

# diarydiary

## APRIL

- 22 International Earth Day
- 26 Bishop Gerardi murdered in Guatemala 1998

## MAY

- 1 St Joseph the worker, International Workers Day
- 3 World Press Freedom Day
- 7 BAE AGM info at emma@caat.org.uk
- 13 International Conscientious Objectors Day
- 15 UN International Day of Families
- 16 World Debt Day 10th Anniversary of Human chain in Birmingham

## JUNE

- 1- 8 Stop the Arms Trade Week
- 5 World Environment Day – Focus: Fostering low-carbon economies
- 8 Day of Prayer to Stop the Arms Trade
- 12 World Day Against Child Labour
- 14-29 Edinburgh World Justice Festival
- 16-22 Refugee Week
- 17 World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought
- 18-21 CIVICUS World Assembly, Glasgow. Rally in Kelvingrove Park on the 21st with guest speakers inc. Mary Robinson UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. This event is still to be confirmed.
- 20 UN World Refugee Day

Full details and links on the events page on our website [www.justiceandpeacescotland.org.uk/events.shtml](http://www.justiceandpeacescotland.org.uk/events.shtml)

### prayer against bribery and corruption in cameroon National Episcopal Conference of Cameroon

Heavenly Father,  
You always provide for all your creatures,  
So that all may live as you have willed.

You have blessed our country Cameroon  
With rich human and natural resources,  
To be used to your honour and glory,  
And for the well-being of every Cameroonian.

We are deeply sorry for the wrong use  
Of these gifts and blessings  
Through acts of injustice,  
Bribery and corruption,  
As a result of which many of our people  
Are hungry, sick,  
Ignorant and defenceless.

Father,  
You alone can heal us and our  
Nation of this scourge.

We beg you, touch our lives  
And the lives of our leaders and people,  
So that we may all realise the evil of bribery and corruption,  
And work hard to eliminate it.

Raise up for us God-fearing people  
And leaders who care for us,  
And who will lead us in the path  
Of justice, peace and prosperity.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.  
Pray for the People of Zimbabwe.

[www.justiceandpeacescotland.org.uk](http://www.justiceandpeacescotland.org.uk)

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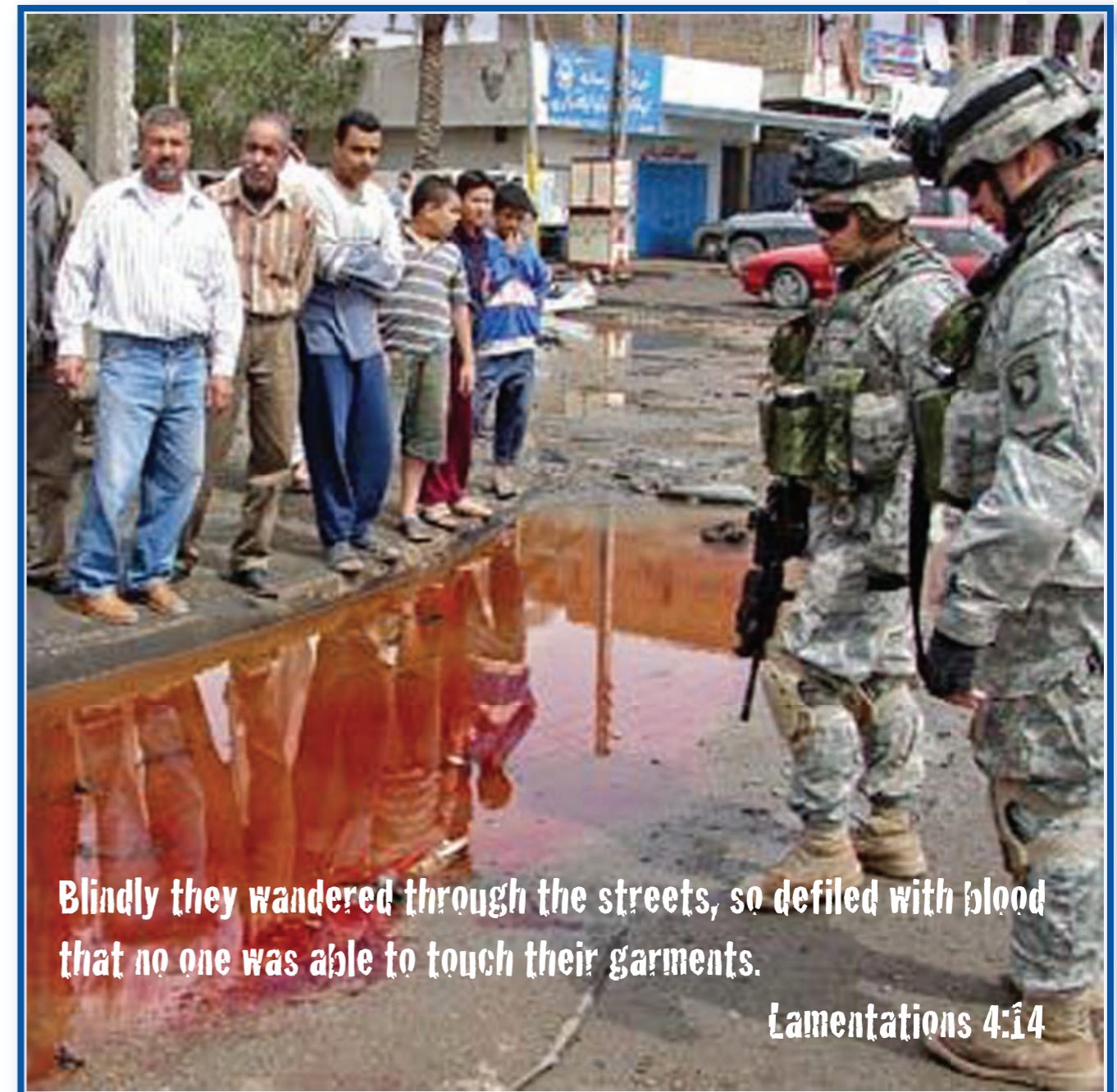
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Blindly they wandered through the streets, so defiled with blood  
that no one was able to touch their garments.

Lamentations 4:14

## ANOTHER CAR BOMB IN IRAQ

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Magazine 12



# editorial

**A**nniversaries can be strange affairs. Ideally we remember a significant event and the fruits that have come out of it. This year we celebrate the first Aldermaston Ban the Bomb march fifty years ago. We also celebrate the tenth anniversary of the great Jubilee Rally in 1998 in Birmingham which was a momentous day for those who would later go on through the Jubilee and Make Poverty History campaigns.

