Michigan

A network of 17 congregations is conducting advocacy around social justice issues. To join their efforts, contact Randy Block at beelock47@comcast.net or call 248.549.5170.

Minnesota

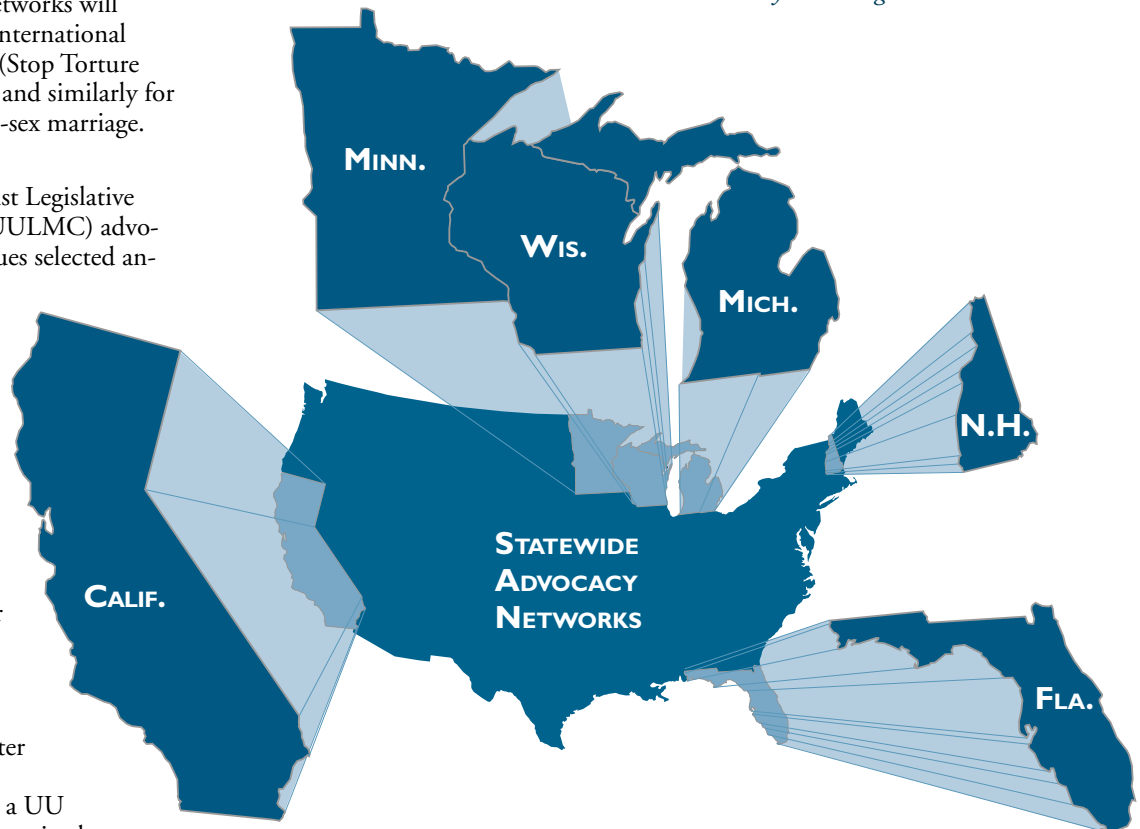
Led by Betsy Allis and Jo Haberman, the Metropolitan UU Social Justice Alliance (MUUSJA) "brings together UUs to strengthen our pursuit of peace, justice and sustainability." Contact Nancy Johnson to join the more than 400 UU members of the alliance by e-mailing njohnsto@che.umn.edu. For more information, visit MUUSJA's website at www.muusja.org.

Wisconsin

Join efforts in Wisconsin to move the world toward justice through effective advocacy that lawmakers will hear. Contact Wendy Cooper in Madison at wendyc@fusmadison.org or call 607.233.9774, ext. 25.

by Jackie Ladd/UUSC

If your state is not among those listed above and you would like to investigate a network in your state, contact Jackie Ladd at democracy@uusc.org or call 800.388.3920.



Peace agreement reached in southern Sudan while genocide continues in Darfur

Just nine days into the new year, people in Sudan rejoiced as a peace agreement was signed, ending 21 years of conflict in southern Sudan that

claimed the lives of two million people and displaced over four million from their homes. This historic event marked the beginning of a new era for the South, and for millions of refugees, it fulfilled their dream to soon return home.

