



Embrace the World

*A journal of Congregational justice issues prepared by:
Good Shepherd International Justice Peace Office*

October 2008 # 26

60th Anniversary

Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948 – 2008

Hedwig Johl rgs NGO Rep. Geneva

The outgoing High Commissioner for Human Rights, Louise Arbour, said: "In the course of this year, unprecedented efforts must be made to ensure that every person in the world can rely on just laws for his or her protection. In advancing all human rights for all, we will move towards the greatest fulfillment of human potential, a promise which is at the heart of the Universal Declaration"

On December 10 last year, Human Rights Day, the Secretary-General launched a year-long campaign in which all parts of the United Nations family are taking part in the lead-up to the 60th birthday of the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) (UDHR) on Human Rights Day 2008.

The declaration is now available in over 360 languages and the most translated document in the world. The declaration belongs to each and everyone of us – read it, teach it, promote it and claim it as your own!

How is your community, your local area, your unit celebrating the 60th Anniversary? We at the GSIJP office would love to have a short account of your activities. If you want ideas, visit this web site:

<http://www.un.org/events/humanrights/udhr60/plan.shtml>



A Quiz

Can you name the new Commissioner for Human Rights? What is her nationality?

When did she assume office? Where is the office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights? Can you name the Good Shepherd NGO Representative to this office?

Did you know that the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights opened 15 years ago? There are just under 1,000 staff working in 50 countries with a total budget of some US\$ 150 million.



Human Rights Instruments:

Human rights are those rights which are essential to live as human beings – basic standards without which people cannot survive and develop in dignity. They are inherent to the human person, inalienable, interdependent, indivisible and universal.

There are a number of human rights instruments that we invite justice peace persons in the units to know of and become engaged in. These are the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), The Committee on the Elimination of all Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Each meets three times a year to review country performance. The UPR reviews how States are fulfilling their human rights obligations and commitments. The next meeting will be

December 1–12, 2008, where **Burkina Faso** and **Columbia** are among the countries being heard.

For more information:
<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/UPRMain.aspx>

The CEWDA Committee is a similar body with its expertise in women's rights. Some CEDAW meetings are in Geneva and some in New York. Winifred attended the 41st Session in New York in June/July '08 and reports that it was very worthwhile. Great Britain and Northern Ireland were reviewed. The 42nd session (October 20 – November 7, 2008) will hear from among others- 8 countries where Good Shepherd is present – **Belgium, Canada, Ecuador, El Salvador, Madagascar, Myanmar, Portugal and Uruguay**. If you want to build your capacity, knowledge and networking in this area, why not consider one of the following: read your country's report and NGO reports or attend a session and learn from experience! If you can come when your country is being heard, it would give you the opportunity to network with your national NGO's, learn how to write and prepare a report, and above all meet the experts who are desirous of hearing of your experiences.



(Members of the CEDAW Committee in NY June/July 2008)

For more information:
<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/cedaws42.htm>

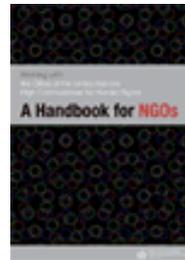
The CRC will have its 49th session (September 15 – October 3, 2008) in Geneva. The state report

for the **United Kingdom** will be heard on 23rd September. There are two optional protocols, one concerning the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict and one on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography. The **United Kingdom** will present on the first protocol and **Austria** on the Second Protocol.

See more:
<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/crcs49.htm>

[Human Rights Basics](#)

The purpose of this material is to inform the general public about United Nations human rights work. It provides answers to the most frequently asked questions about the United Nations human rights programme as well as information on how to use the system to address human rights violations



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<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/PublicationsResources/Pages/Publications.aspx>

Hedwig Jöhl rgs,
Good Shepherd
NGO Rep. Geneva
during a recent visit
to New York with
Zelna, Katherine
and Winifred



— ♥♥ —

Answers to quiz: Navanthem Pillay South Africa
1st September 2008 Geneva
Hedwig Jöhl

— ♥♥ —

Sr. Maureen Catabian, RGS from the Philippines writes about her involvement in the preparations for the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the Philippines in April 2008:

While Maureen could not travel to Geneva she is both informed and involved. She writes “on the home front, the human rights advocates coming from various organizations have formed the **Philippine UPR Watch**. On April 3 there will be a forum here on the People's UPR Agenda - to discuss about UPR Relevance and what we have set to accomplish at the UN as part of the national and international campaign against extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances. I will be attending this event and it will also serve as our ceremonial send-off to members of the Philippine NGO delegates that will include : Mrs. Edith Burgos, Fr. Rex Reyes of the NCCP, Jonathan Sta. Rosa, and BAYAN MUNA Representative Teddy Casino. Ms. Marie Hilao -Enriquez, secretary general of KARAPATAN and Atty. Edre Olalia, members of the delegation, are already in Geneva.”

