



Holy Wisdom



UNITED NATIONS AFFAIRS, SYRIAN ORTHODOX
CHURCH IN AMERICA
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This publication is disseminated to the entire membership of the Church throughout the world on a monthly basis. Please bring this information to the attention of your parishioners and all those under your care. The Earth is holy and a manifestation of God. Pray for peace and the United Nations.

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UNICEF moves to protect Darfur's children from sexual violence

Amid reports of violence against women and children, UNICEF trains police to investigate rape.

DARFUR/NEW YORK, 26 July 2004 – Fifteen-year-old Amna Mohammed's story is disturbingly commonplace in Darfur and Chad: "The Janjaweed took all the property from our village and they burnt it and the other villages nearby," she says, speaking quietly. "Many children were taken away and a lot of girls were raped."

More than 1.2 million Darfurians are vulnerable, surviving with difficulty in the dry, hostile landscape of Darfur and Eastern Chad. They have been forced to flee their homes after a campaign to drive them from their villages through terror and violence. But for Darfur's women and children there is a second dimension to this ordeal. As they swept across Darfur, militia groups raped and sexually assaulted large numbers of women and girls. The assaults have continued around the camps where many of Darfur's displaced are now living, as women have attempted to leave to collect water and firewood.

"Rape, sexual violence, fear of violence, are all pervasive in the Darfur area, certainly among the women and girls that I talked to. There's a great deal of fear," says UNICEF's Executive Director Carol Bellamy.

Ms. Bellamy recently visited Darfur where she heard countless testimonies from children and women. Their stories are both consistent and shocking, almost always including rape and sexual violence, villages burned, parents killed and entire communities forced to flee their homes.

"Too many people assume that rape and sexual violence is inevitable in war. But frankly, from UNICEF's perspective, it is something that is growing," Ms. Bellamy says. "It's growing because increasingly the victims in war today are civilians, largely women and children. So the tactics being used in conflict are tactics of the worst kind of abuse, the worst kind of violence and focused very often on the most vulnerable. So we are seeing more sexual violence, more rape. And it has to stop."

The rape of women and children has a devastating impact on individuals and entire communities. For many girls and women, sexual violence is the culmination of a series of assaults. They have often lost all the things that protect them: Family members have been killed before their eyes with complete impunity, siblings and mothers raped and entire families forced to flee their homes.



Francis Kabina works with the victims of unimaginable horror: young girls who were raped and abused; boys forced to fight and kill; men who saw their homes and families destroyed; women, children and the elderly whose limbs were hacked off. These are Francis' people.

A trauma and community reintegration specialist, 33-year old Francis has worked in Sierra Leone as a United Nations volunteer since November 1998. He counsels people traumatized by a savage war that killed 75,000 and displaced half the country's population of 4.4 million. Francis, who comes from Tanzania, has also experienced the brutality first hand. He was evacuated three times from Sierra Leone, once after anti-government rebels beat him so severely, he almost lost his life.

Francis has taken on a Herculean task: reintegrating the communities of ex-combatants and their victims. He holds public meetings in schools, churches, mosques and refugee camps so victims can release their pent-up anger in a controlled environment. Drama is used to help people deal with their experiences. Villagers relive the atrocities and act out their flight from rebels. Amputees describe how armed gangs cut off their limbs and they carry out mock assaults on ex-combatants who mutilated them.

"I have seen a lot of people go through a lot of suffering", says Francis. "People are angry and they have been hurt. If they keep that anger locked up inside, they will lose their balance and will start exploding."

Once victims understand the importance of not seeking revenge, he advises ex-combatants to go back to their communities. Many former rebels make public confessions in churches and mosques. Although people are still coming to terms with their turbulent past, they are showing a willingness to listen and even to forgive.

Kobe and Martin are Undercover

Sydney, Australia has a great climate, but for Kobe Lee Challis, Martin Proctor and their classmates at Melrose Park Primary School, playing in the sun without protection is a risky game.

Kobe Lee and Martin know that the sun can cause skin cancer and, like all Australian schoolchildren, they have to wear hats outdoors. What they may not know is that a United Nations treaty — the 1987 Montreal Protocol — holds out hope for the recovery of the ozone layer, which protects the earth's surface from the sun's ultraviolet radiation.



DHAKA/NEW YORK, 28 July 2004 – Overflowing sewers mixing with floodwaters are putting the health of millions of children at risk in Bangladesh's capital city of Dhaka.

"In urban areas, poor areas, the situation for children is extremely dangerous. The water in the cities is filled with filth and the children who are playing and walking through the water are vulnerable. They are easy prey to infectious diseases," said UNICEF Bangladesh Chief of Communications Naseem-Ur-Rehman in a phone interview this morning.

The sewer water is gushing out of manholes in many areas of the city, which has a population of more than 10 million people. Diseases like diarrhoea, watery dysentery, acute respiratory infection (ARI), jaundice, typhoid and scabies are being reported. Acute respiratory infection is one of the single largest killers of children annually in Bangladesh, said Mr. Rehman.