UUSC Program Director Atema Eclai attended the signing ceremony in Nairobi, Kenya. "I think there is a real possibility for peace," she says of the new agreement. "The talks went very well because, for the first time, people really listened to each other. If this peace holds, it has

implications for Darfur and the peace of all of Sudan."

However, while the South embraces peace and security after two decades of fighting, war continues to ravage in the western region of Darfur. The ongoing conflict in Darfur has claimed more than 100,000 lives and displaced more than two million people. Still hundreds of thousands of people have not received humanitarian aid, and millions more risk losing their lives if stability to the region is not quickly restored.

A chance for peace

The agreement between the government in Khartoum and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), signed Jan. 9, would guarantee power sharing in the new unified government and appoint SPLA's leader, John Garang, as vice-president of Sudan. The government will also share its oil wealth, mainly extracted from the South, with the inhabitants of the region.

The Christian-dominated South will remain secular and has the right not to adhere to Islamic or Shar'ia law. Islamic law will only be put in practice in the predominantly Muslim north. The SPLA managed to secure a referendum in which it will decide in six years whether it will become an independent, self-ruling state or remain part of Sudan. The United Nations vows to send cease-fire monitors to the region to ensure that all agreements are enforced.

Atrocities continue

According to the United Nations International Commission of Inquiry on Darfur, the government of Sudan is guilty of grave violations of international human rights and humanitarian law including the killing and torture of civilians, destruction of villages, sexual violence and forced displacements. The report, however, stopped short of calling the atrocities in Darfur genocide.

The U.N. commission urged members of the U.N. Security Council to refer the situation in Darfur to the International Criminal Court. Established in 2002, the ICC was created to hold accountable dictators and other perpetrators of gross human rights violations. Because of concerns that U.S. soldiers may be charged with crimes committed while serving in other countries, the United States does not recognize the ICC.

Instead, the United States has proposed that the international community set up a separate court in Arusha, Tanzania, similar to the war crimes tribunal for Rwanda, to prosecute crimes in Darfur.

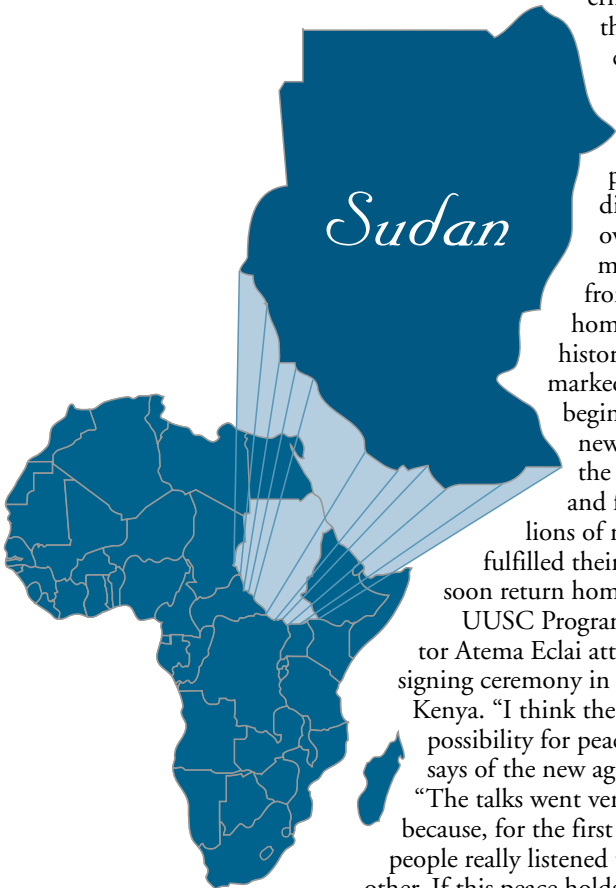
UUSC responds to the crisis

Thanks to generous support from UUSC members and supporters, UUSC is supporting organizations working directly with grassroots communities in the affected areas in Darfur and with refugee groups in Chad.

Relief efforts by Darfur Peace and Development include transportation and distribution programs for aid and medical assistance through schools, churches, masjids, and other organizations in the affected area. Action by Churches Together (ACT) International will provide shelter, water, sanitation, basic sleeping and kitchen materials, and supplementary food for 50,000 children under the age of five and provide education for school-aged children and women rape victims.

