



COMBONI PRESS NETWORK

The News Service Of The Comboni Missionaries

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Comboni Press Network (CPN) newsletter provides access to information on global issues from church and mission-related sources. Our focus is on justice and peace issues, and the effect U.S. policies have on Third World countries. Please share your suggestions and ideas with us—we're only a fax or e-mail away!

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GLOBAL CONNECTIONS:

From *SHATTERING THE SILENCE ABOUT DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC):*
CPN The 15-year bloody history in the DRC's Eastern region has witnessed massive slaughter of its people, the insidious rape and torture of women, displacement of 250,000 and the exploitation of the country's vast minerals, demanding immediate international attention. Since the capture of one of the chief players, the Rwandan General Nkunda in late January, the outlook has been more hopeful, but the history is complicated, and the future unpredictable. In the meantime, U.S. Senators Brownback, Durbin and Feingold have filed a bill to crack down on the U.S. use of electronics containing metals mined in the DRC which is one reason for the unrest. [Link to the following sites to learn more and jumpstart your activism:](#)

(1) *Africa Faith & Justice Network*: Bahati Jacques, policy analyst, AFJN and a native Congolese, traveled there this year and can update you on the situation there and also what's happening in Congress. E-mail afjn@afjn.org, and visit www.afjn.org;

(2) *The Comboni Missionaries and Sisters of Charity* have educational packets on the DRC, ideal for teachers, and filled with articles, lesson plans, actions, and more. \$15 includes s & h. Currently, 56 Comboni Missionary priests, 17 brothers and 36 Sisters work in the Congo at 25 missionary sites. A joint photographic exhibition runs through June 5. E-mail combonipn@combonimissionaries.org for the packet or for the handouts from the exhibit.

(3) *The Enough Project* has up-to-date information on any countries experiencing genocide, and especially the DRC, including these excellent resources:

- ◆ *A Comprehensive Approach to Congo's Conflict Minerals* gives an overview of the role minerals play at www.enoughproject.org/publications/comprehensive-approach-conflict-minerals-strategy-paper;
- ◆ *Confronting Rape and Other Forms of Violence Against Women in Conflict Zones: Spotlight: DRC and Sudan*, (testimony of John Prendergast before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, 5/13/09) at www.enoughproject.org/print/1894;
- ◆ *Raise Hope for the Congo* a campaign of *Enough!* has current information, video clips, blogs and an action alert on the minerals at www.raisehopeforcongo.org.

SPOTLIGHT ON: BREAD FOR THE WORLD's KEY ISSUES:

√ Climate Change and its Effect on the Poor: How do we make poor people more visible in the climate change debate? Where will the money that's needed come from? How can we work on climate change as part of poverty-focused development efforts? How can we take action individually and collectively? are just a few questions posed in *Bread for the World's* Background Paper: *For Poor People, Climate Change is Today* by Michele Learner, *Bread* Newsletter, April-May 2009, No. 202. Visit www.bread.org.

√ H.R. 2139: *The Initiating Foreign Assistance Reform Act of 2009: Bread for the World's 2009 Offering of Letters* is based on the reform of this act. Learn more at www.offeringofletters.org/component/content/article/87.html. On April 28, Reps. Berman and Kirk introduced the act to direct the president to develop and implement a comprehensive national strategy to further the U.S. foreign policy objective of promoting global development, along with other purposes. It's intended as the precursor of a broader reform effort later this year, including a comprehensive rewrite of the *Foreign Assistance Act of 1961*. After Memorial Day, the bill will be taken up by the House Foreign Affairs Committee. Call your representatives at 1-800-826-3688.

Close the *School of the Americas/WHINSEC!* The fight is still on. Visit www.SOAW.org/presente.

NOT-TO-BE-MISSED RESOURCES AND ORGANIZATIONS:

√ *HIV Prevention: A Global Theological Conversation*, edited by Gillian Paterson and published by the *Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance*, is an essential resource for church leaders, theologians, researchers and strategists who are committed to a positive, informed and compassionate engagement with HIV prevention. Available in English, French and Spanish. Downloadable at www.e-alliance.ch/en/s/hivaid/publications/theological-conversation/.

