THE
Kerry Kennedy Cuomo
PROJECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

A Student Dialogue
February 28, 2001

Sponsored by
The Echo Foundation

Presented at
Vance High School
7600 IBM Drive
Charlotte, NC

Collected Educational Materials to prepare students for a conversation with Human Rights Activist Kerry Kennedy Cuomo.
Dear Educator,

This resource guide is intended as an inspiration and a teaching tool to prepare students for a conversation with human rights activist, Kerry Kennedy Cuomo who has graciously agreed to visit Vance High School on February 26, 2001. The guide was created by students, with assistance from their teachers, who are dedicated to human rights and justice for all citizens of the globe. Together, we offer this collection of essays and articles in the spirit of those who sacrifice and work against the odds for others, without personal gain, and who give of themselves to improve the human condition. We challenge each of you to weave lessons of compassion into all aspects of education, and we thank you for your commitment to inspire children not to be indifferent to the suffering of others. Included here are reference materials so that you may extend your quest for teaching justice and human dignity beyond the margins of this Project.

With respect and gratitude,

Stephanie G. Ansaldo
Project Director, The Kerry Kennedy Cuomo Project for Human Rights
Founder and President, The Echo Foundation
"In a world where there is a common lament that there are no more heroes, too often cynicism and despair are perceived as evidence of the death of moral courage. That perception is wrong. People of great valor and heart, committed to noble purpose, with long records of personal sacrifice, walk among us in every country of the world. I have spent the last two years traveling the globe to interview the fifty-one individuals from nearly forty countries and five continents included in these pages, people whose lives are filled with extraordinary feats of bravery. I've listened to them speak about the quality and nature of courage, and in their stories I found hope and inspiration, a vision of a better world."

Kerry Kennedy Cuomo
Human Rights Activist
*From her book, “SPEAK TRUTH TO POWER”*
The Kerry Kennedy Cuomo Project

Table of Contents

Foreword.................................................................2
Information about Kerry Kennedy Cuomo.................................3
The Universal Declaration of Human Rights
    “A United Nations Priority”........................................5
    Universal Declaration of Human Rights.............................10

Documents and Attached Curriculum Questions (Questions follow each section)
From the Human Rights Web:
    “Human Rights Emergencies”.........................................16
    “An Introduction to the Human Rights Movement”..................18
    “A Short History of the Human Rights Movement”..................20
“What Are Human Rights?”.............................................23
Iraq: “Impact of 8-Year Sanctions on the People of Iraq”..............24
    “Iraq: Critical Condition”..........................................26
Human Rights in Cambodia................................................29
White House Remarks on Sweatshop Labor................................32
Sweatshops and Women Workers.........................................36
“Bride Burning” Alive and Well in India..............................39
Violence Against Tibetan Women........................................41
Ending Trade in Conflict Diamonds.....................................45
Women and Afghanistan
    The Taliban’s War on Women........................................50
    Stop Gender Apartheid in Afghanistan.............................54

Ulterior Research Materials............................................58
    Websites
    Books
    Organizations

Curriculum Guide: Ideas and Concepts for the Classroom
Things a Student Leader Can do to Encourage Diversity................65
Definitions Related to the Development of “-isms”......................67
Suggestions for Enhancing Our Appreciation of Differences...........68
The Umbrella Concept of Oppression....................................70
    “Hoopes Intercultural Learning Process Chart”...................71

About The Echo Foundation..............................................Appendix A
Kerry Kennedy Cuomo Project Staff and Special Thanks................Appendix B
Foreword

In recent history, there seems to have been a lack of urgency with many intranational disputes around the globe. The absence of large-scale international conflict gives the impression to some that there is little need to be concerned about injustice. In contrast, however, are more subtle, insidious, and socially inimical practices that exist throughout the world. They do not show up on the nightly news nor surface in public debates very often, and so they persist without our notice. They are human rights abuses.

What exactly are human rights? Philosophically, they are those things which all people inherently have because they, as rational living beings, have dignity, which is inherent human worth. In essence, people have human rights simply because they are human. Pragmatically, human rights in today's world include such freedoms as those of life, speech, press, property, assembly, safety, emigration, privacy, and occupation among others.

If a pin were to be put on the map for every human rights infraction, the proliferation of atrocities would come into focus. From Peru to China to the Middle East to Africa to the Balkans to the United States, human rights abuses are everywhere. The abuses may exist as perverse extensions of cultural traditions, or may arise as methods for dictators or other government officials to achieve their ends. These include torture, forced military service for children, suppression of the press, use of chemical or biological agents on humans without their consent, ethnic cleansing, slavery, suspension of a fair trial, abuse of individuals based on their social class, caste, age, or sex, and many others.

To combat such abuses, individuals from both likely and unlikely origins come forth to battle the atrocities which plague our world. They include bankers, writers, lawyers, slaves, farmers, and peasants alike. Regardless of their origin, these individuals all show courage: courage in the face of danger, ostracism, and tradition. That is what the student dialogue with Kerry Kennedy Cuomo at Vance High School on February 28th is all about.

These defenders of human rights should be an inspiration to us all. With each passing day, greater numbers of individuals rise up in support of human rights. Whether we are affected by atrocious deeds or not, it is clear that we should be involved. Beyond the intuitive immorality of watching others who might be just like us die because of injustice, there is mounting historical evidence that apathy is that which feeds the spread of immorality. These are the reasons for which this resource guide was created: because apathy and ignorance are dangerous, because no one should be without the very basic considerations that every human deserves, and because, as Martin Luther King, Jr. once stated, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

Matthew M. Calabria

Matthew M. Calabria

Chairman of Student Advisory Board
Vance High School
Kerry Kennedy Cuomo

Kerry Kennedy Cuomo started working in the field of human rights in 1981 when she investigated abuses committed by U.S. immigration officials against refugees from El Salvador. Since then, her life has been devoted to the vindication of equal justice, to the promotion and protection of basic rights, and to the preservation of the rule of law. Currently she wrote SPEAK TRUTH TO POWER, a book of profiles of 51 human rights defenders around the world to be published by Random House in September, 2000. She has led over 40 human rights delegations to over 30 countries. At a time of diminished idealism and growing cynicism about public service, her life and lectures are testaments to the commitment to the basic values of human rights.

Kennedy Cuomo served as a Board of Directors of the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial, a non-profit organization that addresses the problems of social justice. She ran three programs: The National Juvenile Justice Project, which helps cities create more effective and less costly programs for dealing with young offenders; The RFK Journalism and RFK Book Awards, known as the “poor people’s Pulitzer”, which recognize those authors who prod our conscience and expose the problems of the dispossessed; and the RFK Center for Human Rights, which she founded in 1988.

Kennedy Cuomo established the RFK Center for Human Rights to ensure the protection of rights codified under the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights. The Center provides an ongoing base of support to leading human rights defenders around the world. The Center uncovers and publicizes abuses such as torture, disappearances, repression of free speech and child labor, urges Congress and the U.S. administration to highlight human rights in foreign policy, supplies activists with the resources they need to advance their work and creates other programs to advance respect for human rights.


She has worked on diverse human rights issues such as child labor, disappearances, indigenous land rights, judicial independence, freedom of expression, ethnic violence, impunity, the environment, and women’s rights.

Kennedy Cuomo has appeared on ABC, NBC, CBS, CNN among others, and her commentaries and articles have been published in The Boston Globe, The Chicago Sun-Times, The New York Times, TV Guide and the Yale Journal of
International Law. As a special correspondent for the environmental magazine television program, “Network Earth”, she reported on human rights and the environment. She interviewed human rights leaders for Voice of America.

Ms. Kennedy Cuomo is Chair of the Amnesty International Leadership Council, and is a judge for the Reebok Human Rights Award. She serves on the boards of directors of Amnesty International, the International Center for Ethics, Justice and Public Life at Brandeis University, the Lawyers’ Committee for Human Rights, the Bloody Sunday Trust and the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial, as well as the Gleitzman Foundation’s Special Board of Advisors for the Sakharov Award, and the Editorial Board of Advisors of the Buffalo Human Rights Law Review. She is on the Advisory Committee for the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty, the Committee on the Administration of Justice (Northern Ireland) and the International Campaign for Tibet. She is Co-Chair of the Board of Governors of SpeakOut.com. Ms. Kennedy Cuomo has served in numerous political campaigns, and she is a member of the Massachusetts and District of Columbia bars.

Kerry Kennedy Cuomo is a graduate of Brown University and Boston College Law School. She is married to Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Andrew Cuomo with whom she has three girls, Cara, Mariah and Michaela.
Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Fifty years ago, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a bulwark against oppression and discrimination. In the wake of a devastating world war, which had witnessed some of the most barbarous crimes in human history, the Universal Declaration marked the first time that the rights and freedoms of individuals were set forth in such detail. It also represented the first international recognition that human rights and fundamental freedoms are applicable to every person, everywhere. In this sense, the Universal Declaration was a landmark achievement in world history. Today, it continues to affect people's lives and inspire human rights activism and legislation all over the world.

The Universal Declaration is remarkable in two fundamental aspects. In 1948, the then 58 Member States of the United Nations represented a range of ideologies, political systems and religious and cultural backgrounds, as well as different stages of economic development. The authors of the Declaration, themselves from different regions of the world, sought to ensure that the draft text would reflect these different cultural traditions and incorporate common values inherent in the world's principal legal systems and religious and philosophical traditions. Most important, the Universal Declaration was to be a common statement of mutual aspirations -- a shared vision of a more equitable and just world.

The success of their endeavour is demonstrated by the virtually universal acceptance of the Declaration. Today, the Universal Declaration, translated into nearly 250 national and local languages, is the best known and most cited human rights document in the world. The foundation of international human rights law, the Universal Declaration serves as a model for numerous international treaties and declarations and is incorporated in the constitutions and laws of many countries.

Drafting the Universal Declaration

The preparatory work for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a remarkable and early example of the Organization's capacity to bring about international cooperation and consensus. The text was drafted in two years – between January 1947, when the Commission on Human Rights first met to prepare an International Bill of Human Rights, and December 1948, when the General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration. An eight-member drafting committee prepared the preliminary text of the Universal Declaration. The committee, chaired by Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, widow of the former United States President, agreed on the central importance of affirming universal respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the principles of non-discrimination and civil and political rights, as well as social, cultural and economic rights. The Commission then revised the draft declaration, in the light of replies from Member States, before submitting it to the General Assembly.

The General Assembly, in turn, scrutinized the document, with the 58 Member States voting a total of 1,400 times on practically every word and every clause of the text. There were many debates. Some Islamic States objected to the articles on equal marriage rights and on the right to change religious belief, for example, while several Western countries criticized the inclusion of economic, social and cultural rights. On 10 December 1948, the United Nations General Assembly unanimously
adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, with 8 abstentions. Since then, 10 December is celebrated every year worldwide as Human Rights Day. The adoption of the Declaration was immediately hailed as a triumph, uniting very diverse and even conflicting political regimes, religious systems and cultural traditions. During 1998, the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration is being commemorated all over the world as Human Rights Year.

For the first time in history, the international community embraced a document considered to have universal value -- "a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations". Its Preamble acknowledges the importance of a human rights legal framework to maintaining international peace and security, stating that recognition of the inherent dignity and equal and inalienable rights of all individuals is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world. Elaborating the United Nations Charter's declared purpose of promoting social progress and well-being in larger freedom, the Declaration gives equal importance to economic, social and cultural rights and to civil rights and political liberties, and affords them the same degree of protection. The Declaration has inspired more than 60 international human rights instruments, which together constitute a comprehensive system of legally binding treaties for the promotion and protection of human rights.

The Universal Declaration covers the range of human rights in 30 clear and concise articles. The first two articles lay the universal foundation of human rights: human beings are equal because of their shared essence of human dignity; human rights are universal, not because of any State or international organization, but because they belong to all of humanity. The two articles assure that human rights are the birthright of everyone, not privileges of a select few, nor privileges to be granted or denied. Article 1 declares that "all human beings are born equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood." Article 2 recognizes the universal dignity of a life free from discrimination. "Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status."

The first cluster of articles, 3 to 21, sets forth civil and political rights to which everyone is entitled. The right to life, liberty and personal security, recognized in Article 3, sets the base for all following political rights and civil liberties, including freedom from slavery, torture and arbitrary arrest, as well as the rights to a fair trial, free speech and free movement and privacy.

The second cluster of articles, 22 to 27, sets forth the economic, social and cultural rights to which all human beings are entitled. The cornerstone of these rights is Article 22, acknowledging that, as a member of society, everyone has the right to social security and is therefore entitled to the realization of the economic, social and cultural rights "indispensable" for his or her dignity and free and full personal development. Five articles elaborate the rights necessary for the enjoyment of the fundamental right to social security, including economic rights related to work, fair remuneration and leisure, social rights concerning an adequate standard of living for health, well-being and education, and the right to participate in the cultural life of the community.

The third and final cluster of articles, 28 to 30, provides a larger protective framework in which all human rights are to be universally enjoyed. Article 28 recognizes the right to a social and international order that enables the realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Article 29 acknowledges that, along with rights, human beings also have obligations to the community which also enable them to develop their individual potential freely and fully. Article 30, finally, protects the interpretation of the articles of the Declaration from any outside interference contrary to the purposes and principles of the
United Nations. It explicitly states that no State, group or person can claim, on the basis of the Declaration, to have the right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth in the Universal Declaration.

International Bill of Human Rights

Once the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted, the Commission on Human Rights, the premier human rights intergovernmental body within the United Nations, set out to translate its principles into international treaties that protected specific rights. Given the unprecedented nature of the task, the General Assembly decided to draft two Covenants codifying the two sets of rights outlined in the Universal Declaration: Civil and Political Rights and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The Member States debated the individual provisions for two decades, seeking to give explicit endorsement to certain aspects of the universality of human rights only implicitly referred to in the Universal Declaration, such as the right of all peoples to self-determination, as well as reference to certain vulnerable groups, such as indigenous people and minorities.

Consensus was reached in 1966, and the United Nations General Assembly adopted the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights that year. The preambles and articles 1, 2, 3 and 5 are virtually identical in both International Covenants. Both preambles recognize that human rights derive from the inherent dignity of human beings. Article 1 of each Covenant affirms that all peoples have the right of self-determination and that by virtue of that right they are free to determine their political status and to pursue their economic, social and cultural development. Article 2, in both cases, reaffirms the principle of non-discrimination, echoing the Universal Declaration, while Article 3 stresses that States should ensure the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all human rights. Article 5 of both Covenants echoes the final provision of the Universal Declaration, providing safeguards against the destruction or undue limitation of any human right or fundamental freedom. Two Optional Protocols elaborate certain provisions of the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, one providing for complaints by individuals, the other advocating the abolition of the death penalty.

When they entered into force in 1976, the two International Covenants made many of the provisions of the Universal Declaration effectively binding for States that ratified them. These two International Covenants, together with the Universal Declaration and the Optional Protocols, comprise the International Bill of Human Rights.

Over 60 human rights treaties elaborate fundamental rights and freedoms contained in the International Bill of Human Rights, addressing concerns such as slavery, genocide, humanitarian law, the administration of justice, social development, religious tolerance, cultural cooperation, discrimination, violence against women, and the status of refugees and minorities. The following four Conventions, relating to racial discrimination, torture, women and children, are considered core human rights treaties, together with the two International Covenants:

The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (adopted in 1965/entry into force 1969) was a ground-breaking treaty defining and condemning racial discrimination. Calling for national measures towards the advancement of specific racial or ethnic groups, the Convention also makes the dissemination of ideas based on racial superiority or inspiring racial hatred punishable by law.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

specifies measures for the advancement and empowerment of women in private and public life, particularly in the areas of education, employment, health, marriage and the family.

The Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1984/1987) bans torture and rape as weapons of war. In 1998, in a major effort to help torture victims and to step up international attempts to end torture, the United Nations declared 26 June as the annual International Day in Support of Victims of Torture.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989/1990) is the most universally ratified human rights Convention. Only two Member States, the United States and Somalia, are not yet parties to the Convention, which protects children, among other things, from economic and sexual exploitation.

Some 14 States have incorporated provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child into their constitutions, while 35 have passed new laws conforming to the Convention or amended laws related to child abuse, child labour and adoption. Other Member States have extended the length of compulsory education, guaranteed child refugees and minority children special protection or reformed juvenile justice systems, as stipulated by the Convention.

[for full texts of the United Nations international human rights instruments.]

World Conference on Human Rights

The United Nations designated 1968 as the International Year for Human Rights to mark the twentieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, and convened an International Conference on Human Rights in Tehran, Iran, to enhance national and international human rights efforts and initiatives. After evaluating the impact of the Universal Declaration on national legislation and judicial decisions, the Conference approved the Proclamation of Tehran, which formulated a programme for the future, addressing the problems of colonialism, racial discrimination, illiteracy and the protection of the family. The Tehran Proclamation emphasized particularly the principle of non-discrimination, condemning the policy of apartheid as a "crime against humanity", and urged the international community to ratify the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights adopted by the United Nations two years earlier.

Twenty-five years later, the World Conference on Human Rights, convened in Vienna in 1993, reassessed the progress of United Nations human rights work over the years. The Vienna Conference was marked by an unprecedented degree of support by the international community. Some 7,000 participants, including delegations from 171 States and representatives of more than 840 non-governmental organizations, gathered for two weeks to set out a revitalized programme for global human rights action. There was broad consensus that, with fundamental rights codified and the essential machinery in place, it was time to implement the established human rights standards and norms with greater vigilance.

In adopting the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action by consensus, the World Conference reaffirmed the centrality of the Universal Declaration for human rights protection, and recognized, for the first time unanimously, the right to development as an inalienable right and an integral part of international human rights law. The Conference also emphasized that, as human rights are universal and indivisible as well as interrelated and interdependent, they should be promoted in equal manner. The delegates rejected arguments that some human rights were optional or subordinate to cultural traditions and practices. The Vienna Conference thus gave high priority to preserving the integrity of
the Universal Declaration. Giving new impetus to the worldwide implementation of human rights norms, the Conference emphasized that most violations could be addressed by forcefully implementing existing norms through the mechanisms already available.

Stating that the protection and promotion of human rights are the "first responsibility" of Governments, the Vienna Declaration recognized democracy as a human right, thus strengthening the promotion of democracy and the rule of law. Also, giving high priority to the universal ratification of international human rights treaties, the World Conference urged States especially to ratify promptly the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Similarly, the Conference took innovative steps to protect the rights of vulnerable groups and to bring women's rights into the mainstream of United Nations human rights work, supporting the establishment of a Special Rapporteur on violence against women and calling for an international decade of the world's indigenous peoples.

The World Conference had a catalytic role in revitalizing the human rights programme of the United Nations. The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action provides the international community with a new framework of planning, dialogue and cooperation that enables an integrated approach to promoting human rights. The recognition of the interdependence between democracy, development and human rights, for example, laid the groundwork for increased cooperation among international development agencies and national organizations in promoting human rights. The Vienna Declaration states, for the first time explicitly, that all organs, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system should have a central role in strengthening human rights. Its key institutional recommendation, however, was the establishment of the post of United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to coordinate all human rights activities system-wide. The World Conference also called for a comprehensive five-year review of the progress made in the implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action in 1998. This review coincides with the fiftieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

[for the full text of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action and for information on the five-year review of their implementation.]
On December 10, 1948 the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights the full text of which appears in the following pages. Following this historic act the Assembly called upon all Member countries to publicize the text of the Declaration and "to cause it to be disseminated, displayed, read and expounded principally in schools and other educational institutions, without distinction based on the political status of countries or territories."

PREAMBLE

Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,
Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,
Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law,
Whereas it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations,
Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,
Whereas Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in co-operation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,
Whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge,

Now, Therefore THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY proclaims THIS UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.

Article 1.

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2.

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or
territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

Article 3.

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

Article 4.

No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

Article 5.

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 6.

Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

Article 7.

All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

Article 8.

Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

Article 9.

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Article 10.

Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

Article 11.

(1) Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defence.

(2) No one shall be held guilty of any penal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offence, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the penal offence was committed.

Article 12.

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.
Article 13.
(1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.
(2) Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

Article 14.
(1) Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.
(2) This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 15.
(1) Everyone has the right to a nationality.
(2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

Article 16.
(1) Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.
(2) Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.
(3) The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

Article 17.
(1) Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.
(2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

Article 18.
Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Article 19.
Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Article 20.
(1) Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.
(2) No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

Article 21.
(1) Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.
(2) Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country.
(3) The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

**Article 22.**

Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

**Article 23.**

(1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.
(2) Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.
(3) Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.
(4) Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

**Article 24.**

Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

**Article 25.**

(1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.
(2) Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

**Article 26.**

(1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.
(2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.
(3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

**Article 27.**

(1) Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.
(2) Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

Article 28.

Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.

Article 29.

(1) Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.
(2) In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.
(3) These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 30.

Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.

More information can be found at www.un.org.
Human Rights Emergencies

Contents

- What Constitutes a Human Rights Emergency?
- What Does Not Constitute a Human Rights Emergency?
- What to Do and Who to Contact

What Constitutes a Human Rights Emergency?

As I use the term here, a human rights emergency is a case where the life, health, or mind of a person is under imminent threat from the actions of a government or non-governmental group. Such situations include the following:

- A person and/or his or her family have been the targets of death threats, threats of torture, or other severe bodily harm by police, government forces, or non-governmental groups holding considerable power in the area.

- While in jail, a person is either threatened with torture or is tortured, beaten, or otherwise physically abused.

- A person is arrested and "disappears," that is, authorities either deny that they are holding him/her or, in some cases, deny the existence of the person.

- A person is arrested and held in incommunicado detention, that is, authorities deny that person access to his/her family, doctor, and/or attorney. (This usually indicates that torture or mistreatment is occurring.)

If you have witnessed such an occurrence personally or are personally acquainted with someone who is experiencing something like this, PLEASE contact one or more of the individuals below so that we can help. Situations like this are extremely dangerous, and if someone does not intervene, people often die.

What Does Not Constitute a Human Rights Emergency

The following situations do not constitute a Human Rights emergency in themselves:

- A prisoner is in jail, but is not held incommunicado, is permitted contact with immediate family members and his/her attorney, is not being tortured or mistreated and is not being denied food or medical care.

- You have heard about a human rights emergency through the news media, but have no personal contact with the victims or their families.

This does not mean human rights groups are uninterested in such cases as this. It simply means that immediate action is either not needed, or that the groups probably already know about the situation and have the same or better information than you can give them. By all means, feel free to express your concerns and ask about these situations, but please do so through non-emergency channels.

What to Do and Who to Contact
In cases like this, the best contact is usually Amnesty International, and particularly the Urgent Action Network. The UAN is geared precisely toward responding to situations like this. Human Rights Watch is also helpful in situations like this, and I have also included their number below.

You may phone, fax, or send electronic mail directly to the following addresses:

- Scott Harrison <sharrison@igc.apc.org>, Urgent Action Network Coordinator in the United States, by phone at +1 (303) 440-0913 or +1 (303) 258-7886.

- The International Secretariat <amnestyis@gn.apc.org>, Amnesty's central administrative office, by phone at +44 (71) 413-5500, or by fax at +44 (71) 956-1157.

- Human Rights Watch New York Office <hrwatchnyc@igc.apc.org>, by phone at +1 (212) 972-8400, or by fax at +1 (212) 972-0905.

If you need to send confidential information, or information that might be dangerous to you or others if it became public, you may use the Human Rights Web's PGP Public Key to encrypt your message, and I will forward it by secure means to whomever you want it sent to. (The public key is available from Public Keyservers as well as this page.)

You may also phone me at home at +1 (408) 736-2237. If I am not there, leave voice mail and I will return your call as soon as I can.

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Created on November 21, 1994 / Last edited on January 25, 1997
An Introduction to the Human Rights Movement

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people.

Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law...

These are the second and third paragraphs of the preamble to the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)*, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 10, 1948 without a dissenting vote. It is the first multinational declaration mentioning human rights by name, and the human rights movement has largely adopted it as a charter. I'm quoting them here because it states as well or better than anything I've read what human rights are and why they are important.

The *United Nations Charter*, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, and UN Human Rights convenants were written and implemented in the aftermath of the Holocaust, revelations coming from the Nuremberg war crimes trials, the Bataan Death March, the atomic bomb, and other horrors smaller in magnitude but not in impact on the individuals they affected. A whole lot of people in a number of countries had a crisis of conscience and found they could no longer look the other way while tyrants jailed, tortured, and killed their neighbors.

*In Germany, the Nazis first came for the communists, and I did not speak up, because I was not a Communist. Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak up, because I was not a Jew. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak up, because I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for the Catholics, and I did not speak up, because I was not a Catholic. Then they came for me... and by that time, there was no one to speak up for anyone.*

-- Martin Niemoller, Pastor, German Evangelical (Lutheran) Church

Many also realized that advances in technology and changes in social structures had rendered war a threat to the continued existence of the human race. Large numbers of people in many countries lived under the control of tyrants, having no recourse but war to relieve often intolerable living conditions. Unless some way was found to relieve the lot of these people, they could revolt and become the catalyst for another wide-scale and possibly nuclear war. For perhaps the first time, representatives from the majority of governments in the world came to the conclusion that basic human rights must be protected, not only for the sake of the individuals and countries involved, but to preserve the human race.

*Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children. This is not a way of life at all in any true sense. Under the clouds of war, it is humanity hanging on a cross of iron.*
-- Dwight D. Eisenhower  
President of the United States  
*I know not with what weapons World War III will be fought, but World War IV will be fought with sticks and stones.*

-- Albert Einstein

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**My Reasons for Working for Human Rights**

My reasons for believing in and supporting human rights stem from what I saw growing up in El Paso, Texas, less than two miles from the border with Mexico and Mexico's second largest city, Ciudad Juarez. Like most border cities, Juarez was filled with very poor people who had left the countryside looking for a better life. They were prey to every kind of abuse, from harrassment to false imprisonment to beatings to rape to politically-motivated murder by authorities and others on both sides of the border with more power and influence than they had.

I doubt I would have known such things existed from my own experience. It became part of my experience, though, and I've never since been able to take my freedom and lack of fear for granted.

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*Created on July 20, 1994 / Last edited on January 25, 1997*

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The concept of human rights has existed under several names in European thought for many centuries, at least since the time of King John of England. After the king violated a number of ancient laws and customs by which England had been governed, his subjects forced him to sign the *Magna Carta*, or Great Charter, which enumerates a number of what later came to be thought of as human rights. Among them were the right of the church to be free from governmental interference, the rights of all free citizens to own and inherit property and be free from excessive taxes. It established the right of widows who owned property to choose not to remarry, and established principles of due process and equality before the law. It also contained provisions forbidding bribery and official misconduct.

The political and religious traditions in other parts of the world also proclaimed what have come to be called human rights, calling on rulers to rule justly and compassionately, and delineating limits on their power over the lives, property, and activities of their citizens.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Europe several philosophers proposed the concept of "natural rights," rights belonging to a person by nature and because he was a human being, not by virtue of his citizenship in a particular country or membership in a particular religious or ethnic group. This concept was vigorously debated and rejected by some philosophers as baseless. Others saw it as a formulation of the underlying principle on which all ideas of citizens' rights and political and religious liberty were based.

In the late 1700s two revolutions occurred which drew heavily on this concept. In 1776 most of the British colonies in North America proclaimed their independence from the British Empire in a document which still stirs feelings, and debate, the U.S. Declaration of Independence.

*We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.*

In 1789 the people of France overthrew their monarchy and established the first French Republic. Out of the revolution came the "Declaration of the Rights of Man."

The term natural rights eventually fell into disfavor, but the concept of universal rights took root. Philosophers such as Thomas Paine, John Stuart Mill, and Henry David Thoreau expanded the concept. Thoreau is the first philosopher I know of to use the term, "human rights," and does so in his treatise, *Civil Disobedience*. This work has been extremely influential on individuals as different as Leo Tolstoy, Mahatma Gandhi, and Martin Luther King. Gandhi and King, in particular, developed their ideas on non-violent resistance to unethical government actions from this work.

Other early proponents of human rights were English philosopher John Stuart Mill, in his *Essay on Liberty*, and American political theorist Thomas Paine in his essay, *The Rights of Man*.

The middle and late 19th century saw a number of issues take center stage, many of them issues we in the late 20th century would consider human rights issues. They included slavery, serfdom, brutal working conditions, starvation wages, child labor, and, in the Americas, the "Indian Problem", as it was known at the time. In the United States, a bloody war over slavery came close to destroying a country.
founded only eighty years earlier on the premise that, "all men are created equal." Russia freed its serfs the year that war began. Neither the emancipated American slaves nor the freed Russian serfs saw any real degree of freedom or basic rights for many more decades, however.

For the last part of the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century, though, human rights activism remained largely tied to political and religious groups and beliefs. Revolutionaries pointed at the atrocities of governments as proof that their ideology was necessary to bring about change and end the government's abuses. Many people, disgusted with the actions of governments in power, first got involved with revolutionary groups because of this. The governments then pointed at bombings, strike-related violence, and growth in violent crime and social disorder as reasons why a stern approach toward dissent was necessary.

Neither group had any credibility with the other and most had little or no credibility with uninvolved citizens, because their concerns were generally political, not humanitarian. Politically partisan protests often just encouraged more oppression, and uninvolved citizens who got caught in the crossfire usually cursed both sides and made no effort to listen to the reasons given by either.

Nonetheless many specific civil rights and human rights movements managed to affect profound social changes during this time. Labor unions brought about laws granting workers the right to strike, establishing minimum work conditions, forbidding or regulating child labor, establishing a forty hour work week in the United States and many European countries, etc. The women's rights movement succeeded in gaining for many women the right to vote. National liberation movements in many countries succeeded in driving out colonial powers. One of the most influential was Mahatma Ghandi's movement to free his native India from British rule. Movements by long-oppressed racial and religious minorities succeeded in many parts of the world, among them the U.S. Civil Rights movement.

In 1961 a group of lawyers, journalists, writers, and others, offended and frustrated by the sentencing of two Portuguese college students to twenty years in prison for having raised their glasses in a toast to "freedom" in a bar, formed Appeal for Amnesty, 1961. The appeal was announced on May 28 in the London Observer's Sunday Supplement. The appeal told the stories of six "prisoners of conscience" from different countries and of different political and religious backgrounds, all jailed for peacefully expressing their political or religious beliefs, and called on governments everywhere to free such prisoners. It set forth a simple plan of action, calling for strictly impartial, non-partisan appeals to be made on behalf of these prisoners and any who, like them, had been imprisoned for peacefully expressing beliefs.

The response to this appeal was larger than anyone had expected. The one-year appeal grew, was extended beyond the year, and Amnesty International and the modern human rights movement were both born.

The modern human rights movement didn't invent any new principles. It was different from what preceded it primarily in its explicit rejection of political ideology and partisanship, and its demand that governments everywhere, regardless of ideology, adhere to certain basic principles of human rights in their treatment of their citizens.