In Defense of Human Rights from Global Solidarity to Global Resistance!

(A Reflection by Sr. Maureen S. Catabian, RGS – JP Contact, PHILIPPINES June 9, 2008)



“ Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to him, “They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him” . . Familiar words from Scripture came alive as I put myself in the situation of countless mothers, wives and children who have lost

sons, daughters, husbands and parents – victims of forced disappearances and extrajudicial killings in the Philippines now counting 903 under the Arroyo regime since she took office.

The recent session of the Human Rights Council (HRC) in Geneva, where the Philippines was one

of the countries reviewed in terms of human rights record, is a disheartening experience. As I watched the video on web where the Philippine government delegation presented its report to the UN HRC it made me realize how truth can be deliberately distorted, rendered tentative and maliciously designed according to State manipulations and maneuverings.

I was part of an ecumenical NGO delegation to submit the HR Report to the UN HR Council in its 5th Session in 2007. In dialoguing with the Philippine Mission in Geneva at that time, I first experienced, this feeling of helplessness. Similarly, last June 2, 2008 “*the Philippine UPR Watch delegation was astonished at the continuing denials, twisting of facts, unabashed name-calling and even **ad hominem** arguments of the Philippine Mission to the conclusions and observations of Prof. Philip Alston.*” At a side event participated in by Prof. Alston , he “*firmly stood by his findings and recommendations on the state of human rights in the Philippines and the accountability of the state for the continuing impunity*”. (Italics not mine)

“*The US-backed Arroyo regime, facing serious challenges to its political survival, has courted the support of the US and ensured the loyalty of the US-trained Philippine military by escalating military actions against legal progressive organizations and personalities under the guise of countering terrorism. Hence the rise in extrajudicial killings. Moreover, the regime has been emboldened by the US war on terror to rely mainly on a military solution to the armed conflict rather than address the roots of the armed conflict by instituting basic social, political and economic reforms.*”

Objective reports substantiated by data, facts and figures validate the truth that the Philippine military and the Arroyo regime are responsible for the spate of extrajudicial killings and other human rights violations indelibly linked to the counter-insurgency policy of the government.

They must be accountable to the Filipino people and the international community for the blood that is in their hands because of command responsibility.

The UN HRC as an international structure can only respond and play its role within the limits which is accorded them by the international community, where power is still in the hands of the most influential countries and the rich corporate giants backing puppet governments.

As Good Shepherd people bringing the cries and anguish of the victims and the suffering from the grassroots level – we must be willing to stare at the evil in the eye – so it can be expelled out from our system – even if it means looking at our own eyes as if in a mirror!

Human lives have become disposable in the face of mammon and structures that have become monstrous and globalized! As *Neoliberal Globalization and War on Terrorism* looms over the global community – a different form of global solidarity is being called forth from the ground – Global Dissent where resistance becomes the essence of self-respect.

NGOs can effect transformation and bring the voice of the suffering grassroots people to the UN and other universal structures, but they must be willing to name and denounce the “evil” so as to be able to announce the good news of the woman of the Resurrection – “*I have seen the Lord!*” because Jesus called her by name – Mary!

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UPCOMING EVENTS

International Day for the Eradication of Poverty is October 17. The theme of the day this year is: **Human Rights and Dignity of People Living in Poverty.** See website for further information – English only

<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/social/intldays/IntlDay/index.html>

or

<http://www.oct17.org/en>

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Building a Network of Networks for anti-trafficking

By Clare Nolan



Ambassador Mary Ann Glendon, US Ambassador to the Holy See in Rome, reminded those assembled at *Congress 2008, Women Religious Against Trafficking in Persons*, that this year is the 60th anniversary of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, UDHR. Human rights and trafficking had been highlighted earlier by the Vatican at the UN Vienna Forum to Combat Human Trafficking, February ‘08, when Archbishop Marchetto said that all strategies to combat human trafficking and to protect victims should put human rights at the center.

Presentations of successful projects from women religious around the globe emphasized human rights and Catholic social teaching in themes of dignity, respect, and empowerment that underpin each undertaking, whether it was oriented to prevention, protection, or political action.

Congress 2008, in June, followed a 5-year international training initiative sponsored by the Union of International Superiors General, UISG, and the International Office of Migration, IOM. The goal of the gathering was to form stronger networks among women religious and their partners, in order to enhance the work being done. An earlier network of religious women, formed in October ‘07, sponsored by the Italian Women Religious (USMI), had representation at *Congress 2008* in an effort to link existing connection points.