In addition, more than 2,000 UUSC members and supporters stood in solidarity with the people of Darfur by signing petitions to end the genocide. We have forwarded these signatures to the United Nations, U.S. Congress and the Sudanese Embassy in Washington, D.C.

by Nadya Khalife/UUSC



WHAT YOU CAN DO

Donate now to the Darfur Relief Fund. Visit our website, www.uusc.org, or call 800.766.5236.

Raise awareness about the genocide in Darfur by:

- Visiting UUSC's website for immediate action alerts.
- Writing letters to the editor to ensure that the genocide taking place there continues to be highlighted in the media.
- Organizing candlelight vigils in your congregation and community to show solidarity.
- Inviting human rights experts to speak about the situation and what you and your community can do. Contact programs@uusc.org or dayofconscience@savedarfur.org for suggested speakers.
- Hosting a fund-raising event at your congregation to assist international humanitarian organizations working in Darfur and in refugee camps on the border of Chad.

Drums of war grow louder in Congo

Rwandan invasion threatens peace, undermines work of UUSC partners

The Congolese government has claimed that approximately 6,000 Rwandan troops have entered the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo. This latest development threatens the already fragile peace process which civil society organizations in the Congo have worked so hard to sustain.

As the threat of war looms in the eastern part of the Congo, grassroots human rights organizations supported by UUSC are providing education and training on women's and children's rights, documenting cases of rape and sexual violence, and amplifying women's voices in the country's peace process.

Peace process threatened

Rwandan president Paul Kagame has not denied claims that Rwanda has invaded the Congo, a country 10 times larger than his, for the third time in 10 years. Rwanda withdrew troops in 2002 under a regional agreement to end five years of war in the Congo.

Mr. Kagame has repeatedly maintained that any military action by Rwanda will only target ethnic Hutu rebels deemed responsible for the Rwandan genocide of 1994. Hutu rebels in the Congo were supposed to have been disarmed by the United Nations, but progress on disarmament programs has been relatively slow.

The Congo, however, is adamant that Rwanda seeks to loot the Congo of its mineral riches of gold and diamonds. As a result of this invasion, the Congolese government has threatened to deploy 10,000 troops to the eastern part of the country. More than 10,000 U.N. peacekeepers are on the ground and an extra force of 5,000 was recently deployed upon heightened

tensions in the region and growing fears of another Rwandan invasion.

Humanitarian groups promote peace

Humanitarian and religious organizations have reported massive movements of people in the eastern region of the DRC. One town of approximately 15,000 people was completely burned to the ground and all of its inhabitants disappeared into neighboring towns or forests. The U.N. peacekeeping mission in the Congo (MONUC) is investigating claims of invasion and has only identified 100 soldiers as originating from Rwanda.

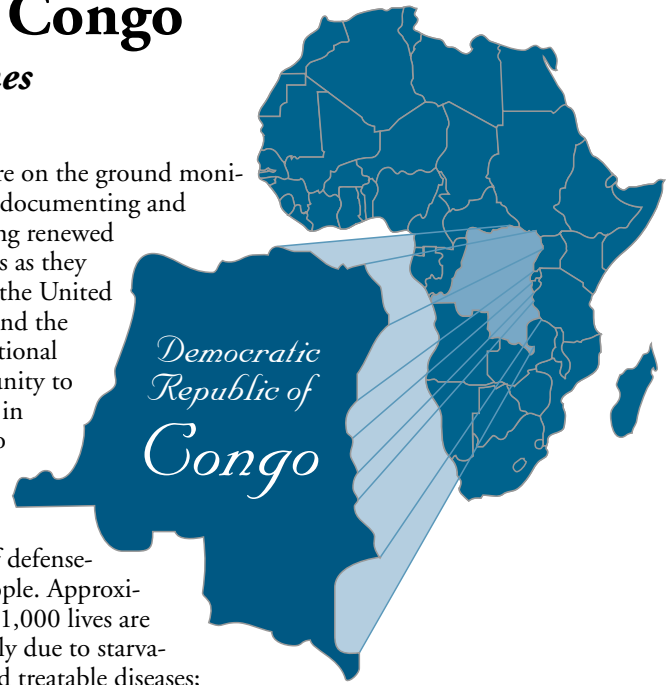
UUSC partner, the Women's Solidarity for Peace and Development in Ituri (SOFEPADI), promotes peace education for women and children, and encourages the full participation of women in the current peace process. Because violence against women and girls is rampant in the region, SOFEPADI, with support from UUSC, has launched a consciousness-raising campaign to sensitize political and military authorities on women's rights violations and to alleviate social stigmas against women who have been raped in order to reintegrate them into their respective communities.

