

# JPW BULLETIN

Newsletter of the Justice and Peace Workers (JPW) Network of Asia-Pacific

July – September 2007, No.3

"The Justice and Peace Workers Asia-Pacific Forum is a proactive network of solidarity among women and men working with Catholic Justice and Peace organizations and affiliated groups and organizations in the region..."

## A Silent Moment

### What's Going On in Asia?

**Hong Kong:** *Large Gap between the Rich and the Poor Confirmed by the Government; Cardinal Zen Encourages the Faithful to Appeal for Universal Suffrage; 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Hong Kong's return to China - 50 Cases of Human Rights Violations*

**India:** *Justice Sunday and Right to Food*

**Japan:** *Bishop Michael Goro Matsuura's message on Hiroshima and Nagasaki*

**Philippines:** *Philippine Bishops oppose Anti-Terror Law*

### Issues of Concern/Events

*World Refugee Day 2007*

*ACPP-HL Regional Training 2007 - Workshop on "Justice and Peace Work"*

### Justice and Peace Resources

*Resources on Burma*

### JPW Exchange Corner

*Update on the next JPW Meeting*

## A Silent Moment

### How the World Changes

If you want to make changes in the world,  
you're going to have to be working day after day  
doing the boring straightforward work  
of getting people interested in an issue,  
building a slightly bigger group or organization,  
carrying on, experiencing frustration  
and finally getting somewhere.  
That's how the world changes.

That's how you get rid of slavery,  
that's how you get woman's rights,  
that's how you get the vote,  
that's how you get protection for workers.

Every gain you can point to  
came from that type of effort,  
not from people going to one demonstration  
and dropping out when nothing happens  
or voting every four/five years  
and then going home.  
It's fine to get a better or maybe less worse candidate in,  
but that's the beginning, not the end.  
If you end there, you may as well not vote.

Unless you develop an ongoing,  
living, democratic culture  
that can compel the candidates,  
they're not getting to do the things you voted for.

Marking a cross and then going home is not going to  
change anything.

~ Maryknoll Friends

*Courtesy of Justice and Peace Scotland*

## What's going on in Asia

### Hong Kong

#### Large Gap between the Rich and the Poor Confirmed by the Government

During a meeting of the Justice and Peace Commission of Hong Kong Catholic Diocese (HKJP) on 17 June 2007, Cardinal Joseph Zen underlined that after the return of Hong Kong to the motherland, the plight of the poor and disadvantaged had worsened. The bishop invited Catholics to help the poor, as Jesus teaches us.

Two days later, his observation was confirmed by the Hong Kong's Census and Statistics Department. According to the department's report, the number of people earning HK\$4,000 (US\$513), or less, per month has increased by 80,000. Given the increase in the numbers of the rich, the Gini coefficient, which measures the imbalance between rich and poor, now stands at 0.583, defined as being "worrying."

*Source: Asia News*

#### Cardinal Zen Encourages the Faithful to Appeal for Universal Suffrage

As Hong Kong marked the 10th anniversary of reunification with its motherland - China, Cardinal Joseph Zen encouraged the faithful to appeal for universal suffrage by joining a big demonstration on 1 July 2007.

During a meeting hosted by the Justice and Peace Commission on 17 June 2007, Cardinal Zen said that 10 years after Hong Kong's reunification, the situation of the underprivileged and the poor has been deteriorating. The Cardinal encouraged the faithful to go out into the streets this July 1 and express their desire for universal suffrage.

The march for democracy has become a tradition since the 1 July 2003 turnout, when more than half a million people took to the streets in protest against a proposed anti-subversion law and to criticize the failings of the first chief executive in the territory, Mr. Tung Chee-hwa, who was appointed and chosen picked by the Chinese government.

*Source: Asia News*

#### 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Hong Kong's return to China - 50 Cases of Human Rights Violations

The Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace of Hong Kong Catholic Diocese (HKJP) has launched a polling

campaign to highlight the 10 most disrupting incidents that have infringe upon human rights in Hong Kong since its reunification with China.

While the society of Hong Kong has a good record in human rights compared to its Asian counterparts, the HKJP observed that the city still falls short in various areas of the stipulations of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

The commission has noted that Hong Kong people were deprived of the right to a fair election of its government head, the right to free speech and assembly and the right to information. Personal privacy was put under threat and the Racial Discrimination Ordinance contained some contradictory ambiguities.

