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RESPONSES TO HOTLINE ASIA URGENT APPEALS 2002 – 2003

Hotline Asia's Urgent Appeals (UA) are issued by the Asian Center for the Progress of Peoples (ACPP), in response to Asian requests for international solidarity on special cases of injustices. Therefore, your response to each UA is important for those who have requested these appeals and their struggle to address these injustices.

Your responses and feedback are also important for ACPP to evaluate our service and identify how to continue to improve our services to you.

This report gives a summary of your responses during 2002 - 2003, which we have collected and monitored from the annual questionnaires [Hotline Asia Urgent Appeals: Collection of Responses Questionnaire 2002 and 2003], copies of solidarity letters you sent to us, and your messages informing us of your action.

Urgent Appeals (UA) Issued

In 2002-2003, ACPP responded to solidarity requests from 14 countries, through a total of 21 Urgent Appeals (10 in 2002 and 11 in 2003) and 15 Special Urgent Appeals (10 in 2002 and 5 in 2003). Most of these requests came from South Asia, with India and Pakistan each generating a total of 9 issues in the period.

Issues in the UA range from laws related to immigration detention in Australia and anti-terrorism laws in India, violence by law enforcers on indigenous peoples, project affected peoples, urban poor, and minorities in Bangladesh, India, Indonesia and Sri Lanka, and arrests and detention of activists in China, India, Pakistan and Malaysia. (*The list of these UA is available at our web site: www.acpp.org under Urgent Appeals.*)

Profile of Urgent Appeal Recipients

As part of monitoring, the number of UA recipients (people and organizations who expressed interest to receive UA and related information from ACPP) in 2002 and 2003 was tallied.

In 2003, there was a total of 1,531 UA recipients from 69 countries. Most of them are from Pakistan (165 recipients) followed by India (122 recipients). 735 of them receive UA by "post only", 416 by "e-mail only" and 380 by "both e-mail and post". This is an increase from 1,466 recipients in 2002. The 65 new recipients are mainly from Pakistan. (*Refer to Table 1: Comparison Table of UA Recipients by Region/Sub-region*)

There is an increase in the number of people receiving UA by "e-mail only" (from 359 in 2002 to 415 in 2003), showing e-mail's importance in the trend. However, recipients receiving by "post only" remain to be more or less half of the total recipients (735 out of 1,531 in 2003). "Post only" recipients are mainly from South Asian countries. (*Refer to Table 2: Comparison Table on Method of Receiving UA*)

By regularly updating our mailing list from your information on the change of contact details, we were able to reach those who have moved, and delete those who expressed their intention to unsubscribe.

Responses to Urgent Appeals (UA)

Collection of Responses Questionnaires

In January 2003 and 2004, Hotline sent a Questionnaire to all UA recipients to monitor UA responses. The information received was used to improve the work for the following year. The 2002 Questionnaire was designed to gather more data on ways in which people used or responded to the UA. For 2003, the same questionnaire was used, with improved formatting for e-mail delivery.

As there were only 40 responses to the 2002 Questionnaire, a greater effort was made to remind UA recipients in the following year. As a result the number of respondents increased to 69 in 2003.

The responses helped us in updating contact details of the respondents, learning more about their work; how they actually used our UA; getting feedback and suggestions for improvement.

Letter Writing Responses

114 UA recipients from 28 countries responded to UA in 2003. They produced a total of 356 letters (average of 3.12 letters per person). In general, the result is encouraging as compared to 2002, with an increase of the letters written (from 313 to 356). The average number of letters written per UA has also increased from 15.65 to 22.25. The maximum number of letters written was 38 (for UA on murder of a Catholic priest in Pakistan), while the minimum was 8 (UA on eviction of communities in Pakistan and signature campaign from South Korea). (*Refer to Table 3: Summary of Letter Responses*)

During the 2-year period, the most active respondents were mainly from India (31), Pakistan (17), Hong Kong (16), Australia (13) and Bangladesh (12). They are mainly from religiously inspired NGO and religious communities and individuals.

Issues of concern

Issues relating to eviction of the fisherfolk in Sri Lanka and the rights of farmers in Pakistan were the main concern of our respondents, based on the highest number of letters recorded in 2002. In 2003, the main issues of concern were on the murder of Catholic priest in Pakistan and forced eviction in Indonesia.

Non-Letter Writing Responses

Apart from writing letters, we also learned from the Questionnaires and other feedback that the UA respondents have actually been used for the following purposes: (*also refer to Table 4: No. of Respondents and their Responses*)

- for education and training activities
- as information for reflection or group discussion,
- included information in prayer intentions (especially the religious individuals and faith-based NGO)
- published information in newsletters (especially in Europe and South Asia)
- displayed them in bulletin boards
- linked UA to their web sites
- shared and distributed them among communities and network, discussion groups, etc.
- translated them into local language

Other comments include: appreciation that ACP's concern has been larger than other Catholic organizations and has unique issues that they believe it is a reliable source in Asia, and that "Other suggested actions" made the UA meaningful. It was also mentioned that English language makes it difficult for some countries to disseminate the information locally.