Another UUSC partner, the People's Group for the Support and Advancement for Women's and Children's Rights (HADEFE), provides legal assistance to prisoners, many of whom are women and children. HADEFE lobbies for their release or for a reduction in their sentence as many of the children are former child soldiers recruited into militias.

All of our partners in the Congo remain vigilant at this time of great uncertainty.

They are on the ground monitoring, documenting and reporting renewed tensions as they call on the United States and the international community to act fast in order to help save millions of defenseless people. Approximately 1,000 lives are lost daily due to starvation and treatable diseases; half of the victims are children under the age of five.

by Nadya Khalife/UUSC



WHAT YOU CAN DO

Contact U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and President George W. Bush to urge the U.S. government to provide support to the National Unity and Transition Government in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the U.N. Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC). Visit our online Legislative Action Center at www.uusc.org to send an immediate e-mail or fax.



© 2005 IRINNews

Women and children at a camp for internally displaced persons in northeast Congo. As the threat of war looms in the Congo, they are especially vulnerable, facing violence, disease and starvation. (Photo © IRIN)

UUSC announces “Campaign for Our Future”

In order to support increases in advocacy work and communication with constituents, UUSC has announced the first adjustment in its membership levels in over a decade. The new rates will take effect July 1, 2005. Youth/student membership levels will remain at only \$10.

As our new programs take shape, UUSC is emerging as a strong advocacy organization. Issues related to economic justice, civil liberties and environmental justice are all top priorities in UUSC’s justice-centered work.

“Our membership affects our influence in the United States and abroad, as we advocate for justice and confront oppressive power structures,” says UUSC President Charlie Clements. “We want to increase the member education and advocacy opportunities so that every member of the Service Committee has a means of putting their values into action.”

For questions regarding the membership increase, e-mail memberservices@uusc.org.

Campaign for Our Future	Current annual dues	Dues effective July 1, 2005
Membership: Student/Youth	\$10	\$10
Membership: Senior	\$10	\$20
Membership: General	\$25	\$40

SONGS OF JOY AND JUSTICE WITH HOLLY NEAR

Almost 450 concertgoers braved a drizzly night in Cambridge, Mass., to hear folksinger/activist Holly Near share songs of joy and justice to benefit UUSC. The October concert was held at First Parish Church and was sponsored by the Homegrown Coffee House of Needham, Mass. Local folksinger Scott Alarik opened the concert which was deemed a rousing success by music and justice lovers alike!

(Photo by Dick Campbell/UUSC)

UU singles meet matches

New online service gives 10 percent of proceeds to UUSC

For Jeanne Lamont, success would be a match made online.

The founder of uusingles.com launched the site in June 2004 at General Assembly in Long Beach, Calif. In just a few short months, she already has over 200 people from across the country participating.

Ms. Lamont, a member of the East Shore Unitarian Church in Bellevue, Wash., got the idea to start a site where single UUs could meet up after realizing that she wasn’t the only one who was frustrated by her experiences on other faith-based sites. She and others she knew wanted a site where they could meet people who shared the same liberal religious values.

Ms. Lamont said she’s excited about the possibilities for connections and is looking forward to hearing about successful matches as they occur. In the meantime, she’s happy that UU singles have an outlet for connecting with other singles who share their values. “They’re talking to each other!” she exclaimed during a recent phone interview.

UUsingles.com

The Service Committee will receive ten percent of the proceeds for uusingles.com. Ms. Lamont said she was inspired by the idea of tithing, where members of congregations are encouraged to give 10 percent of their income to support their congregations. “I thought I should give back to a UU organization,” she explained.

Hoping to meet your match? Visit www.uusingles.com.

Become a First Responder

Monthly donors make UUSC’s work possible

When you pledge a monthly gift to UUSC – whether that gift is of \$100 per month or \$10 – you are making a commitment to advancing human rights wherever the need is greatest.