The presence of the black, foul-smelling water suggests that the worst of the problem is yet to come. As the dank floodwater stagnates, children face an increasing risk of disease.

More than one-third of Dhaka is inundated. All roads in Motijheel, the commercial hub of the country, are submerged; anyone wishing to go to the central bank must wade through thigh-deep water.

Fifty-one of Dhaka's 90 wards have been affected by the flood. So far, 206 flood shelters have been opened in the city, in which more than 200,000 people have taken shelter. There are nearly 5,000 flood shelters open in the rest of the country. Since last weekend, 15,263 schools have been affected by the flood and 14,932 schools have been closed. Currently, 1,571 schools have been converted into temporary flood shelters.

Floods claim children's lives across the country

More than 400 people, including children, have died in the floods, from drowning, injuries and other causes. Over 25 million children, women and men have been displaced by the floodwaters, caused by the monsoon season.

"The situation here is grave," said Mr. Rehman. "There are an increasing amount of people in the shelter homes, and there is a lot of anxiety there, especially among the children."

MAGARITA WORK IS JUST BEGINING

In Kuanda village in northern Malawi, Maritas Shaba has her work cut out for her. At 65 years of age, she is the sole guardian of nine grandchildren whose parents died of AIDS.

Like many in sub-Saharan Africa, Maritas and her grandchildren face an uncertain future. Malawi has one of the highest poverty rates in the world, exacerbated in recent years by a drought. The country also has one of the highest HIV infection rates in Africa. More than a million of Malawi's 10 million people are HIV-positive with 25 percent of the urban workforce expected to die of AIDS by 2010.

According to the United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the virus has caused life expectancy in Malawi to drop from 47 years for a baby born in the mid-1980s to 36 for a baby born today.

Breaking the silence that surrounds HIV/AIDS is considered key to effective education, prevention and care of those infected with the virus. There is a desperate need for a dramatic increase in spending. UNAIDS Executive Director Peter Piot says \$3 billion is needed for basic HIV care and prevention in sub-Saharan Africa — a figure that, incredibly, is 10 times what is actually being spent today.

The United Nations will hold a Special Session in June 2001 to galvanize political leadership and mobilize resources to deal with the AIDS epidemic. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan says, "We must make people everywhere understand that the AIDS crisis is not over; that this is not about a few foreign countries, far away. This is a threat to an entire generation; this is a threat to an entire civilization."

Andrea is in a New Field Deep in the highlands of Guatemala in the small village of Pixabaj, Andres Julaju Cojtin has begun a new life as a farmer. After 15 years of fighting on the side of the guerrilla movement known as the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG), Andres is benefiting from an income-generating project for former combatants.

The peace agreement in December 1996 between the Government and URNG ended Guatemala's devastating 36-year-long conflict, which claimed more than 200,000 lives.

But the fighting has left deep rifts in Guatemalan society. Like many others, Andres' family was torn apart when he fought on the side of the URNG and his brother worked for military intelligence. Four years after the fighting stopped, the two brothers still do not speak.

Demobilizing former soldiers and helping them adapt to civilian life is a key part of UN's work for peace. A United Nations mission, known as the UN

The word first learned in the early 1970s of the damage to the stratospheric ozone layer caused by the emission of chemicals known as chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) used in such products as refrigerators, aerosols and air-conditioners. Reduced ozone levels lead to higher levels of UV-B radiation, which causes skin cancer and has been linked to cataracts. Even small increases in UV-B levels are believed to have adverse effects on plant growth and marine ecosystems.

After the signing of the Montreal Protocol, which is administered by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), governments and business made giant strides in converting industries to ozone-friendly chemicals. DuPont and AT&T were among the leaders in developing alternatives, and companies such as Seiko, Epson and Nortel/Northern Telecom agreed to phase out CFCs faster than was required.

Since 1996, industrialized countries have banned production of CFCs and, in July 2000, developing countries began to freeze their use. Schedules are also in place to phase out other ozone-depleting substances.

To ensure compliance with the treaty developing countries are receiving international assistance to move to ozone-friendly technologies. UNEP's OzoneAction Programme has played a key role and a trust fund set up under the Montreal Protocol has allocated over \$1 billion to projects in 124 developing countries. For example, more than 26 million CFC-free refrigerators will be produced with the fund's assistance.

WASHINGTON—Evangelization was the main topic of this year's session of the Oriental Orthodox-Roman Catholic Theological

Consultation. The meeting took place on June 7 and 8 at the Passionist Spiritual Center in Bronx, New York, under the co-chairmanship of Bishop Howard Hubbard of Albany and Very Rev. Chorbishop John Meno of the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch



United Nations Department of Public Information

57th Annual DPI/NGO Conference

"Millennium Development Goals: Civil Society Takes Action"

8 to 10 September 2004

United Nations Headquarters

New York Civil society activists from around the world are preparing to mobilize broader public support for a major United Nations initiative, the Millennium

Development Goals. The 57th Annual Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), entitled *Millennium Development Goals: Civil Society Takes Action*, will take place at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 8 to 10 September 2004. Organized by the United Nations Department of Public Information (DPI) in partnership with the NGO/DPI Executive Committee, the Conference is the premier NGO event held at the United Nations each year.

