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Canadian perspectives on global justice



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A malnourished and dehydrated child lies on a bed in Banadir Hospital in the Somali capital Mogadishu. Somalia is gripped by a devastating drought and famine that has already killed tens of thousands and leaving many hundreds of thousands more in desperate need of emergency life-saving humanitarian assistance from the outside world. Photo: UN/Stuart Price.

Drought is a phenomenon of weather. Largely unpreventable, droughts have been made more severe by climate change.

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The Social Justice Committee asks you to support humanitarian relief efforts but also development assistance based on the promotion of human rights.

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Our thanks to our volunteer and intern writers, and to the photographers who contributed their work. For information on submitting articles or other material, contact the editor.

Delays in publication. Production of the *Upstream Journal* has had some setbacks in recent months, but we now are ready to catch up and have lots of stories to share with you.



Cover: Ayatollah Seyyed Hossein Kazemeini Boroujerdi, an Iranian political prisoner jailed since 2006. Photo courtesy Mohsen Shahnazi. The background is from a photo of the protests following elections in June 2009, by Arash Ashoorinia.



About this paper:

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Dear readers,

I imagine an infant, a girl, born into poverty in rural sub-Saharan Africa. The odds are already stacked against her, but imagine also that she has a severe disability. What are her chances of her fulfilling her potential, or even of surviving past childhood?

And what is our role in helping that child? There is no doubt that most people would donate money to help her survive and to cope, and so Canadians do, donating millions of dollars to charity every year. But the real challenge is to change the circumstances that condemned her in the first place. Poverty and gender discrimination arise from power inequality, and disability is a matter of context; all of these can be changed.

Examining the cause along with the symptom is, of course, what this magazine does - where we get the "upstream" in its title. And when you poke about to find out why people are poor and oppressed, sometimes what you find out isn't welcomed by everyone involved. Exploitive power dynamics become exposed, social norms get challenged, and political objectives get challenged.

If Canadians aren't willing to engage with those challenges, our development efforts will never be more than band-aids.

The current government has made it clear it will not support groups engaged in political advocacy, although even registered charities are permitted to engage in a degree of advocacy.

The elimination of government funding of the Christian church charity Kairos, and the Montreal group Alternatives, are perhaps the most publicized of the funding cuts to groups advocating rights-based international development. Rights and Democracy, a government agency, did not get cut but was instead cleansed of its engagement in critical analysis, and will no longer do any scrutiny whatsoever of Canadian policy, no matter the relevance for the organization's purported goals of democracy and human rights.

Groups advocating for women's rights and those of First Nations people have also been cut, and refugee support groups are closing their doors.

There are few options for funding in Canada which, unlike the US, does not have a strong tradition of foundation support. Government support has been in decline for years, and Canadians themselves give less to charities than do our American neighbours (the situation is worse in Québec, where individual giving is half the national average).

Charities are also nervous about how their politics might affect their tax status. I'm told that some have even scrubbed their web sites clean of words like "advocacy."

Caution about engaging in policy analysis and criticism is nothing new in the Canadian NGO world, but the Harper government's intolerance of dissent means that there will be precious little in the way of analytical thinking coming from this sector in the coming years.

The challenges the world faces, from widespread poverty, inequality and oppression to climate change, require solid analysis of their causes. They require responses informed by evidence, analysis and debate. With critical voices silenced, Canadian foreign policy is becoming more shallow than ever before, guided by short-term objectives of trade and corporate growth.

Derek MacCuish 1-514-933-6797 editor@upstreamjournal.org

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Enemies of the Islamic Republic



“ Their action is in defence of their rights and against the injustice and oppression they suffer at the hands of that ruling system. Such an action is not only permissible but also, in some cases and stages, obligatory. ”

- Grand Ayatollah Yousuf Saanei, now considered the most prominent clerical reformist, commenting on the anti-government protesters in Iran. Saanei is a leader with the Green Movement, pushing for greater freedom and an accountable democracy.

Ayatollah Seyyed Hossein Kazemeini Boroujerdi is an Iranian political prisoner, jailed in Evin prison since 2006. An outspoken critic of the Islamic Republic, Boroujerdi is an advocate for democracy, human rights, religious freedoms and the separation of religion from politics. He is opposed to *Vilayet - i Faqih*, the system that rules Iran by clerical jurisprudence.

He is a charismatic leader with a large following, and the government considers his teachings to be a threat. After a short detention in 2004, Boroujerdi was banned from making speeches, and ordered to eliminate all contact with his adherents. Despite the restrictions, he continued to speak out publicly and the government jailed him as an enemy of the Islamic Republic.

In a secret trial without legal representation, the Special Court of the Clergy sentenced him to death for openly criticizing and working against the regime. The sentence was later reduced to eleven years. Tortured repeatedly, his health suffers as a result.

“Every Iranian household bears the scars of these

BY MICHELLE BOOTH

inhumane acts of injustice,” Boroujerdi stated in an open letter to the UN Human Rights Council. “Today, throughout the world, Iran, which purports to represent ‘political Islam,’ has become the role model for injustice and violence.”

Ali Paydar, a follower of Boroujerdi, established the website BamAzadi as an information base about the Ayatollah and to provide updates on his treatment while imprisoned.

I asked him why Boroujerdi is considered by authorities to be a threat.

“Given that Mr. Boroujerdi strongly believes in the separation of religious power from state, and given that he has made many attempts in implementing this belief in Iran, he is therefore a threat to the regime. His progressive beliefs question the *raison d’être* of the regime. It would not be an exaggeration to say that at present this regime does not fear any political prisoner as much as they fear Mr.

Boroujerdi, because he is a religious intellectual who, along with his knowledge of the principles of Islam, addresses serious criticism to the Islamic regime in Iran.”

When President Ahmadinejad claimed an election victory in 2009, Iranians took to the streets to demonstrate in the largest show of opposition since the Islamic revolution of 1979. Government response to the opposition movement was severe. Approximately 4,000 demonstrators were arrested, and 200 of them remain in jail. Ten were given death sentences, charged with crimes against God (*Moharebeh*). Prisoners are often held without contact with lawyers or family members, and are subject to torture.

Opposed to the oppression, other prominent religious scholars have spoken out. To find out more about them, I spoke with Iranian blogger and journalist Omid Memarian. He has written extensively about Iranian politics and human rights since 2002.

Memarian says that there are several religious leaders in Iran who disagree with the repressive policies of the Islamic state. Two examples are Grand Ayatollah Dastgheib and Grand Ayatollah Saanei.

Because of their opposition to the government, the offices of Dastgheib and Saanei were attacked. Members of the militia are believed to be responsible.

“In the case of Saanei and Dastgheib, both have been really critical and direct in their criticism, and the regime has attacked their offices to disconnect them from their supporters,” Memarian said.

Saanei and Dastgheib have not yet been impris-

oned, but the Iranian government has banned the adherents of Ayatollah Saanei from following his religious rulings.

Saanei supports the actions of the protestors and has spoken out against the death sentences handed down by the Revolutionary Court.

I reached him by email and asked if he believed that protesting constitutes a crime against God and the Islamic Republic. “People who protest the actions and decisions of their ruling system and raise their objection are not by any means considered ‘Mohareb,’ since their action is in defence of their rights and against the injustice and oppression they suffer at the hands of that ruling system,” he said. “Such an action is not only permissible but also, in some cases and stages, obligatory.”

In a statement from Evin prison in November, Ayatollah Boroujerdi said, “Now that Iran’s theocratic leaders have lost all domestic and international credibility, they have devised plots to execute prisoners in every possible way. As neither international observers or local inspectors are allowed to visit prisons, threats and assassination attempts against jailed dissidents are now on the increase.”

Shortly after, six of his followers were arrested without charge and imprisoned.

According to the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran, the government is now on an “execution binge,” killing a prisoner every nine hours on average. How many, and who they are, is difficult to determine because executions are carried out in secret, much like they were in 1988, when “death commissions” ordered an estimated 5,000 prisoners killed.

“This regime can not survive,” Memarian said.



Before his imprisonment, Ayatollah Boroujerdi drew large crowds to hear him speak. Photo courtesy BamAzadi.