At other times anniversaries can be used to jog our memories. Nelson Mandela's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, however, is more of a summation of a life which has come to symbolise the struggle of a people. And when the unionist parties remind us of '10 Years of Devolution' in Scotland, a cynic might suspect that this is really trying to remind us who 'gave' us devolution.

Numbers too, are very helpful in giving us a sense of size and proportion. Indeed in the worlds of science or economics or politics, they are sometimes seen as giving us everything (or they are withheld for fear of giving us too much). While for our work in justice and peace accuracy of number is important, however, of itself it does not give human meaning to a problem.

With the fifth anniversary of the current war in Iraq, there seems little to recall other than human suffering, wasted resources and social dissolution in the aftermath of a self serving, ill planned and dubiously legal invasion – and of course, the lies and misrepresentation. Anniversaries and numbers can help shape our sense of the human meaning.

We 'celebrate' this year the twentieth anniversary of the end of the Iran Iraq War (1980-88, in which the West backed Saddam Hussein), in which Iraq lost up to 400,000 people (and Iran up to 1 million). Then came the First Gulf War in 1991 whose six months resulted in unknown tens of thousands of Iraqi casualties.

Another anniversary: ten years ago in 1998 Denis Halliday resigned as co-ordinator of humanitarian relief to Iraq, after 34 years with the UN, 'because the policy of economic sanctions is totally bankrupt. We are in the process of destroying an entire society.' It was a policy that led to the deaths of more than half a million Iraqi children. It was this policy that Madelaine Albright, US Secretary of State, said was 'a hard choice, but in the end worth it.' Worth it for whom?

So before we come to the current Iraq War, we have a country which has lost over a million people in 20 years. Any social stability that was left in the country was dissolved in an immorally pre-emptive attack in pursuit of aims put forward by politicians who were either liars or credulous fools.

In the last five years Iraqi casualties are estimated at anywhere between 85,000 and 1.2 million. But the occupying military notoriously 'doesn't do body counts' of civilians precisely because it affects support. So when you see, as recently, Iraq Death Toll Reaches 4,000, that is only the figure for US troops. Estimated insurgent casualties such as car bombers number about 14,500, making the vast majority of casualties non combatant. Not that anyone, apart from a few Catholic US nationalists, have tried to apply Just War criteria to the current mess. The US and UK favour the big lie approach: keep saying it was right and people will come to believe it

An estimated 4.7 million Iraqis have lost their homes over the last five years, with 1.2 million living in exile in Syria and 560,000 in Jordan. The freedom loving liberators in the US and UK have been notably stingy in extending asylum, each accepting only a handful. Indeed the UK is now hypocritically repatriating Iraqis on the ground that it is safe to return.

Not everyone has lost, however. Companies like Halliburton (Vice president Cheney's old outfit), Kellogs, Brown & Roots (KBR), and Blackwater have all done well out of 'no bid' contracts awarded without competition. Apart from huge catering and supply profits, private security personnel form the second biggest military presence after the US. There are over 30,000 mercenaries working for 28 firms which pay about six times the rate an ordinary soldier gets and seem to finance this with elaborate sub contracting routines.

The economists Joseph Stiglitz and Linda Bilmes, in their recent book, *The Three Trillion Dollar War*, well worth reading, have costed the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. One comparison: total annual US spending on Africa - \$5 billion, which is equivalent to the cost of 10 days in Iraq.

And what of those who started this war? Will they ever be brought to account? Well, Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz were pretty well drummed out of office, but like Bush and Cheney, there will always be jobs for them on the boards of firms which rely on the military industrial complex. Here, Campbell, Goldsmith and Powell either have their cushie jobs on banks or else their self serving memoirs and lecture tours; while Tony Blair, chameleon like, moves on to his next lucrative opportunity. They will not want.

At the end of *Gaudium et Spes* the Council Fathers asked for 'an evaluation of war with an entirely new attitude' (n80). How much more the intervening years have increased that necessity.

TD

## a distinguished visitor

**W**e recently had the pleasure of entertaining a visitor from Cameroon in the Justice and Peace office. Mrs Laura Naddin Ngwa is highly qualified in law and human rights and works for the Archdiocesan Justice and Peace Commission in the Archdiocese of Bamenda, covering four of the English speaking dioceses of Cameroon (between 3-4 million people). The post colonial legacy has left a French speaking majority and an English speaking minority. The Catholic Church is one of the main agents of social criticism in a civil society rife with tribalism and ethnic rivalry as well as corruption at all levels. Mrs Naddin Ngwa is the Bishops' representative on the Human Rights Commission of Cameroon.

She is in Scotland for three months on a scholarship, studying Government Relations with NGOs and civil societies; and she has been working in Citizens' Rights. We took the opportunity to interview her and find out about Justice and Peace in Cameroon.

**J&P:** Welcome to Scotland and to the National Office. How are you enjoying Scotland?

**LNN:** I have been very busy with course work since I arrived in January and I haven't had a chance to meet too many people. But I have been made welcome by some very nice people who have taken me into their homes. I hope I can come again in a more relaxed way.

**J&P:** Give us a brief background to Cameroon.

**LNN:** The original colonisers were the Germans who handed the greater part of the country over to the French and a part to the British. French Cameroon gained independence in 1960 and British Cameroon a year later, joining with the French part to make today's Cameroon. English speaking Cameroon has had less influence in the development and government structures of the country and attempts to improve things have met with repressive responses. We have had two presidents since independence. Our current President has been in place for over twenty five years. There are the usual problems associated with long term power elites: favouritism, corruption, repressive censorship and interference with the democratic process, up to and including elections. I was part of a team that worked on an Electoral Code for my country. The Government has been using this as part of its own attempts to institute an independent Electoral Commission.

**J&P:** What is the background to Justice and Peace in Cameroon?

**LNN:** You may want to know that the very first Justice and Peace Commission in Africa was created in 1969, shortly after the recess of the Vatican Council II, that of the archdiocese of Yaounde, capital of Cameroon. Our archdiocese, Bamenda, set up its Commission in 2002. I have had the privilege of visiting the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace in Rome where I met Cardinal Martino. From the beginning the Church has been a strong voice in Cameroon. In the early days the Church was the only structure that could face the repressive regime at the time. In some ways the minority English speaking dioceses make the running. There is a continuing concern about assimilation by the French speaking majority. Some of the bishops have been particularly vocal. In particular I would mention Cardinal Tumi, who has written an exciting autobiography of his experiences; and Archbishop Emeritus Paul Verzekov who composed the Prayer Against Bribery and Corruption which is said in all churches, and who worked relentlessly to abolish torture in the 1990s.