"This Conference aims to raise public awareness and support for the Millennium Development Goals through the 3,000 NGOs working directly with the UN Secretariat," says Shashi Tharoor, Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information of the United Nations. "The involvement of civil society partners in the MDG Campaign is essential to its success."

At the Millennium Summit in 2000, 189 Member States adopted a Declaration that synthesized the priorities of the international agenda and reflected the commitments that had been painstakingly negotiated during the previous decade of world conferences. The Millennium Declaration, and the eight goals it identified, have become a road map for tackling poverty, instability, HIV/AIDS, gender inequality and violence in virtually all parts of the world.

In addition to five plenary panels and 30 Midday NGO Interactive Workshops, the Conference will feature speakers such as **Eveline Herfkens**, Executive Coordinator, United Nations Millennium Development Goals Campaign, **Jeffrey Sachs**, Special Advisor to the Secretary-General on the Millennium Development Goals, **Mark Malloch Brown**, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), **Kavita Ramdas**, President of the Global Fund for Women, **Jacques Attali**, Founder and President of PlaNet Finance, **Ryolichi Hirono**, Senior Adviser of the Japan Council on the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development and **Bineta Diop**, Founder and Executive Director of *Femmes Africa Solidarité*, among others.

Syrian Orthodox Bishop Mor Severius Saliba Tuma passed away

SOLNews (27.7.2004) – This very evening the Syrian orthodox Bishop Mor Severius Saliba Tuma passed away at 5 pm at the age of 35 in Zahle, Lebanon. Mor Severius Saliba suffered from a fatal brain tumor. The funeral will be held at the St. George Church on 29th at 5 pm.

Mor Severius Saliba Tuma was born in the city of Kamishli, Syria, on November 21, 1969. He followed his theological education at the Patriarchal Seminary in Damascus. In 1989, he became a monk and in 1992 he was ordained a priest. From 1994 to 1998, he visited the Oriental Institute in Rome, studying for his Doctorate. On 14th May 2000, he was ordained as a Metropolitan by the Syrian orthodox Patriarch Mor Ignatius Zakka I was at the Sts. Peter & Paul Cathedral in Saydnaya, Damascus, for the new diocese of Zahle in Lebanon. The young prelate could serve his flock for only four years as a Bishop.

Source: <http://www.survivo-online.org/news/severiusalibatod.htm>

June 17, 2004. Senior Metropolitan of the Syrian Orthodox Church in India, Mor Osthathos Binyamin Joseph (55), died of cardiac arrest at a private hospital near his home town on Thursday morning (17th June). He collapsed while the doctors were examining him. The Metropolitan had been admitted to the hospital on June 14 following a severe stroke.

Funeral will be on Saturday, 19th June, at Majanikkara Mor Ignathios Dayro in Pathanamthitta district. Catholicose Aboon Mor Baselios Thomas I who was on a visit to United States is returning tomorrow. His Beatitude the Catholicose will lead the last rites of the late Metropolitan.

Binyamin Joseph Mor Osthathos was for several years the Metropolitan of the famous Dayro at Manjanikkara where the Holy tombs of Patriarch St. Ignatius Elias III (1932), Patriarchal delegate Mor Yulius Elias (1962) and Mor Yulius Yakub (1992) are situated. Mor Osthathos was also the bishop of Patriarchal churches in Malankara.

Born in Kunnankulam in the Thrissur district in 1949, he was ordained priest in 1973 and elevated as Metropolitan on 7 October 1984. He was the secretary of Their Holinesses Moran Mor Yacoob III and Moran Mor Zakka I was Patriarchs from 1977-84.

Contributed by John Philip - St. Joseph's Cathedral - Kerala, India

FROM: William Ryan, United Nations Representative

EVANGELIZATION WAS MAIN TOPIC OF THIS YEAR'S SESSION OF ORIENTAL ORTHODOX-ROMAN CATHOLIC THEOLOGICAL CONSULTATION

WASHINGTON—Evangelization was the main topic of this year's session of the Oriental Orthodox-Roman Catholic Theological Consultation. The meeting took place on June 7 and 8 at the Passionist Spiritual Center in Bronx, New York, under the co-chairmanship of Bishop Howard Hubbard of Albany and Very Rev. Chorbishop John Meno of the Syriac Orthodox Church of Antioch.

From an Oriental Orthodox perspective, Fr. Athanasius Farag spoke of the theology of evangelization in the Coptic Orthodox Church. He described four aspects of the mission of the Coptic Church in the United States. First, there is a need to provide spiritual care for first generation Copts who have come to this country from Egypt. Second, there is a need to communicate the spiritual life to children, often in areas where there are few if any other Copts to provide them with support. Third, there is a need to reach out to other Christians in the country, and to preach to non-believers. The Coptic Orthodox Church senses a strong spiritual hunger among many Americans and seeks to meet this need through proclamation and personal witness. The Coptic Church tries to make its own historical heritage available to more Americans by providing English translations of Coptic patristic and contemporary sources.