Responses from Authorities

While it is difficult to know the direct impact that appeals have on the authorities contacted, the following appeals resulted in some response from the relevant authorities.

Urgent Appeal	Response from Authorities
SUA 020128(1) - AUSTRALIA Concern for well-being of Detainees in Immigration Detention Centres	reply from Australian diplomatic representatives in Belgium and Hong Kong explaining immigration detention policies
SUA 020328(6) - AUSTRALIA Extend Time for Public Hearing on Anti-terrorism Laws	postal response from the related authorities regarding Australia's anti-terrorism bills
UA 020124(2) - HONG KONG Respect Family Reunion as a Basic Right	automatic and acknowledgement responses from Immigration Department of Hong Kong
UA 020119(1) - SRI LANKA Stop Sand Dredging, Restore Fisherfolk's Livelihood	copies of letter from secretary of Sri Lanka's prime minister was forwarded to ACP
SUA030812(5) - NEW ZEALAND Refugee Faces Deportation	acknowledgement of receipt by Immigration Minister, with an explanation of their policy

Suggestions for Improvement and Hotline's response

1) Improve the layout and format, adding colours and pictures, and highlighting topics to make it more attractive.

In response: HL has started to explore the possibility of sending soft copies of UA by using PDF format or HTML to improve the appearance. However, we also need to consider recipients of some countries where it is not easy to download certain formats on their e-mails.

2) It might be helpful to follow up the UAs by focusing on one issue to do more in-depth study or to make a bibliography of reliable resources provide focus on particular issues.

In response: HL will also consider in-depth study of certain issues through Education Supplements.

3) Include the e-mail addresses of the authorities

In response: HL tries as much as possible to include all contact details from the local source. However, we still believe that e-mails, though very convenient, can be easily blocked, unlike the old-fashioned fax and post which will reach surely. Therefore, we encourage to always post letters after sending by e-mail or fax.

4) Occasionally send back responses received from others to forward to others and build confidence.

In response: More efforts will be made to collect and communicate responses to the requesters about each UA.

Concluding Remarks

After comparing the responses and questionnaires of 2002 and 2003, we observe that:

- The number of UA recipients increased, mostly from the e-mail list. Those who receive UA by "post only" has decreased. Although the trend shows increasing importance of e-mails over post, the latter remains important to ACPP, with more than 700 recipients in the current list, who may not have access to internet. Therefore, ACPP will continue to send UA and other information by post.
- Reminders sent for the 2003 Questionnaire was useful in increasing no. of people who responded to the questionnaire. Therefore, reminders will be used to encourage people to respond more actively to UA.
- The number of letter responses is increasing, and many of them are continued supporters.
- UAs have been a valuable source of information which have actually been used for Education and training, and the information was also used for reflection or group discussion. There are also many other actions which can be taken by UA recipients.
- Most of the respondents informed us that the UA was useful, and others circulate it further to their network. This is an encouragement for our work.
- The staff learned more about the respondents' concern in their work: this is also part of the basis to identify our role and how to improve Hotline's services.
- The challenge of language also prompted us to discuss strategies in translation of UA, using our existing network and resources.
- From the suggestions and comments, we were able to identify specifically how to improve our services for the following year.

Summary in Tables

Table 1: Comparison Table of UA Recipients by Region/sub-region

Region/sub-region	2002	2003	Remarks
South Asia	346	415	Increased by 69
South East Asia	324	329	Increased by 5
East Asia	311	309	decreased by 2
N. America and others	183	175	decreased by 8
Europe	176	181	Increased by 5
Pacific	126	122	decreased by 4
TOTAL	1466	1531	<i>65 new recipients</i>

Table 2: Comparison Table on Method of Receiving UA

Method	2002	2003	Remarks
E-mail only	359	416	increased by 57
Both e-mail and post	346	380	increased by 34
Post only	761	735	decreased by 26
TOTAL recipients	1466	1531	increased by 65

Table 3: Summary of Letter Responses

Result	2002	2003
Number of respondents	126	114
Number of countries	26	28
Number of appeal letters written	313	356
Average letter written per UA	15.65	22.25
- <i>Maximum</i>	33	38
- <i>Minimum</i>	8	9
Average letter written per person	2.48	3.12

Table 4: No. of Respondents and their Responses (from Questionnaires)

Non-Letter writing responses	2002	2003
Displayed the <i>Urgent Appeals</i>	9	15
Published the information in a newsletter	7	9
Used the information for reflection or group discussion	12	18
Used the <i>Urgent Appeals</i> in education or training	14	21
Included the information in prayer intentions or homilies	8	16

Thank You for Your Continued Support

Hotline Asia is a service for Justice and Peace irrespective of class, race, religion, culture and political affiliation. We issue **Urgent Appeals** on request from our network. As you receive **Urgent Appeals free**, we welcome contributions payable to **Asian Center for the Progress of Peoples Ltd**

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