Laura with Comboni Father Donato

**J&P:** What are some of the projects and priorities of Justice and Peace in Cameroon?

**LNN:** The basic problem is that the principles of Catholic Social Teaching are totally disregarded by the political structures. Dignity and human rights are disregarded. Corruption is an accepted way of life and personal gain is more important than the common good. The structures of power are seen as sources of patronage and favour, and justice is too often denied. There is a fundamental problem of inequality as one would notice in government policies, and this tends to build up grievances and frustrations in the citizens. This of course ends up in open and violent conflicts.

We are currently involved in a range of projects. There is a pilot project against corruption called FACTS (Fight Against Corruption Through Schools). We are looking for funding for modules for primary schools. There is ongoing research into access to justice, which we hope will influence policy regarding the administration of justice in the country. Access is cumbersome, expensive and corrupted. We are working on the human rights of prisoners in detention, which the government conspicuously disregards. We presently have a peace building programme for some communities in the diocese.

One of our main projects is combating human trafficking, which is a major problem, in all its forms. With help from a Dutch religious foundation, we are developing a project of rehabilitation for women victims of sexual trafficking, to provide them with alternative livelihoods.

Local dioceses initiate their own independent projects according to the needs of the people in the territory they cover. And of course the Church runs many of the best social services, schools and hospitals, which would otherwise be unavailable.

**J&P:** Do you see signs of hope for Cameroon?

**LNN:** Of course there are signs of hope, but they will require a lot of ground work. We have to create good projects particularly for young people to give them hope and a focus in life. The principled stand taken by the Bishops against state corruption has raised awareness and given a strong direction to the younger generation. People look to the Bishops for leadership. And the Justice and Peace Commission is the most widespread and powerful non governmental network in the country. The best signs of hope are the work we do to uphold the dignity of the human person in promoting justice, peace and human rights with the inspiration of the Gospels and the Social Teachings of the Church.

**J&P:** I am sure that we share these hopes and we can pray for each other. Have a safe journey home to your family.

... SEE corresponding prayer on back page



# principles for tackling poverty in scotland

The following summary from the Scottish Government's recent discussion paper, **Tackling Poverty, Inequality and Deprivation in Scotland**, (available on our website) makes a good basis for discussion of this J&P priority in local groups despite the 'business speak'. There is useful Catholic Social Teaching material to be found in the Compendium, para 323 and following.

In developing the framework, there are some key principles that the government will seek to ensure are at the heart of their plans for the future:

- A focus on tackling the causes as well as the symptoms of poverty
- An approach that improves the internal capacity of disadvantaged individual to lift themselves and their families out of poverty by developing their resilience, while also seeking to tackle the structural barriers (such as market failures, unresponsive public services or prejudice and discrimination) that prevent some people from accessing the opportunities available to others
- A focus on early intervention and prevention wherever possible – to break the cycle of disadvantage
- A focus on providing work for those who can work, alongside support for those who can't – this should of course be sustainable work that lifts households out of poverty and provides real personal development opportunities
- A conviction that everyone – regardless of their circumstances – should be supported to achieve their potential
- The need for gendered analyses - and, where necessary, gendered approaches
- targeted support for the most disadvantaged – but within a framework of universal service provision and a minimum 'offer' that the government expects everyone to be able to access
- The promotion and adoption of partnership

working and seamless service provision which effectively connects with individuals and successfully moves them through the system (with service providers focusing on what they do best and then passing people on) in order that, as far as is feasible, they make progress at every stage and do not become stuck in the 'revolving door' of support services, circulating in and out of poverty or work

- Delivery of sustained, holistic, personalised support which is client rather than provider-focused and equips individuals to sustain themselves into the future
- The adoption of policies and services that are founded upon user involvement, consultation with people experiencing poverty, and community engagement and empowerment, so that policies and practice are informed by the real experience of those the service is trying to help
- Achievement of the right balance between closing the gap/tackling inequality and helping the very poorest in society
- The development of more active public engagement around poverty in Scotland as an issue which should concern us all and which requires action from the private as well as the public and third sectors

#### KEY QUESTIONS:

- Are these the right principles?
- Are there other principles that should be adopted?
- Is there potential for some to compete, and therefore be in conflict, with others?
- How can the government ensure that they are in turn adopted by key delivery bodies and agencies?
- Given that there is a finite resource available to deliver on these laudable aims, what is it feasible to expect and should some principles be prioritised over others?

Child labour is cheap and results in adult unemployment and low wages.

Large numbers of children work in commercial agriculture, fishing, manufacturing, mining and domestic service, with an estimated 70% of the total child labour force in the world engaged in the agricultural sector, working on farms and plantations where they are often exposed to hazards and risks that range from the mixing, handling and applying of toxic pesticides to using dangerous cutting tools, to working in extreme temperatures and operating powerful farm vehicles and heavy machinery. Many industries such as chocolate, jute, sugar, silk, coffee and tea involve children in the production and distribution.

While there may be a difference between child work and child labour, education should be the first priority for all children.

Australian Social Justice Network

More information at [www.ilo.org/ipecc/Campaignandadvocacy/WDAcl/lang-en/index](http://www.ilo.org/ipecc/Campaignandadvocacy/WDAcl/lang-en/index)

## world day against child labour june 12

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimates that 246 million children between ages 5 and 17 currently work under conditions that are considered illegal, hazardous, or extremely exploitative. The worst forms of exploitative child labour are defined as child slavery (including forced labour, debt bondage and servitude), child soldiering, child trafficking, child prostitution, involving children in illegal activities (such as selling drugs), and involving children in hazardous labour.

Children around the world work at all sorts of jobs, usually because they and their families are extremely poor, which reduces choices and makes survival the focus. The child's contribution is often vital to the family's ability to survive.

## obituary for archbishop rahho

Archbishop Paul Faraj Rahho, whose body was discovered in a shallow grave on 13 March, in Mosul was leader of the Chaldean Catholic community in northern Iraq. This Eastern Church, in full communion with the Roman Church, is the main Christian church in Iraq. Its adherents include Tariq Aziz, formerly Saddam Hussein's deputy.