“The majority of people living now did not vote for the Islamic Republic. They did not approve of the constitution, and they are not the people who accepted the Islamic Republic as a political institution. What the government did is not a long-term solution. It can not constantly arrest critics, journalists and lawyers and send them to prison.”

Ali Paydar agrees. “The movement is very much alive because of the tyranny in Iran. The protest movement of the people was an answer to three decades of suppression, murders and executions, and it would be extremely unfair if we were to talk about the dissent of the people as merely a protest against elections. If we listen to the protest chants after the recent elections, we would hear that the people of Iran are asking for a change in the regime of the Vilayet -i Faqih. I say with absolute conviction that the people of Iran are just waiting for the moment and the opportunity.”

The international community, including Canada, has attempted to put pressure on Iran to improve its human rights record.

“We continue to call on Iran to respect its domestic and international obligations and ensure fairness and due process for all its citizens and others,” Department of Foreign Affairs spokesperson Laura Markle told me. “There are numerous reports of individuals like Ayatollah Boroujerdi and his followers having been denied their rights. For the eighth consecutive year, Canada again successfully led international efforts to adopt a resolution on the situation of human rights in Iran at the Committee of the UN General Assembly. The Government of Canada stands firmly with the people of Iran against human rights abuses, discrimination against and ill treatment of women, and the lack of due process for all prisoners.”

“Friendship, understanding, and unity must be established among all humans in the world,” Boroujerdi said. “Every kind of war and bloodshed under any title damages the human spirit.”

Michelle Booth is a mother of three and a communications student at Concordia University. She spends her days writing and exploring the ancient landscape of the Laurentian mountains.

Iran facts

Oil

Iran has the third largest oil supply in the world and is the fourth largest exporter of crude. Countries that import Iranian oil include:

Japan 520 (thousand barrels per day)
China 430
India 410
South Korea 210
Italy 160
Spain 140
Greece 110
French 90
South Africa 90
Other 440

Israel gets oil from Iran on a large scale despite its boycott of Iranian products by having the oil delivered via Europe.

Arms

China and Russia are Iran's principal arms suppliers. Both countries are signatories to UN Security Council Resolution 1929. This resolution increased restrictions on arms sales to Iran in response to concern over Iran's nuclear program, but is not a complete arms embargo. Eight categories of heavy weapons, such as armoured vehicles and combat aircraft, are prohibited, while sales of small arms are permitted.

Executions

Iran executes the second largest number of prisoners in the world after China. Amnesty International counted 388 executions in 2009 and 252 in 2010, but the Iranian government does not make all numbers public, and many executions are conducted in secret. As 2011 began, there was a surge in executions.

Trade with China

The president of Iran-China Joint Chamber of Commerce predicted that the annual trade between the two countries will reach \$50 billion in the next five years. Asadollah Asgaroladi was reported in Iran's Mehr News as saying that sanctions against Iran were to no avail and that trade between the two countries was growing despite them.

SEX TRAFFICKING in Canada

BY CARINA ANTCAK

Human trafficking is the fastest growing industry criminal industry in the world. The International Labour Organization estimates that criminals make a profit of almost US\$ 32 billion per year from trafficking, mainly from sexual exploitation.

Although trafficking is commonly identified with Asia or Eastern Europe, the domestic aspect of the problem is mostly absent from current discourses on sex trafficking in Canada. Up to 60% of prostituted women are aboriginal girls, and more than 75% of aboriginal girls under the age of 18 have been sexually abused. Since 1980, over 500 aboriginal women have disappeared, presumably murdered or involved in sexual exploitation.

Anupriya Sethi is a researcher who has focused on this violence and exploitation. She says that poverty, unemployment and a history of colonization have made aboriginal girls particularly vulnerable to traffickers. The destruction of social and cultural structures brought increased violence, sexual abuse, substance abuse and suicide.

Desperate for employment and acceptance, the girls are often trafficked across provincial borders, particularly from Saskatchewan to Alberta because of the increased demand that came with oil and

mining, and to urban centers like Vancouver and Montreal.

Caterina A. Ferlino, a spokesperson for the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, says that government response has been plagued by discriminatory sentiments toward aboriginal people and the view that sex trafficking is an

international issue, not a domestic one. There is no national strategy on the issue, and the investigation and prosecution of traffickers are the responsibility of provincial governments.

VICTIM SERVICES HAVE IMPROVED, BUT NOT ENOUGH

Some services available to victims have improved. Those from outside Canada can get temporary resident permits regardless of whether or not they testify against their traffickers. However, Sethi says that the long waiting period in

service provision and the lack of consistent long term funding are key problems for victims support, and they can't stay in rehabilitation centers for sufficiently long periods of time. Once the girls are forced to leave, they often fall back into the hands of their traffickers.

Ferlino confirmed the trend is similar in



Manitoba. "When we talk about victim services, we don't have enough of that in Manitoba," she says. "There is a need to put pressure on provinces to increase dollars and support for victim services."

Francois Crepeau, a McGill Faculty of Law Professor, says this is not a priority for policy makers. "Victim services are expensive and we're talking about damaged goods, girls who are the bottom of the heap in terms of social scale."

An additional difficulty is that there are often other issues such as a history of violence and/or drug or alcohol abuse which must be addressed along with the trauma caused by trafficking itself.

Ferlaine says that Manitoba's initiative to prevent human trafficking and sexual exploitation of First Nations people takes into account these root causes and addresses the issue in a holistic way. The province has recognized that the issue is not just rooted in prostitution but in sexual exploitation. The sexual abuse of aboriginal children is a big problem in Winnipeg, and Manitoba has developed an awareness and education strategy specific to First Nations.

MINIMAL LEGISLATION AND ENFORCEMENT

While services have improved, the same cannot be said of the legislation addressing trafficking or the prosecution of human traffickers. Human trafficking has been a criminal activity under Canadian law since 2006, and in 2010 MP Joy Smith's private member's bill requiring a minimum sentence of five years for those convicted of trafficking of children became law. This law does not extend to adults, and legislation addressing trafficking remains minimal.

Michelle Brock of Hope for the Sold, an NGO that fights human trafficking, gave examples of weaknesses in legislation and sentencing.

Montreal resident Michael Lennox Mark exploited a 17-year old girl for two years, selling her for sex. Sentenced to two years in jail, he received double credit for the year he served during his trial and spent only a week in jail after sentencing.

Imani Nakpangi, the first person in Canada convicted of human trafficking, received a three-year sentence for trafficking and exploiting a minor for two years. With double credit for time jailed during his trial, like Mark he will spend less time serving his sentence than the girl spent as his victim.

Ferlaine says that to better establish precedents

and strengthen the law, more victims need to come forward. Unfortunately, most victims never testify, fearing retribution from their traffickers or because they lack awareness of their options. "Nobody will come forward until there is a forum to do so; people need to realize what's happened to them."

In addition, crown prosecutors need to be educated about the issue in order to identify it in court and applying the appropriate law. Traffickers are most often only convicted of purchasing sex, money laundering or drug dealing.

In a city like Montreal, there is only a minimal amount of investigation into sex trafficking, with raids on brothels being a rare occurrence. Information on traffickers is mostly obtained when police investigate other gang-related activities.

PROSTITUTION

There is disagreement about the issue of prostitution and what legalization would mean for trafficking.

"Prostitution in itself is not wrong or good, it's a human activity," Professor Crepeau said. "People have the right to do what they want with their body. If you consider a prostitute as a human being having rights and agency, you will tackle this very differently than if you consider her a victim who doesn't have the agency of deciding."

Professor Crepeau argues that the legalization of prostitution would free time and money for law enforcement to go after the more serious issues such as hard drugs and violence.

Brock argues that the opposite will happen, and that the sex industry would grow drastically due to increased demand. This would lead to an increase

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in the number of trafficked girls and challenges for police. "Finding trafficked girls in the midst of legalized prostitution is a nightmare," she said.

Professor Rebecca Whisnant, an educator and author on feminism, trafficking and pornography, agrees that legalization makes pimping more lucrative. "Because of sky-rocketing demand, and legally risk free, it creates a magnet for traffickers, while making it nearly impossible to prosecute them successfully. Legalization treats pimps as legitimate employers and johns as legitimate consumers," she said.