This appealed to a large group of people, many of whom were politically inactive, not interested in joining a political movement, not ideologically motivated, and didn't care about creating "the perfect society" or perfect government. They were simply outraged that any government dared abuse, imprison, torture, and often kill human beings whose only crime was in believing differently from their government and saying so in public. They (naively, according to many detractors) took to writing letters to governments and publicizing the plight of these people in hopes of persuading or embarrassing abusive governments into better behavior.

Like the early years of many movements, the early years of the modern human rights movement were rocky. "Appeal for Amnesty, 1961" had only the most rudimentary organization. The modern organization named Amnesty International gained the structure it has mostly by learning from mistakes. Early staff members operated with no oversight, and money was wasted. This led to establishing strict financial accountability. Early staff members and volunteers got involved in partisan politics while
working on human rights violations in their own countries. This led to the principle that AI members were not, as a matter of practice, asked or permitted to work on cases in their country. Early campaigns failed because Amnesty was misinformed about certain prisoners. This led to the establishment of a formidable research section and the process of "adoption" of prisoners of conscience only after a thorough investigation phase.

The biggest lesson Amnesty learned, and for many the distinguishing feature of the organization, however, was to stick to what it knew and not go outside its mandate. A distinguished human rights researcher I know once said to me that, "Amnesty is an organization that does only one or two things, but does them extremely well." Amnesty International does not take positions on many issues which many people view as human rights concerns (such as abortion) and does not endorse or criticize any form of government. While it will work to ensure a fair trial for all political prisoners, it does not adopt as prisoners of conscience anyone who has used or advocated violence for any reason. It rarely provides statistical data on human rights abuses, and never compares the human rights records of one country with another. It sticks to work on behalf of individual prisoners, and work to abolish specific practices, such as torture and the death penalty.

A lot of people found this too restrictive. Many pro-democracy advocates were extremely upset when the organization dropped Nelson Mandela (at the time an active South African anti-apartheid activist in jail on trumped-up murder charges) from its list of adopted prisoners, because of his endorsing a violent struggle against apartheid. Others were upset that Amnesty would not criticize any form of government, even one which (like Soviet-style Communism, or Franco-style fascism) appeared inherently abusive and incompatible with respect for basic human rights. Many activists simply felt that human rights could be better served by a broader field of action.

Over the years combinations of these concerns and others led to formation of other human rights groups. Among them were groups which later merged to form Human Rights Watch, the first of them being Helsinki Watch in 1978. Regional human rights watchdog groups often operated under extremely difficult conditions, especially those in the Soviet Block. Helsinki Watch, which later merged with other groups to form Human Rights Watch, started as a few Russian activists who formed to monitor the Soviet Union's compliance with the human rights provisions in the Helsinki accords. Many of its members were arrested shortly after it was formed and had little chance to be active.


Although there were differences in philosophy, focus, and tactics between the groups, for the most part they remained on speaking terms, and a number of human rights activists belonged to more than one.

Recognition for the human rights movement and Amnesty International in particular, grew during the 1970s. Amnesty gained permanent observer status as an NGO at the United Nations. Its reports became mandatory reading in legislatures, state departments and foreign ministries around the world. Its press releases received respectful attention, even when its recommendations were ignored by the governments involved. In 1977 it was awarded the Nobel Peace prize for its work.

Unfortunately, the Nobel Peace Prize didn't impress the governments Amnesty most wanted to get through to. That year the Argentine military dictatorship reportedly claimed that Amnesty was a front organization for the Soviet KGB. This supposedly occurred the same week that the Soviet government claimed Amnesty was run by the U.S. CIA, to the amusement of human rights activists and, presumably, embarrassment of certain people in Argentina and the Soviet Union.

(To be continued)
Human rights are the rights a person has simply because he or she is a human being. Human rights are held by all persons equally, universally, and forever. Human rights are inalienable; you cannot lose these rights any more than you can cease being a human being. Human rights are indivisible: you cannot be denied a right because it is "less important" or "non-essential." Human rights are interdependent: all human rights are part of a complementary framework. For example, your ability to participate in your government is directly affected by your right to express yourself, to get an education, and even to obtain the necessities of life.

Another definition for human rights is those basic standards without which people cannot live in dignity. To violate someone's human rights is to treat that person as though she or he were not a human being. To advocate human rights is to demand that the human dignity of all people be respected. In claiming these human rights, everyone also accepts the responsibility not to infringe on the rights of others and to support those whose rights are abused or denied.

Human rights are both inspirational and practical. Human rights principles hold up the vision of a free, just, and peaceful world and set minimum standards for how individuals and institutions everywhere should treat people. Human rights also empower people with a framework for action when those minimum standards are not met, for people still have human rights even if the laws or those in power do not recognize or protect them.

We experience our human rights every day in the United States when we worship according to our belief, or choose not to worship at all; when we debate and criticize government policies; when we join a trade union; when we travel to other parts of the country or overseas. Although we usually take these actions for granted, people both here in North America and in other countries do not enjoy all these liberties equally. Human rights violations occur in this country when a parent abuses a child, when a family is homeless, when a school provides inadequate education, when women are paid less than men, or when one person steals from another. Human rights are an every day iss
Impact of the 8-Year Sanctions War on the People of Iraq

From UN Reports

- "The increase in mortality reported in public hospitals for children under five years of age (an excess of some 40,000 deaths yearly compared with 1989) is mainly due to diarrhea, pneumonia and malnutrition. In those over five years of age, the increase (an excess of some 50,000 deaths yearly compared with 1989) is associated with heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, cancer, liver or kidney diseases." Approximately 250 people die every day in Iraq due to the effect of the sanctions. - UNICEF, April 1998.

- "The Oil-for-Food plan has not yet resulted in adequate protection of Iraq's children from malnutrition/disease. Those children spared from death continue to remain deprived of essential rights addressed in the Convention of Rights of the Child." - UNICEF, April 1998.

- Seven years after the imposition of the blockade on the people of Iraq, more than 1.2 million people, including 750,000 children below the age of five, have died because of the scarcity of food and medicine. - Verified by the UN, June 1997.

- "32 percent of children under five, some 960,000 children are chronically malnourished - a rise of 72 percent since 1991. Almost one quarter (23%) are underweight - twice as high as the levels found in neighboring Jordan or Turkey." - UNICEF, November 1997.


- "One out of every 4 Iraqi infants is malnourished. ... Chronic malnutrition among children under five has reached 27.5%. After a child reaches two or three years of age, chronic malnutrition is difficult to reverse and damage on the child's development is likely to be permanent." UNICEF and World Food Programmed (WFP), May 1997.

- "Iraq's health system is close to collapse because medicines and other life-saving supplies scheduled for importation under the 'oil-for-food' deal have not arrived. ... Government drug warehouses and pharmacies have few stocks of medicines and medical supplies. The consequences of this situation are causing a near-breakdown of the health care system, which is reeling under the pressure of being deprived of medicine, other basic supplies and spare parts." World Health Organizations (WHO), February 1997.

- "4,500 children under the age of 5 are dying each month from hunger and disease. ... The situation is disastrous for children. Many are living on the very margin of survival." UNICEF, October 1996.

- "Since the onset of sanctions, there has been a six-fold increase in the mortality rate for children under five and the majority of the country's population has been on a semi-starvation diet."
WHO, March 1996.

• "More than one million Iraqis have died-567,000 of them children-as a direct consequence of economic sanctions . . . As many as 12% of the children surveyed in Baghdad are wasted, 28% stunted and 29% underweight." - UN FAO, December 1995.

• "Famine threatens four million people in sanctions-hit Iraq - one fifth of the population - following a poor grain harvest...The human situation is deteriorating. Living conditions are precarious and are at pre-famine level for at least four million people. ... The deterioration in nutritional status of children is reflected in the significant increase of child mortality, which has risen nearly fivefold since 1990." - UN FAO, September 1995.

• "Alarming food shortages are causing irreparable damage to an entire generation of Iraqi children". - UN FAO and WFP, September 1995.

• "Sanctions are inhibiting the importation of spare parts, chemicals, reagents, and the means of transportation required to provide water and sanitation services to the civilian population of Iraq. ... What has become increasingly clear is that no significant movement towards food security can be achieved so long as the embargo remains in place. All vital contributors to food availability - agricultural production, importation of foodstuffs, economic stability and income generation, are dependent on Iraq's ability to purchase and import those items vital to the survival of the civilian population." - UNICEF, 1995

Iraq Action Coalition ... http://iraqaction.org ...

http://iraqaction.org/involved.html

[Iraq Action Coalition - homepage]
Iraq: Critical Condition

text from: http://www.best.com/~lloyd007/grain/iraq/iraq.htm

There is no Hope

For Salme, the critically ill, there is no hope. Wringing her hands helplessly she gazes down at her semiconscious son who lies still on one of the few beds with a sheet and a pillow on it. Her son, Jassim, was a robust 11 year old who used to love to play soccer on the streets of Basra their home in southern Iraq.

Then he was stricken with cancer. His case is not unique. Since the Gulf War there has been a sixfold increase in the incidence of childhood cancers mostly in the south of Iraq. In the pediatric leukemia ward of Al Mansour tears begin to stream down Salme’s cheeks. Her husband is in a mental asylum she explains, she doesn’t have any money to purchase the drugs for her child. The medicine costs about 700,000 Iraqi Dinars which is unaffordable for people whose average salaries are 7000 to 15,000 Iraqi Dinars per month. Drugs are very hard to find, and when they are available they are usually shared amongst the patients which means that no one child gets to complete a course of treatment.

Too Weak to Weep

It is very hot inside the Basra Pediatric and Maternity Hospital in Basra in southern Iraq. A young mother strokes her baby who lies still on the bed. Surrounding her is other babies, all suffering from malnutrition. Iraq has never seen such levels of malnutrition in modern times. The oil rich nation used to have a malnutrition rate that was similar to the developed nations in the world. Today it ranks amongst the poorest countries in the world. Children die by the thousands of malnutrition, and gastrointestinal diseases. Despite the UN’s food for oil plans, because of the extraordinary bombing of Iraq’s oil fields the country cannot pump the amount of oil that is allowed in the UN oil for food plan. Meanwhile, according to UNICEF 32% of children under five suffer from chronic malnutrition.

Angels of Mercy

It’s 2:00 AM at the Al Monzer Hotel in Amman Jordan. In the dingy smoke stained lobby of the Hotel, three Americans are busy counting medicine and cataloging the contents. Bottles of antibiotics vials of Lidocaine, alcohol, anticoagulants, and other medicines are accounted for. The Americans are a part of a delegation from a group in the United States called Voices in the Wilderness. They are taking medicine in to Iraq in direct defiance of the UN/US sanctions. The group could get and exemption from the US Department of the Treasury but Barbara Lubin, who is the leader of the Middle East Childrens Alliance and the delegations leader, says that she doesn’t want to ask for permission to take medicine into Iraq. “I refuse to legitimize the killing of innocent people and the withholding of medicine from children,” she says. So they go and risk 12 years in prison and $1,000,000 in fines for taking medicine to sick and dying children in Iraq.
A Date with the Doctor

Perhaps he knew. Only 8 months old, and looking at the doctor with his eyes filled with anticipation. At the Bridges to Baghdad Clinic in Basra, it is the medicine brought by groups like the Voices in the Wilderness that keeps health care going. Women and children travel from miles around to come to this clinic and others like them. Bridges to Baghdad is operated and funded by an Italian group that is an NGO (Non Governmental Organization). There are others, the French has a group in Baghdad called Enfants Du Monde, but there are no American NGO's operating in Iraq yet.

No Cure: No Asprin: Simply Nothing

There is no medicine to help. Forget a cure, even a tablet to relieve his pain from leukemia would be welcomed here in Basra Iraq. But there is nothing. Slowly, because of the cancer, the boy begins to bleed to death. Leukemia in children in Iraq has risen sixfold according to experts and UN officials. Some experts suspect that the reason behind this incredible increase is due to the use of depleted uranium that the US used on munitions during the Gulf War.

Pure Gratitude

Standing in a ward of the Basra Pediatric and Maternity Hospital and preparing to leave, a woman walks up to ask in arabic who we were and where we were from. After being told that we were American she asked why we were visiting the hospital. As she was told that we were bringing medicine to Iraq, she grabbed Barbara and in a display of raw emotion wept as she kissed Barbara. "God Bless you all," she said as we left the room.

The Lasting Costs of War

Radiation is still very high in southern Iraq. Children are being born with birth defects statistically at numbers unseen before in Iraq's history. Many people are suffering from Gulf War like symptoms. The world has yet to investigate the unseen effects from the aftermath of the war.

A Proud People

The Iraqis are very proud. At one time their country was a jewel, rich from its vast oil reserves, Iraq had created one of the most advanced medical care systems in the entire middle east. Today it is worse off than a third world country. Yet, there is a fierce independence. They march to the UN. They protest the injustice of the sanctions. And they continue to struggle.
Curriculum Questions on Iraq and Economic Sanctions

1. Are sanctions ethical means by which to deter dictators?
2. Are there other ways to deter military action on the part of dictators?
Human Rights in Cambodia

Intro to Human Rights in Cambodia
by Craig Etcheson

Over the course of the last thirty years, Cambodia has experienced one of the most dreadful human rights records in modern history. The worst was between 1975 and 1979 under the Communist Party of Kampuchea, the "Khmer Rouge," who carried out war crimes, genocide and other crimes against humanity on a scale that left more than one quarter of the population dead and the remainder in a semi-permanent state of shock. Though the situation improved markedly with the overthrow of the Khmer Rouge regime in 1979, and has advanced since then, the improvement has been unsteady and relative. Even today, following the end of the three decades of civil war in 1998, human rights remain more a theoretical aspiration than a reality for the vast majority of Cambodia's population. The situation is exacerbated by a judicial system that remains fundamentally unreconstructed from its authoritarian roots and a "culture of impunity" among elite segments of society in which the powerful prey at will on the society at large.

Cambodian law still explicitly denies many rights to the twenty percent of the population that is not of the majority Khmer ethnic group. Trafficking in humans has become a major industry in recent years. Though women were accorded equal rights with men under the 1993 constitution, cultural practices continue to deny females fair treatment in many spheres of life. Torture is commonplace in police custody, prison conditions remain mostly substandard, and regular reports of extrajudicial execution by authorities and their cooperation with "mob justice" continue to accumulate; mob justice has been growing because the people believe the courts are corrupt, and the police seem to agree. Perhaps the most glaring and emblematic of human rights issues in Cambodia is the fact that after perpetrating one of the worst genocides in history, not a single leader of the Khmer Rouge movement has ever been brought before a court of law to answer for those crimes. Since the United Nations peacekeeping mission to Cambodia in 1992-1993 planted the first seeds of multi-party liberal democracy in Cambodia, however, a score or more indigenous human rights organizations have been founded and are struggling to advance on a broad spectrum of issues ranging from
reform of the police, military and judiciary, children's, women's and labor rights, electoral reform and good governance, and respect for the rule of law, including ending the impunity of the Khmer Rouge for their genocidal policies of the 1970s. These dedicated pioneers deserve the support of the international community in their brave efforts to improve the lot of their fellow citizens.
Curriculum Questions Concerning Human Rights in Cambodia

1. Could a situation in which the aristocracy feeds on the rest of society ever arise in the United States?
2. In a democratic nation, should the majority have the ability to implement laws affecting the minority? If so, to what degree? If not, why not?
Sweatshop Labor

April 14, 1997

TRANSCRIPT

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
AT APPAREL INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP EVENT

The East Room

April 14, 1, 05 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. I would like to begin, first of all, by thanking all of the members of this partnership -- the co-chairs, Paul Charron of Liz Claiborne and Linda Golodner of The National Consumers League; Jay Mazur of UNITE. I thank Kathie Lee Gifford, who has done so much to bring public attention to this issue. I thank the members of Congress who are here: Congressman George Miller, Congressman Bernie Sanders, Congressman Lane Evans, Congressman Marty Martinez, and especially I thank my good friend, Senator Tom Harkin, who first brought this issue to my attention a long time ago. Thank you very much, sir, and thank all of you for your passionate concern. (Applause.)