On 29 February 2008, after he led the Stations of the Cross at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit in Mosul, gunmen ambushed his car, killing the driver and two bodyguards and abducting the Archbishop who was shoved into the boot of a car, church officials said. In the darkness, he managed to pull out his mobile phone and call the church, telling officials not to pay a ransom for his release, they said. 'He believed that this money would not be paid for good works and would be used for killing and more evil actions,' officials said. There were no external injuries and it is possible that the trauma of the abduction itself had a fatal effect on a weak heart. Part of the aftermath of the Iraq war has been the dissolution of the admittedly brutally enforced social consensus under Saddam, and the emergence of the most divisive sectarianism, wreaking havoc not only on Christians,

but on all faith communities.

This is only the latest in a series of attacks against Christians. In January, bombs exploded outside three Chaldean and Assyrian churches in Mosul, two churches in Kirkuk and four in Baghdad. Last June, the Archbishop's secretary, Fr Ragheed Ganni, was shot dead in his church along with three of his companions.

Pope Benedict stated the murder was 'an act of inhuman violence that offends the dignity of the human being'. The Pope also denounced the 5-year-long Iraq war, saying it had provoked the complete breakup of Iraqi civilian life. 'Enough with the slaughters. Enough with the violence. Enough with the hatred in Iraq!' the Pope said to applause at the end of his Palm Sunday Mass in St. Peter's Square.

About half of Iraq's 800,000 Christians are estimated to have been forced into exile, in Syria, Jordan and elsewhere. Lacking tribal support systems, and often from professional backgrounds, they are regarded as good targets for ransom. One more fragment of the tragedy that is Iraq; and yet more evidence of the catastrophic short sightedness of the 'invaders'. **TD**

## happy birthday ... 90 nelson mandela



18th July 2008

will be Nelson Mandela's 90th birthday. That milestone and the whole of his birthday year will be marked world wide by celebrations of a lifetime of struggle and of the qualities and values for which Nelson Mandela is so admired and respected across the globe. The most publicised event so far is probably the concert planned for the end of June at Wembley in aid of his AIDS charity 46664, which Nelson Mandela has said he will attend. (46664 was Mandela's prison number on Robben Island.)

ACTSA (Action for Southern Africa) Scotland, is planning events for Scotland, which will culminate with an event in Glasgow on Mandela's birthday.

Meantime ACTSA is arranging for the people of Scotland to send Nelson Mandela a birthday card. The card will be in the form of loose leaf sheets, which you are invited to sign along with a short message if you wish. These sheets will be distributed as widely as possible, through town halls, churches, libraries and then bound into a series of volumes and presented in person

to Nelson Mandela.

The Birthday Card was launched on the 27 March with Glasgow Lord Provost Bob Watson being the first signatory. Glasgow was chosen because of its long standing support of the Anti Apartheid movement and Glasgow was the first British city to give Nelson Mandela the freedom of the city.



Further events are planned for throughout the year, with a conference due to take place on 25 October.

Copies of the birthday card can be downloaded from our website. Please arrange for as many people as possible to sign this card in churches, schools, at your place of work etc and return to the organisers.

There are many websites about Mandela's 90th birthday if you wish more information, you can try: [www.nelsonmandela.org/index.php/foundation/90/](http://www.nelsonmandela.org/index.php/foundation/90/) or the ACTSA site <http://www.actsa.org> We will of course keep you fully informed through the Justice and Peace website.



# ban the bomb + 50

Janet Fenton is the Co-ordinator of the Edinburgh Peace & Justice Centre. Here she gives a lively account of the 50th anniversary Aldermaston March



This Easter, with my youngest daughter and around thirty others, I went on a peace coach trip. We travelled from Biggar to get the coach in Edinburgh on

Sunday afternoon and arrived at the Quaker Meeting House in Reading late that evening, where several people were already bedded down for the night including several children curled together like puppies on an inflatable mattress next to us. After supper, some had banners to finish, and others sang or got to know each other.

On a wet, chilly Good Friday April 4, 1958 in London's Trafalgar Square, thousands gathered to "ban the bomb" and to make the long march to Aldermaston, where atomic weapons research took place. They hoped to halt the development of atomic energy as the most indiscriminate and destructive "weapon" ever considered, and to ensure that never again would the tragedies of Hiroshima and Nagasaki be perpetrated.

On this year's Easter Monday, sixty three coaches came to Aldermaston from as far away as Aberdeen; several who had marched 50 years ago were there again.

Since then, the International Court of Justice has found nuclear bombs to be illegal; the non proliferation Treaty of 1968 obliges Nuclear States to work towards their elimination; the Pope and other Christian church leaders and the Ayotallah of Iran have all condemned them as completely immoral. One message; The 'Bomb Stops Here'.

Groups from different regions each took one of six gates to the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) and themed it to mark one campaigning decade. There were also international campaigners; a Japanese delegation with survivors from the nuclear attacks of 1945 (Hibakusha), had walked from Greenham Common to AWE on Sunday.

Speakers, including notable politicians, original marchers and Hiroshima survivors, travelled from gate to gate on a float, along with the 'rinky dink' pedal powered PA, colourful and lively clowns, cyclists and joggers among others.

Scotland got the 2000s and the Main Gate which was very well bannered. We established Tea not Bombs - a snack bar. Our urn could also be used to fill hot water bottles to keep out the chill (it snowed at one point) all very popular. We stopped on the way to the Construction gate to sing with friends at the Falcon gate, and to listen to a Hibakusha at Tadley gate give a moving account of his childhood experience, as well as much meeting up with fellow campaigners all the way along.



'rinky dink'

Lollipop style placards of the CND symbol, similar to those used on the original march, were provided at all the gates. The children who had been sleeping near us had brought theirs from their home in France. We discovered that they are the grandchildren of British pacifist textile designer Gerald Holton who created the now universally recognized symbol for that first 1958 Aldermaston March. The semaphore positions used for the acronym also symbolised a person with arms held out and low, as if in despair.

Over 2,400 arrived on the organised transport, and many more people made their way by car or on public transport and around 5,000 took part in the biggest gathering the site has seen for twenty years, a colourful, peaceful demonstration, enough of us to spread out along the four and a half miles of perimeter fence at two o'clock and hold hands to surround the base.

Fifty years on the present UK government seeks to upgrade and maintain these weapons for another fifty, but when the parliamentary vote was taken a year ago, there was a massive back bench revolt with 160 MPs opposing the motion. Amongst the Scottish MPs, only 22 out of 59 supported the motion - all Labour.