Despite their differences, everyone contacted for this article agrees on one point. "Among all the turmoil caused by anti-prostitution debates, the issue of sex trafficking victims has not come out on top," as Professor Crepeau put it. "There are much bigger political agendas fighting against each other."

NEXT STEPS

There is general agreement is that sex trafficking in Canada should be addressed by a National Action Plan. The Trafficking in Persons Report, issued by the United States Department of State in 2010, suggested that Canada "intensify efforts to

investigate and prosecute trafficking offense" using "proactive law enforcement techniques". It also recommended that Canada "strengthen coordination among national and provincial governments on law enforcement and victim services and improve data collection," issues that could be addressed by the implementation of a national strategy.

Despite the lack of a national strategy, some steps have been taken. The RCMP began to address the issue in 2006, establishing the National Human Trafficking Coordination Centre at its headquarters in Ottawa, staffed with RCMP officers and a civilian analyst. It also has six regional "human trafficking awareness coordinators" across the country.

The RCMP and other police agencies organized Canada's first national conference on human trafficking in March, 2011. Information on police efforts in human trafficking can be found in the RCMP web site, www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca, under "programs."

Carina Antczak has a BSc in physiology from McGill University. She volunteers as an activity organizer at several health facilities and plays competitive tennis.

Between 10% and 15% of people involved in street prostitution are under 18 (Statistics Canada)

Prostitutes enter the sex trade at the average age of 14

75% of aboriginal girls have been abused sexually

Only 3 to 10% of women in the sex trade are there by choice

70% of children sexually exploited on the streets of Winnipeg are aboriginal (Stop Sex with Kids Campaign)

70% of those children are in the care of Child and Family Services

Number of people being trafficked in Canada: unknown

In Canada, organizations combatting human trafficking include the Chrysalis Network, ACT Alberta, and the Salvation Army.

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Saskatchewan First Nations communities' new relationship with private sector

As part owners, the communities are active participants in planning their future, hoping to avoid the problems facing other reserves where oil royalties brought more social strife

BY FATIMA ARKIN

In Saskatchewan, some First Nations have partnered with corporate investors in the single largest development ever to be conducted on a First Nations reserve in Canada. Not inclined to just receiving royalties, they are equity participants, part owners of the Pehonan hydroelectric project. They're also taking a more proactive stance by planning for the economic and social impact this project will have on their communities.

Historically, the development of natural resources on First Nations territories has been controversial. The discovery of oil deposits brought millions of dollars in royalty revenues to the Cree people of Hobbema, Alberta, but the community struggles with problems of drug use and gangs. Its per-capita murder rate was almost thirty times

higher than Edmonton's in 2008.

"Because of the lack of community planning, a lack of healing and not dealing with the actual community issues, Hobbema became famous for its social problems becoming far worse," said Pamela Palmater, Chair of Indigenous Affairs at Ryerson University.

The director of aboriginal relations for Brookfield Renewable is John Kim Bell, a First Nations energy advocate who was born on the Kahnawake Mohawk Reserve. He said that for years the First Nations were invisible to Canadian society. Now laws require developers to consult and accommodate First Nations on any type of business that impacts their community. "In the case of the James Smith First Nations, they are completely happy to have the Pehonan project," Bell said. "For them it represents a huge, unprecedented economic impact on their community."

In a 2009 referendum, 96% of the James Smith Cree Nation voted in support of the Pehonan Hydroelectric project. Everybody over the age of 18

was allowed to vote including women and those living off-reserve. The majority of James Smith's community lives in Prince Albert and Saskatoon. Information sessions were held prior to the referendum and continue to be provided.

"We try to inform our membership," said Chief Wally Burns. "A lot of good ideas come from the member-



The James Smith Cree Nation, the Chakastaypasin Band of the Cree Nation and the Cumberland 100A First Nation/Peter Chapman Band have joined Brookfield Renewable and Peter Kiewit Sons Co. to develop the Pehonan project. Photo courtesy John Kim Bell

ship in terms of how we can work together and become a prosperous First Nation.”

The James Smith First Nations is, like others, fighting problems related to alcohol and drugs, but Chief Burns is optimistic that these will diminish. “I know for a fact that our membership will get sick and tired of drug users.”

Brookfield has established a positive rapport with First Nations in Western Canada in recent decades, and it brings more than one hundred years of experience in hydroelectricity to the project. With the company’s support, a \$7.5 million dollar grant was secured to train First Nations people for employment on all phases of the project. Apprenticeships are being provided to two hundred students in trades like welding, plumbing and carpentry.

Despite its size and scope, Bell warns that single initiatives like the Pehonan project cannot fulfill the economic needs of the First Nations, and calls for the reform or elimination of the main federal legislation dealing with Aboriginal Peoples. “In order for First Nations to be able to achieve basic living standards, there’s a need to reform the

Indian Act, or dispense with it, or replace it. The laws are discriminatory and they result in poverty and a form of apartheid.”

At the Assembly of First Nations annual meeting in July 2010, National Chief Shawn Atleo called for an end to the Indian Act within the next five years. He said that the Department of Indian Affairs should be dismantled and replaced with efficient institutions such as a ministry of First Nations-Crown relations and a treaty rights tribunal. Aboriginal people continue to fight for health care, housing, land and other amenities promised in treaties over a century ago.

Pehonan, however, represents a new effort towards self-determination, Bell said. “The First Nations will derive revenues in a way they never have before. It is going to change and improve their community on a permanent basis.”

Fatima Arkin studied international development at McGill University followed by human rights research in the Philippines. She is now pursuing graduate studies in journalism at Concordia University.

The Pehonan Hydroelectric Project watershed is located within the traditional territory claimed by three First Nations that share territory and administration:

- The James Smith Cree Nation
- The Peter Chapman Band/Cumberland 100A First Nation
- The Chakastaypasin Band of the Cree

The proposed project will generate approximately 250 megawatts of clean renewable power into the Saskatchewan power grid, enough electricity to power approximately 80,000 homes. The feasibility studies could take three or four years, and the project is expected to be operational in 2018.

There are 2,692 band members of the James Smith Cree Nation, of whom 1,742 live on the reserve (2006). Located 58 km east of Prince Albert, on the edge of the Fort a la Corne Provincial Forest, Saskatchewan, the James Smith Cree Nation is 15,099 hectares in size.



Killers target youth leaders in Guatemala

"You've got to respect yourself and others, everyone is a human being. Violence hurts everyone. It oppresses people." -Victor Leiva

BY TAMKINAT MIRZA

Victor Leiva was one of the instructors of Caja Ludica, an art collective in Guatemala providing troubled youth with art and culture as alternatives to violence and gang-membership. The organization incorporates drama, dance, acrobatics, stilt-walking and juggling.



Victor Leiva left gang violence to pursue a life in art and community involvement. At 24 years old, he was murdered.

Photo courtesy of Christian Aid. (UK)

Although he turned to street gangs in his early years, Leiva eventually found art as an alternative. He was one of the collective's founding members and also participated as a clown and stilt-walker. "I did my first parade in 2002. I've never forgotten it. I teach young people juggling and stilt-walking. It makes me very happy, and it makes me humble," he told Christian Aid, a UK-based NGO, in 2007.

Leiva was assassinated in February, 2011 in a public square, the victim of gunshots fired by unidentified men who fled—another of the numerous individuals killed mysteriously in the country recently. 43 homicides per 100,000 have been recorded in Guatemala City, one of the highest figures in the Americas.

Other members of Caja Ludica have been assassinated in circumstances similar to Leiva's murder. Of these, Saul Fernando Gonzalez Estrada was shot dead when unknown men in a vehicle opened fire on him before fleeing, witnesses reported. These deaths are consistent with executions carried out by extra-judicial death squads who aim for a social purge of individuals suspected of having gang affiliations.

Young artists, spiritual and community leaders, human rights activists and free thinkers in Guatemala face stigmatization from parts of the conservative society. So, these murders may be linked to the victims' ways of thinking, dressing and expression.

