

J/P Alert

CONFERENCE OF MAJOR SUPERIORS OF MEN *JUSTICE AND PEACE OFFICE*

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CMSM:

- *assists major superiors in their role as leaders;*
- *promotes dialogue and collaboration with the conference of bishops and other major groups in church and society;*
- *provides a corporate influence in church and society.*

December 2004

UN Security Council Approves Weak Darfur Resolution

In late November the UN Security Council met in special session in Nairobi, Kenya on the ongoing crisis in the Darfur region of Sudan. The decision to hold a Security Council meeting outside of New York was almost unprecedented, and was intended to demonstrate the UN's commitment to ending the violence. The final outcome of the meeting was the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1574, which, while calling for a ceasefire, fails to mention sanctions or the need to bring those responsible for the atrocities to justice.

Resolution 1574 "demands that Government and rebel forces and all other armed groups immediately cease all violence and attacks" and urges the parties to finish negotiating a Comprehensive Peace Agreement for Sudan. However, this resolution is weaker than the previous resolutions passed by the Security Council in July (Resolution 1556) and September 2004 (Resolution 1564). It repeats many of the same demands stated in earlier resolutions without the threat of sanctions for continued defiance.

While the goals laid out in the Resolution 1574 are laudable – an end to the violence

and a lasting peace – the Resolution adopted no new measures to encourage the parties to meet those goals. Without concrete measures like an enlarged mandate for the African Union force in Sudan, a complete arms embargo, or the enforcement of a no-fly zone over Darfur, there is little incentive for the parties to negotiate a Comprehensive Peace Plan. The USCCB has endorsed the use of targeted sanctions and a complete arms embargo as incentives to the Khartoum Government to comply with UN Resolutions. The violence continues in Darfur and aid agencies still have difficulty delivering humanitarian assistance.

At the August 2004 Assembly CMSM members adopted a resolution of Solidarity with the people of Sudan. Along with the Catholic Task Force on Africa, CMSM is working to promote more effective US policy and engagement regarding Sudan both in Washington and at the UN.

The complete text of the USCCB statement on Sudan from their November meeting is at www.usccb.org/bishops/sudan1104.htm.

US Use of Landmines Subject of International Discussions

An international gathering of government representatives and NGO's also met in Nairobi, Kenya to promote a mine-free world.

One point of discussion is the change in US policy regarding the use and manufacture of landmines. In February 2004 the Bush Administration announced a new policy that reverses the positive steps taken over the last ten years to eradicate antipersonnel mines. The new policy no longer has as an objective ratification of the Mine Ban Treaty and now permits the use of self-destructing mines without any geographic or date restrictions, and the use of antipersonnel mines will be used throughout the world where US military action takes place.

The US Campaign to Ban Landmines is suggesting that those concerned about this change in policy, particularly ending the commitment to ratify the treaty, contact the Administration to express disagreement with the new policy and encourage reconsideration and to make a commitment to not violate the policy even if the US does not ratify the treaty. The US Campaign to Ban Mines has issued a memo with background and policy recommendations that you can find on their website at www.banminesusa.org.

US-Made Bulldozers Still Used to Raze Homes

Human Rights Watch recently issued a new report, "Razing Rafah," that documents the Israel Defense Force's (IDF) systematic use of Caterpillar bulldozers in illegal demolitions throughout the occupied Palestinian territories. The IDF has demolished over 2,500 Palestinian homes over the past four years in the Gaza Strip alone.

In April, a group of Caterpillar shareholders presented a resolution at the annual shareholder meeting that called on the company to investigate whether bulldozer sales to the Israeli military violated Caterpillar's code of conduct. Jewish Voice for peace has announced that it will resubmit the resolution for the 2005 shareholders meeting.

Human Rights Watch has called on Caterpillar to immediately suspend sales of bulldozers to the Israeli Army. For more information about the use of Caterpillar bulldozers for home destructions visit the Global Exchange website at www.globalexchange.org/countries/palestine. You can get the Human Rights Watch report at their website, www.hrw.org. For other information about programs related to justice issues in the Palestinian territories visit the website of the US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation at www.endtheoccupation.org.

Ecumenical Advocacy Days and Annual JP Directors Gathering

"Make All Things New" is the theme for the third annual ecumenical gathering in Washington, DC, **March 11-14, 2005**. The conference brings together faith-based social justice advocates from many Christian traditions to focus on critical regions and issues including Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East, U.S. foreign and domestic policies, eco-justice, and Jubilee and economic justice.

The gathering will feature challenging speakers, issue briefings, advocacy training workshops and a Lobby Day on Capitol Hill when participants will speak with their Senators and Representatives and key Congressional staff.

A PDF version of the brochure is available on the CMSM website and more information is at www.advocacydays.org. CMSM is one of the sponsors of the event and leaders, JP Coordinators, religious information and others are encouraged to participate. The Advocacy Days will be followed by the annual gathering of JP Coordinators in Washington, DC, beginning the evening of March 14 and ending the afternoon of March 15. This meeting is an excellent opportunity for the JP Office and congregational JP Coordinators to dialogue on issues and priorities, to network, and to learn about the broad justice agenda of religious men in the U.S. This year the meeting will be open to all CMSM related participants to the Ecumenical Advocacy Days. More details about the gathering will be sent out soon.

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