Trident was a major consideration at the Scottish elections, and Labour lost control of the Scottish Parliament. When, on 14 June 2007, the Scottish Parliament voted by an overwhelming majority to call on the UK Government not to go ahead with the renewal of the Trident nuclear system, not a single Labour MSP supported the UK government's position.

So there is real hope that we can reverse the Trident process at the "Initial Gate" stage in 2009, and stop development on nuclear warheads at Aldermaston.

Next outing is 14th June 2008, to make a Peace Chain for Faslane Nuclear Weapons Base on the Clyde.

More information from SCND  
([www.banthebomb.org](http://www.banthebomb.org))

or Peace & Justice Centre Edinburgh  
([www.peaceandjustice.org.uk](http://www.peaceandjustice.org.uk))

St John's Church, Princes Street tel 0131 229 0993  
[janetscotlands4peace@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:janetscotlands4peace@yahoo.co.uk)

Pictures courtesy of CND (Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament) website gallery

## newsbrief . . . newsbrief

With this issue of the magazine you will find enclosed a **STUDY GUIDE ON FAIRTRADE** produced by Edinburgh Archdiocese. Edinburgh is just one of the Scottish dioceses striving to become a fairtrade diocese. It is a useful tool for all who are interested in fairtrade from beginners to seasoned campaigners. Also included is an excellent leaflet from the Jesuit Refugee Service, which includes a list of 10 things we can all do to help asylum seekers.

**VIGIL ZIMBABWE** is protesting fortnightly on Saturdays starting from 29th March 2008 at Argyle Street Precinct, Glasgow, from 1400hrs - 1800hrs. They are gathering for the protest against the human rights abuses in Zimbabwe. Details from Ancilla 07770291150 from WOZA (Women of Zimbabwe Arise). or Patrick 07990724137 of Scotland-Zimbabwe Group.

**BAE AGM:** The AGM of Europe's biggest arms company takes place on Wednesday 7 May. Highlighting the significance of 2008, this year's meeting provides a great opportunity to pursue BAE further, especially surrounding February's judicial review over their Saudi arms deals. The day will provide exciting events both inside, with CAAT's token shareholders submitting several questions, along with an outside protest. For more information contact Emma Longstaff at [emma@caat.org.uk](mailto:emma@caat.org.uk)

**CATCH THE FLAME:** Help carry the fair trade message around the globe. As the Olympic torch relay to Beijing gets underway, the Playfair 08 campaign launches its own electronic torch relay: Catch the Flame. The relay highlights the need for the Olympics movement to stamp out abuses of labour standards in workplaces making Olympics goods. Catching the Flame supporters can join others in calling on the International Olympics Committee to take action. The Catch the Flame relay, launched on 19th March in Amsterdam, has now reached the UK. We need you to help us carry it all the way to Beijing. Catch the Flame now!  
[www.catchtheflame.org/join.php](http://www.catchtheflame.org/join.php)

**CALL FOR RELEASE OF DETAINED SHOE WORKERS IN CHINA:** 5 workers from the Panyu Li Chang Footwear Co. Ltd in Panyu district of Guangzhou City have been detained and formally arrested on criminal charges (illegal assembly) following a peaceful demonstration against the overnight closure of the factory and the theft of their wages and social security payments. Labour Behind the Label is demanding the immediate and unconditional release of the five workers who spontaneously and peacefully walked with their fellow workers to report the factory owner's crime and call on the authorities for help. Take action at: [www.cleanclothes.org/urgent/08-03-17.htm#action](http://www.cleanclothes.org/urgent/08-03-17.htm#action) For more information contact Labour Behind the Label also have a current campaign to help home workers who make many of the shoes sold in UK high streets. Find out more at above website or contact them at Labour Behind the Label, 10-12 Picton Street, Bristol, BS6 5QA. Tel: +44 (0) 117 9441700.

**OVER 40,000 PEOPLE FROM BANGLADESH ARE AT RISK OF LOSING THEIR HOMES** at the hands of a UK company? Global Coal Management - based in London - are pushing through plans to build an open cast mine in Phulbari, Bangladesh. This mine will destroy the homes of more than 40,000 people, and threaten the water supply of a further 100,000. The people of Bangladesh are protesting against this new mine and are now urging us to do the same. Bangladesh campaigner Zakir Kibria contacted the World Development Movement asking for help: "The poorest people of Bangladesh will suffer at the hands of this UK Company who want to mine our land and destroy our environment for profit. Please campaign with the people of Phulbari to stop it" To take action contact WDM: [www.wdm.org.uk/campaigns/](http://www.wdm.org.uk/campaigns/) World Development Movement Scotland, 20 Graham Street, Edinburgh EH6 5QR. 0131 454 3802

**ANTI WAR MARCH:** Justice and Peace was represented at the recent anti war march on March 15 to mark the 5th anniversary of the invasion of Iraq. Mary Macpherson and Ellen Charlton from Motherwell diocese carried the J&P banner through the streets of Glasgow in a march that attracted over 5,000 participants.

**BIOFUELS:** Mandatory fuel blending begins on April 15, when all transport fuel will be 2.5% biofuel. This is seen as a disaster for runaway climate change, human rights and food prices. To find out more visit [www.biofuelwatch.org.uk/](http://www.biofuelwatch.org.uk/)

**BURMA:** *Burma Issues* is a magazine that we have been receiving in the J&P office for many years. It is a publication of the Peace Way Foundation and is distributed on a free subscription basis to individuals and groups concerned with the state of affairs in Burma. It contains informative article on Burma. To find out more and if you wish to subscribe check out their website [www.burmaissues.org/](http://www.burmaissues.org/)

**GOOD NEWS:** The Co-op Bank's latest Ethical Consumerism Report was published in Dec 2007. Ethical products in the UK continue to grow with a rise of 9% bringing its market value to £32.2 billion a year.

**GOOD NEWS 2:** Friends of the Earth welcomed B&Q's decision in January to stop selling patio heaters because of the damage they do to the environment. FOE want the Government to ban the sale of patio heaters as part of its efforts to cut UK carbon dioxide emissions. More info [www.foe.co.uk](http://www.foe.co.uk)

**MAGAZINE SUBSCRIPTIONS:** Many thanks to all who have renewed their subscription to the magazine. If your subscription is still outstanding please pay it as soon as possible. Rises in postage have taken place over the last year, so it is a great help if we receive subscriptions promptly. Also it will save us the cost of having to post a reminder.