"We still suffer stigmatization for the way we look and the way we think, even for small issues such as belonging to a youth community group. Any time that

you do something different, people notice,” Samuel Ochoa, one of Caja Ludica’s founding members, told me in an email. “The problem arises when conservative thinking represses free thinking.”

GUATEMALA

Guatemala has become an integral component on the main route running cocaine from the Andes to North America, which has fostered a gang culture with power paralleling that of the state. There is no reliable data on the number of gangs presently operating in Guatemala, and these usually have smaller territorial components. Youth gangs are responsible for high levels of social violence, including pick-pocketing, mugging, theft and bus robberies. They also engage in organized crimes such as kidnapping, bank robberies and arms and drug-trafficking.

Despite the multitude of crimes, authorities have not made extensive attempts at investigating them, and those responsible may never be brought to justice. Given the power of gangs and police

corruption in Guatemala, police authorities are often willing to ignore violence attributed to these, in exchange for compensation. According to news media, police officials are regularly used by gang members to carry out local drug sales and extortion.

“The country has become a dangerous place

for everyone, especially for youth and women,” Ochoa said. Gangs provide a cohesive social group, protection and collective power for the average teenager unable to gain security, respect, identity and emotional expression any other way.

Work in Guatemala tends to be badly paid, so young people have only limited opportunities for material advancement. Gangs are a rational alternative to poverty in the country, being economically and socially self-sufficient. Before the existence of art collectives, there were not many other options.

While Caja Ludica focuses on community-building, it does provide some salaried employment. “We sell cultural services that sustain our organization and improve the members’ quality

of life,” Bobby Ochoa, another member of Caja Ludica, told me in an email.

However, Ochoa does not believe financial compensation is a major motivation for people to join the collective. “People join because they identify themselves with this movement, and with communitarian art. One of the reasons is its cultural relevance. Another is that when you come to Caja Ludica, you have to confront yourself, you have to overcome your fears, and that is interesting to the people. They feel this challenge.”

In Guatemala, older people automatically associate teenagers with gangs, pushing non-members to the peripheries of society. Here, youth collectives play a part in fostering community integration, and creating identities for young people which do not rely on gangs.

The country’s history of easily accessible arms, desensitization to violence resulting from years of living with hostility, and a conservative societal mindset has given rise to groups other than street gangs, who similarly rely on violence to carry out their aims.

EXTRA-JUDICIAL DEATH-SQUADS

Extra-judicial death squads have recently emerged in the country, apparently to eliminate gang members. Off-duty police officials have been linked to these death squads, which engage in a sort of social purge and target young men with criminal records or suspected of having gang ties. Such executions have elements in common: vehicles without identification, large calibre weapons, more than one person involved, and delayed action by the authorities.

One of these death squads emerged in January 2011 in response to increasing gang violence, under the name *La Patrulla*, or “The Patrol,” comprising anonymous, masked men unsanctioned by the law.

In a press release regarding Leiva’s murder, Samuel Ochoa said, “We denounce and condemn this act. We are dismayed. It took us by surprise and it’s painful.” Ochoa said that despite the murders Caja Ludica would continue to persevere in its attempts at social change.

“We promote free thought, creativity, analytical thinking and trust, so that people feel part of something important,” he said, “We use art to make young people think about their future, about how they can help to transform the community where they live.”

“In a town where unemployment and violence is rampant, the community itself has created a safe haven, an oasis where there is a possibility of healing.”

OTHER INITIATIVES

There are other organizations like Caja Ludica, all of whom hold the common belief that Guatemala needs social change. Among these are La Banqueta, Iqui Balam and Collective Artisana, which also focus on the arts.

La Banqueta offers an urban space for those individuals who want to engage in art but don't have the resources to afford it at private art galleries and theatres. The seventeen members organize a wide variety of activities, including theatre, art exhibitions, concerts and puppet shows

Iqui Balam grew out of attempts to bridge gang enmity, and re-sensitize individuals hardened by daily violence, through a positive theatre experience. The group of fifty members works to improve community services and has trained fourteen other youth groups to do similar work. UNICEF supports this initiative and has provided leadership training.

Collective Artisana is an NGO that, while also focusing on arts as do the previous groups, directs its focus toward Guatemalan women, not specifically youth. The organization aims to develop the women's movement in Guatemala and to contribute to the recognition of women's rights through artistic expression.

Tamkinat is a student of humanistic studies and communications at McGill University. She has worked with several newspapers in her native Pakistan, and is planning a career in journalism.

6292 people were murdered in Guatemala in 2008, the highest homicide figure ever recorded. (Compare to 2,655 murders in 2006.)

Charges are filed in only 2% of murders committed.

The U.N. has reported that 93% of human rights violations during the war were perpetrated by government forces and paramilitaries.

Guatemala had a poverty rate of 76% in 2010, with 56.2% of the population living beneath the poverty line.

ACTIVISM THAT WORKS

edited by
Elizabeth Whitmore,
Maureen G. Wilson &
Avery Calhoun



The Social Justice Committee has a chapter in a new book entitled *Activism that Works*. The chapter, written by Derek MacCuish, conveys the energy and excitement of SJC and analyzes the keys to its success in recruiting and retaining volunteers.

The book's editors (Elizabeth Whitmore, Carleton University, and Maureen G. Wilson and Avery Calhoun, from the University of Calgary) worked over a four year period with 86 activists from nine groups and organizations across Canada, asking, "How do you know you are making a difference?"

What becomes apparent is that success is not only indicated through large-scale social changes but is also found in moments of connection — in building relationships and raising awareness. Success and what contributes to it are sometimes interchangeable so that the "doing" of activism becomes a part of its effectiveness. Building on activists' stories, additional chapters contextualize and analyze success within social justice activism in Canada.

Available from Fernwood Publishers, www.fernwoodpublishing.ca



“Consultation” no longer good enough

World Bank strengthens its human rights policy

Consent of local indigenous people now required for commercial projects

The World Bank division that funds private sector projects, the International Finance Corporation (IFC), recently revised its operating guidelines to require the “free, prior and informed consent” (FPIC) of indigenous people for projects affecting them. This replaces a much-criticized policy that only required “consultation” with local people.

Human rights groups are pleased with the change, for which they have lobbied for years, but are concerned that the new policy - set out in what are called “Performance Standards” - does not go far enough and that the IFC will limit its use. In February, several international NGOs sent a letter to the IFC claiming, among other things, that the “IFC’s current approach does not include a clear commitment to ensuring that human rights are respected and protected in the context of its activities. IFC’s approach is also inconsistent with, and undermines, the emerging international consensus on the responsibility of companies to take concrete actions to ensure that they respect human rights.”

Asked about the IFC’s expectations for the new FPIC policy, a spokesperson said, “The IFC’s

intent is to have our clients undertake comprehensive due diligence, including human rights risks and impacts, commensurate with the expected risks and adverse impacts and informed by local and country context. We believe that the Performance Standards themselves identify and address many of the human rights impacts that a company may face in the course of its operations.”

The new policy requires implementing FPIC when the project is located within traditional lands used by indigenous people, when natural resources located within traditional or customary lands will be commercially developed, and when a project makes commercial use of indigenous people’s cultural resources.

In operational terms, the IFC envisions that the FPIC “will be established through good faith negotiation between the client and culturally appropriate institutions representing communities of Indigenous Peoples. The client will document (i) the mutually accepted process between the client and Indigenous Peoples, and (ii) evidence of agreement between the parties as the outcome of the negotiations.”

“We have undertaken a review of the scope of each Performance Standard against the International Bill of Human Rights. This is part of a systematic effort to understand the relationship between the Performance Standards and human rights.”

The new policy has implications for countries like Canada, which generally accept World Bank policy as the world standard and match it in their own international development programs.

- Derek MacCuish

Evaluation by IMF says it didn't see financial crisis coming, has over-optimistic faith in the market

“The IMF provided few clear warnings about the risks and vulnerabilities associated with the impending crisis before its outbreak. The banner message was one of continued optimism after more than a decade of benign economic conditions and low macroeconomic volatility.

The belief that financial markets were fundamentally sound and that large financial institutions could weather any likely problem lessened the sense of urgency to address risks or to worry about possible severe adverse outcomes.”