A basic overview of the Catholic understanding of evangelization was provided by Rev. Frank DeSiano, CSP. Father DeSiano is former President of the Paulist Fathers, present pastor of Old St. Mary's parish in downtown Chicago, consultant to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Evangelization, and the principal writer of *Go and Make Disciples: A National Plan and Strategy for Catholic Evangelization in the United States*, adopted by the Bishops in 1992. In a second presentation Fr DeSiano provided a summary of *Go and Make Disciples*, and focused on the three goals of evangelization that are identified in the document. He also spoke about parish evangelization strategies in a third presentation, geared to help parishes reach out beyond themselves to evangelize the unchurched and inactive. The Catholic and Coptic presentations at the meeting were followed by lively discussions regarding the best ways to witness to Christian faith in an increasingly secular society.

The dialogue also held a session devoted to an examination of major events in the lives of the churches. Topics discussed included the dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches in India, an update on the way the U.S. Catholic Bishops have responded to the clerical sexual abuse scandal, the new agreed statement on the *filioque* released by the North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation, a new patriarch of the Eritrean Orthodox Church, the visit of a delegation of U.S. Catholic Bishops to Armenia in the summer of 2003, current issues concerning the reception of communion by pro-choice Catholic politicians, the first session of the Catholic Church-Oriental Orthodox Churches International Joint Commission for Dialogue, the installation of a new Malankara Orthodox Metropolitan in North America, the "Christian Churches Together" initiative, and the present situation of the Coptic, Ethiopian, and Syriac Orthodox Churches. The members also reviewed reactions to the document *Reflections on Covenant and Mission* that was issued by representatives of The National Council of Synagogues and the Catholic Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs on August 12, 2002.

The members of the Consultation were particularly pleased to welcome Archbishop Mor Titus Yeldho Pathickal, of the Malankara Archdiocese of the Syrian Orthodox Church in North America, who attended for the first time since his recent installation as metropolitan.

The next meeting is scheduled to take place on June 9-10, 2005, at St Nersess Armenian Seminary in New Rochelle, New York. It will focus on developing closer relations among our churches, and on the position of the Catholic Church regarding proselytism among the Oriental Orthodox faithful. The United States Oriental Orthodox-Roman Catholic Consultation was established in 1978, and is sponsored jointly by the Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the USCCB and the Standing Conference of Oriental Orthodox Churches in America. In 1995 it published "Oriental Orthodox-Roman Catholic Interchurch Marriages and Other Pastoral Relationships," which includes pastoral guidelines for marriages involving the faithful of the two communions as well as ample documentation about the development of our ecumenical relationship in recent decades. In 1999 it issued "Guidelines Concerning the Pastoral Care of Oriental Orthodox Students in Catholic Schools

Highlights of the Noon Briefing

BY STEPHANE DUJARRIC

ASSOCIATE SPOKESMAN FOR THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

OF THE UNITED NATIONS

UN HEADQUARTERS, NEW YORK

Tuesday, August 31, 2004

UNITED NATIONS CONDEMNNS TERRORIST ATTACK IN ISRAEL

- In a [statement](#) released through his Spokesman, [Secretary-General](#) Kofi Annan strongly condemns the double terrorist attack today in the [Israeli](#) city of Beersheba that killed at least 15 people and wounded many more. He sends his deepest sympathy and condolences to the families of the victims.
- The Secretary-General calls on the Palestinian Authority to do everything possible to bring the perpetrators to justice and to put an end to such heinous crimes.
- The Security Council, in a [press statement](#) read by Council President Russian Ambassador Andrey Denisov, also strongly condemned the bombings. Members of the Council also denounced the escalation of violence in the Middle East and called on all the parties for the continuation of the Middle East peace process.

SUDAN: SEARCH AND RESCUE UNDERWAY FOR MISSING U.N. STAFF IN DARFUR

- A search and rescue operation with helicopter support is underway today to locate the three local staff of the [World Food Programme](#) with whom radio contact was lost on Saturday in [Darfur](#), [Sudan](#). Also missing are five Sudanese Red Crescent staff.
- The last radio contact with them was at 3:00 p.m. on Saturday, in the vicinity of Shangel Tubai, approximately 30 kilometers south of El Fashir.
- The local Sudanese authorities and the rebel groups, Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) and Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), have assured the United Nations that they are exerting all efforts to assist in providing any information that might get on their whereabouts.
- A Crisis Management Centre has been established in El Fasher.