I thank the former Secretary of Labor, Bob Reich, and acting Secretary, Cynthia Metzler and Secretary-designate, Alexis Herman who is here. And I thank Maria Echaveste and Gene Sperling for their work.
The announcement we make today will improve the lives of millions of garment workers around the world. As has now been painfully well documented, some of the clothes and shoes we buy here in America are manufactured under working conditions which are deplorable and unacceptable. Mostly overseas, but unbelievably, sometimes here at home as well.

In our system of enterprise, which I have done my best to promote and advance, we support the proposition that businesses are in business to make a profit. But in our society, which we believe to be good and want to be better, we know that human rights and labor rights must be a part of the basic framework within which all businesses honorably compete.

As important as the fabric apparel workers make for us is the fabric of their lives, which is a part of the fabric of our lives -- here at home and around the world. Their health and their safety, their ability to make a decent wage, their ability to bring children into this world and raise them with dignity and have their children see their parents working with dignity, that's an important part of the quality of our lives and will have a lot to do with the quality of our children's future.

Last August, when the Vice President and I brought together the leaders of some of our nations largest apparel and footwear companies, and representatives of labor, consumers, human rights and religious groups I was genuinely moved at the shared outrage at sweatshop abuses and the shared determination to do something about it. That led to this apparel industry partnership. This partnership has reached an agreement -- as already has been said -- that will significantly reduce the use of sweatshop labor over the long run. It will give American consumers greater confidence in the products they buy.

And, again, I say they have done a remarkable thing. Paul Charron said it was just the beginning because even though there are some very impressive and big companies represented on this stage, there are some which are not. But I would like to ask all the members of the partnership here to stand and I think we ought to express our appreciation to them for what they have done. (Applause.)

Now, here's what they agreed to do: first, a workplace code of conduct that companies will voluntarily adopt, and require their contractors to adopt, to dramatically improve the conditions under which goods are made. The code will establish a maximum work week, a cap of 12 hours on the amount of overtime a company can require, require that employers pay at least the minimum or prevailing wage, respect basic labor rights. It will require safe and healthy working conditions and freedom from abuse and harassment. Most important, it will crack down on child labor -- prohibiting the employment of those under 15 years of age in most countries.

It will also take steps to ensure that this code is enforced and that American consumers will know that the tenets of the agreement are being honored. The apparel industry has developed new standards for internal and external monitoring to make sure companies and contractors live up to that code of conduct. It will also form an independent association to help implement the agreement and to develop an effective way to share this information with consumers, such as labels on clothing, seals of approval in advertising or signs in
stores to guarantee that no sweatshop labor was used on a given product line.

Of course, the agreement is just the beginning. We know sweatshop labor will not vanish overnight. We know that while this agreement is an historic step, our real measure of progress must be in the changed and improved lives and livelihoods of apparel workers here at home and around the world. That is why we need more companies to join this crusade and follow its strict rules of conduct.

One of the association's most important tasks will be to expand participation to as many large and small companies as possible. And I urge all of America's apparel companies to become part of this effort. If these people are willing to put their names, their necks, their reputations and their bottom lines on the bottom line of America, every other company in America in their line of work ought to be willing to do the very same thing. (Applause.)

We have spent a lot of time trying to find jobs for everybody in America who wants to work, and we have spent a lot of time saying that people who are able-bodied, who can work, should be required to work. Now, we are also reminding ourselves that no one, anywhere, should have to put their safety or their dignity on the line to support themselves or their children. This is a great day for America, a great day for the cause of human rights, and I believe a great day for free enterprise. And I thank all of those who are here who made it possible.

I'm proud that this agreement was industry-led and wholly voluntary. Like the TV industry's decision to rate its programming, like the new private sector effort to help move people from welfare to work, like the high-tech industry's efforts to wire our schools and our classrooms to the Internet, all of them, by the year 2000, which we will continue this Saturday.

This is further evidence that we can solve our problems by working together in new and creative ways. The apparel industry understands that we all share a stake in preparing our country for the 21st century and preparing the world to be a good partner. Reaching across lines that have too often divided us in the past, this new partnership will create more opportunity for working families. It will demand more responsibility for working conditions. It will build a stronger community here in America and bind us to the community of people all around the world who believe in the value of work, but who also believe in the importance of its dignity and sanctity.

Thank you and God bless you all. (Applause.)
Curriculum Questions Concerning Sweatshop Labor

1. Should sweatshop labor be boycotted because of its harsh working conditions, or used because it at least provides people in third world countries with some income?
2. To what degree should America intervene in sweatshop usage? Should the nation do more than just ban sweatshops in America?
Sweatshops and Women Workers

The Department of Labor defines a work place as a sweatshop if it violates two or more of the most basic labor laws including child labor, minimum wage, overtime and fire safety laws. For many, the word sweatshop conjures up images of dirty, cramped, turn of the century New York tenements where immigrant women worked as seamstresses. High-rise tenement sweatshops still do exist, but, today, even large, brightly lit factories can be the sites of rampant labor abuses. Sweatshop workers report horrible working conditions including sub-minimum wages, no benefits, non-payment of wages, forced overtime, sexual harassment, verbal abuse, corporal punishment, and illegal firings. Children can often be found working in sweatshops instead of going to school. Sweatshop operators are notorious for avoiding giving maternity leave by firing pregnant women and forcing women workers to take birth control or to abort their pregnancies. Sweatshop operators can best control a pool of workers that are ignorant of their rights as workers. Therefore, bosses often refuse to hire unionized workers and intimidate or fire any worker suspected of speaking with union representatives or trying to organize her fellow workers.

The notorious sweatshops of the age of Big Business (the late 19th and early 20th centuries) virtually disappeared after World War II because of increased government regulation of monopolies and the rise of trade unions. Sweatshops began to reappear again, however, during the 1980's and 1990's because of economic globalization. Today's economy is described as global because advancements in technology have made it possible for large corporations that were once confined to a specific geographic location to become large "multi-nationals."

The popularity of the "free" market following the fall of Communism and a rise in anti-union sentiment, coupled with government programs (like NAFTA and GATT) designed to encourage free trade, have hastened the globalization process. Large corporations are now free to seek out low-wage havens: impoverished countries where corporations benefit from oppressive dictatorial regimes that actively suppress workers' freedoms of speech and association. Even in North America, where the North American Free Trade Agreement is supposed to enforce a minimum standard for workers' rights, corporations concentrate in maquiladoras, "free trade zones" that were created by NAFTA, where the workers' rights provisions of the Agreement simply do not apply. Corporations have been fleeing countries with relatively prosperous economies and stable, democracies in droves not only to take advantage of cheap labor, but to escape government scrutiny and criticism from human rights and workers' rights organizations. Guess? Clothing Co., for example, has always produced the majority of its goods in the U.S. but threatened to move 75% of this manufacturing to Mexico last year in response to Department of Labor citations and highly publicized humanitarian appeals. According to the Department of Labor, over 50% of U.S. garment factories are sweatshops. Many sweatshops are run in this country's apparel centers: California, New York, Dallas, Miami and Atlanta.

There are probably sweatshops in every country in the world - anywhere where there is a pool of exploitable workers. Logically, the poorer a country is the more exploitable its people are. Labor violations are, therefore, especially widespread in third world countries. Nike has been criticized for unethical labor practices in its Chinese, Vietnamese and Indonesian shoe factories, and Haitian garment factories. Non-profit groups have documented the labor violations of retailers like Philips-Van Heusen and the Gap in factories throughout Latin America.
As mentioned above, however, developing countries are not the only ones with sweatshops. Guess? Clothing Corporation, for example, has been cited numerous times by the Department of Labor for the use of contract sweatshops in California.

In the garment industry, the typical sweatshop worker is a woman (90% of all sweatshop workers are women). She is young and, often, missing the chance for an education because she must work long hours to support a family. In America, she is often a recent or undocumented immigrant. She is almost always non-union and usually unaware that, even if she is in this country illegally, she still has rights as a worker.

Many of the companies directly running sweatshops are small and don't have much name recognition. However, virtually every retailer in the U.S. has ties to sweatshops. The U.S. is the biggest market for the garment industry and almost all the garment sales in this country are controlled by five corporations: Wal-Mart, JC Penney, Sears The May Company (owns and operates Lord & Taylor, Hecht's, Filene's and others) and Federated Department Stores (owns and operates Bloomingdale's, Macy's, Burdine's, Stern's and others).

Several industry leaders have been cited for labor abuses by the Department of Labor. Of these, Guess? Clothing Co. is one of the worst offenders - Guess? was suspended indefinitely from the Department of Labor's list of "good guys" because their contractors were cited for so many sweatshop violations.

Other companies contract out their production to overseas manufacturers whose labor rights violations have been exposed by U.S. and international human rights groups. These include Nike, Disney, Wal-Mart, Reebok, Phillips-Van Heusen, the Gap, Liz Claiborne and Ralph Lauren.

Even when companies are caught violating workers' rights, the punishment is often nominal. Fines that may seem hefty to us are insignificant to companies reaping multi-million dollar profits. The truth is, business and government are a lot more connected to each other than most people think. Our economy rewards the highest bidder among consumers and the lowest bidder among producers. Foreign governments, desperate for economic gain, often deliberately set their national minimum wage below what it would actually take a worker to support herself and her family. The citizens of a country starve and suffer while the elite class and corrupt government officials reap the benefits of globalization.

The Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 officially prohibits sweatshops. However, because of understaffing at the Department of Labor and corporations' strategies for distancing themselves from the production of their goods by contracting production out to many different manufacturers, enforcement is lax. Earlier this year Stop Sweatshops Bills were introduced in Congress that would amend the Fair Labor Standards Act to hold companies responsible for the labor violations of their contractors.

President Clinton has also created an Apparel Industry Task Force of both labor rights and corporate interests to address the issue of sweatshops. The Task Force's first resolution, however, failed to address many important issues for workers. The Task Force does not require member-corporations to pay their workers a living wage, instead requiring only the, often substandard, minimum wage set by the government of a corporation's host country. The resolution allows member-corporations to force their workers to labor as many as 60 hours a week during regular business circumstances, and even more under vaguely defined "extraordinary" business circumstances. The Task Force is due to release its second report this November. However, reports indicate that corporate interests continue to be unyielding to the requests of human and workers' rights groups.

Corporations set up sweatshops in the name of "competition". In reality these corporations are not
facing profit loses or bankruptcy, just too little profit! During this century, workers real wages have
gone down while CEO's salaries have skyrocketed. In 1965 the average CEO made 44 times the
average factory worker. Today, the average CEO makes 212 times the salary of the average
worker.
Source: "http://aflcio.paywatch.org/ceopay/problem/index.html"
Corporations have skewed priorities. Many are putting expenses like CEO salaries and advertising
costs before the well-being of their workers. For example, a Haitian worker sewing children's
pajamas for Disney would have to toil full-time for 14.5 years to earn what Michael Eisner makes
in one hour! Here's another staggering statistic: Nike could pay all its individual workers enough to
feed and clothe themselves and their families if it would just devote 1% of its advertising budget to
workers' salaries each year! Corporations falsely claim that they are victims of the global economy
when, in fact, corporations help create and maintain this system.

Curriculum Questions Concerning Sweatshops in the United States

1. A business is considered a sweatshop by the U.S. Department of Labor under what conditions?

2. Who is a typical sweatshop worker? Where in the United States are most sweatshops located?

3. Discuss the laws regulating labor conditions in the United States. How effective has the Labor
   Department been in enforcing these laws? Which bodies are working for improvements in the
   workforce?

4. Research labor conditions in America's history. Why are we hearing so much about them
   again? What economic conditions have fostered this system?

This is an excerpt from an article which can be found in its entirety at:
'Bride Burning' alive and well in India:
Police say every two hours a woman is killed over dowry

September 12, 1995
NEW DELHI, India (CNN) -- For years, victims of so-called "bride burnings" have been crowding a unit of a New Delhi hospital -- young women whose husbands and in-laws have set them on fire in disputes over dowries.
In 1986 Mooni's in-laws burned her to death when her parents refused to give them more money. Her mother, Appa Shahjihan, says police laughed when she went to seek justice for her daughter.
"I was humiliated," she remembers, crying.
So Shahjihan started a shelter and support office for victims of dowry disputes. Police say every two hours a woman in India is killed over a dowry -- and dozens of others are harassed or beaten.
Women like Sudesh, whose husband's family tried to burn her.
"They had a can of oil and were pushing me toward the oven fire, but I managed to run away and scream so the neighbors came running."
Burning is common because in-laws can then claim it was a cooking accident. "They had a can of oil and were pushing me toward the oven fire," recalls Sudesh. "But I managed to run away and scream so the neighbors came running."
Dowries are as old as India, but in recent years the stakes have risen. The bride's family is expected to hand over cash and gifts such as televisions, cars and refrigerators.
"There are so many consumer goods available," explains feminist author Mrinal Pande, "and there is a possibility that if you torture the bride as a sort of hostage then there is a chance that her father or brother will try and meet your demands."
With most marriages arranged, there is little love lost between families fighting over the best deal possible. Police say between 1987 and 1991 the number of dowry deaths skyrocketed by 170 percent. Since then, women's groups and new protection laws have managed to stem the tide -- but not turn it.
Young women throughout India are still being harassed for dowries, and an estimated 5,000 a year murdered. All for an ancient custom, one that has clashed with a new form of greed.

From Correspondent Gayle Young
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Curriculum Questions Concerning “Bride Burning”

1. Are there differences between domestic violence in the west and this type of violence? Is this not just a form of violence that seems erotic to the western eye?

2. What problems did Shahjihan face when seeking justice? Is the act of dowry killing becoming legitimized through cultural practices?

3. Consider this quote:
   "I was a simple girl from a low-caste family who was married off at 11 years of age. But when society put me up against the wall, I reacted. I am a human being."
   -Phoolan Devi
   Women’s Rights Activist in India

Discuss the institution of arranged marriages with your classmates.

***For students interested in reading about one woman’s struggle with the custom of arranged marriages, From Sleep Unbound, by Andrée Chedid, is an insightful piece of fiction.

This is an excerpt from the complete article which can be found at:
Violence Against Tibetan Women
International Committee of Lawyers for Tibet, March 10, 1995

Background
Armies of the PRC invaded Tibet in 1950, ostensibly to "liberate the masses" and rid the country of "foreign imperialists." Open rebellion erupted in Eastern Tibet in 1956 and in Lhasa in 1959. According to PRC statistics, 87,000 Tibetans were killed during the 16 month period following the 1959 uprising. An estimated 100,000 Tibetans, including the Dalai Lama, narrowly escaped and fled to India and Nepal.
During the next 20 years, more than 6000 monasteries, nunneries, temples, and shrines were destroyed and much evidence of Tibetan culture was suppressed. A comprehensive survey conducted in 1984 by the Tibetan Government in Exile estimates that 1.2 million Tibetans died as a direct result of the Chinese occupation as victims of war, famine, forced labor, execution, torture and suicide.