On the economic, social and cultural fronts, the commission enlisted six to seven cases where labour rights and family/children's rights were infringed. It was followed by what was considered a lack of social protection, which showed four violations. Other offences are recorded in housing rights, academic freedom, cultural preservation and reluctance in setting up rights protection mechanisms.

The public are invited to submit their opinions by mid October. On-line polling is available at [www.hkjp.org](http://www.hkjp.org).

*Source: HKJP*

## India

### Justice Sunday and Right to Food

The National Commission for Justice, Peace and Development (NCJPD) of the Catholic Bishops' Conferences of India (CBCI) has chosen "Freedom from Hunger" as the theme of Justice Sunday this year, which was observed on 19 August.

According to the message by the chairperson of NCJPD, India hosts more than a third of the world's 146 million under-nourished children. The problem of hunger has persisted, despite the fact that there has been a stockpile of surplus food grain in the country, thus the problem is not of scarcity of resources, but a lack of commitment of the government to its obligation to respect, protect and fulfill human rights of its citizens. The Commission proposes that the Rights-Based Approach be adopted to address the problem of hunger, not only holding the government accountable, but also educating and empowering the people to reclaim their rights.

To mark this occasion, NCJPD has published a brochure on "Freedom from Hunger" and a poster on "Ten Commandments for an Effective Public Distribution System" for distribution to all parishes in the country for reflection. With the intent to promote the values of justice and peace among the people of India, the book, "Justice and Peace—an Ever Present Challenge" has also been reprinted with permission from the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace.

In the Archdiocese of Mumbai, the Justice and Peace Commission has featured "Right to Food" in its Newsletter, Chetana, emphasising that "the Right to Food is the right to feed oneself in dignity, rather than the right to be fed." Articles include a fact-finding report to Wardha investigating farmers suicides in the Vidharba region, statistics and details of the Public Distribution System and relevant schemes and a Church response to it as well as the liturgy for Justice Sunday.

*Source: National Commission for Justice, Peace and Development (NCJPD) India; JPC Mumbai*

## Japan

### Bishop Michael Goro Matsuura's message on Hiroshima and Nagasaki

During the Pax Christi New Mexico's annual action at Los Alamos, Bishop Michael Goro Matsuura, president of Catholic Council for Justice and Peace, encouraged the faithful to support action to dismantle nuclear warheads.

He acknowledged the importance of standing together in making a concrete action for peace and non-violence. He reiterated the call to continue articulating the commitment to non-violence to the government of the then-prime minister, Abe, and the current administration, which still seeks to revise Article 9 of the Constitution of Japan in order to permit Japan to maintain de jure military forces for dispatch to anywhere in the world. Such a move is strongly supported by the United States (US) government: A statement from the US-Japan Security Consultative Committee issued in May 2007 confirmed that "as both countries develop and deploy capabilities, every effort must be made to ensure tactical, operational, and strategic coordination in response to ballistic missile threats against alliance interests."

The bishop recognizes the world is facing a dangerous time when a culture of war and violence is steadily built up. He urged people to express their commitment to another world, which is possible, that works together in solidarity to create a global network of peace, non-violence and compassion, and which cries out: No more Hiroshima, No nuclear weapons!

*Sources: Pax Christi International*

## Philippines

### Philippine Bishops oppose Anti-Terror Law

In late July, the Ecumenical Bishops Forum (ESF) of Mindanao joined the Catholic Bishops' Conference of The Philippines in opposing an anti-terrorism measure in a southern region of the Asian nation.

According to Section 3 of the act, "terrorist activities" are all those actions "causing widespread and extraordinary fear and panic" and they may be punished by "up to 40 years in prison". Further, Section 19 allows the "arbitrary detention of a suspect for more than three days, house arrest even if not upheld by a judge and a ban on all kinds of movement."

Human-rights groups have also condemned the legislation saying it could invade privacy, noting it allows for court-authorized wiretapping of suspects. Hundreds of left-wing activists urged repeal of the law at a protest, vowing to question its legality in the Supreme Court.