You are saying that when disaster strikes, you want the Service Committee to be able to react quickly. You are saying that when human rights advocates are threatened, you want the Service Committee to quickly move to the defense of activists.

Donors who choose to pledge a monthly gift to UUSC are so important. They allow us to respond quickly to emerging problems, act decisively in the face of disaster, and have confidence that we will have the resources needed to continue our work. And that is why we call this generous group of people our “First Responders.”

It’s easy to make such a pledge. It can be done by credit card or by electronic draft from a checking account. Once you make your pledge, you never again have to worry about your Service

Committee membership expiring. To help us continue our long tradition of being where the need is greatest, call UUSC’s Institutional Advancement staff at 617.868.6600 or make a monthly pledge online at: www.uusc.org/monthlypledge.

Human rights threatened in Haiti

Unrest, fear in wake of hurricane and political violence

Even as Haiti struggles to recover in the wake of last fall's devastating hurricane, the nation continues to face violence and unrest that threaten the safety and human rights of many who live there.

Haitians faced two natural disasters in 2004: first, devastating floods in May, followed by Hurricane Jeanne in September. As many as 3,000 died and more than 300,000 were left homeless. The consequences of the hurricane were especially severe in Haiti because deforestation has left the land prone to flooding and mudslides.

Many Haitians are beginning to rebuild their lives and livelihoods. Support from UUSC was directed to the Lambi Fund, an organization that supports sustainable agriculture and reforestation by Haitians. UUSC support has gone directly to rebuilding community projects that sustained hundreds of families

such as sugar cane mills, community farms and grain mills.

A human rights crisis

These humanitarian crises came directly on the heels of the onset of significant political upheaval and violence. In February 2004, nine years of constitutional rule came to an end in Haiti with the removal of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. The unelected Latortue regime supports paramilitary groups and has cut taxes for the rich, a devastating blow for the impoverished communities of the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere.

Human rights violations abound in Haiti today. Impunity reigns and the justice system is often ineffectual or corrupt. The country is rife with political killings, and reports of persecution and terror campaigns.

It is the poor and those working on their behalf that are most directly affected by

the violence. In October, Haitian police forcibly entered St. Clare's Catholic Church in the nation's capital of Port-au-Prince and arrested the pastor, Rev. Gerard Jean-

Juste, without a warrant.

Father Jean-Juste is a prominent activist for peace, justice and the rights of immigrants in Haiti and the United States. His arrest generated an international outcry that included UUSC members and supporters, many of whom responded to our urgent action alerts. After 50 days in jail on suspicion of fomenting violent protests, Father Jean-Juste was released after a judge

found no evidence to hold him.

If there is hope for Haiti, it resides in the people and grassroots organizations. In spite of years of intimidation and repression, repeated coups and foreign intervention, the people of Haiti still show resourcefulness, creativity and extraordinary resilience in their struggle for basic human rights and life with dignity.

by Mary Lania/UUSC



WHAT YOU CAN DO

UUSC is still accepting donations for the Haiti Relief Fund.

Donate now online by visiting www.uusc.org or call 800.388.3920.

Residents leave the flooded streets of Gonaives with what little belongings they have left after Hurricane Jeanne devastated this Haitian city in September. (Photo courtesy of the Lambi Fund of Haiti)