SUDANESE PARTIES DISCUSS HUMANITARIAN ISSUES

- The political talks in Abuja, Nigeria are continuing today and the discussions are focused on the humanitarian cluster.
- The African Union, with the support of UN partners, presented the parties with a consolidated draft paper on humanitarian assessment.
- On the humanitarian front, the [Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees](#) (UNHCR) said today that over the weekend, it [sent](#) two teams to the villages of Suleha and Arara in [Sudan's West Darfur region near the Chad border](#) to evaluate the situation for [internally displaced persons](#) in the villages and overall security conditions. The teams will also determine if there have been any refugees returning to these villages from Chad.
- Meanwhile, across the border in eastern Chad, where 188,000 refugees have fled from Darfur, UNHCR and the Chad government are set to [sign](#) an agreement today aimed at maintaining security and ensuring the civilian nature of the refugee camps and surrounding areas.
- The [World Health Organization](#) has produced a [report](#) on Sudanese [internally displaced persons](#) in Darfur, Sudan, and Sudanese refugees in Chad. It contains facts and figures on the situation of clean drinking water and sanitation, hepatitis e, cholera, and other health problems and needs.
- Asked about the report by Special Representative [Jan Pronk](#), concerning Sudan's implementation of [Security Council Resolution 1556](#), the Spokesman said the [Secretary-General](#), who remains on annual leave, was to have received the report from Pronk today. The Secretary-General, he added, had spoken by phone today with Pronk, who briefed him on his mission. Council members are expected to receive the report, in an English-only version, prior to their meeting on Sudan on Thursday. After that meeting, Pronk is expected to speak to the press.

UNITED NATIONS INVITED TO ATTEND AL THAWRA CITY RECONSTRUCTION CONFERENCE IN IRAQ

- The Secretary-General's Deputy Special Representative in [Iraq](#), Ross Mountain, today met with Daoud Kassem, Iraq's Minister of State and discussed the development in Najaf and Al Thawra (Sadr) City.
- Iraqi authorities invited the United Nations to attend a national conference held today in Baghdad on the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Al Thawra City. The conference was attended by Prime Minister Iyad Allawi and members of his cabinet.
- A large number of tribal and religious leaders representing Al Thawra City discussed directly with the Iraqi officials the development programmes that need to be undertaken

there.

UNESCO URGES RELEASE OF FRENCH HOSTAGES IN IRAQ

- The [UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization](#) has [made](#) an urgent plea for the release of two French journalists held hostage in Iraq.
- The pair, Christian Chesnot and Georges Malbrunot, disappeared 10 days ago on the road between Baghdad and Najaf.
- UNESCO's Director-General, [Koïchiro Matsuno](#), said it's unacceptable that conflicting factions in Iraq should use the pair as pawns. He also condemned the targeting of journalists in that country.

SECURITY COUNCIL BRIEFED ON BURUNDI ON LAST DAY OF RUSSIAN PRESIDENCY

- The [Security Council](#) held consultations on Burundi this morning.
- [Jean-Marie Guehenno](#), Under-Secretary-General for [Peacekeeping Operations](#), briefed the Council on the [Secretary-General's](#) most recent [report](#) on Burundi, which was released yesterday.
- Today is also the last day of the Russian [Presidency of the Security Council](#). Starting tomorrow, Spain assumes the Security Council presidency for the month of September.

NUMBER OF ASYLUM SEEKERS IN INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES FALLS

- The number of asylum seekers in industrialised countries has dropped to the lowest level in 17 years, according to [statistics released](#) by the [Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees](#) (UNHCR).
- According to UNHCR, the total number of asylum claims in 30 industrialised countries during the first six months of 2004 was 22% lower than during the first half of 2003. In addition, the monthly average for the first half of this year is at its lowest level since 1987.
- France, the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany and Austria were the top five countries of asylum over this period. Russians – most of whom are believed to be Chechens – were still the top group seeking asylum, followed by nationals of Serbia and Montenegro, China, Turkey and India.

DONORS URGED NOT TO FORGET BANGLADESH FLOOD VICTIMS

- The United Nations in Bangladesh is urging donors not to forget the devastating [floods](#) there, which killed 900 people and displaced four million others.
- The [UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs](#) says that so far, only one third of the \$210 million requested through a flash appeal has been received.
- Many flood victims still have no income and are vulnerable to disease, and drinking water is in short supply.
- Also, because many seed stocks were swept away, and the deadline for planting new crops is swiftly approaching, farmers need seeds now if the next harvest is to meet the country's future food requirements.
- More than half of all Bangladeshis are dependent on agriculture for their livelihoods.

MOROCCO'S GOLD MEDALLIST TO HELP CHILD DEVELOPMENT CAMPAIGN

- Morocco's double Olympic gold medallist, Hicham El Guerrouj, will be [using](#) his popularity and fame on the track later this year to promote a [UNICEF](#) early childhood development campaign targeting children in the critical toddler phase.
- El Guerrouj is an active Goodwill Ambassador for UNICEF, the UN Children's Fund. Proceeds from the campaign will go to early childhood projects in Morocco, in areas such as health, nutrition and social skills development for young children up to the age of three.
- UNICEF says El Guerrouj's popularity and integrity will be key success factors in raising awareness of child development from the ages of 0 to 3 – a critical life cycle little known to many parents and child care-takers in Morocco.

OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

REFUGEE AGENCY IN PACT TO HELP RETURN 10,000 CONGOLESE REFUGEES: The [Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees](#) (UNHCR) has [reached](#) an agreement with the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the Central African Republic (CAR) that will pave the way for the return of some 10,000 Congolese refugees. The tripartite agreement, signed last Thursday in Kinshasa, will provide a legal framework for the voluntary repatriation of refugees who fled the fighting in DRC's northwestern province of Equateur between 1998 and 2002.

WOMEN AND ADOLESCENTS NEEDED FOR HIV VACCINE TRIALS: A meeting organized by [UNAIDS](#) and the [World Health Organization](#) [stressed](#) the need for greater participation of women and adolescents in [HIV vaccine](#) clinical trials. Experts at the meeting, which took place over the weekend in Lausanne, Switzerland, said that women exposed to [HIV](#) are at least twice as likely to become infected with the virus as their male counterparts. AIDS also places young people at high risk, with about half of the new HIV infections in the developing world affecting people between the ages of 15 and 24.

LATEST ISSUE OF U.N. ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME MAGAZINE RELEASED: The [United Nations Environment Programme](#) [announced](#) today the publication of the latest issue of their magazine, called [Our Planet](#). This issue examines the role of women throughout the developing world in the use and care of the environment.

JAPAN DONATES \$2 MILLION TO HELP GET CHILDREN OUT OF ORPHANAGES: The Government of Japan is [donating](#) more than \$2 million to [UNICEF](#) to get children out of orphanages and other institutions across Central Asia. The funds will go to the UNICEF supported-project "Every Child Has a Right to Grow up in a Family Environment" and benefit around 32,000 children, plus 30,000 families that are at risk of institutionalising their children. The funds will be divided between Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

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WCC calls for peacekeepers and war crimes probe in Sudan

Geneva (ENI). The World Council of Churches has called for an international peacekeeping force and the investigation of war crimes in Sudan's troubled Darfur region, where up to 50 000 people are reported to have died in 18 months of violence blamed on pro-government militia. "The ethnic cleansing which has taken place in Darfur must be reversed before it takes on the proportions of genocide," said WCC director of international affairs, Peter Weidenud. The mainly Arab pro-government militia have been accused of killing tens of thousands of black Africans and pushing more than a million people from their homes in the crisis in Darfur in western Sudan. [374 words, ENI-04-0561]

Indian church council rejects army's special powers in troubled Manipur

New Delhi (ENI). The National Council of Churches in India (NCCI) has backed a demand for the scrapping of a law granting sweeping powers to security forces in troubled Manipur state in north-eastern India. Protests against the law in Manipur have increased since mid-July when a woman was allegedly raped and killed by troops who said she was thought to be helping separatists. The woman had been detained under the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, which gives security forces wide-ranging powers, and which the armed forces say is necessary to help fight militants. [296 words, ENI-04-0563]

Pope's return of Russian icon raises hopes of detente with Orthodox

Warsaw (ENI). Russian Orthodox church leaders have welcomed Pope John Paul II's decision to return a precious icon to Russia, to be handed over in Moscow on Saturday by a Roman Catholic delegation. The icon, "Our Lady of Kazan", is due to be returned at a ceremony in the Kremlin's Dormition cathedral, which President Vladimir Putin is scheduled to attend. Archbishop Tadeusz Kondrusiewicz, the head

of Russia's Roman Catholic minority, said he hoped the gesture would improve relations between the Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches which have been strained in recent years. [405 words, ENI-04-0562]

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Security Council unanimously renews UN mission in Iraq for another year

12 August 2004 – The Security Council today unanimously renewed for a further year the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq ([UNAMI](#)), whose tasks include coordinating various humanitarian operations and helping the war-torn country to organize elections by the end of January and draft a new constitution.

Reaffirming that the UN should play a leading role in assisting the Iraqi people and government in the formation of institutions for representative government, the 15-member body said in a [resolution](#) that it would review UNAMI's mandate in 12 months or sooner if requested by the Iraqi Government.

The mission was initially established for a 12-month period by Security Council [resolution 1500](#) of 14 August 2003, when Secretary-General Kofi Annan called for it to have a staff of over 300, both international and local.

Security Council

Last month Mr. Annan named Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States, Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, as his Special Representative for Iraq. Mr. Qazi is expected to make his first visit to the country some time this month, but in his latest report on the situation Mr. Annan last week stressed that staff security remained the overriding constraint for all UN operations in Iraq.

With the risk to UN personnel in Iraq categorized as "high to critical," UNAMI and UN agencies will continue to limit their activities inside Iraq to essential tasks, the report said.

UN envoy says Sudan has failed to disarm militias and stop attacks in Darfur

Jan Pronk, UN envoy for Sudan, said in his latest report on the situation Mr. Annan last week stressed that staff security remained the overriding constraint for all UN operations in Iraq. Mr. Annan last week stressed that staff security remained the overriding constraint for all UN operations in Iraq.

Jan Pronk, the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Sudan, called for the mission of African Union (AU) monitors in Darfur to be expanded in size and mandate to better protect the region's vast population of internally displaced persons (IDPs).