The 1985 U.N. World Conference
The Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women adopted by the U.N. World Conference in 1985, established provisions to guarantee women equality, development and peace. The provisions encompass a broad spectrum of women's issues and include special concerns for abused women. The People's Republic of China (PRC) has ratified these strategies, and provides for women's rights in its own constitution and in other international U.N. documents. However, the PRC government has neglected implementation of these strategies, particularly in the situation of Tibetan women. Tibetan women, who participate in the Tibetan non-violent struggle to exercise their right to self-determination, are repeatedly subjected to violent, degrading, and inhumane treatment. The examples cited in this report are indicative of the widespread use of violence against Tibetan women. This violence, defined as unconsented, forceful infringement or profanation of the physical person, includes such acts as unlawful touching, assault, rape, sexual abuse, and torture. These acts of violence target Buddhist nuns, as well as lay women and serve to further the repressive climate in Tibet.

The violence and torture suffered by Tibetan women is particularly poignant as the PRC has volunteered to host the UN World Conference on Women. So far it is unclear whether Tibetan women in exile will receive visas to go to Beijing. The PRC, last year, "selected" 500 Tibetan women to attend the conference. These women are unfortunately not free to openly discuss issues of violence against Tibetan women for fear of persecution. In fact, a Tibetan member of the Chinese delegation to the Cairo population conference was not even allowed by the Chinese delegation to speak in Tibetan to Tibetans in exile. It is therefore imperative that the women's community is accurately informed about Tibetan women's issues and that Tibetan women, not selected by the PRC, are given the opportunity to discuss their issues and concerns in Beijing.

Reasons for Arrest
Tibetan women have been at the forefront of the Tibetan people's non-violent struggle for independence. Women originally planned and led the major uprising against the Chinese occupation in 1959. According to the Tibetan Government in Exile, a nun from Nyemo led a full-scale uprising in 1969 which spread to 18 counties and threatened to take over Lhasa. In 1993, Asia Watch reported a sharp increase in the number of political arrests of Tibetan nuns.
Most Tibetans are arrested or detained for spreading "counter-revolutionary" material, which is loosely interpreted as anything that threatens the 'unity' of China. Actions such as "printing leaflets, forming subversive organizations, spying or passing information to enemies, criticizing the Party while speaking to foreigners, encouraging reactionary singing, hoisting Tibetan flags, and demonstrating" are offenses that provoke arrest. Participation in protests nearly always lead to immediate arrests of demonstrators. During one peaceful demonstration, a Tibetan woman, Ngawang Kyizom shouted such chants as 'Long Live the Dalai Lama' and 'Free Tibet.' Her chants lasted only 90 seconds and were fiercely suppressed when the police arrived. For her 'outburst' she was physically abused and jailed for three years without trial. These political arrests interfere with fundamental freedoms of expression, and are violations of Articles 9, 10, 18, 19, 20 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

The PRC makes special efforts to also stifle religious expression, a violation of Article 18 of the UDHR. It persecutes Buddhist nuns who have dissenting ideologies. Under the repressive regime, forced reeducation and indoctrination sessions target these nuns in an attempt to transform their Tibetan nationalistic or religious beliefs into communist Chinese-favoring ideologies. Nuns who do not adapt are expelled from their nunneries and cannot rejoin other nunneries. Ironically, these and other policies spark more protests from nuns, who use songs and chants to voice their dissent. Unfortunately, nuns are suspected more often than lay women and therefore are more strictly surveyed.

Prison Conditions
Conditions in prison usually are detrimental to the health and well being of imprisoned Tibetans. The two most notorious prisons in central Tibet are Drapchi and Gutsa. Prison cells normally consist of small rooms with no fixtures, small windows, and no light or heat even in the cold winter months. Prisoners are given an empty pail to use as a toilet in their cells but they are allowed to empty it only once a day. Ages of currently imprisoned Tibetan women range from as young as 14 to as old as 75.

Medical research has shown that the food is "insufficient and nutritionally inadequate." A typical prison meal consists of two dumplings at morning and two at night. Mrs. Adhi, a Tibetan woman recounts her bleak prison experience. She was arrested along with 100 other women for participation in protests. In jail, she was selected to feed the pigs. This chore fortunately became the source of her subsistence as she would often times smuggle the pigs' food to monks and others, or eat it herself. It was considered a delicacy in the prison. This job was retained only in exchange for sexual favors for the Chinese functionaries. At the end of the term, only 4 of the 100 detained Tibetans survived, all of whom had worked with pigs. The rest died of starvation.

Gender-Specific Torture
Various accounts indicate that Tibetan lay women and nuns are subject to gender-specific torture which may be more vicious than torment against men. Special "female" tortures include use of dogs, use of lighted cigarettes, stripping prisoners naked, and use of electrical batons. These tortures and other sexual indignities are not typical for men.

Nima Tshamchoe, 19, took part in a peaceful demonstration in 1988. Now in Dharamsala, she recounts her prison life:
"Dogs were set on us while we were naked. Lit cigarette butts were stubbed on our faces, knitting needles jabbed in our mouths...kicked in the breasts and in the genitals until they were bleeding...made to hang from trees and beaten on bare flesh by electric batons. Containers of
human urine were poured over heads...many were raped. However, even those who were raped were very secretive because they were ashamed and embarrassed. I was hung up from the wall with my legs up and beaten with electronic rods in the genitals and in the mouth. After this I could not even go to the toilet..."

Other Women’s Rights Violations
The PRC has violated women’s reproductive rights, as their one-child-per family law has underhandedly been enforced through coerced sterilizations or abortions. These uninformed women are subject to physical and mental suffering as a result. Tashi Dolma, a lay woman, actively protested the birth control policies, after the PRC forced her to have an abortion: "They forced me onto a table, inserted an electrical device into my uterus and left me alone like that for hours, bleeding profusely. Then they came and inserted some kind of spatula, twisting it round and round, scraping the fetus out in small pieces."

PRC officials also ill-treat women outside of the prison environment. They may force young girls into prostitution. "Lhakpa Chungdak thought it a dream come true when at 14 she had been offered a place in the Chinese People’s Liberation Army. But her dream turned rapidly to nightmare. Rape, pregnancy and abortion were to be her lot. The Chinese said it was no use complaining, it was what being in the army meant if you were a Tibetan girl."

It is evident that the PRC has committed and continues to commit numerous atrocities against Tibetan women. The PRC’s ratification of national and international documents serves as idle legislation only. The protection the PRC allegedly provides is ineffective as the status of Tibetan women has seen little improvement in the last ten years. At risk of violence, ill-treatment and degradation, Tibetan women have led protests against the PRC’s occupation of their country and continue to be leaders in the Tibetan independence struggle. It is time for the international women’s community to actively support Tibetan women by urging all appropriate local, regional, national and international bodies to address the issue of violence against Tibetan women.

Curriculum Questions Concerning “Violence Against Tibetan Women”

1. What was accomplished at the 1985 UN World Conference?

2. The People’s Republic of China volunteered to host the 1995 UN World Conference on Women. Does their invitation seem hypocritical? If so, why?

3. A Tibetan woman, Ngawang Kyizom shouted such chants as ‘Long Live the Dalai Lama’ and ‘Free Tibet.’ She was physically abused and jailed for three years without trial. These political arrests interfere with fundamental freedoms of expression, and are violations of Articles 9, 10, 18, 19, 20 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Referring back to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, what exactly do each of these 5 Articles state?

4. Explain how the PRC has sought to suppress the religion of the Tibetans. Discuss the plight of Buddhist nuns and monks in prison. What has happened to holy shrines and temples in Tibet? Use the Internet, periodicals and books from the library to research the Dalai Lama.
**Tibet is in a remote area of the world; it is cut off from the rest of the world not only by the oppressive measures of the Chinese, but geographically by the Himalayas. To get a better understanding of the environment in which the Tibetans live and suffer, you and your classmates might want to watch Seven Years in Tibet.

This article is an excerpt from an entire article, which can be found at: http://www.tibeticlt.org/reports/violence.html
Ending the Trade in Conflict Diamonds

House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Trade
Wednesday, September 13, 2000

Introduction: Good morning, Chairman Crane and Members of the Committee. My name is Holly Burkhalter, and I am the advocacy director of Physicians for Human Rights, a human rights organization that utilizes the skills of the medical and scientific professions to investigate and prevent human rights abuses around the world. My organization, which conducted an investigation of rape and sexual violence in Sierra Leone last March, has organized in collaboration with InterAction and the Africa Advocacy Network an informal coalition of some seventy U.S.-based human rights, humanitarian, and religious groups to promote protection of human rights in Sierra Leone. As a part of that effort, we have called upon the diamond industry to take specific action to deprive the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) of revenues from their control of Sierra Leone's diamond resources, as a way of denying them access to weapons and ending their control of and abuses against the civilian population. It goes without saying that if diamond revenues were not being used to purchase weapons that are used against the unarmed population, Physicians for Human Rights would not be concerned about the RUF's control of Sierra Leone's diamonds. For it is the link between diamonds, weapons, and abuses that is of concern, not diamonds in and of themselves. My remarks today focus on diamonds and violence in Sierra Leone, but the observations about the need for reforming the diamond industry apply to Angola as well, and to future conflicts that may arise in other diamond-producing countries.

Background: The Committee is familiar with the role that diamonds have played in funding and fueling appalling human rights abuses in Sierra Leone; indeed, that is why you have called this hearing. The misappropriation of Sierra Leone's diamond resources by insurgents and renegade army officers and soldiers dates back to the early 1990's, and official corruption and theft of Sierra Leone's diamond resources is a decades-long problem. But the linkage between diamonds and conflict only recently riveted the world's attention because of the RUF's extraordinarily cruel violence against unarmed men, women, and children. The insurgents' signature violations include mass rape of women and children of all ages; widespread amputation of limbs; and extensive forcible recruitment, deployment, and abuse of child soldiers.

Physicians for Human Rights' preliminary medical investigation of human rights abuses conducted last spring revealed that in areas under RUF control (approximately half of Sierra Leone) almost every Sierra Leonean institution, town, village, and family has been weakened, scarred, maimed or destroyed by the insurgents' reign of terror. PHR researchers have been informed by local human rights activists that in some communities almost every woman and girl has been raped. Thousands of women and children were abducted by RUF insurgents to serve as sexual slaves or child combatants and hundreds are still in their custody. The ubiquitous practice of rape is particularly appalling. This is a crime that carries great shame and stigma for the victims, and many rape victims who have escaped from the RUF (often pregnant or with new babies) have been rejected by their families and communities. These innocent victims, many of whom survived other gross crimes, such as amputation and mutilation and many of whom are HIV-positive as a result of rape, need extensive mental and physical health services as well as job training and humanitarian assistance.

The RUF's violence (as well as war crimes by other parties to the conflict) has resulted in upwards of a million noncombatants fleeing the country altogether and another million being displaced from
their homes inside the country. These numbers amount to half the population of Sierra Leone being displaced from their homes. But it was not until the rebel force attacked U.N. peacekeepers attempting to disarm and demobilize RUF combatants in the diamond-mining areas, killing several and taking five hundred hostage in May, that the international community at last was moved to outrage and action. That action has included, appropriately, demands that the RUF be deprived of the revenues from diamond smuggling that have been crucial to its military campaign that nearly destroyed Sierra Leone and its people.

The Revolutionary United Front insurgency appears to have grown and developed largely because of its access to diamond resources, with which the rebel force transformed itself into a formidable fighting force of some 15,000 fighters, well-armed and well-equipped with everything that money can buy. As Ambassador Richard Holbrooke stated in his July 31 testimony before the Security Council, "A year ago, the RUF were drug-crazed, machete-wielding thugs. They are now acquiring machine guns, shoulder-fired surface-to-air missiles and the means to shoot down aircraft." In a region where an AK-47 can be purchased for $5, millions of dollars in diamond revenues have permitted the RUF to exert enormous control over the civilian population of the country. Without its access to Sierra Leone's vast diamond wealth and the assistance of a powerful patron in neighboring Liberia, Charles Taylor, the RUF would never have become the military force that it is today.

Although Liberian officials have taken great umbrage at denunciations by the Clinton Administration and British officials at its role in laundering the RUF's illicit diamond wealth, export statistics are a damning indictment. Official exports of diamonds from Sierra Leone in recent years have only averaged 8,500 carats annually, but historically Sierra Leone's annual production has totaled 530,000 carats. Where are the missing diamonds? The RUF controls 90 percent of Sierra Leone's diamond-producing areas and diamonds are most assuredly being mined and exported. They are entering the world market through a number of other countries, most notably Liberia. Liberia's average annual mining capacity is 100,000-150,000 carats, but the official Diamond High Council in Antwerp recorded Liberian imports into Belgium of more than 31 million carats over the past five years; an average of 6 million carats a year. U.S. Government officials estimate that the RUF has accrued $30 - $50 million and perhaps as much as $125 million a year from the illicit sale of diamonds.

International attention to the role of diamonds in the ongoing destruction of Sierra Leone because of the U.N. hostage crisis and fear of possible consumer boycott of diamonds persuaded the diamond industry in May of this year to undertake comprehensive reforms. At a meeting of diamond-producing nations and the industry in Kimberly, South Africa, a plan for developing a global certification regimen for legitimate diamonds was developed and a follow-up meeting was held in Luanda in May. The most significant development was in mid-July at Antwerp, where the World Diamond Congress (the industry trade association) formally announced a comprehensive, global certification plan for assuring that the industry does not trade in conflict diamonds. A preliminary diplomatic meeting of key diamond producers and importers was held last week in Windhoek, Namibia, and ministerial meetings are scheduled for Pretoria in two weeks to finalize the agreement.

Put overly simply, the industry's proposed global certification scheme, known as "rough controls," would work as follows. Rather than attempting to identify and exclude all conflict stones from the international diamond trade, the global certification scheme instead creates a certification and delivery system for legitimate exports and bars all others from certified cutting and finishing centers. No country is permitted to import rough diamonds unless packets of these uncut diamonds
have forgery-proof certificates of origin granted by governments and are in tamper-proof packaging. The rough exports are logged in an international computer database when they leave a country and when they enter, so that discrepancies between exports and imports from any country would immediately be apparent. An international monitoring authority, the proposed International Diamond Council, would conduct oversight of the entire system, and violators would be prosecuted and banned from the trade.

Weakness in the Proposed Plan of Rough Controls: The diamond industry can justly be praised for moving quickly in recent months to create a global system to squeeze out the trade in conflict diamonds in a far-reaching, comprehensive way. Nonetheless, Physicians for Human Rights is deeply concerned about what appears to be a significant weakness in the industry’s proposal: transshipment and export by other countries of rough stones mined in rebel-controlled Angola and Sierra Leone. The industry’s proposed global certification scheme requires tamper-proof packaging and double-entry booking in a computer registry. But what is to prevent a country from officially packaging and sealing diamonds smuggled from Sierra Leone or Angola as their own, and exporting them openly and transparently through designated, monitored exit points? Only in cases where exports grossly exceed the transshipping state’s own capacity (which in the case of Liberia was so negligible that the country’s role in laundering others’ diamonds was immediately apparent) would the counterfeit be obvious.

The diamond industry has pledged not to deal in conflict stones, and we welcome that pledge. On August 7, for example, Indian government officials announced that they will require Indian traders who import uncut diamonds to declare that they do not originate from Sierra Leone, Angola, or the Democratic Republic of Congo. This is an important statement, given that India is reportedly responsible for finishing over 55% of the world’s cut diamonds. But to my knowledge, neither the key countries that import rough diamonds for cutting and finishing nor the diamond industry itself has taken action to bar the importation of rough diamonds from Liberia, Burkina Faso, or Togo. Since virtually all of Sierra Leone’s diamonds are coming from those countries, not from Sierra Leone itself, commitments not to import from Sierra Leone are not especially useful in actually stopping the trade in blood diamonds and the flow of money and weapons to the RUF.

Legislation: Physicians for Human Rights and our partners in the non-governmental community applaud Representative Tony Hall and his cosponsors for highlighting the link between diamonds and human rights violations, and for proposing to take action to limit their importation into the United States. We have endorsed the original CARAT Act, and urged our physician members to encourage their own representatives in Congress to co-sponsor it.