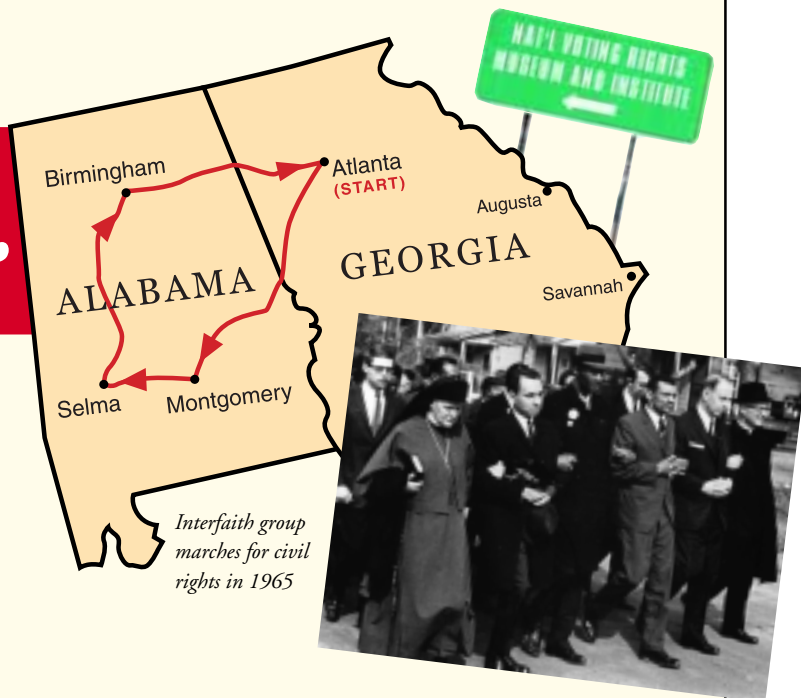
Sign Up For UUSC's

"Freedom Summer: A Civil Rights Journey"

It was a defining period in U.S. history. A time when courageous men and women stood up to the forces of prejudice and fear. A time when freedom, too long a prisoner of hate, was set free for all Americans to share.

Join youth and adults from all over the country for **UUSC's Freedom Summer**, a weeklong historical odyssey that will take you to some of the most significant sites of the Civil Rights movement.

You'll visit Atlanta, Montgomery, Selma and Birmingham. See where history was made and hear the stories of those who were there to witness it. Relive the trials and triumphs of Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks,



Join Us For A Week That Could Change Your Whole Life

Rev. James Reeb and thousands of others, plus take part in a community service project.

For more information, or to sign up for this life-altering educational tour, contact Nguyen at 800.388.3920, ext. 201, or apply online at www.uusc.org/FreedomSummer. The fee (not including airfare to Atlanta) is \$275 for UUSC members, \$295 for non-members. \$500 for two individuals from the same congregation. Must be age 14 or older to participate.

The tour runs from July 9-16. The inspiration lasts a lifetime.



"It was one of those life-changing experiences you only get once."

-Chloe S.



Unitarian Universalist Service Committee

"The Power of You & You"

And you never thought shopping could improve the world!

Your purchase of UUSC merchandise contributes directly to our work advancing human rights and social justice throughout the world.



CHILDREN'S WALL NOTECARDS

These popular cards show an image of the Children's Wall, a mural at UUSC's office. Blank inside. Eight cards and envelopes in each packet. (NC001) \$8.00 per packet

BUMPER STICKERS

Honk if you support justice! Buy one bumper sticker for your car or a pack of ten to share with friends and family. Approximately 11" x 3".



"Activist Onboard" sticker (BP01)
One sticker (\$2.00 each)
Pack of 10 (\$15.00/pack)



"Coffee Farmers" sticker (BP02)
One stickers (\$3.00 each)
Pack of 10 (\$25.00/pack)

One dollar (\$1) from the sale of each "Coffee Farmers" sticker goes to the Small Farmers' Fund through the UUSC Coffee Project.



UUSC PEWTER LOGO JEWELRY

Display your commitment to social justice. Each piece is crafted in pewter. \$5.00 each.



3/4" Pendant with chain (M03P)
1/2" Post earrings (M11P)
1/2" Lapel pin (M26P)

Printed image is larger than actual size.

Item #	Item Name	Price	Qty	Total
			S&H	\$3.00
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Name(s)

Address

City/State/Zip

Amount enclosed \$

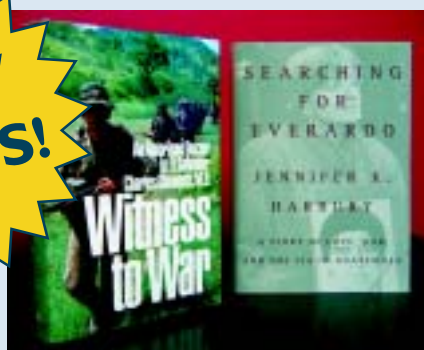
Check or money order (payable to UUSC)

Visa MasterCard American Express

Card # Exp. Date

Signature Date

Send with this form to: **UUSC Merchandise, 130 Prospect Street, Cambridge, MA 02139-1845**



Quantities are limited. Order your copies of Witness to War and Searching for Everardo today!

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Charles Clements
The moving eyewitness account by UUSC President Charlie Clements of his experiences as a medical doctor in a rebel-controlled area of El Salvador during the 1980s.