Three GS sisters were present at Congress 2008. Clare Nolan, from the GS Int. JP office, served as an external consultant to the process. Sr. Anurak Chaiyaphuek from Thailand, presented on Asia-Pacific networks of anti trafficking. Sr. Juanita Renos Dano from Senegal, represented the region of West Africa where an anti-trafficking training session will take place later this year. Five other GS sisters had already participated at last October's conference, also in Rome.

(Active at the Congress: Sr. Anurak and Sr. Juanita)



The concluding statement of the Congress focused on ongoing practical work, based on the conviction that women religious have a prophetic call to creative solidarity with women who have been exploited. The way forward requires further skill building in areas such as dealing with trauma; it requires more directed political action along with direct services; it requires newer initiatives such as "Stop the Demand" campaigns; and it requires integration of work on systems that reinforce trafficking, such as the feminization of poverty and migration. As GS strengthens our involvement in networking, and our Justice commitment to Human Rights, we have the opportunity to both benefit from and make substantial contributions to Anti-Trafficking Networks.

See UISG news for more: <http://www.uisg.org/index.html>

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TAKE ACTION

Join millions worldwide as they Stand Up and Take Action against Poverty. Go to web site <http://www.standagainstopoverty.org/>

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Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and Human Rights

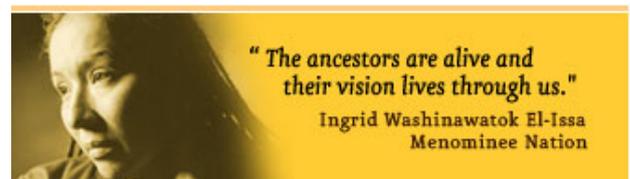
Katherine Ward JPSM Coordinator

From April 21st to 2nd of May 2008, the Seventh Session on the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues convened at the United Nations headquarters in New York. The theme for this session was Climate Change, Bio-Cultural Diversity and Livelihoods of Indigenous Peoples. The 2008 session also focused on indigenous languages and indigenous peoples in the Pacific Region as other key areas of concern.

Background

The UN Commission on Human Rights adopted and subsequently created the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (PFII) in 2000. The creation of this advisory body to the Economic and Social Commission (ECOSOC) allows for the discussion of indigenous issues relating to cultural, economic and political rights. In 2007, the General Assembly adopted the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Human Rights and Indigenous Issues



The estimated 300 to 500 million indigenous people live in approximately 70 countries and represent 5,000 languages and cultures (U.N. Dep. Of Public Information 1/08). The world's indigenous people live primarily in rural areas and are dependent on the land and the environment for their way of life. They have a strong spiritual connectedness to the land that is intertwined with their personal and cultural identity. The presence of indigenous people, their way of life and culture, will remain vibrant as long as the earth is preserved and protected by

all people while legitimizing the rights of indigenous people to share and live on the land.

The issue of climate change and degradation of land, disregarding sustainable methods has a direct and negative affects on indigenous people around the world, resulting in human rights violations. The indigenous people in most societies live on the fringes and are already sidelined in political and social arenas and denied access to land and employment opportunities. This exclusion in social, political and economic affairs is exacerbated by climate change. Climate change and the exploitation of land for its resources, forces native communities to migrate to new areas where they are unwelcome and face further abuse of their rights.

The 2008 session of the PFII promoted the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the creative approaches already adopted by indigenous communities in addressing climate change and in preserving their cultural and linguistic identities.

According to the UN PRII Backgrounder 2008, many indigenous communities have responded to the devastating effects of climate change e.g

- In Central, South American and Caribbean regions, indigenous people are shifting their agricultural activities and their settlements to new locations which are less susceptible to severe weather patterns.
- In Vietnam, communities are helping to plant dense mangroves along the coast to diffuse tropical-storm waves.

GS Support of Indigenous People

We noted that these are often in countries where Good Shepherd ministries are present. The illustrations above are accounts of the extraordinary effort of indigenous peoples to hold on to their human rights by maintaining their cultural practices and ensuring the continuance of their life style for future generations. The continued support for the human rights of

indigenous peoples in the conference rooms of the United Nations is only possible through awareness and advocacy within each country and local communities. Shared experiences will only enable the voice of the indigenous peoples to grow stronger!

Did you celebrate World Indigenous Day, August 9th ? This day creates awareness about indigenous communities worldwide and suggests ways to promote their human rights. Some ideas may help:

- Identifying indigenous people within your ministry and learning through them about their culture and their heritage and celebrating World Indigenous Day with them.
- Advocating for just legislation in your country;
- Continue learning from, and about, the various indigenous communities around the world.

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Other news

A Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty 2008 – 2017 has been launched. Eradicating poverty is now universally perceived as an ethical, social, political and economic imperative of human kind. The onus is now on all of us to respond effectively to this moral obligation.

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<http://www.buonpastoreint.org/index.htm>

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