- IMF Independent Evaluation Office, 2011

See no evil?

The World Bank and IMF high opinions of Tunisia, Egypt & Libya, despite their rule by tyrants and entrenched social and economic inequality and oppression

TUNISIA

World Bank: “Tunisia has consistently scored above average on most dimensions of comparative governance rankings and development indexes... Tunisia is far ahead in terms of government effectiveness, rule of law, control of corruption and regulatory quality.” (Current Tunisia profile on the World Bank website)

IMF: “Plans to further enhance business climate and competitiveness, including through continued liberalization and openness... are key in developing new sources of growth. Staff encourages the authorities to implement the underpinning reforms with the same steadfastness and pragmatism demonstrated in the recent past.” (2010)

US embassy (from Wikileaks): “Tunisia’s financial sector remains plagued by serious allegations of corruption and financial mismanagement. The lack of transparency and accountability that characterize Tunisia’s political system similarly plague the economy, damaging the investment climate and fueling a culture of corruption.” (2008)

EGYPT

World Bank: “There is a broad overlap between the thinking of the government of Egypt and that of the Bank with regard to Egypt’s key development challenges and reform agenda.”

LIBYA

The IMF “commended the authorities for their ambitious reform agenda, and looked forward to the effective implementation of the many important laws passed in the last year, complemented by policies aimed at adapting the labor force to the economic transformation.” (2011)



eye on Ottawa

Our Woman in Washington

BY SARAH BABBAGE

In Washington D.C., an entire industry exists around influence. Lobbyists, diplomats, politicians and interest groups all push to have their organization's message heard. Marie-Lucie Morin is one of them, although she has more than one set of interests to represent; in fact she has thirteen.

Morin is the World Bank Executive Director (ED) who represents Canada, Ireland and eleven Caribbean countries. It's a diverse group, but one that she says allows her to bridge the development goals of two donor countries with the development needs of a group of "clients" or aid recipients.

A French Canadian from Sherbrooke, Morin began her two-year term in November 2010. The position is the latest in a public service career that has included stints in the Canadian government, in countries like Indonesia, England and Russia, as ambassador to Iceland and Norway, and most recently the Harper government's National Security Advisor and Associate Secretary to the Cabinet.

At the World Bank, Morin is one of twenty five EDs who form its board of directors. The representation structure functions similarly to a corporation with shareholders: each donor country gets a certain percent of votes based on how much they give the Bank. The biggest donor countries, like the United States, have a director dedicated exclusively to representing their interests while smaller

donors, like Ireland and Canada, are grouped together under a single ED.

"It's extremely valuable and interesting to represent a constituency that is made up of both donor countries and client countries," Morin told me when I visited her office. "It allows me to understand the very granular levels of what the issues associated with development on the ground are, and to make a contribution to the board discussions on both perspectives."

EDs are responsible to the Bank rather than to their home country. They meet regularly to vote on strategic direction and development policy, and to approve the Bank's transactions.

"It's a very large, complex institution here, so there's quite a bit of responsibility in this regard that rests on the board of directors," Morin said.

The board meets twice a week and also holds larger, semi-annual meetings where development policy is decided. A variety of civil society representatives, and sometimes protestors, also travel to Washington for the major meetings.

EDs are required to sit on one of the Bank's five committees, and Morin sits on the Committee on Development Effectiveness (CODE) which provides strategic direction to the Bank's development policy. It is a role she clearly enjoys, since CODE oversees program reviews and reviews policy strategies for every sector of the Bank's work.

"I think the mandate of the committee goes very much to the heart of this institution is all about, which is making sure that we are effective in the delivery of our programs."

CODE played an important role in helping

developing countries navigate the recession and its aftermath, while striving to reach the poverty reduction goals identified in the Millennium Development Goals, Morin said. “There are some pretty compelling statistics that poverty has been greatly reduced around the world over the last ten or twenty years, but conversely we still have hundreds of millions of people who are living in poverty.”

Morin says she is fortunate to represent two donor countries with similar interests. With famine permanently etched in their collective memory, the Irish have placed a strong focus on food aid, as Canada has. Both donors have traditionally focused on Africa, although Canada is now reducing aid to the region.

One of Morin’s goals is to ensure discussions of food aid get beyond hunger relief. “When we discuss a renewed emphasis on agricultural projects and so on, we will say it’s not only about quantity – making sure that people actually have something to eat – but it’s also a focus on quality. Just having something with a nutritional aspect is not really achieving your goals.”

Morin’s Caribbean client countries have three concerns: macroeconomic sustainability and debt management, economic growth, and the constant threat of natural disasters, hurricanes, and, increasingly, torrential rains. Caribbean governments have a distinctive take on development, favouring sustainable economic growth driven by the private sector. “All governments there want to see the private sector create jobs and take on a heightened role in economic development,” Morin said.

Their social structure also gives them unique takes on development policies. With regards to gender, for instance, they worry less about the subjugation of girls and women – the traditional concern of gender development policy – and more about aggression between men which is leading to higher rates of violence and murder.

“This is a very interesting perspective I can bring to the board, and say that we’re supportive of the gender agenda, of course, but at a country level, it is not necessarily going to mean this only about girls having equal opportunities. In some situations it’s actually going to be programming for boys.”

One of the Bank’s lesser-known functions is the role of broker of South-South cooperation, where developing regions share their experiences and help each other grow. “Not all knowledge necessarily comes from the North. Much innovation is also taking place at the local level in developing countries,” Morin said. “There is a huge level of interest on the part of Latin Americans to know what’s going on in Asia, on the part of Africans to know what’s going on in Latin America and so forth.”

Morin has a hopeful outlook for the future of development. “There’s a tremendous amount of innovation going on in the world of development. Technology is playing a much greater role now.”

As examples, she points to the rise of mobile telephony as a platform for greater social participation, and the expansion of micro financing for small-scale entrepreneurship. Prospects for Africa have also improved, she said. “We now see huge progress in Africa from governance, institutional and economic points of view. We’re at a point now where Africa is prepared to make that quantum leap and the Bank has had a role in supporting much of that development.”

With a year and a half left at her post, Morin says she wants to help expand that momentum to her Caribbean constituents and beyond.

Sarah Babbage, a former Upstream Journal intern, is pursuing a Master’s of Government at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C.



Canada’s representative to the World Bank, Marie-Lucie Morin. To communicate with her about World Bank policy, email mmorin@worldbank.org.



Working for a better world

How young people can prepare for a life in international development

Breaking into the field: How to get your career in international development started

BY YURIKO SALCEDO

A recent graduate of political science, I studied human rights and international development. I am especially interested in how good governance is a key component of recovery and stability in post-conflict countries. But how to get a job that's relevant to my studies and interest?

For information and advice on how to get a job in human rights and international development, I contacted some NGOs that work in these fields and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

VOLUNTEERING AND INTERNING

Volunteer experience is key to starting a career in international human rights and development, according to Bonnie Harnden, Executive Assistant at Amnesty International Canada, especially when jobs are scarce. AI Canada hires an average of two or three people a year, including fund raisers, selecting from about 200 applicants.

"You have to meet the criteria, but I will look more closely if you've been a really good volunteer for us," she says. "It's just the way the world works."

Scott Cantin, assistant manager of media relations at CIDA, suggests not only volunteering but taking the opportunity to intern while attending school and during the summers. Before they grad-

uate, students should be thinking about what they can do to get an advantage when they for jobs later on, Cantin says.

The CIDA International Youth Internship Program was set up to help young people gain experience and to ease the transition from education to work. Networking is an additional benefit, Cantin says. "It is a great way to learn, meet people, ensure your interests are known, and acquire experience that can help you prepare for a career."

The International Institute for Sustainability (IISD), a public policy research group that focuses on sustainable development, also has a few internship programs that it says give graduates "the opportunity to gain tangible, entry-level overseas work experience and gives them the skills and opportunities to shape their world." IISD interns have to be Canadian and they are usually placed internationally.

CUSO-VSO, one of North America's largest development agencies sending people overseas to work on projects, has two types of internship programs. The first is for up to twenty recent graduates or final year students, the other for up to twenty young people who do not have experience.