It is my understanding that Congressman Hall’s revised CARAT Act requires that diamonds entering the United States be accompanied by a certificate of mined origin, which can be waived if the rough controls regimen is in place and is effective in stopping the trade in conflict diamonds. The Act’s import restrictions would not go into effect until two years after enactment.

We would welcome action on the Hall-Wolf bill this session. It presses the diamond industry to implement what it has pledged to do, and it holds out the possibility of imposing a more rigorous import regimen - country-of-origin certification - if it does not. Nonetheless, I still have concerns that neither the CARAT Act nor the global certification scheme of rough controls will have any impact in the short run on the trade in RUF and UNITA-controlled diamonds, and will do little to deprive those forces of their diamond revenue and thus their means of waging war.

Without meaning in any way to undermine either the CARAT Act or the global certification regimen, I would like to suggest that the Committee consider revising the legislation. The bill should include a prohibition on U.S. importation of any finished diamonds from countries,
specifically including Belgium, India, and Israel, which have not erected effective national embargoes on the importation of rough diamonds from Liberia, Togo, Burkina Faso, and the DRC, and which have not prohibited the cutting centers that operate within their national boundaries from handling such stones if they are smuggled in. The U.S. could also prohibit the entry of finished diamonds from countries that have not set a quota on the volume of diamonds that may be imported that is commensurate with the exporting country's own mining capacity. Thus the Ivory Coast and Guinea, which have their own diamond production, could export, but they could not export amounts disproportionate to their own production, that is, launder diamonds for others.

The United States is not in a position to regulate the diamond industry, nor can it force any other government to take the actions that are required for the global certification program to become a reality. The only thing that the U.S. can do is control its own imports. By conditioning American imports of finished diamonds on the actions of the world's largest importers of rough stones - Belgium, Israel, and India - the U.S. would encourage those governments to take meaningful action in the short run that could help stem the flow of revenues to the RUF and UNITA almost immediately.

Conclusion: Mr. Chairman, I would not want to suggest by my testimony that diamonds alone are the problem or the answer to the heartbreaking human rights crisis in Sierra Leone. It is crucial, for example, that the United Nations and its strongest members take immediate and forceful steps to implement the international weapons embargo on the RUF, in place since 1997 and the arms embargo against Liberia, which was imposed in 1992. The United Nations Security Council must put some teeth into these measures by establishing responsible monitoring bodies and publicly report and condemn violations. Moreover, competent troops should be posted at the Sierra Leonean-Liberian border, at airfields, and other delivery points to seize shipments of weapons to the RUF. U.N. forces should take immediate action to disrupt the RUF's weapons supply lines, including on roads and waterways, airports and airfields.

What is needed most of all, in my opinion, is for the United Nations, generously supported by the U.S. and its allies, to implement a forceful military strategy to dislodge the RUF from the areas that it controls (including the diamond-producing regions) and defeat, demilitarize and demobilize the insurgents. International peacekeeping forces should establish security and protection for all civilians throughout Sierra Leone so that they may rebuild their shattered lives and country. Extensive humanitarian and development assistance should be provided once security is established so that Sierra Leonean refugees in Guinea can return home. Those implicated in human rights abuses, particularly those in command positions, should be apprehended and turned over to the Sierra Leonean authorities, and, eventually, to the international tribunal that the United Nations is establishing to prosecute war crimes in Sierra Leone for investigation and prosecution.

We are very grateful for the attention that Representatives Hall and Wolf have given to the issue of human rights in Sierra Leone and the role that diamonds have played in the country's destruction, and appreciate the Chairman and members of this Committee highlighting our concerns so prominently at this important hearing. Thank you.
Curriculum Questions Concerning Ending the Trade in Conflict Diamonds

1. Sierra Leone is under the control of what group?

2. What is laundering and how has laundering diamonds empowered the Revolutionary United Front? Discuss the role economics play in human rights violations in Sierra Leone. You and your classmates may also want to research America’s trade policies with China.

3. What action by the RUF caused the international community to become outraged? With your classmates, outline the plan the World Diamond Congress enacted. How will it hopefully end the violent oppression of the RUF?

4. What act did Representative Tony Hall sponsor? What does this act entail? Discuss improvements Physicians for Human Rights would like to see in the legislation of the diamond trade.

This is an excerpt from the hearing before the House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Trade, which occurred on Wednesday, September 13, 2000. The testimony of Holly Burkhalter, Physicians for Human Rights can be found in its entirety at: http://www.phrusa.org/campaigns/sierra_leone/sierra_diamd_091400.html
The Taliban's War on Women: A Health and Human Rights Crisis in Afghanistan

Executive Summary

This report documents the results of a three-month study of women’s health and human rights concerns and conditions in Afghanistan by Physicians for Human Rights (PHR). The extent to which the Taliban regime has threatened the freedoms and needs of Afghan women is unparalleled in recent history. Taliban policies of systematic discrimination against women seriously undermine the health and well-being of Afghan women. Such discrimination and the suffering it causes constitute an affront to the dignity and worth of Afghan women, and humanity as a whole.

The people of Afghanistan have suffered extensive human rights violations in the course of the past twenty years. The Soviet invasion and occupation from 1979 to 1989, aided by Afghan communist military and civilian collaborators, brought mass killings, torture, disappearance, the largest recorded refugee outflow in history, and a scourge of landmines. The subsequent civil war, fueled by support from neighboring countries and other regional powers for various factions following the collapse of the Soviet-backed regime in 1992, witnessed extensive abuses by the armed factions vying for power, including the virtual destruction of the capital city, Kabul, from rocket shelling, aerial bombardment and mortaring. Indiscriminate use of force, torture, killing in detention of both civilians and combatants, the extensive laying of antipersonnel landmines, and the arbitrary exercise of authority principally through military force characterized Afghanistan for much of this period.

In November 1994, a new group named "Taliban" emerged as a military and political force. Taliban, which means "students of Muslim religious studies," are poorly educated rural Pashtun youths mostly recruited from refugee camps and religious schools (madrasas) in neighboring Pakistan. This movement, led by Mullah Mohammed Omar, a 31-year-old religious leader, claims to be restoring peace and security through the imposition of a strict Islamic order. With no functioning judicial system, many municipal and provincial authorities use the Taliban's interpretation of Shari'a (Islamic law) and traditional tribal codes of justice.

After taking control of the capital city of Kabul on September 26, 1996, the Taliban issued edicts forbidding women to work outside the home, attend school, or to leave their homes unless accompanied by a husband, father, brother, or son. In public, women must be covered from head to toe in a burqa, a body-length covering with only a mesh opening to see and breathe through. Women are not permitted to wear white (the color of the Taliban flag) socks or white shoes, or shoes that make noise while women are walking. Also, houses and buildings in public view must have their windows painted over if females are present in these places.

Furthermore, in September 1997, the Ministry of Public Health ordered all hospitals in Kabul to suspend medical services to the city’s half million women at all but one, poorly-equipped hospital for women. Female medical workers also were banned from working in Kabul’s 22 hospitals. The temporary Rabia Balkhi facility was designated the sole facility available to women. At that time the facility had 35 beds and no clean water, electricity, surgical equipment, X-ray machines, suction, or oxygen. An international uproar ensued, and in November 1997, after two months of negotiations with the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Taliban partially rescinded its directive and agreed to reopen some of the hospitals and make available limited beds therein. In June 1998, the requirement that physicians may not treat women unaccompanied by close male
relatives was reinstated; it has caused particular problems for the many women in Kabul and elsewhere who do not have male relatives to play this role. In Kabul alone, there are more than 30,000 widows. Taliban gender restrictions--preventing women from moving freely and prohibiting women from working--continue to interfere with the delivery of health services and humanitarian assistance to women and girls.

The Taliban's edicts restricting women's rights have had a disastrous impact on Afghan women and girls' access to education. On June 16, 1998, the Taliban ordered the closing of more than 100 privately funded schools where thousands of young women and girls were receiving training in skills that would have helped them support their families. The Taliban issued new rules for nongovernmental organizations providing the schooling; education must be limited to girls up to the age of eight, and restricted to the Qur'an.

Taliban policies that restrict women's rights and deny basic needs are often brutally and arbitrarily enforced by the "religious police" (Department for the Propagation of Virtue and the Suppression of Vice) usually in the form of summary, public beatings. In addition, Afghan staff members of international organizations have reportedly faced threats, harassment, beatings and arrest in the course of conducting their professional duties. The atmosphere of fear created by the Taliban laws and their harsh imposition has exacerbated the multiple traumas related by the women PHR interviewed. PHR gained firsthand knowledge of those experiences while in Kabul. Every Friday the Taliban terrorizes the city of Kabul by publicly punishing alleged wrongdoers in the Kabul sports stadium and requiring public attendance at the floggings, shootings, hangings, beheadings, and amputations. On one occasion, PHR' researcher, herself, witnessed the public execution (stabbing and beheading) of two men convicted of murder by the Taliban Shari'a court at the sports stadium, and another day saw the amputation of an alleged thief's hand and the flogging of an eighteen-year-old girl who was accused of having a romantic relationship. Witnesses told PHR that another young woman died a few days after being subjected to a public flogging for a similar charge. Reportedly, she either committed suicide or was killed by her father because of the embarrassment and shame of the punishment. The researcher said that before, during, and after the execution and punishments, the stadium was filled with women and children crying and pleading with the authorities not to carry out the sentences, albeit in vain.

The Taliban's abuses are by no means limited to women. Thousands of men have been taken prisoner, arbitrarily detained, tortured, and many killed and disappeared. Men are beaten and jailed for wearing beards of insufficient length (that of a clenched fist beneath the chin), are subjected to cruel and degrading conditions in jail, and suffer such punishments as amputation and stoning. Men are also vulnerable to extortion, arrest, gang rape, and abuse in detention because of their ethnicity or presumed political views. The Taliban's Shari'a courts lack even a semblance of due process, with no provisions for legal counsel and frequent use of torture to extract confessions.

For nearly twenty years, the Afghan people have suffered the health consequences of armed conflict and human rights violations. That Taliban officials now claim to be "restoring peace" to Afghanistan is perhaps one of the cruelest ironies of our time, as they have virtually imprisoned Afghan women in their homes and threatened their very survival. The "peace" imposed on that portion of the country under Taliban rule is the peace of the burqa, the quiet of women and girls covering in their homes, and the silence of a citizenry terrorized by the Taliban's violent and arbitrary application of their version of Shari'a law.
Summary of Findings
The information included in this report was collected during a three-month period in the beginning of 1998. Women who participated in the health and human rights survey and case testimonies were from all walks of life, ethnic groups, educational levels and economic backgrounds. The participants included women currently living in Kabul and Afghan women who recently migrated to Pakistan. All participants lived in Kabul for most of their lives and for at least one year after the Taliban took control of Kabul in September 1996. Some results of the survey of 160 Afghan women indicated:
71% of participants reported a decline in their physical health
77% reported poor access to health care services in Kabul. 20% of the women reported no access.
53% of women described occasions in which they were seriously ill and unable to seek medical care
28% of the Afghan women reported inadequate control over their own reproduction
21% of the participants indicated that they had suicidal thoughts "extremely often" or "quite often"
An Afghan physician also described declining nutrition in children, an increasing rate of tuberculosis, and a high prevalence of other infectious diseases among women and children. Male doctors' access to sick children within women's hospitals is also severely curtailed, leading to unnecessary death. A female physician reported that a female child died of the measles because the authorities didn't allow a male doctor to visit the children's ward, which is located within a designated female ward of a local hospital.
Women's fear of being publicly beaten or arrested by the Taliban for being on the street discourages many of them from even attempting to seek health care. PHR interviewed homeless, displaced women occupying an abandoned school with their children. One woman was mourning the recent death of her 20-year-old daughter, who had suffered from stomach pains for days but could not be taken out because her mother did not possess a burqa. The women gathered there begged the PHR researcher to send them some burqas from the United States so that they could go out on the street. They didn't possess the garment, and had no money to pay for it.
The wearing of the burqa itself may contribute to health problems. In answer to a question in the PHR survey, a female pediatrician noted the following:
"My activities are restricted. Walking with the burqa is difficult; it has so many health hazards. You can't see well and there is a risk of falling or getting hit by a car. Also, for women with asthma or hypertension, wearing a burqa is very unhealthy."
A doctor informed PHR that the garment may cause eye problems and poor vision, poor hearing, skin rash, headaches, increased cardiac problems and asthma, itching of the scalp, alopecia (hair loss), and depression. Another respondent noted that the "burqa is another reason for not wanting to go outside the house. I am not used to wearing the burqa and it is a risk for me every time I wear it. I can fall and break my leg or my neck, also, it is not good for the eyes."
The Taliban's claim that its policy of gender segregation is rooted in Afghan history and culture is invalidated by the experience and views of Afghan women themselves. Afghan women have a long history of participation in Afghan society and in political and economic life, including employment as health professionals, teachers, and in government offices. PHR's interviews with 160 women represented a diverse sample of Afghan women living or having recently lived in Kabul under Taliban rule. Virtually all study participants agreed that women should have equal access to education, equal work opportunities, freedom of expression, freedom of association, freedom of movement, control over the number and spacing of children, legal protection for women's human
rights, and participation in government. Over 95 percent disagreed with Taliban dress codes and that the proposition that the teaching of Islam imposes restrictions on women's human rights.

Recommendations
In recent years, Physicians for Human Rights and many leaders in public health have argued that health, defined as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity," requires the protection and promotion of human rights. In Afghanistan, Taliban restrictions on Afghan women's freedom of expression, association, and movement deny women full participation in society, and consequently, from effectively securing equal opportunities for work, education, and access to health. Furthermore, such exclusion of women from employment and education jeopardizes their capacity to survive and participate in society. The health and human rights concerns of Afghan women identified in this study illustrate that the promotion of Afghan women's health is inseparable from the protection and promotion of human rights.

Afghanistan has been the focus of extensive efforts by the United Nations for two decades. A Special Reporter to monitor human rights is in place and has issued many detailed reports. A Special Envoy to the Secretary General visits regularly, and a Special Mission for Afghanistan has been established. The General Assembly has passed numerous resolutions calling upon all parties to cease their violations of human rights, and U.N. interlocutors have been attempting to mediate the conflict for the past six years. Hundreds of millions of dollars worth of humanitarian aid have been spent both within Afghanistan and in Pakistan to support Afghan refugees. Yet Afghanistan today is a monument to the avarice of the warring parties that brought it to this point, to the international and Afghan actors who promoted the Taliban, and to the United Nations' failure. PHR urges the international community to reconsider the situation of Afghanistan and take action aimed at securing a representative government, which is committed to international human rights standards, including the equal rights for women. In particular, those governments that support the Taliban, notably Pakistan, should be publicly called upon to end their support for the regime, and an effective arms embargo should be established. All parties from all parts of the country should deploy international human rights monitors to collect and disseminate information on rights abuses. The UN's Memorandum of Understanding with the Taliban, which acknowledges that access for women to health care and education in Afghanistan must be "gradual", should be rescinded and renegotiated.
If the U.N. fails to reach an agreement that would assure the immediate access of Afghan women and girls to health care and education and an end to restrictions on the operations of humanitarian organizations (including limits on the movement of their Muslim female staff) then it should publicly announce that it is terminating negotiations with the Taliban, restricting its aid to humanitarian operations carried out by non-governmental organizations, and removing U.N. staff from Afghanistan to the maximum extent feasible.
Stop Gender Apartheid in Afghanistan

What is Gender Apartheid?