Hardcover (WW01) \$25.00
Paperback (WW02) \$10.00

SEARCHING FOR EVERARDO: A STORY OF LOVE, WAR AND THE CIA IN GUATEMALA

Jennifer Harbury
The secret detention and torture in Guatemala of her husband fuels Jennifer Harbury's work investigating and reporting the links between U.S. intelligence networks and the Latin American death squads. By the director of UUSC's STOP Campaign.

Hardcover only (SE01) \$25.00

UUSC responds to tsunami

(continued from cover)

In Indonesia, we are working with a coalition of nongovernmental organizations which is providing relief to survivors who for political reasons are afraid to move to camps controlled by the military.

Shiamala Baby, director of UUSC program partner, the Forum for Women's Rights and Development (FORWARD), visited coastal areas in India affected by the tsunami. "All the areas looked like deserted battlefields," she reported in a message to UUSC. "The fishing boats could be seen damaged and lying in far-away areas. The fishing nets were also seen lying stranded. There were cries and wailings everywhere due to the destruction caused by the tsunami."

Moving quickly to provide support

At UUSC, we joined with people around the world mourning the horrifying devastation and loss. Together with the Unitarian Universalist Association, we responded quickly to the disaster by establishing the joint UUSC-UUA Tsunami Relief Fund. Within weeks of the tsunami, our members and supporters had responded with unprecedented generosity, donating over \$1 million.

With millions left vulnerable, UUSC moved quickly to provide support to grassroots organizations providing humanitarian assistance to those without access to traditional aid programs. We are committed to providing long-term relief and rehabilitation in places where our support can be most effective in assisting poor, marginalized and politically oppressed populations. Efforts will focus on

assisting communities to recover livelihoods so that they can once again provide income and food for their families.

These communities, already struggling with poverty, now find themselves faced with the devastating loss of livelihood in addition to the grief and pain of losing loved ones. "When we visited the affected coastal areas, the whole area gave a painful feeling on how the already deprived and the marginalized communities like the fisherfolk get more and more victimized in such calamities," wrote Ms. Baby.

In addition to fishing communities, we are providing aid to landless farm workers and to groups that offer job training, women's empowerment, trauma counseling, alternative employment skills and human rights education.

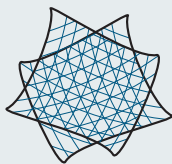
by Sofia T. Romero/UUSC

What your donation can restore for a fishing community (according to Sahanivasa)



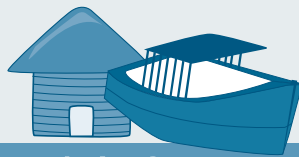
\$229

catamaran



\$275

fishing net



\$458

■ mechanized boat
■ rebuild a house



\$1144

fiber boat

EFFORTS ALREADY UNDERWAY TO PROVIDE RELIEF AND REHABILITATION

Several grassroots organizations in India, Burma and Indonesia have already received support from the UUSC-UUA Tsunami Relief Fund. This is just some of the work being accomplished by UUSC program partners and UUA Holdeen India Program partners in the region. For complete updates, visit our website, www.uusc.org/tsunami.

Burma

The **Grassroots Human Rights Education and Development Committee** is working with Burmese migrants to provide emergency relief and protection from human rights abuses in Thailand.

India

Sahanivasa, which promotes community-based initiatives for severely oppressed Dalit laborers, women and farmers, is working to provide emergency relief and livelihood rehabilitation in eight fishing villages in Andhra Pradesh.

FORWARD, which works with Dalit women in the area around Chennai in Tamil Nadu, is working with women in five relief camps providing trauma counseling and training in alternative livelihood skills.

The **Disaster Mitigation Institute** runs a livelihood relief fund which has provided support to more than 11,000 small businesses. They are developing a plan for community-based rehabilitation and long-term recovery.

The **Gandhian Unit for Integrated Development**

Education is doing rehabilitation work in 21 fishing villages in the Kancheepuram district. They are forming a committee of about 10 members in each village to oversee the relief and rehabilitation efforts.

The **Annai Theresa Welfare Trust** will provide aid such as trauma counseling and medical care to affected families in coastal villages.

People's Watch has distributed relief supplies to over 6,000 families. They will establish a network to monitor reconstruction work.