# cancel the debt 1998:2008 ten years on

2008 is a milestone for the debt campaign marking ten years since 70,000 people formed a human chain in Birmingham to demand that the G8 drop the debt, in May 1998.

Ten years later some debts have been cancelled, and many lives have been transformed. But the debt crisis is not over. Millions of people around the world are still struggling under a massive debt burden, paying out to rich countries instead of investing in health, education and other essential services. Much wider debt cancellation is urgently needed to help tackle global poverty.

On Sunday 18 May, the Jubilee Debt Campaign will be holding a 'Journey to Justice' conference at the International Convention Centre, Birmingham. It will celebrate what the

Jubilee 2000 and **MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY** campaigns have achieved on debt, and demand further action. There will be high profile speakers from around the world, as well as a mixture of music films and interviews. More information on what is happening on the day at:

[www.jubileedebtcampaign.org.uk](http://www.jubileedebtcampaign.org.uk)

Jubilee Scotland will be taking part on the day and would like to know if anyone from Scotland would like to attend (especially if you took part in the human chain in 1998). Depending on numbers they will be organising transport down to Birmingham for the day. Contact them at 0131 225 4321

[mail@jubileescotland.org.uk](mailto:mail@jubileescotland.org.uk)

The University of Birmingham is also holding a conference on 16 and 17 May to support the city's celebration of the 10th anniversary of Birmingham's G8 meeting in 1998, entitled 'Aiding the poorest: ten years on from the Birmingham G8'. Information at:

[www.newscentre.bham.ac.uk/debtrelief/index.shtml](http://www.newscentre.bham.ac.uk/debtrelief/index.shtml)

## different pasts, shared future: refugee week 16 - 22 june 2008

**By the time the next magazine is published in mid June, the tenth anniversary Refugee Week will be upon us. So we give you plenty of notice of this event as the issue of Refugees and Asylum is a Justice and Peace priority**

Refugee Week is a UK-wide programme of arts, cultural and educational events that celebrate the contribution of refugees to the UK, and encourages a better understanding between communities

The aim of Refugee Week is to encourage a diverse range of events to be held throughout the UK, that facilitate positive encounters between refugees and the general public, and to deliver positive educational messages that counter fear, ignorance and negative stereotypes of refugees, and promote understanding about the reasons why people seek sanctuary.

Refugee Week was first held in 1998, and was created in response to the increasingly negative perceptions of refugees and asylum seekers held by the general public in Britain. It remains the only UK-wide event that promotes the importance of sanctuary and the benefits it can bring to both refugees and host communities.

During Refugee Week hundreds of events exploring refugee experiences take place across the UK. These range from small community and school activities to art exhibitions, political debates, film screenings, conferences, big music festivals, sports events etc...

Anyone can get involved in Refugee Week either by organising or visiting an event or by just spreading the word.

Check out the events calendar on the Refugee Week website to find an event near you:

[www.refugeeweek.org.uk](http://www.refugeeweek.org.uk)

*"Refugee Week is important because it reminds us that refugees are not just statistics to be used and abused, they are living, breathing people. I am British, I was born here and I have no intention of leaving here, so I want to create a society here where compassion is built into our culture, in this society we will be so aware of the world around us that we will not need a Refugee Week. Until then this is how we do it."*

**Benjamin Zephaniah, Poet**

### FACTS ABOUT REFUGEES

**There is so much misinformation circulating about refugees and asylum seekers in the media that it is sometimes hard to work out what is reality and what is myth. Refugees have always had a huge contribution to make to UK society, in economic terms as well as cultural and social ones. Find out and download the latest facts and figures from:**

[www.refugeeweek.org.uk/InfoCentre](http://www.refugeeweek.org.uk/InfoCentre)

## june 5 world environment day

The focus will be on the solutions and the opportunities for countries, companies and communities to "Kick the habit" and de-carbonise their economies and life-styles. Measures include greater energy efficiency in buildings and appliances, including light bulbs, and a switch toward cleaner and renewable forms of electricity generation and transport systems. The role of forests in countering rises in greenhouse gases will be emphasised. An estimated 20% of emissions contributing to climate change globally are a result of deforestation.

United Nations Environment Program: [www.unep.org](http://www.unep.org)



# deadly cargo

## - Tracking the Nuclear Warhead Convoy

*A new Camcorder Guerillas film*

**DEADLY TARGO - TRACKING THE NUCLEAR WARHEAD CONVOY**, was premiered on 29 March at the Glasgow Film Theatre.

The film tracks how fully assembled nuclear weapons are regularly transported in secret convoys on ordinary roads right across Britain. The film finds out the chilling truth about these lethal convoys and just how close they come to YOU. The convoys are tracked by people in the NukeWatch network.

The film is twenty minutes long and is a must see for all those interested in Justice and Peace. It tells how the convoys are assembled and how they travel with no radiation symbols despite containing up to 8kg of plutonium. Minor accidents such as burst tyres happen in this convoy, and the thought of a major incident happening is unthinkable.

Interviewing grassroots activists, environmental journalists and international disarmament experts as well as local authorities and fire services, about the dangers and illegalities of this deadly cargo, the Camcorder Guerillas offer an insight into an issue usually well hidden from the public.

After the premiere there was an answer and question session with Inigo Garrido of Camcorder Guerillas, Juliet McBride of NukeWatch who is featured in the film, Janet Fenton of the Peace and Justice Centre and Sandra White MSP. Most of the questions revolved around the reserved nature of the nuclear weapons issue and how the Scottish Government, which opposes nuclear weapons, can deal with this. Another comment noted the difference between health and safety gone mad with countless forms having to be signed when taking children on a school trip. Yet the most deadly cargo of all, with all the potential for Armageddon was passing by our doors in the dead of night.

For more information on Camcorder Guerillas visit [www.camcorderguerillas.net/](http://www.camcorderguerillas.net/) for more information on NukeWatch and how you can help visit [www.nukewatch.org.uk](http://www.nukewatch.org.uk).

Copies of **DEADLY CARGO** are available from Camcorder Guerillas at the above website or by calling 0141 553 2551. Copies cost £10.00. Why not get a copy to show to your group or church.