The people they recruit for international work are not only from Canada and the United States, but also from the Philippines, Kenya, and Chile, among others, depending on the skills required for the country in question. CUSO-VSO's main priorities include education, health, HIV/AIDS, environmental sustainability, and building systems

of community participation and good governance.

“Becoming involved and showing that you actually have commitment and passion for something is going to be the key thing, whether that’s taking up a job that becomes available or volunteering,” Derek Evans, executive director of CUSO-VSO, said when I asked him what they look for in job applicants.

GETTING A JOB

For the hiring and training of recent graduates CIDA has two programs: the New Development Officer Program (NDOP) and the Student Bridging Mechanism.

The NDOP is a three year period of structured assignments and training. Graduates are recruited into the program where they are exposed to work related experience in order to develop the competencies CIDA for which is looking.

The Student Bridging Mechanism is a program for entry-level positions. CIDA hires about 120 students each year, and through this program provides opportunities in fields like communications, finances, economics, international development and environment.

Most non-governmental agencies don’t provide that kind of training, however. At the IISD, experience is absolutely necessary in a potential employee, says Marlene Roy, Research & Learning Resources Manager. All positions require at least one graduate degree and some research background in a relevant field, and they only hire for two or three positions a year. “There are enough graduates out there with research experience that we’re able to look for what we want,” she said.

GETTING EXPERIENCE SO YOU CAN GET THE JOB

While it is crucial to focus on relevant subjects during your studies, these organizations also emphasize that it is also important to become involved and to demonstrate your interest in the field – you need both the relevant educational background and a history of involvement, such as through volunteer work or some internship experience. Gaining the appropriate amount of experience, especially during studies, allows you to have exposure into the field - and it can help your networking too.

Yuriko Salcedo is a graduate of McGill’s International Development Studies program. She will be continuing her studies in Switzerland.

The politicization of aid

Humanitarian assistance and longer-term efforts to reduce poverty are being damaged where aid is used primarily to pursue donors’ own narrow political and security objectives, Oxfam report says.

Some donors are increasingly concentrating both humanitarian and development aid on countries and regions seen to threaten their own immediate security interests, while neglecting other equally insecure, impoverished and conflict-afflicted places. Since 2002 one third of all development aid to the 48 states labeled ‘fragile’ by the OECD has gone to just three countries: Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Since 2009 Canada has pledged to spend 80 per cent of its bilateral aid on twenty ‘countries of focus,’ designated partly on the basis of ‘their alignment with Canadian foreign policy priorities.’ The list includes Afghanistan, where Canadian troops are fighting, and middle-income Colombia, with whom Canada had just signed a free trade agreement, while seven low income countries in sub-Saharan Africa were dropped.

- Oxfam Briefing Paper “Whose aid is it anyway? Politicizing aid in conflicts and crises” Feb 2011

No more advocacy on government policy, says Rights and Democracy

In a change from past practice, new guidelines at Rights and Democracy state that it is not an NGO and has no mandate to advocate in issues related to Canadian policies. President Gérard Latulippe told the *Le Devoir* newspaper that it has “no role to play in Canada’s foreign policy because it is not how we will improve the condition of people suffering on the ground.”

Created by an Act of Parliament in 1988, the organization receives 99% of its funding (more than \$2 million) from the federal government.

Gender disparity means more women are dying, World Bank says

The World Bank’s feature publication, the World Development Report focuses on gender disparities.

“The worst disparity is the rate at which girls and women die relative to men in developing countries:

Globally, excess female mortality after birth and “missing” girls at birth account for an estimated 3.9 million women each year in low- and middle-income countries. About two-fifths are never born due to a preference for sons, a sixth die in early childhood, and over a third die in their reproductive years.

These losses are growing in Sub-Saharan Africa, especially in countries hard-hit by HIV/AIDS.”

La stigmatisation et répression des Montagnards de Vietnam

PAR TIMOTHÉE LABELLE

«**L**es Montagnards sont victimes d'un nettoyage ethnique. Leur monde est détruit par la mondialisation, la modernisation et les répressions du gouvernement vietnamien» dit Scott Johnson de la Montagnard Foundation Inc.

La répression des Montagnards par les autorités vietnamiennes prend plusieurs formes, visibles et invisibles. Des manifestants pacifiques battus en pleine rue, des prêtres chrétiens montagnards assassinés après avoir refusé de se joindre aux groupes religieux autorisés par le Parti communiste vietnamien (PCV), nombre de prisonniers torturés et des

femmes stérilisées de force sont les traces visibles de la répression. Deux importantes manifestations pacifiques, en 2001 et 2004, ont donné lieu à une réponse particulièrement violente des autorités vietnamiennes aidées de la police cambodgienne. Le gouvernement cambodgien se plie aux fréquentes demandes d'Hanoï, puissance politique et militaire régionale, en participant à la répression.

L'ETHNOCIDE SILENCIEUX

Ces violations des droits humains sont toutefois les manifestations d'un mal plus profond. Les Montagnards souffrent d'une autre oppression, celle de l'exclusion et de l'ethnocide silencieux. «C'est du racisme, les Khin (l'ethnie majoritaire) se considèrent supérieurs aux Montagnards. Ils les appellent Moï, qui signifie sauvages» souligne Kay Reibold de la Montagnard Human Rights Organization (MHRO), une organisation vouée à promouvoir l'héritage culturel montagnard.

«Il y a «vietnamisation» de leur culture et de leur langue dans les changements du nom des rues, des rivières, des provinces décidés à Hanoi».

Parallèlement, le PCV les déloge de leurs terres ancestrales, en surexploite les ressources naturelles et relocalise les Montagnards dans des régions isolées, loin des sources d'eau potable et des régions au climat plus tempéré. «On assiste depuis plusieurs décennies à la délocalisation systématique du peuple montagnard vers des territoires hostiles» dit M. Johnson. La déforestation et l'usage de produits chimiques sur leurs territoires traditionnels anéantissent leurs chances de retrouver une vie normale.

Au début du XXe siècle, durant la colonisation française, le peuple montagnard avoisinait 3,5 millions d'individus concentrés dans les plateaux du centre du Vietnam. Ils ne seraient aujourd'hui qu'un



La nuit du 16 octobre 2007, alors qu'elle y dormait avec ses trois enfants, la maison d'H'Aner a été brûlée par des policiers vietnamiens. Ils avaient appris quelques jours plus tôt que son mari supportait une organisation américaine défendant les droits du peuple montagnard au Vietnam, la Montagnard Foundation Inc. (MFI). À ce jour, le sort de la famille d'H'Aner est inconnu de la MFI. Photo: MFI

million.

Les politiques du PCV visant les Montagnards, prises pour la plupart au début des années 1990, reposent en partie sur un argument historique. L'appui des Montagnards aux milices américaines durant la Seconde Guerre d'Indochine et leurs constantes revendications d'autogestion sur leurs terres ancestrales suscitent l'ire des dirigeants communistes et contribuent à la stigmatisation des Montagnards.

De plus, leur fervente foi chrétienne entraîne aussi la répression du pouvoir vietnamien. «Plus une ethnie est religieuse, plus elle est préoccupée par la justice, la liberté, la démocratie, des valeurs opposées à celles du régime communiste vietnamien» explique Nguyen Ba Tung, directeur de l'organisation coordonnant l'implication des défenseurs de droits humains au Vietnam, le Vietnam Human Rights Network (VHRN).

Dû aux importantes restrictions à la liberté de presse exercées par le PCV, il est difficile d'obtenir des données précises sur la situation des Montagnards persécutés, comme la famille d'H'Aner.

LA VIE DANS LA RÉPRESSION

La population montagnard vit dans une pauvreté extrême, résultat des délocalisations forcées. «Les taux de pauvreté sont incroyablement plus élevés dans les régions du nord et dans les plateaux centraux, où les Montagnards sont concentrés, que dans le reste du pays. C'est un autre exemple d'ethnocide» dit Mme Reibold. «Le gouvernement restreint le développement économique de ces régions et entrave souvent les efforts des organisations humanitaires».