On September 27, 1996, the Taliban, an extremist militia, seized control of the capital of Afghanistan, Kabul, and violently plunged the occupied territories of Afghanistan into a brutal state of gender apartheid in which women and girls have been stripped of their basic human rights.

"If this was happening to any other class of people around the world, there would be tremendous outcry. We must make sure these same standards are applied when it is women and girls who are brutally treated."
-Eleanor Smeal, President, Feminist Majority Foundation

Gender Apartheid - A Reality Codified Under Taliban Law

Upon seizing power, the Taliban instituted a system of gender apartheid effectively thrusting the women of Afghanistan into a state of virtual house arrest. Under Taliban rule women have been stripped of their visibility, voice, and mobility. When they took control in 1996, the Taliban initially imposed strict edicts that:

- Banished women from the work force
- Closed schools to girls in cities and expelled women from universities
- Prohibited women from leaving their homes unless accompanied by a close male relative
- Ordered the publicly visible windows of women's houses painted black and forced women to wear the burqa (or chadori) - which completely shrouds the body, leaving only a small mesh-covered opening through which to see
- Prohibited women and girls from being examined by male physicians while at the same time, prohibited most female doctors and nurses from working. (Currently there are a few, selected female doctors allowed to operate in segregated wards.)

Women have been brutally beaten, flogged and even killed for violating Taliban decrees.

Even after international condemnation, the Taliban has made only slight changes. A few women doctors and nurses are working. In Kabul and other cities a few home schools for girls operate—although only clandestinely—and women who conduct home schools could be risking their lives or a severe beating. Some war widows who had been reduced to begging to feed their children are now allowed to work in order to survive. Some hospitals have segregated wards for women. But the overall reality of the tragic plight of Afghan women and girls has remained virtually unchanged. Official Taliban edicts and decrees have not been lifted to restore Afghan women's rights to work, education and health care.

Gender Apartheid - The Consequences

- A woman who dared to defy Taliban orders by running a home school for girls was shot and killed in front of her

An emergency humanitarian crisis faces Afghan women and girls as Taliban terrorism and a severe drought force more and more people to flee Afghanistan, while Pakistan has closed its borders to Afghan refugees. Urge President Clinton to use his authority to immediately release Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance (ERMA) funds to respond to this crisis.

Get the Stop Gender Apartheid E-Mail Alert:

[Submit]

Back-to-School Campaign

FMF's Back to School Campaign reminds the nation that, as women and girls in the US return to school in the fall, Afghan women and girls continue to be barred from education.

- Adopt-A-School
- Afghan Women's Scholarships
- Petition Drive

These crafts are handmade by Afghan women refugees living in Pakistan. 100% of the proceeds go back to the refugees as part of FMF's Campaign to Stop Gender Apartheid in Afghanistan.
husband, daughter, and students.

- A woman caught trying to flee Afghanistan with a man not related to her was stoned to death for adultery.
- An elderly woman was brutally beaten with a metal cable until her leg was broken because her ankle was accidentally showing from underneath her burqa.
- Women have died of treatable ailments because male doctors were not allowed to treat them.
- Many women, now forcibly housebound, have attempted suicide by swallowing household cleaner, rather than continuing to live under these conditions.
- 97% of Afghan women surveyed by Physicians for Human Rights exhibit signs of major depression.

Taliban Law Is In Opposition To Islam

Prior to the Civil War and Taliban control, especially in Kabul, the capital, women in Afghanistan were educated and employed. 50% of the students and 60% of the teachers at Kabul University were women, and 70% of school teachers. 50% of civilian government workers, and 40% of doctors in Kabul were women.

The Taliban claim to follow a pure, fundamentalist Islamic ideology, yet the oppression they perpetrate against women has no basis in Islam. Within Islam, women are allowed to earn and control their own money, and to participate in public life. The 55-member Organization of Islamic Conference has refused to recognize the Taliban as Afghanistan's official government. The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, regarded by many as an ultraconservative organization, has denounced the Taliban's decrees.

Who Supports the Taliban

During the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in the 1980's the United States through a CIA covert operation based in Pakistan supplied billions of dollars to support insurgent militia forces called the mujahideen (soldiers of God). Following the Soviets' withdrawal in 1989, factions of the mujahideen fell into a civil war and in 1994, the Taliban emerged as a dominant force. The Taliban is comprised of young men and boys of Afghan descent who have hardly lived in Afghan society. They were raised in refugee camps and trained in ultraconservative religious schools (madrasahs) in Pakistan. In addition, thousands of Pakistanis and hundreds of Arabs fight alongside the Taliban. Pakistan is the primary source of support to the Taliban, supplying military aid and personnel; Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and known terrorist organizations provide the Taliban with financial support. Additionally, Afghanistan is the one of the world's two largest producers of opium and a major drug-processing center; almost all areas of poppy cultivation are occupied by the Taliban. But perhaps the biggest potential for financial support lies in the petroleum industry.

U.S. Corporate Interests and the Taliban

International oil interests are in fierce competition to build pipelines through Afghanistan to link Caspian Sea oil and gas reserves to Central and South Asia. California-based UNOCAL, a U.S. energy company, led the CentGas consortium that planned to build an oil and gas pipeline through Afghanistan. The Taliban stood to gain over $100 million a year from this pipeline. UNOCAL announced it was suspending the project at the end of 1998, citing in part, pressure from feminist organizations protesting the company's involvement with the
Stop Gender Apartheid in Afghanistan

The Taliban and other U.S. and international corporate interests are trying to make business in the country. Recently, Telephone Systems International (TSI), a New Jersey-based telecommunications firm, reached an agreement with the Taliban to install a satellite-based system throughout Afghanistan. Corporate investment under current conditions could mean billions of dollars to shore up the Taliban regime without regard for women’s rights.

The Campaign to Stop Gender Apartheid in Afghanistan

- Led by the Feminist Majority Foundation, the Campaign to Stop Gender Apartheid has brought together over 180 leading human rights and women’s organizations in the U.S. and around the world, to demand that the human rights abuses against women and girls in Afghanistan must end. These organizations include Amnesty International USA, Human Rights Watch, the International Women’s Human Rights Law Clinic, the National Organization of Women, the National Political Congress of Black Women, the Women’s Alliance for Peace and Human Rights in Afghanistan, and the World Council of Muslim Women Foundation.
- The Campaign has helped stop the U.S. and United Nations from officially recognizing the Taliban until women’s human rights have been restored.

What You Can Do to Help

2 "This Could Be You," Jan Goodwin, Marie Claire magazine, March 1998.
4 ibid.
5 ibid.
6 "Muslim Brotherhood Leader Lashes Out at Taliban Militia," AP (Cairo), October 8, 1999. 7 Testimony of Karl F. Inderfurth, Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs before the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, March 9, 1999.
8 ibid.
Curriculum Questions Concerning the Taliban

1. Create a chart that lists the various political factions which controlled Afghanistan during the second half of the 20th century. When did the Taliban gain control of Kabul? Do you think the Soviets were more oppressive than the Taliban? Why?

2. In September 1997, what decisions did the Ministry of Public Health make that jeopardized the health of the women of Kabul? Discuss the conditions at Rabia Balkhi. What other edicts limiting women’s access to medical facilities have the Taliban created during their reign of terror?

3. Describe a burqa. What physical problems might it cause?

4. What does the Department for the Propagation of Virtue and the Suppression of Vice do?

5. Consider this quote. “Gender segregation is rooted in Afghan history and culture.” Do you agree or disagree with the statement. Why?

6. The Taliban restrictions on Afghan women’s freedom of expression, association, and movement deny women full participation in society. What efforts has the UN made to ensure basic human rights for Afghanistan’s women? Talk with your classmates about PHR’s recommendations. What actions do you think are necessary to stop the oppression in Afghanistan? Write a persuasive letter to the United Nations. Inform them of the plight of women in Afghanistan and suggest specific actions to guarantee the country’s freedom from the Taliban.

7. Is this institution of gender apartheid a human rights abuse or a an acceptable cultural practice?

8. Since the United States supplied monetary support for the Afghan insurgent groups, is it morally bound to help ending the practice of gender apartheid?

These are excerpts from articles which can be found in their entirety at:
http://www.phrusa.org/research/health_effects/exec.html
and http://www.feminist.org/afghan/facts.html
Other Human Rights Sources

WEBSITES
www.echofoundation.org
www.speaktruthtopower.org
www.amnestyusa.org
www.un.org/rights/HRToday
www.state.gov/www/global/human_rights/index.html
www.greekhelsinki.gr
www.balkan-rights.net
www.un.org

BOOKS AND OTHER LITERATURE
Speak Truth to Power by Kerry Kennedy Cuomo
The Human Rights Reader: Major Political Writings, Essays, Speeches, and Documents from the Bible to the Present by Micheline R. Ishay
The Idea of Human Rights: Four Inquiries by Michael J. Perry
International Human Rights by Jack Donnelly, George A. Lopez (editor)
HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS

AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION
> aclu.org
125 Broad Street, 18th floor New York, NY 10004
(212) 549-2500 info@aclu.org
The ACLU is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization established to defend the civil rights of all Americans as set forth in the Bill of Rights.

ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE
> aidl.org
823 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017
(212) 490-2525
The Anti-Defamation League is one of the leading organizations to fight anti-Semitism, bigotry, and extremism. The mission of the Anti-Defamation League is "to stop the defamation of the Jewish people, to secure justice and fair treatment to all citizens alike."

LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE ON CIVIL RIGHTS
> civilrights.org > unitedagainsthate.org
1829 K Street NW, Suite 1010, Washington DC 20006
(202) 466-3311, http://www.civilrights.org/talk_to_us.html
For almost a half century, the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights has led the fight for equal opportunity and social justice. Founded on the eve of historic victories in the struggle against racial discrimination, the Leadership Conference has become the nerve-center for the struggle against discrimination in all its forms.

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES
> nccusa.org
475 Riverside Drive, Room 670, New York, NY 10115
(212) 870-2376, news@nccusa.org
The NCC's Executive Board has approved the following justice priorities for 2000-2001: The elimination of racial violence and injustice and the building of a racially and culturally inclusive society, the eradication of poverty, especially among women and children, and the improvement of health, quality of life and survival of the planet.

SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER
> splcenter.org
400 Washington Avenue, Montgomery, AL 36104
(334) 264-0286
Tolerance.org is a web project of the Southern Poverty Law Center, a nonprofit organization that combats intolerance and discrimination through education and litigation. The Center’s programs include Teaching Tolerance, the Intelligence Project and the Civil Rights Memorial, which honors 41 martyrs in the struggle for human rights. Write to us at: info@tolerance.org, or SPLC, 400.

100 BLACK MEN
> 100blackmen.org
41 Auburn Avenue
Atlanta, GA 30303
(404) 688-5100, http://www.100blackmen.org/comments.html
The 100 Black Men of America, Inc. is committed to the intellectual development of youth and the economic empowerment of the African-American community based upon the following precepts: respect for family, spirituality, justice and integrity.
AMERICAN-ARAB ANTI-DISCRIMINATION COMMITTEE
> adc.org
4201 Connecticut Ave, NW
Suite 300
Washington, D.C. 20008
(202) 244-2990, ADC@adc.org
The American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) is a civil rights organization committed
to defending the rights of people of Arab descent and promoting their rich cultural heritage. ADC
offers counseling in cases of discrimination and defamation and selected impact litigation in the
areas of immigration. ADC is at the forefront combating defamation and negative stereotyping of
Arab Americans in the media and wherever else it is practiced.

ASIAN AMERICAN LEGAL DEFENSE & EDUCATION FUND
> aaldef.org
98 Hudson St., 12th Floor
New York, NY 10013
(212) 966-5932, http://www.aaldef.org/contact.html
Founded in 1974, the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF) is the first
legal rights organization on the East Coast serving Asian Americans. AALDEF was founded by a
group of lawyers, law students and community activists who believed that the law should be used
as a tool to achieve social and economic justice for Asian Americans and all Americans.

COLOMBIAN AMERICAN SERVICE ASSOCIATION
> casa-usa.org
3138 Coral Way
Miami, FL 33145
(305) 448-2272, casa@casa-usa.org
The Colombian American Service Association was established to assist and support the Hispanic
community. CASA's efforts are focused on stabilizing and strengthening immigrant families,
assisting the needy and promoting self reliance. CASA meets this challenge by developing
programs that provide direct services, information, referral assistance and advocacy in the areas
of immigration, employment, crisis intervention, legal services, housing, and education.

CUBAN AMERICAN NATIONAL COUNCIL
> cnc.org
1223 SW 4th Street
Miami, FL 33135
(305) 642-3484, info@cnc.org
An active partner in the National Hispanic movement, the CNC provides direct human services to
needy individuals from diverse racial and ethnic groups with a focus on Hispanics and minorities.
The CNC also conducts research and publishes reports on social policy issues.

THE INDIAN ABROAD CENTER FOR POLITICAL AWARENESS
> iacpa.org
1275 K Street, NW
Suite 810
Washington, DC 20005
(202) 289-3654, iacpa@iacpa.org
The mission of the IAPCA is to increase awareness in the Indian American community and
encourage participation by the Indian American community in the American democracy.
Monitoring legislation that has an impact on the community is one of the Center's main
responsibilities. While most of IAPCA's issue areas focus on immigration, they also relate to
policy issues that impact minorities as a whole. Wherever possible, the IAPCA suggests
opportunities and avenues for everyday citizens to take action.
INDIAN DEFENSE LEAGUE OF AMERICA
> tuscaroras.com/IDLA
P.O. Box 305
Niagara Falls, New York 14302!
The Indian Defense League of America was established on December 1, 1926 to resist further erosion of the rights of Indians in North America. The IDLA was established to guarantee unrestricted passage on the continent of North America for Indian people. Unrestricted passage is considered an inherent right for indigenous people.

INUIT CIRCUMPOLAR CONFERENCE
> randburg.com/gr/inuitcir.html
Alaska Office
3201 "C" Street
Suite 698Anchorage, AK 99503
(907) 583-8917
The Inuit Circumpolar Conference (ICC) is the international organization representing approx. 145,000 Inuit living in the Arctic regions of Alaska, Canada, Greenland, and Chukotka, Russia. The principal goals of the ICC are to: strengthen unity among Inuit of the circumpolar region; promote Inuit rights and interests on an international level develop and encourage long-term policies which safeguard the Arctic environment; and seek full and active partnership in the political, economic and social development of circumpolar regions.

JAPANESE AMERICAN CITIZENS LEAGUE
> jacl.org
1785 Sutter Street
San Francisco, CA 94115
(415) 921-5225, jacd@jacl.org
The Japanese American Citizens League was founded in 1929 to fight discrimination against people of Japanese ancestry. It is the largest and one of the oldest Asian American organizations in the United States.

LEADERSHIP EDUCATION FOR ASIAN PACIFICS
> leap.org
327 E. 2nd Street
Suite 228
Los Angeles, CA 90012
(213) 485-1422, leap@leap.org
LEAP's mission is to achieve full participation and equality for Asian Pacific Americans through leadership, empowerment, and policy.

NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIAN
> ncai.org
1301 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Suite 200
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 486-7767, joe_chase@ncai.org
The National Congress of American Indians was founded in 1944 in response to termination and assimilation policies that the United States forced upon the tribal governments in contradiction of their treaty rights and status as sovereigns. Since 1944, the NCAI has been working to inform the public and Congress on the governmental rights of American Indians and Alaska Natives.

NATIONAL ITALIAN AMERICAN FOUNDATION
> NIAF.org
1360 19th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20009
(202) 387-0060, dona@niaf.org
The National Italian American Foundation (NIAF) is a non-profit organization based in Washington, DC and dedicated to preserving the heritage of an estimated 20 million Americans of Italian descent, the nation’s fifth largest ethnic group.