He praised Khartoum for making some progress since the Security Council imposed a 30-day deadline on 30 July, citing the end of Government military attacks in areas with high numbers of IDPs, the deployment of extra police, the removal of restrictions on humanitarian relief and the start of negotiations with Darfur's two rebel groups.

But Mr. Pronk said Khartoum had failed in two key areas to meet the commitments it made in a joint [communiqué](#) with the UN in early July: it has not stopped attacks by militias against civilians and it has not disarmed the militias.

While he welcomed the reining in of part of the Popular Defence Force as "a laudable step," most militias, especially the notorious Government-allied Janjaweed, have not been disarmed.

Mr. Pronk also said no serious steps have been made to identify any of the militia leaders or bring them to justice, "allowing violations of human rights to continue in a climate of impunity."

Some 1.2 million IDPs live in at least 139 sites around Darfur, an impoverished region in western Sudan that is equivalent in size to France. Another 200,000 refugees have fled to neighbouring Chad. Many of the IDPs and refugees have told UN agencies that left their home villages because of deadly attacks by the Janjaweed and Government forces, which have been fighting an armed rebellion in Darfur since February last year.

Mr. Pronk said in his address that the humanitarian situation remains bleak and while there have been no major outbreaks of infectious disease, malnutrition and mortality "is still high, too high."

Many IDPs are also out of reach of relief workers because of the remoteness of the region, and some areas lack access to food, water and sanitation.

The Council is meeting today to discuss what kind of progress Khartoum has made in implementing its pledges to restore security and end the violence in Darfur.

On 30 July, in [Resolution 1556](#), the Council stated it may take action under Article 41 of the UN Charter if Sudan has not taken steps to meet those promises. Article 41 measures include unspecified economic penalties and the severing of diplomatic relations.

Meanwhile, Ambassador Juan Antonio Yáñez-Barnuevo of Spain, which holds this month's rotating Council presidency, told a press briefing that the situation in Sudan, Africa's Great Lakes region and Iraq would be among the major issues confronting the Council this month.

Ambassador Yáñez-Barnuevo said the Council hoped to wind down its workload by the middle of the month to allow for the annual session opening of the General Assembly.

Without offers of protection, Annan warns that UN workers in Iraq remain in peril

9 September 2004 – International staff working for the United Nations in Iraq are "operating at the outer limit of acceptable and prudent risk," Secretary-General Kofi Annan says in a new [report](#) which warns that the UN presence on the ground there is limited because of insecurity until further notice.

While pledging to "do everything possible, as circumstances permit, to support Iraqi efforts in the political and economic reconstruction of their country," the Secretary-General points out that no country has yet committed to providing any security staff for UN workers there.

UN spokesman Fred Eckhard told reporters today that the world body has conducted "an exhausting and exhaustive search" for security units, adding that there have been "some promising leads."

The UN Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI) needs four personal security details, each comprising 12 officers, to protect the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Iraq, Ashraf Qazi, other designated [UNAMI](#) officials and visitors as they travel around the country.

Three armed guard units, each consisting of 160 people, are required to protect UNAMI facilities, while forces are also needed to help UN staff working outside the so-called "international zone" in Baghdad.

The UN has restricted the number of its foreign staff in [Iraq](#) to 35 until there is "a qualitative improvement in the overall security environment," Mr. Annan says.

Just over a year ago, the UN suffered a devastating terrorist attack which killed 22 people at its Baghdad headquarters. And the new report notes that the last few months have been marked by continuing violent attacks, including assassinations and kidnappings, with many targeting foreign workers. Armed militias are still active and are connected to politically influential parties and individuals. The volatile security situation is also playing havoc with Iraqis' confidence in their political future, especially the electoral process as it heads towards polls scheduled for January next year.

Mr. Annan says the only solution to the insecurity and violence is a political process that is not based on threats or armed force, but instead a genuine willingness to tackle political, economic, social and cultural grievances peacefully.

He gives prime responsibility for this to Iraq's Interim Government, arguing it must be as inclusive as possible as it shapes the political process ahead of the scheduled elections.

"Ultimately, the people of Iraq must be continually reassured and convinced that the process is unequivocally moving towards the goal of making them the masters of their own political future."

Mr. Annan stresses the importance of establishing the rule of law as paramount in Iraq and calls for reform of the country's police, judicial and penal systems. He also calls on political parties to avoid moves which could inflame tensions.



Photo by ©UNHCR

In the past fifty years, our world has been ravaged by violent conflicts that have claimed the lives of many millions of civilians and left tens of millions more permanently

displaced. These civilians have been expelled from their homes, and are often denied access to life-saving food, medicine and shelter. Grave violations of international humanitarian and human rights law and blatant disrespect for the normative framework of humanity that has emerged over the past 50 years is common to many of these conflicts. Civilians have become the primary target of attack motivated by ethnic or religious hatred, political confrontation or simply ruthless pursuit of economic interests.