Indonesia

The **Humanitarian Solidarity Coalition for Natural Disaster** in Aceh and North Sumatra will provide immediate relief to survivors who for political reasons are afraid to move to camps controlled by the military. They will provide relief such as food supplies, community kitchens, clothing and medicine.

Via Campesina is holding a conference on reconstruction and development of fisherfolk and peasant livelihoods. They will be able to discuss and analyze their needs and strategies for reconstruction, as well as monitoring, collaboration and follow-up.



Defending the human right to water

(continued from page 3)

In Cochabamba, Bolivia, Tanya, a mother of four who earns her income knitting baby clothes, was desperate when her water bill went from \$7.50 a month to \$30 a month. Aguas de Tunari, a Bechtel subsidiary that was awarded a 40-year contract for Cochabamba's water system, had raised the water rates 400 percent.

"What we pay for water comes out of what we have to pay for food, clothes and the other things we need to buy for our children," Tanya said, explaining that the money that went to pay the hike in water rates could feed her family for 10 days.

(Adapted from the Women's Environment and Development Organization, www.wedo.org)

especially in the global South, when water is privatized, the rates go up and usually service and quality go down. Water privatization turns water from a public service into a commodity for profit. As with all other commodities, people who can afford it buy it, and people who cannot afford it make do.

Making do in this case means using contaminated water. In Alexandra and KwaZulu Natal, South Africa, in 2000 and 2001, when water rates went up, people who couldn't pay used contaminated water. Over 250 people died from the resulting cholera outbreaks.

In Bolivia, Aguas de Tunari, a subsidiary of Bechtel, got the water contract for Cochabamba. In four months they raised water rates 400 percent, and tried to charge people for the water they collected from rainfall and the water they drew from their wells. Fierce opposition from the population finally forced Aguas de Tunari to cancel their contract but Bechtel is now trying to sue the Bolivian government for \$25 million in profit losses.

The growing water crisis

Privatization of public water systems is happening in the midst of a growing crisis all over the world. Over three quarters of the earth is covered with water but only one percent of that is fresh water and only

1/100th of that one percent is available for the 6.4 billion people on the planet to use. Irrigation and agriculture use up 92 percent of that!

Pollution, depletion and deforestation are destroying freshwater supplies faster than the rainwater cycle can replenish them. The World Bank calculates that in 2025, two thirds of the people in the world will have no access to clean fresh water. It's no wonder Fortune magazine has called water the oil of the 21st century.

Three European transnational corporations – Vivendi, Veola and RW Thames – now control 70 percent of the global water market. They are poised to enter the U.S. market where 85 percent of the water systems are publicly owned. As preparation, the "Big Three" have bought up most of the private companies in the United States.

"When water becomes a market commodity, people living with poverty lose access to it because they cannot pay competitive prices for water," says Dr. Clements. "Unfortunately, by market rules, scarcity makes a commodity more profitable."

by Martha Thompson/UUSC

Service Committee News Winter 2004–2005

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Mark Simon and Emily Hopkins

UUSC employees are represented by Human Rights Workers Local 2661, UNITE HERE!

The *Service Committee News* is a publication of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, a membership organization working to advance justice throughout the world. UUSC members receive the *Service Committee News* three times per year. UUSC is supported by individual members, Unitarian Universalist congregations and private foundations that share our commitment to building a better, more just world.

UUSC Mission Statement

Grounded in Unitarian Universalist principles that affirm the worth, dignity and human rights of every person, and the interdependence of all life, the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee is a voluntary, nonsectarian organization working to advance justice throughout the world.

We Welcome Letters

The *Service Committee News* is grateful to readers for their interest and support. We invite you to share your questions and comments by submitting a letter to the editor.

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Unitarian Universalist Service Committee

"The Power of You & You"

Could the cost of water become too expensive to swallow?

Sadly, the answer is "Yes."


When public water systems are sold to private companies, water rates rise, often to a level that can literally turn off the tap for those who can't pay.

Access to water is so fundamental to human life that the United Nations has recognized it as a basic human right. That's why UUSC is working to counteract the global shift towards private ownership of public water, and to defend the human right to water.

Today, as over one billion people lack access to clean drinking water, it's time to act. Because if we don't act now, that number will soon be a mere drop in the bucket.

PAY NOW

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NO WATER**

 Let Justice Flow:
Defending The Human
Right To Water
JUSTICE SUNDAY 2005

 **UUSC**

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