Le quotidien des Montagnards est de surcroît bouleversé par les intenses pressions du PCV visant à restreindre l'exercice de la foi chrétienne. Si la liberté religieuse est garantie dans la constitution du Vietnam (1992), elle est limitée aux religions officielles reconnues par le PCV. Les forces de l'ordre s'appuient sur cette limitation pour torturer et tuer certains tenants d'églises domestiques, de lieux de cultes clandestins ou même de simples citoyens faisant la prière.

La discrimination à l'endroit des Montagnards touche aussi les exilés. Les réfugiés souffrent souvent de détresse psychologique. Mme Reibold se charge de l'accueil des réfugiés montagnards aux États-Unis, une part importante du mandat de la

LA PUISSANCE RÉGIONALE VIETNAMIENNE

Depuis le début des années 2000, le Vietnam est le pays de la péninsule sud-est asiatique qui consacre le plus grand pourcentage de son Produit Intérieur Brut (PIB) au militarisme, surclassant le Cambodge, la Thaïlande, l'Indonésie et la Chine, selon les données officielles.

Le Vietnam est aussi le second pays s'étant le mieux tiré de la crise économique de 2008, affichant une croissance globale au-dessus de la barre des 5% chiffre que seul le Laos a pu atteindre dans la péninsule d'Asie sud-orientale.

Ces deux données, combinées à l'octroi d'un siège non-permanent au Conseil de Sécurité des Nations-Unies en 2008 et de la présidence de l'Association des pays d'Asie du sud-est (ASEAN) en 2010 assurent au Vietnam le rôle de puissance dans cette région du globe.



« Les Montagnards sont confrontés à de graves persécutions au Vietnam, notamment ceux qui fréquentent des églises de maison indépendantes, car les autorités ne tolèrent pas l'activité religieuse qui échappe à leur contrôle », a expliqué Phil Robertson, Human Rights Watch. Photo: MFI.

LA PERSÉCUTION DES MOINES BOUDDHISTES

La survie d'autres communautés religieuses est menacée par les tendances répressives du PCV. En outre, la situation des moines bouddhistes d'origine cambodgienne dans la région australe de la vallée du Mekong se rapporte à celle des Montagnards. Elle est décriée par nombres d'organisations non-gouvernementales, Human Rights Watch en tête. Là encore, racisme, pauvreté, exclusion sociale et répression religieuse se mêlent.

En 2007, une manifestation pacifique réunissant 200 moines a donné lieu à une réaction violente des autorités vietnamiennes. Plusieurs dizaines de moines ont été emprisonnés, certains ont été battus, d'autres forcés de professer l'abandon de leur foi. En signe de protestation, plusieurs ont pratiqué l'immolation par le feu.

MHRO, basée en Caroline du Nord. «Les impacts sur les réfugiés aux États-Unis et au Canada sont évidents. Des décennies de racisme et de persécutions affectent non seulement la qualité de vie des Montagnards vietnamiens mais aussi l'esprit de tout un peuple».

Les restrictions imposées par le PCV à l'exercice de la liberté religieuse des Montagnards sont connues de l'Occident et des Nations Unies. Les États-Unis et les autres grandes puissances refusent cependant de mettre en péril leurs relations avec un joueur émergent pour la défense des droits des minorités et de certains droits humains fondamentaux.

«Le gouvernement américain pourrait faire tellement plus» dit M. Johnson. «Les câbles diplomatiques de Wikileaks des relations américo-vietnamiennes révèlent une clause 'ne pas mentionner les Montagnards'».

Pour plus d'information: www.montagnard-foundation.org
www.mhro.org, www.vnhrnet.org

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Timothée Labelle est étudiant de deuxième année au Baccalauréat en relations internationales et droit international de l'Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM). Il a fait un stage au Upstream Journal à l'été 2011.

International Crime and the developing world

The illicit flow of goods, guns, people and natural resources around the world is estimated at \$650 billion, according to the organization International Global Financial Integrity (GFI). The drug trade and counterfeiting are the largest illegal markets in developing nations.

Profit from trafficking is mainly distributed to transnational crime syndicates with a vast array of networks. Traffickers have connections with many key associates, such as custom officials, migrant workers and labourers. They all must be easily corruptible for trafficking to be successful and profitable. Suppliers and traffickers earn more than laborers and organ donors, who are often paid a fraction of the selling rate.

GFI says that the most critical component of criminal networks is the level of underdevelopment and weakness of the country and state. Legitimate developing economies are quelled by criminal networks due to the hindrance developed economies would have on the free flow of profits and goods. Without government regulation, criminal organizations are able to exploit child labour, ignore trade tariffs and safety regulations, and exploit local labour forces to their advantage.

Complex criminal operations thrive in developing nations that are characterized by poverty, inequality and state weakness. Transitional crime can bring revenue and business to an otherwise failed state. The profits are potentially enormous, such as drug trafficking's \$320 billion worth.



Opinion

When we were challenged by the Movement of Campesino Workers (MTC) to support the people of San Marcos in their struggle with the Marlin gold and silver mine about eight years ago, I was somewhat taken aback. Mining was one of those issues which had never crossed my mind. I certainly never dreamt that this issue would become an important part of the Social Justice Committee's work for years to come.

Today, that mine has become both a challenge to our commitment to stand with the poor in their attempts to determine their own destiny and a symbol of what has now become a global struggle between many of the world's indigenous folk and the western world's predators.

From May 1st to the 3rd I participated in a church-sponsored conference on the topic of Canadian mining companies active in many parts of the world. Some 150 people came from Africa, Asia, Latin America and many parts of Canada to discuss the mining issue, to strengthen international cooperation, particularly, though certainly not exclusively, among faith-based individuals and groups and to strategize together. Where do we Canadians go after the defeat of Bill C-300?

The first days were filled with enthusiasm (it was great to see so many unfamiliar faces as well as a good number of Canadian veterans of the struggle) but on the morning of the third day there was a decided change. Some of our visitors from abroad were more than a bit puzzled by the long faces sported by so many of their Canadian hosts. As you may have guessed, the federal election results were in and the Conservatives, the party that had so strongly resisted Bill C-300 and shown itself opposed to any type of regulation of Canadian mining companies, had been elected and this time with a clear majority.

Our visitors were quite gentle with us. They politely acknowledged our pain and commiserated with us, but only for a while. Time was short. So, they smiled and then told us to get on with it. They, after all, had learned long ago not to put all their eggs in the basket of government support. They had long lived with governments that strongly support unregulated mining in their countries. Why would we expect our governments to be any different?

Please don't get me wrong. I am not saying that we should cease our attempts to convince our government to regulate mining companies working in Guatemala, the Philippines or elsewhere, nor did I hear others voicing that opinion. Rather, our visitors were challenging us to look for imaginative and alternative ways of living in solidarity with them. Several stated that mining is just one of the latest steps in a war being waged on indigenous peoples by the West (which often includes the political and economic elites of the country under attack.) Five hundred years ago, the conquistadors stole whatever gold, silver and other minerals attainable by the technology of that era. Now, with new and much more devastating equipment, they have returned to finish the job. Gold, oil, lumber, palm oil and dozens of minerals are today's plunder. There is no real need to point out that another primary victim of this war is our natural environment.

Despite the progress that Canadian organizations have made during the past five to ten years, we have a long way to go. We have brought speakers in from around the world, shown audio-visuals, held workshops, and spoke of what many of us have seen and heard, yet, I am ashamed to say, most Canadians couldn't care less. And this is as true of church people as it is of the rest of Canadian society. We have just scratched the surface.

Unfortunately, the conference touched only briefly on the third of our three goals: strategizing together. Time did not permit us to go any further than to list several rather broad ideas which, I hope, will become the matter of our work in the near future.

Wherever you, the reader of this column, happen to be, I am sure that there is an organization in your community that is working in solidarity with those who suffer the ravages of unregulated mining and could do with some help. (I don't have to point out that the Social Justice Committee of Montreal is one such organization!) Check out their web site and, if you like what you see, give them a call.

Ernie Schibli is a founding member of the SJC, and one of our most popular workshop animators. Contact: ernie@s-j-c.net

The Social Justice Committee

The *Upstream Journal* is a publication of the Social Justice Committee of Montreal. It is one of several educational materials we offer on human rights and development.