This stark picture has led the United Nations, the International Committee for the Red Cross, regional organizations and many other international agencies increasingly to dedicate greater attention to protecting civilians in ongoing armed conflicts. The United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan called for the establishment of a "culture of protection" in his report of 30 March 2001 on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict. "In such a culture, Governments would live up to their responsibilities, armed groups would respect the recognized rules of international humanitarian law, the private sector would be conscious of the impact of its engagement in crisis areas, and Member States and international organizations would display the necessary commitment to ensure decisive and rapid action in the face of crisis. The establishment of this culture will depend on the willingness of Member States not only to adopt some of the measures (outlined in the report) but also to deal with the reality of armed groups and other non-state actors in conflicts, and the role of civil society in moving from vulnerability to security and from war to peace."

On many occasions, the Secretary-General has emphasized that, "As human beings, we cannot be neutral, or at least have no right to be, when other human beings are suffering. Each of us...must do what he or she can to help those in need, even though it would be much safer and more comfortable to do nothing." In this spirit, humanitarian aid workers, United Nations peacekeepers and many others struggle daily, to provide protection to those distressed by war. Humanitarian personnel in particular, in many conflicts are at the forefront of this international effort, often without any military presence available and in imminent danger of their lives.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), together with its humanitarian partners in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee on the ground, advocate for the accommodation of needs and the rights of civilians, particularly children, women, the elderly and other vulnerable groups. It strives to ensure that civilians everywhere will be afforded the basic human dignity each individual deserves.

At the same time international actors do not cease to remind States and their Governments of the fact that the primary responsibility for the protection of civilians rests with them and that international efforts can only be complementary to Governments own efforts in this respect. In the Millennium Declaration, the Member States of the organization therefore, pledged to "expand and strengthen the protection of civilians in complex emergencies." Together we must move from words to deeds and intention to implementation, in protecting civilians in armed conflict.



At least 25 million people spread over 52 countries are displaced by violence and persecution but remain within the borders of their own countries. While the primary responsibility for protecting and assisting IDPs rests with States, the scope and complexity of this contemporary phenomenon requires the concerted action of a wide range of humanitarian, development and political actors.

Pursuant to a decision of the Secretary General, the Internal Displacement Unit was established within the Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). The Unit is directed by Mr. Kofi Asomani, and consists of international staff seconded by the UNDP, UNHCR, WFP, OCHA, UNICEF, IOM, NGO community and the RSG on IDPs. Its establishment was preceded by extensive consultations amongst members of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and Senior Network on Internal Displacement. ([About Us](#))

The main objective of the Unit is to promote system wide improvements in the response to the needs of the internally displaced people (IDPs) as well as to provide targeted support to specific country situations. Main areas of work focus on protection of IDPs, field support, capacity building/ training and advocacy/ public information. ([Priorities and Initiatives](#))

In achieving these objectives, the Unit assists the ERC in discharging his function to coordinate an effective response to the needs of the internally displaced people (IDPs) worldwide. The Unit supports field response in IDP crises as implemented by IASC members and OCHA under the leadership of Resident and Humanitarian Coordinators, in the context of an inter-agency collaborative approach. ([Partners](#))

Humanitarian Impact of Sanctions

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) was established as a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council by Council resolution 11(II) of 21 June 1946 to prepare recommendations and reports to the Council on promoting women's rights in political, economic, civil, social and educational fields. The Commission also makes recommendations to the Council on urgent problems requiring immediate attention in the field of women's rights. The object of the Commission is to promote implementation of the principle that men and women shall have equal rights. The Commission's mandate was expanded in 1987 by the Council in its resolution [1987/22](#). Following the 1995 [Fourth World Conference on Women](#), the General Assembly mandated the Commission to integrate into its programme a follow-up process to the Conference, regularly reviewing the critical areas of concern in the [Platform for Action](#) and to develop its catalytic role in [mainstreaming a gender perspective](#) in United Nations activities.

The Economic and Social Council modified the Commission's terms of reference in 1996, in its resolution 1996/6. In 2000, a comprehensive review and appraisal of progress made in the implementation of the Platform for Action was undertaken by the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (Beijing +5) entitled "Women2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century". The Assembly adopted a [Political Declaration](#) and [Further Actions and Initiatives to Implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action](#) (the Outcome Document). The Commission's current and future work, as determined by its multi-year programme of work [2002-2006](#) is closely related to both, the Platform for Action and the Outcome Document so as to ensure their effective implementation.

The Commission, which began with 15 members, now consists of [45 members](#) elected by the Economic and Social Council for a period of four years. Members, who are appointed by Governments, are elected on the following basis: thirteen from African states; eleven from Asian states; four from Eastern European states; nine from Latin American and Caribbean states; and eight from Western European and Other states. The Commission meets annually for a period of ten working days.

The Bureau of the Commission on the Status of Women (forty-ninth session, 2005) comprises the following members:

Ms. Kyung-wha Kang (Republic of Korea), Chairperson
 Ms. Marine Davtyan (Republic of Armenia), Vice Chairperson
 Ms. Tebatso Future Baleseng (Botswana), Vice Chairperson
 Ms. Beatrice Maille (Canada), Vice Chairperson
 Ms. Carmen-Rosa Arias (Peru), Vice Chairperson