√ *SICSAL* is a “worldwide Christian ecumenical network of solidarity with impoverished peoples.” Founded in 1980 as the *International Christian Service in Solidarity with Latin America “Oscar Romero,”* it’s now in more than 25 countries, and SICSAL-U.S. publishes *Signs of the Times in the Americas*. Supporting the demands for justice by the indigenous peoples, Afro-Americans, women and migrants and also sharing analyses of the social, political, economic and ecclesial realities are two of SICSAL’s goals. Visit www.sicsal-usa.org.

√ *20,000 Dialogues, Make Peace Happen*, a project of Unity Productions Foundation, has held 4,592 dialogues so far, to spur greater cross-cultural understanding on a community level. This nationwide initiative uses films to facilitate dialogue about Muslims and Islam, such as the recent *Cities of Light: The Rise and Fall of Islamic Spain*. To watch the *How to Dialogue* video, or join a community dialogue campaign, contact Daniel Tutt/Washington, D.C.; (202) 298-8088/E-mail: Daniel@upf.tv/Web site: www.upf.tv.

√ *Who Speaks for Islam? What a Billion Muslims Really Think* is a new book from Prof. John Esposito and Dalia Mogahed, just appointed to the Advisory Council on Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships by President Obama. The book from the Gallup Press is the result of a massive, multi-year research study that included tens of thousands of interviews with residents of more than 35 nations. It helps explain why misconceptions and stereotypes about Muslims can only hurt the U.S., posing questions that stir the debate in the minds of millions: *Is Islam to blame for terrorism? Why is there so much anti-Americanism in the Muslim world? Who are the extremists?* In bookstores or order online now.

NOTABLE BOOKMARKS:

- ◆ *Making Sense of Darfur*, www.ssrc.org/blogs/darfur/category/darfur/, is a blog created by Alex de Waal on the *Social Science Research Council’s* site, that’s stirring discussion about the ongoing genocide.
- ◆ *The Restorative Justice Book Project* is currently in the works by the *Africa Faith and Justice Network*. Executive Director Rocco Puopolo, SX kept an online diary on his findings last fall in Ghana, Liberia, and Sierra Leone at rjwestafrica.blogspot.com. Two other AFJN staffers, Beth Tuckey and Bahati Jacques, also working on this project, visited Burundi, Uganda and DRC to interview the people there.
- ◆ www.yesafricamatters.org, still in process, will educate you on the upcoming Africa Synod in October, the initiatives, actions and resources, with a focus on being *Together with Africa: A Celebration of Hope*. Also, visit the Maryknoll web site at www.maryknollogc.org to click on the link there.

FUTURE DATES FOR FUTURE THINKERS AND PLANNERS:

- May 31-June 5, 2009: Congo: Shattering the Silence—*2009 Photographic Exhibit on Congo*. This second leg of the educational exhibit kicks off with an opening reception on the 31st from 4-5 pm (hours until 8 pm that night) at the Comboni Mission Center, 1318 Nagel Road, Cincinnati. Speakers include Comboni Fr. Peter Ciuciulla, Dr. Lumana Pashi and Vince Costello, Red Cross. The object is to raise awareness of the ongoing atrocities in the DR Congo. The exhibit ran from May 17-22 at the Sisters of Charity (co-sponsor) on the city’s west side. Weekday hours are 6-9 pm, or by appointment. Educational kits are available for \$12. E-mail Fr. Paul Donohue at donohue@combonimissionaries.org.
- June 5, 2009: United Nations World Environment Day is an opportunity to stimulate worldwide awareness of the environment, political attention and action. Learn about the *Plant for the Planet: Billion Tree Campaign* at www.unep.org/billiontreecampaign. Obtain the USG/UISG Commission for JPIC in Rome’s Environment Day Prayer, in three “movements” (*Celebration, Lamentation and Response*), at <http://jpicformation.wikispaces.com>.
- June 12-14, 2009: IMAGO’s *Earth Spirit Rising: A Conference on Ecology, Spirituality and Living Economies* will take place at Xavier University’s Cintas Center in Cincinnati. This dynamic conference brings together national and regional leaders to identify the essential elements of sustainable economies, and discuss topics such as climate change, species extinction, energy depletion and contamination of food and water. Speakers include David Korten, Miriam Therese MacGillis, OP, Dr. David Orr, Paula Gonzalez, SC, Jim Schenk and James Buchanan. Register at www.earthspiritrising.org.