Donations to the SJC are welcome, and go to support a range of human rights & development education activities.

The SJC is a registered charity in Canada, and donations are tax deductible. We accept personal cheques, MasterCard and Visa. Please consider making a donation and becoming a member.

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Most articles are produced in the SJC office by volunteers and interns who are in training in journalism, with guidance and content input from the editor.

Printed on recycled paper with a high level of post-consumer content.

At the Social Justice Committee of Montreal (the organization that publishes the *Upstream Journal*) we're getting nervous. We've had only occasional support from the federal government in recent years, and have relied instead on three other main sources of funds: individual donations, support from religious orders, and the Quebec government.

Now we're down to two. The Quebec government has just ended several years of very welcome funding of our work.

What to do? Should we look at the examples set by organizations that have found a way to succeed in a difficult environment? Certainly. But will we welcome the lessons to be learned?

World Vision Canada got 87% of its \$416 million income last year from donated cash and goods, according to its annual report to Revenue Canada. It's an exceptional level of public support.

The organization also spent \$58 million on fundraising (\$38 million of it in advertising) - 14% of its \$415 million in expenses. It apparently pays off, especially paired with an appealing and successful "child sponsorship" approach. The organization claims that more than half a million children are now sponsored by Canadians.

The competition for funds is getting tougher, and we need to look where we can for lessons. The SJC is respected for its work in human rights and for global financial reform and democratization, but that doesn't necessarily result in funding. We are still limited to working with a \$100,000 budget and are spending more than we take in, which of course isn't sustainable.

However, although we can't deny the effectiveness of heavy promotion and the use of children's emotional appeal, these are not techniques we are eager to adopt. And there is a strength in being small. We are independent, flexible, and remain close to our members.

Our education program is booming. We presented almost 60 workshops last year, making it one of our busiest. There are several good reasons why.

- Three solid themes: 1) Third World debt and global finance 2) International trade and what it means for development 3) Mining and corporate social responsibility.

- Qualified presenters. Every person who leads SJC workshops undergoes extensive training, and is highly motivated to lead a dynamic presentation.

- Relevance. Each workshop brings participants to a greater understanding of dynamics of international development happening today.

- Popularity. Many of the invitations we get are from places where we have presented before, and they want us back.

- Experience. The SJC has been providing education on human rights and development since 1975.

We count on people who demand to know why so many others are denied the chance of a healthy and happy life, who want to hear their stories, and who want the inequality and oppression to change.

We know they're out there. Our challenge is to make sure that they know about us.



The Social Justice Committee
Le Comité pour la justice sociale

The Social Justice Committee of Montreal is an independent Canadian organization working in international solidarity. Conscious that many of the world's impoverished peoples are victims of social injustice, and inspired by the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, its mission is to engage Canadians in working for a more socially just world.

The Social Justice Committee of Montreal has been working to raise awareness of the root causes of hunger, poverty and repression in the world through our education programs since 1975. We work in solidarity with organizations in a number of Third World countries in the search for a more just and sustainable global socio-economic system.

The Social Justice Committee depends on financial support from its members and the general public. It is a registered charitable organization; donations are tax deductible.

We invite you to donate today, and become a member by supporting the Social Justice Committee as we:

- Analyze the underlying structural and global causes of poverty, human rights violations and other social injustices.
- Contribute to informed popular participation in eliminating these injustices.
- Work in solidarity, through education, to transform our world into a just society.

Le Comité pour la justice sociale remercie le **ministère des Relations internationales** de son appui à sa mission d'éducation à la solidarité internationale.

The Social Justice Committee thanks the **Québec Ministry of International Relations** for its support of our mission of education on behalf of international solidarity.

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The *Upstream Journal* is published by the **Social Justice Committee of Montreal**. The *Upstream Journal* focuses on economic, social and cultural rights, reflecting the SJC perspective of Third World poverty as a human rights issue. We try to go "upstream" to examine root causes of poverty and injustice.

Subscription to the *Upstream Journal* is only \$12 a year in Canada, \$20 outside. It is published four times a year.

Views expressed in the *Upstream Journal* are the writers' own and do not necessarily reflect those of the Social Justice Committee. We welcome the submission of images and articles on aspects of international development and human rights.

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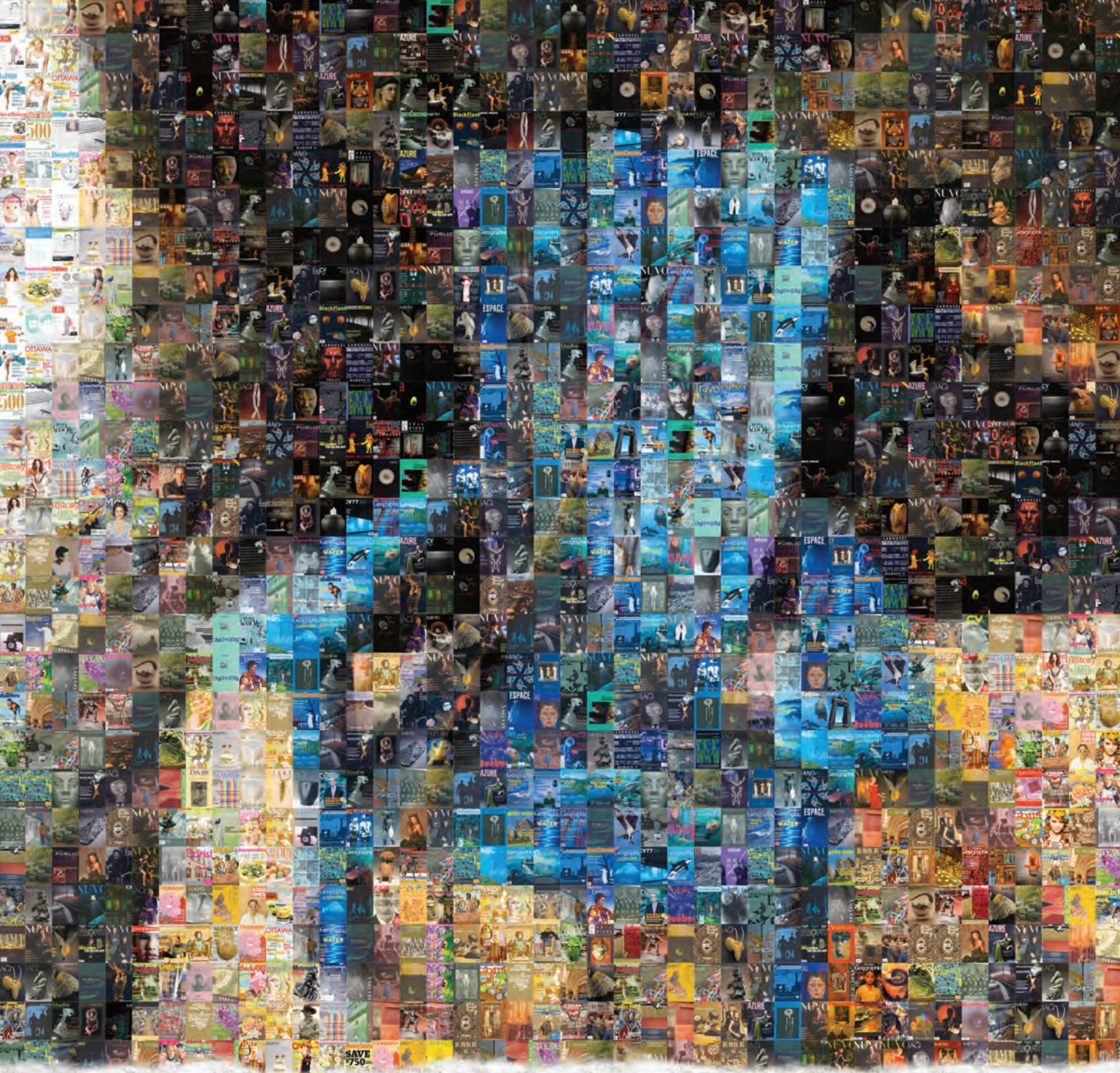
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