The Catholic bishops' conference, at a press conference on July 9, called on the Philippine government to revise a new anti-terrorism law which took effect on July 15, saying the unlimited powers it confers upon the army "could become a cause of gross injustice."

*Source: Catholic Online*

## Issues of Concern/Events

### World Refugee Day 2007

On the World Refugee Day (20 June), Prof. Vito Muntarbhorn, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights, has published an article entitled "Major challenges for World Refugee Day". While estimates suggest that there are now a smaller number of refugees than a decade ago, he noticed that the global scenario may not have improved. Indeed, increased constraints have been imposed on people seeking to leave their countries. He enlisted 10 challenges to protect those people in need of protection.

Rising bilateralism is among one of the challenges. According to Prof. Muntarbhorn, there is a clear trend among countries to adopt bilateral approaches. Yet at times, there is "negative bilateralism". A classic situation is when two or more countries get together to suppress "border crossers" or "illegal immigrants", when in reality the persons who are labeled in that manner are fleeing persecution and other dangers. Other challenges include: lack of global solidarity, mistrust among government officials, UN agencies, civil society and refugees, refoulement of refugees etc.

*Source: Bangkok Post*

### ACPP-HL Regional Training 2007 - Workshop on "Justice and Peace Work"

The Asian Center for the Progress of Peoples (ACPP) held its regional Training Workshop: "Justice and Peace Work" on 16-20 September 2007 at the St. Gabriel Provincial House, Bangkok, Thailand. The Workshop aims to strengthen and enhance the skills of Hotline Asia (HL) staff and the network in addressing justice and human rights issues in Asia, as well as strengthening collaboration. As 2007 also marks the 40th anniversary of the Populorum Progressio, the workshop also hopes to help participants respond more effectively to the "signs of the time."

There were 17 participants from 10 countries, representing Justice and Peace Commissions of the Bishop's Conferences and the Religious Superiors, Church-based organizations and other NGOs with human rights focus. They explored how the topics of Catholic Social Teaching (CST), the Rights-Based Approach (RBA) and some theories on conflict (CT), can enhance work for justice and peace, as well as explored how human rights advocacy is part of peace-building.

The main feature of the Workshop was an introduction to the 3 topics and their relevance and linkage in the context of Justice and Peace and human rights work, as well as self-reflection sessions on the application of tools that enhance work in a specific justice and peace issue they are currently involved in.

Although the participants came to the Workshop with different experiences and levels of knowledge in CST and RBA, the various input, group work discussions, role plays and self-reflection sessions helped clarify and emphasize certain key concepts and provide a venue for the participants to temporarily get out of their regular routine to look into their issues in a different space and with a different perspective.

The resource persons for the workshop were Fr. Allwyn D'Silva of the Justice and Peace Commission, Mumbai for CST, Mr. Andre Frankovits of the Human Rights Council of Australia for RBA, and Dr. Chaiwat Satha-Anand of Thammasat University for conflict theory. The facilitating team was composed of Mr. James Tan, Ms Katalée Sikharangkura, and Ms Linda Noche of the ACPP.

*Source: ACPP*

## Justice and Peace Resources

### Resources on Burma

Education for Justice has published a new resource to follow up the developments in Burma, which helps to understand more background about the situation, why the monks are involved and the nature of their demands. The event is seen as a teachable moment to look at the call for structural change, the role of non-violent protest and the call for justice in political rule.

To access the resource (for registered members only), please go to:

<http://www.educationforjustice.org/index.fpl/1200/rs/1/article/10890.html>

If you are not a member, you may register with them directly or contact [hotline@acpp.org](mailto:hotline@acpp.org) for assistance on the resource.

*Sources: Education for Justice*

## JPW Exchange Corner

### Update on the next JPW Meeting

The next networking meeting of the Justice and Peace Workers (JPW) Asia-Pacific Forum, initially scheduled for November 2007, has been postponed due to inadequate funds raised. The JPW Co-Organizing Team is also currently exploring another possible country to host the event, which is hoped to be held in the first quarter of 2008.

*This Bulletin is distributed by ACPP-Hotline-Asia ([www.acpp.org](http://www.acpp.org)) on behalf of the JP Workers network in Asia. Please send your feedback or comment to [hotline@acpp.org](mailto:hotline@acpp.org).*