# close encounters of the fidel kind

*Rev Ian Fraser reflects on his experience of a man generally reviled in the West.*



Persons and movements may be vilified for their evil-doing. Jesus made it clear that vilifying may also be directed at those whose integrity of life challenges common norms of behaviour: *'Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely, on my account ...'*

Into which category are we to place Fidel Castro? Are the charges against him substantiated or do they give a false interpretation of his life and work? Can they be said to be *'on my account'* as Jesus asks? The basis of judgement, as Jesus makes clear in the parable of the Last Judgement, is to be on the life lived, not on words of allegiance. Those who are affirmed at the end may or may not realize that it is to him that they are responding: *'Not everyone who says to me "Lord, Lord" will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only those who do the will of my Father in heaven.'*

I have never met Fidel Castro, but especially in work for the World Council of Churches, I have come close.

My first *'near thing'* was in Chile, during Allende's time. I

stayed with members of the recently-founded *'Christians for Socialism'*. Fidel had met with them and debated long into the night. He left just before I arrived. His final verdict on that encounter was: *'With Christians such as you are, we Marxists can have not only tactical, but also strategic alliances.'*

I was one of a delegation of three sent by the World Council of Churches to suss out the situation in Cuba, more than a decade after the revolution, to get some clues about how to relate to it. Participation in a Protestant Assembly assured us of the support for it of many, many Christians. In our travels through the land, we arrived in a town which Fidel had visited earlier in the day. We heard that he had met with building workers. He had taken off his jacket and laboured with them for some hours. It was a sign of the way in which he got alongside people. It surprises you that most Cubans would listen to hours-long speeches when all they had to do was to turn off the radio! (Fidel never used one word if two words



would serve!) He spoke to them as someone who had listened to them and knew what they were facing, who was alongside, not over them.

The next close encounter was when we were both in Nicaragua at the same time to celebrate the first anniversary of the success of the revolution, which threw out the dictator, Somoza. I stayed in the Jesuit Centre in Managua before moving to Ciudad Sandino. I was there at the invitation of Xavier Gorostiago, the Jesuit economics supremo in this new Nicaragua. I had come across him in Ruskin College, found that he had a spare year before returning home, and got him invited to be the William Paton lecturer for that year, in Selly Oak Colleges, where I was Dean. During that first part of my stay with him, a messenger came from Castro asking for a list of the theological books which he should be reading. A substantial list was supplied. The messenger returned the next day. Fidel had already read all those. What else should he be reading?

On the anniversary day itself, I was with the great crowd which filled the main square in Managua. Fidel spoke from the podium (for only 20 minutes! - A record?) He urged Nicaraguans not to take their cue from the Cuban revolution, as if it could provide a guide and pattern. They should find their own Nicaraguan way of establishing a just society. *'All you might learn from us is - learn from our mistakes!'* This was characteristic of his respect for the indigenous resources of peoples. Although he wore a Marxist label at the time, he did not take the Marxist line in Cuba, looking to the working class to be the leaders and stimulators of the revolution there. More recently when South American countries staged their own democratic revolutions, he encouraged them, but took no hand in shaping them.

The next close encounter came through friendship with the Lavastidas, a husband and wife Baptist team, both pastors, who were at the heart of a great ecumenical outreach of churches in Santiago de Cuba. They had been my guests - for the first time 8 or 10 years previously, and had stayed in Scottish Churches House in Dunblane and in Iona. They reported back to the local churches. Thereafter the ecumenical instrumentality for forwarding their commitment together, was always described in this way: they were looking for *'a Cuban Scottish Churches House.'*

I knew that, in 1990, Fidel Castro had invited Protestant Church leaders to meet with him in discussions, which were beamed out to the whole nation on radio and TV. I give a summary of that gathering in Pastor Elmer's own words:

***'The meeting with President Fidel Castro was April 4, 1990, in Havana. The President recognized that Protestants had been***

***"discriminated" by the Revolution, and he promised to try to amend that error. He also stated that it would not be an easy task since many of the Party officials were educated in the Soviet Union and therefore had strong anti-religious feelings. But he gave his word to try to convince them of the new focus.***

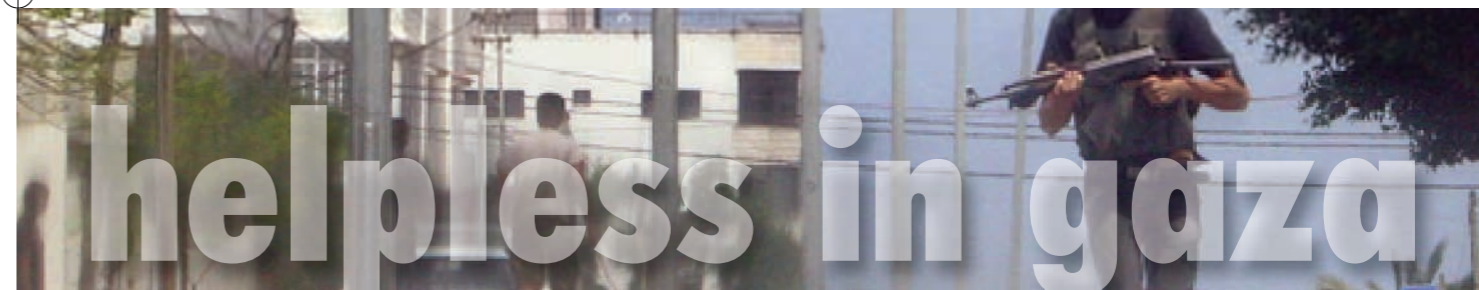
***This is what I remember of that historical meeting; and soon after the effects were felt in different areas in which we had expressed complaint. For example, access of Christian youth to University careers and specific jobs, entrance of Bibles and other literature to Cuba, possibility of receiving Christians from abroad and Cubans travelling to other countries (especially USA and Europe), openness for the prayer cell movement in private homes, access to radio.'***

You would not know it from the international media, who, lazily, or with deliberate hostility, continue to call Cuba *'communist'*; but from around the early 1990s Cuba ceased to be a Marxist state. It became what is known in Latin America as a *'Law Society'* - one in which different religions and ideologies are free to make their way according to their own ability to attract adherents.

My most recent close encounter has been in print, in the biographical work in which Ignacio Ramonet frees Fidel to provide his own assessment of what is simply called *'My Life'*. A temptation to allow the Commandante to interpret things his way? To some extent, but there is a history of distorted reporting which makes this personal testimony welcome. In 1957, when he was with the band of resisters to the dictatorship of Batista, he gave an interview. Thereafter, till he responded to the trusted Ignacio Ramonet, he refused all interviews on his life, because he found his thoughts and words so distorted in transmission.