NATIONAL KOREAN AMERICAN SERVICE AND EDUCATION CONSORTIUM
> nakasec.org
50-16 Parsons Blvd
Suite 100
Flushing, NY 11355
718.445.3939, nakasec@sprynet.com
The establishment of NAKASEC is the result of the base building work of its founding affiliates who had been meeting the critical needs of their respective for over fifteen years. NAKASEC and its affiliates share a common vision for empowering Korean Americans through education, advocacy and organizing.

MEXICAN AMERICAN LEGAL DEFENSE AND EDUCATIONAL FUND (MALDEF)
> maldef.org
Los Angeles Regional Office
634 South Spring Street
11th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90014
213.629.2512
The Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) protects and promotes the civil rights of Latinos living in the United States. Making sure there are no obstacles preventing this diverse community from realizing its dreams, MALDEF works through litigation, advocacy, community outreach and education to secure the rights of Latinos, primarily in the areas of employment, education, immigration, political access and public resource equity.

NATIONAL ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN LEGAL CONSORTIUM
> naplc.org
1140 Connecticut Avenue NW
Suite 1200
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 296-2300, sscantlon@naplc.org

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE
> naacp.org
4805 Mt. Hope Drive
Baltimore, MD 21215
(410) 358-8900
The NAACP’s principal objective is to ensure the political, educational, social and economic equality of minority group citizens of United States and eliminate race prejudice.

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF LA RAZA (NCLR)
> nclr.org
1111 19th, NW Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 785-1670, www.nclr.org/contact.html
The National Council of La Raza (NCLR) is a private, nonprofit, nonpartisan, tax-exempt organization established in 1968 to reduce poverty and discrimination, and improve life opportunities, for Hispanic Americans. NCLR is the largest constituency-based national Hispanic organization, serving all Hispanic nationality groups in all regions of the country.
NATIONAL URBAN LEAGUE
> nul.org
120 Wall Street
New York, NY 10005
212-558-5300, info@nul.org
The National Urban League has sought to emphasize greater reliance on the unique resources
and strengths of the African-American community to find solutions to its own problems. To
accomplish this, the League's approach has been to utilize fully the tools of advocacy, research,
program service and systems change. The result has been an organization with strong roots in
the community, focused on the social and educational development of youth, economic self-
sufficiency and racial inclusion.

OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS
> oha.org
711 Kapi'olani Blvd., Suite 500
Honolulu, HI 96813
(808) 594-1888, oha@aloha.net
OHA's purpose is to provide the opportunity for a better life and better future for all Hawaiians. It
advocates for Hawaiians in the state Legislature, state and federal courts, in the United States
Congress and in the local media, as well as by supporting community initiatives.

PUERTO RICAN LEGAL DEFENSE AND EDUCATION FUND
> joc.anp.org/PRF
99 Hudson Street, 14th Floor
New York, NY 10013-2815
(212) 739-7400, info@prldef.org
The Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund (PRLDEF) works to secure, promote and
protect the full civil and human rights of the Puerto Rican and broader Latino community,
accomplishing its work through its three program divisions: Litigation, Education and Policy

AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE
> ajc.org
Jacob Blaustein Building
165 East 56 Street
New York, NY 10022
[212] 751-4000, pr@ajc.org
The American Jewish Committee works to safeguard the welfare and security of Jews throughout
the world and strengthen the basic principles of pluralism around the world. AJC works to make
real the promise of equal opportunity, uphold the separation of religion and state, defend our
American heritage of religious liberty, and secure respect for the dignity of every individual.

ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE
> adl.org
823 United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017
(212) 490-2525
The Anti-Defamation League is one of the leading organizations to fight anti-Semitism, bigotry,
and extremism. The mission of the Anti-Defamation League is "to stop the defamation of the
Jewish people, to secure justice and fair treatment to all citizens alike."

CATHOLIC LEAGUE FOR RELIGIOUS AND CIVIL RIGHTS
> catholicleague.org
450 Seventh Avenue
New York, NY 10123
The Catholic League is the nation's largest Catholic civil rights organization. The Catholic League defends the right of Catholics - lay and clergy alike - to participate in American public life without defamation or discrimination. Motivated by the letter and the spirit of the First Amendment, the Catholic League works to safeguard both the religious freedom rights and the free speech rights of Catholics whenever and wherever they are threatened.

COUNCIL ON AMERICAN ISLAMIC RELATIONS
> cair-net.org
453 New Jersey SE
Washington, DC 20003
(202) 488-8787, cair@cair-net.org
The Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR) is a non-profit, grassroots membership organization. CAIR was established to promote a positive image of Islam and Muslims in America. CAIR is dedicated to presenting an Islamic perspective on issues of importance to the American public. In offering that perspective, CAIR seeks to empower the Muslim community in America through political and social activism.

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES
> nccusa.org
475 Riverside Drive, Room 670
New York, NY 10115
(212) 870-2376, news@nccusa.org
The NCC is the nation's leading organization in the movement for Christian unity. The NCC works for peace and justice in the United States, addressing issues ranging from poverty and racism, to the environment, family ministries, and much more. Through the NCC, members join with partners in more than 80 countries, including the United States, in ministries of disaster relief, development and refugee assistance; unity, justice, education, and public witness.

SIKH MEDIAWATCH AND RESOURCE TASKFORCE
> sikhmediawatch.org
P.O. Box 1761
Germantown, MD 20875-1761
(301) 428-3593, info@sikhmediawatch.org
Sikh Mediawatch and Resource Task Force (SMART) is a Washington, DC-based Sikh advocacy group. SMART educates the Sikh American community about its civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights, and works to protect and promote these rights. SMART is ultimately dedicated towards the betterment of the Sikh American community and its active participation in the greater American polity.

SIMON WIESENTHAL CENTER
> wiesenthal.com
9760 West Pico Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90035
(310) 553-9036, webmaster@wiesenthal.org
In November 1977, the Simon Wiesenthal Center was founded. Today, together with its world renowned Museum of Tolerance, it is a 400,000 member strong international center for Holocaust remembrance, the defense of human rights and the Jewish people. With offices throughout the world, the Wiesenthal Center carries on the continuing fight against bigotry and antisemitism and pursues an active agenda of related contemporary issues.
Things a Student Leader Can Do to Encourage Diversity

1. Speak as an individual "I," not as the organization when discussing multicultural/diversity issues.

2. Work to create an open and accepting forum at your meetings - a place where members are encouraged to speak honestly about diversity issues with one another.

3. Program diverse and multicultural events - try to create balance in the organizations' overall calendar.

4. Reach out to other multicultural organizations. Establish a network among leaders of under-represented campus groups.

5. Be pro-active in your attempt to recruit and retain members from all populations. Create an accepting and open environment that will welcome them.

6. Be patient and understanding. Always try to "put yourself in someone else's shoes."

7. Set an example as a multicultural diversity advocate - encourage others to increase their awareness and understanding.

8. Stand up against racism, bigotry or discrimination of any kind. Speak directly to organizational members and others who use language or actions that display this.

9. Require multicultural/diversity awareness training for your members.

10. Attend multicultural events planned by other student organizations by yourself, or with other members.

11. Listen, talk, listen, talk and listen some more to individuals who are culturally different from you. Stretch yourself to learn more and grow in your understanding of others.

12. Understand that you communicate non-verbally as well as verbally and that non-verbal communication is extremely important. Of a total message, the following percentages are how we interpret a message:
Verbal 7%

Vocal 33% (tone, pitch, rate, volume)

Facial 55% (non-verbal)

(Culturally different people rely on non-verbals at an even higher rate.)

Donald E. Luse, Director of Student Union, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
From: Leadership Matters... Skills Training Workshops
DEFINITIONS RELATED TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF "ISMS"

Power + Prejudice = "ISMs:

An attitude, action, or institutional structure which subordinates a person or group because of their race, ethnicity, religion, physical ability, gender, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic level (i.e.: Racism, Ablism, Sexism, Heterosexism, Classism).

Stereotype:

The tendency to group likenesses and attach characteristics to them. Although stereotyping may bring order to things, it creates barriers to appreciation of individual differences.

Prejudice:

Beliefs, usually unfavorable, about a certain group formed by previous experiences an individual has had concerning that group. The experiences can be direct (through personal contact) or indirect (what others say).

MULTICULTURALISM

Culture:
The accepted behavior of a given people. How we are raised to view and practice life.

An inevitable result of rubbing elbows with one segment of the population. A cultural group has a common understanding of how to think, feel, and act. It shows in how we do, make, and celebrate things. Culture tells us who “we” are and gives us attitudes about “them,” or people different from us. It manifests itself in two ways:

(1) physically: our diet, language, and dialect
(2) cognitively: ethics, values, and religion

Ways we are different:

Race
Age
Sexual Orientation
Mind style
Profession
Religion
Neighborhood
Family
Religion
Communication styles
Social class
Gender
Experience
Events
Organizations
Nation

(Can you think of any others? What are some ways we can avoid placing ourselves in these categories?)

From: Leadership Matters... Skills Training Workshops
Suggestions for Enhancing Our Appreciation of Differences

1. Concentrate on similarities. Are we the same?

2. Acknowledge differences. Consider how differences make each of us unique. What do we contribute through our differences?

3. Examine differences. What are the stereotypes surrounding those differences? What are your feelings about those differences?

4. Reflect on how those differences can broaden your understanding about life. Consider what you can learn from those differences.

5. Withhold judgment about people who are different from you in terms of their background, habits, values, and appearances.

6. Before making a judgment or decision about someone, check out the accuracy of your thoughts or opinions.

7. Ask yourself why the other person is the way s/he is. Consider how you might act, think or feel if your life experiences were similar to those of the other person.

8. Find the part of you that can identify with what it is like to be different.

9. Accept people as they are rather than expecting them to be like you.

10. Stretch to accept differences.

11. Appreciate the differences that people express.

12. Take the risk of getting to know the people who are different from you. It may feel uncomfortable at first but the more you reach out, the more comfortable you are likely to be.
13. Challenge yourself. What are some things you can start to do now to enhance your appreciation of differences? Set specific goals and begin to work on them today.


*Leadership Matters*. Synopsis
The Umbrella Concept of Oppression

It is important to remember that...

- All manifestations of oppression, e.g. sexism, classism, can be viewed as being encompassed under an "umbrella of oppression."
- Each form of oppression however, has its own uniqueness.
- Each form of oppression also shares commonalities with others such as

  ✓ The dominant subordinate structure (power/privileges)
  ✓ Individual/institutional levels
  ✓ All are cyclical – perpetuated by learned beliefs about ones own group and others
  ✓ All are based on stereotypes

The definition of oppression we will be using is...

...The systematic subjugation of one social group by another social group or

POWER + PREJUDICE = OPPRESSION

Dominant-Subordinate Social Groups
- In each "ism", the social group with relatively more power to enforce their prejudice is the dominant group
- The social group who is kept relatively less powerful and is subject to the prejudice of the dominant group is the subordinate group
- Some dominant/subordinate groups are on a continuum, i.e. age and class, others we are born into and do not change
- Most of us are neither members of all dominant groups nor all subordinate groups, but some of each

Social Group Membership Profile
- The presenter will ask participants to note to themselves which groups they are dominates and subordinates
- Participants will be asked to select of their profile meaning, "What stands out to you?"
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnocentrism</th>
<th>Individuals strongly believe that their culture is the best. They are tolerant and possibly hostile toward other cultures.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Awareness</strong></td>
<td>Individuals are aware that other &quot;good&quot; cultures exist, but they believe these cultures are for other, not for themselves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Understanding</strong></td>
<td>Individuals take the time to learn about other cultures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Acceptance/Respect (tolerance)</strong></td>
<td>Individuals are beginning to accept other cultures without comparing or judging.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Appreciating/Valuing</strong></td>
<td>Individuals learning to value and appreciate specific aspects of other cultures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Selective Adoption</strong></td>
<td>Individuals selectively adopt those aspects of another culture that they see as having value for them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Multiculturalism</strong></td>
<td>The ideal stage—individuals are genuinely open to all new experiences.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Leadership Matters... Synopsis*
THE ECHO FOUNDATION

AN INTRODUCTION

On March 12, 1997, as the centerpiece of the community-wide, year-long, educational Elie Wiesel Project, internationally revered humanitarian and Nobel Laureate for Peace, Elie Wiesel spoke “Against Indifference” to over 23,000 students and adults. He was so inspired by this visit to Charlotte, that, as he left, he challenged the community to continue its focus on the critical issues of human dignity, justice and moral courage. He offered seed money and his wholehearted assistance in obtaining speakers and developing programs to address these issues. Thus The Echo Foundation was born, and with it its mission: ...to sponsor and facilitate those voices that speak of human dignity, justice and moral courage in a way that will lead to positive action for humankind. The mission is implemented by bringing speakers, exhibitions and performances to the Charlotte Region as catalysts for educational programs. For each project school-based curriculum materials that meet North Carolina and national standards are developed and are made available free of charge to schoolteachers across the region.

Our goals are:
A. Educating for compassion, justice and moral decision making;
B. Teaching understanding through fostering relationships founded in respect;
C. Facilitating opportunities to act against indifference on these issues.

Our city has demonstrated a need and a desire to address issues of racial diversity, culture and the quality of human relationships. The Echo Foundation brings together people from all corners of Charlotte-Mecklenburg to address these vital goals through student dialogues, teacher workshops, theatrical productions, lectures and more. The primary focus of all projects is humanity. The secondary focus is specific to the particular speaker, exhibition or performance. For example, the primary focus of The Elie Wiesel Project: Against Indifference was justice and world peace; the secondary focus of the Project was World War II and the Holocaust.


Proposed future speakers include: President Vaclav Havel, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, President Nelson Mandela and Graca Machel, President Jimmy Carter, Marian Wright Edelman, Shimon Peres, Tich Nath Hanh, The Dalai Lama, President Oscar Arias, Jody Williams, and more.

The Echo Foundation is governed by an International Board of Advisors and a Charlotte Board of Trustees. Mr. Wiesel is an active Honorary Chairperson who continues to meet with ECHO on a regular basis. To date, many outstanding professionals in the community have offered their services to The Foundation pro bono. The corporate, religious and educational communities have generously exhibited their support of ECHO’s mission and projects.

Date of Incorporation: October 20, 1997
Federal Tax Exemption: 501(c)3 received November 10, 1998, EIN: 56-2054137
Administrative Offices: 926 Elizabeth Ave. Suite 403, Charlotte, NC 28204

926 Elizabeth Ave., Suite 403, Charlotte, NC 28204 Tel. 704-347-3844 Fax. 704-347-3845
THE ECHO FOUNDATION

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  *Nobel Laureate for Peace, 1986*

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  **Ambassador Jack Perry**, Retired Foreign Service Officer
  **Sally D. Robinson**, Community Volunteer
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  **Eulada Watt**, Educator, U.S. Department of Education
  **Dr. James Woodward**, Chancellor, University of NC at Charlotte

Our mission “...to sponsor and facilitate those voices that speak of human dignity, justice and moral courage in a way that will lead to positive action for human kind.”
With thanks

The Echo Foundation wishes to express special thanks to the teachers, students and professionals who gave generously of their time to create the Kerry Kennedy Project for Human Rights in Charlotte, NC. The Project would not have been possible without their commitment and tireless efforts.

**Education Committee**
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- Tuffy Jordan
- Gloria Miller
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- Emily Crutcher
- Paula Kweskin
- Brandon Phelps
- Chris Sinay


**Student Dialogue Documentary**
created by
- Bank of America
- Fitts Productions
- Stuart M. Grasberg
- Norman Sound
- Trio Communications