In *'My Life'* Fidel Castro makes known his definitive position. The ground on which he stands in relation to the meaning of human existence is Christian. The essential clues which provided and provide insights for the dynamics and development of human societies, is Marxist-Leninist. Not only do I think that these can be brought into effective combination, I consider that features of the Marxist-Leninist analysis need to be recovered, with the atheism stripped out - which deprived the theory of a transcendent reference; and, accordingly, left life subject to the pride and desire for uncritical acclaim of tyrants, freed thus to pursue their murderous paths.

It is a human, and in particular, a Christian responsibility, to set the record straight where those who have been assailed, have not conformed to the accepted norms of the powerful, because of an integrity of life which should be honoured.



The following stories, collected by Physicians for Human Rights-Israel, give a small glimpse of the Kafkaesque process, in which the suffering of sickness and the cruelty of a hostile bureaucracy combine to embitter the last days of these people's lives.

The number of deaths of patients referred to medical care outside Gaza are hard to estimate. Several factors are involved, but there is no doubt that every delay lessens the patient's chances of recovery. In Gaza, the delays have nothing to do with medical constraints of any kind, but with *'security'*. Many patients in Gaza, knowing the current situation at the border crossings, prefer to forego the hopeless process, and die at home, their stories untold and their voices unheard. It is the casual, indifferent violence where compassion has been supplanted by *'security'*.

Fatmeh Mahdi, 77 years old, was diagnosed with a cancer in her neck in June 2007 at Shifaa' Hospital in Gaza. In early July she exited Gaza and underwent a series of tests at Ichilov hospital in Tel Aviv, Israel, after which she was told she must return for surgery and commence chemotherapy and radiotherapy in August 2007. From August she repeatedly tried to re-enter Israel for medical care without success. Despite five consecutive requests submitted to the Erez Crossing, no response was received. Mrs. Mahdi's condition deteriorated. All that her doctors could do was administer painkillers. On the 11th of February 2008, Mrs. Mahdi died due to the spreading of the cancer throughout her body.

Bayyan Abu Hilu, one year old, was born in Al Bureij refugee camp in Gaza. Her parents had previously lost two other children due to a genetic liver disease at an early age. Two months after she was born, Bayyan was diagnosed with a similar genetic condition. In November 2007 she entered Israel with her parents for treatment in the hematology department in Hadassah Ein Karem Hospital in Jerusalem (west), and started life-saving care. After the first stage of treatment, the doctors asked that she return as soon as possible for continuation of care. However, when the family applied a second time for exit permits, the Palestinian medical referrals department told them that the request of the parents had been rejected by the GSS for *"security reasons"*, and that an alternative companion for the child must be found. Since they had missed their appointment, the family applied to PHR-Israel in January to ask for help with renewal of an appointment at the Israeli hospital. The new appointment was set for 5.3.08 and Bayyan's father applied again to the Palestinian medical referrals department to relay the request for the permit to Erez Crossing. However, before a response was received, Bayyan died in Gaza, on the 2nd of March 2008.

Fatmeh Al-Ladawi, 45 years old, was a mother of ten children. In September 2007 she was diagnosed at the European Hospital in Khan Younis, Gaza, as suffering

from injury to her spleen, with internal bleeding and infection, following trauma. Fatmeh was referred by the Palestinian Ministry of Health to Al Takhassusi hospital in Nablus, West Bank, for surgery.

In late September 2007 Fatmeh was permitted by the Israeli authorities at Erez Crossing to enter Nablus. However, the necessary care was not available there, and she was sent back home for re-referral. Fatmeh's condition deteriorated while she waited for a correct referral to a medical center, which was delayed for two and half months.

In late 2007 Fatmeh finally received a referral to Maqassed hospital in East Jerusalem, but she was not permitted to exit Gaza due to the closing of the Crossing on the scheduled day of her exit. When the Crossing reopened, Fatmeh submitted a new request for a permit to go to East Jerusalem. However, this time, the GSS (Israeli secret police) refused to allow her husband to accompany her. She was asked to submit a new request, with a different companion. Only after five days was she allowed to exit Gaza to East Jerusalem with another companion. However, in Maqassed hospital she was told again that the necessary treatment was lacking, and Fatmeh was returned to Gaza after two days. Upon her return, she was led to an interrogation chamber in a basement beneath Erez Crossing, where she was interrogated by the GSS for five hours. Fatmeh was next referred to Ma'hed Nasser hospital in Cairo, but once again encountered obstacles, when the GSS refused to allow her brother-in-law to accompany her to her medical care. Her condition continued to deteriorate.

In January 2008 Fatmeh was finally referred to Ichilov hospital in Tel Aviv. However, this time the visit of US President George Bush to the region stopped her from leaving, since Erez Crossing was closed throughout the visit, from the 9th to the 12th of January 2008. Only on the 20th of January was she informed that a permit had been issued her, and she arrived at Erez Crossing on a wheelchair, suffering from difficulties in breathing. She was once again led to a GSS interrogation, which lasted several hours. Her interrogators asked her to prove that the purpose of her exit was medical and not other. At the end of the interrogation, and after a total delay of 10 hours, she was allowed to go to the hospital. She was admitted to the hospital in the evening, but it was too late: On the next day, 21st of January, Fatmeh died in Ichilov hospital, Tel Aviv.

Security is a universal right, and should not be used as a slogan to justify human rights violations. Universal security for all the people living in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory can only be achieved through political means, by ending occupation and all other forms of oppression in our region.

For further details, please contact: Miri Weingarten, [miri@phr.org.il](mailto:miri@phr.org.il)

## day of prayer for the arms trade

Every year the Campaign Against the Arms Trade (CAAT) Christian Network organises a Day of Prayer to end the arms trade. This year's Day of Prayer will be held on Sunday 8th of June.

*Taken from a prayer vigil outside BAE Systems arms factory, Warton, Lancs. and reproduced, with permission, from Paynter N, Boothroyd H (2005); Holy Ground [Glasgow: Wild Goose Publications]*

More information at [www.caat.org.uk](http://www.caat.org.uk)

God, you have entrusted us with the care of each other. Forgive us that we profit from the oppression and injury of our brothers and sisters.

Forgive us that we develop so readily the means of destruction at the expense of the things that create community.

Forgive us that when we are asked for bread we sell bombs, and that we have made the livelihood of so many dependent upon trading in death.

Enable the victims of the arms trade to forgive us.

Enable us to give ourselves in commitment to the eradication of this evil.

Enable us to help those with power to work for justice and peace.

Lord, you have given us all we need;

So now make us ready to forfeit all the hurtful things that are not needed.

God, who is against the arms trade and for the people, give us your love.