

FOR YOUR DIARY

World Week of Prayer for
Israel Palestine

it's time for palestine

CWS invites churches and all people to share in joint action for just peace, initiated by the World Council of Churches and supported by the Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees, a CWS partner. This annual observance of prayer, education, and advocacy calls participants to seek justice for Palestinians so that both Israelis and Palestinians can finally live in peace.

For more information and useful links see:
www.cws.org.nz/node/490

June 5 World Environment
Day

June 20 World Refugee
Day "Agree with one another,
Live in Peace" Romans 2 Cor
13:11c. In this, the 60th
anniversary of the signing of
the UN Convention relating to
Refugees, the worship
resources for Refugee Sunday
focus attention on returning
refugees in Sudan as well as
ancient Biblical traditions of
hospitality to the stranger.
The resources are available
at: www.cws.org.nz/

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Action by Churches
Together

Refugees Struggle to Keep Homes

Trish Murray, International Programmes, met Palestinians in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood of East Jerusalem while visiting CWS partner, the Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees in May. She observed firsthand the daily struggles faced by long standing refugee families in an effort to maintain their homes and livelihoods.



Mahmoud (pictured) and his family are part of a group of 28 families facing continuing court battles over their homes. The refugee families moved to Jerusalem in 1948 and were finally given houses built by United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA) in 1956 in what was then Jordan. Mahmud says his case is an important political case as it is representative of the community asserting its right to ownership of the land and to stop Jewish settlers from clearing the area of Palestinian families.

Every Friday afternoon a protest takes place at the edge of the small Sheikh Jarrah playground to highlight the plight of the community. They take a non-violent, peaceful approach to their struggle for the right to live in the homes they have built or were allocated and to halt the evictions and occupation by settler families. They are convinced that they have stopped the evictions of several families, at least in the short term, and they hope the forthcoming court case will find in their favour. Trish says they are a strong community group, offering solidarity to each other and fighting to retain a Palestinian presence in Jerusalem.

Sudan: ACT calls for peace in troubled Abyei

With the July 9 timeline for the separation of north and south Sudan fast approaching, tensions are rising. A month from the date agreed by the Government of Sudan and the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement in the Comprehensive Agreement of 2005, there is no final agreement on the sharing of oil proceeds and the exact border between these new countries. One of the key flash points is the jointly administered central province of Abyei which has yet to have its own referendum. Conflict broke out on May 19 and tens of thousands have fled its main city also called Abyei. The ACT Alliance (Action by Churches Together) of which CWS is a part is deeply concerned about the resumption of hostilities. The African Union is endeavouring to negotiate a demilitarised zone between the two. Churches are asked to pray for a peaceful transition and the safety of all those involved, including those providing much needed humanitarian assistance. <http://www.cws.org.nz/node/491>

Live Below the Line



CWS is inviting young people to live below the line. The Global Poverty Project has chosen CWS as a partner for national fundraising effort 22-26 August. The money raised will help young people in Maridi, South Sudan. Globally 1.4 billion people live below the line – on less than USD \$1.25 a day. The challenge is to live on NZ \$2.25 or less a day and raise sponsorship support.

Contact youth@cws.org.nz for information.

Food for Life

The latest report from CWS sister organisation Christian Aid considers the prospects that the trade in commodities is fuelling global hunger. Investing in commodity index funds through pension funds and other investments appears to be contributing to higher food prices.

Almost a billion people now live in chronic hunger, with a further 44 million forced into extreme poverty since mid-2010.

In the report, Christian Aid calls for an investigation into the effect deregulation has had on food prices and an assessment of the impact on the poor from changes. Major improvements to food security could be brought about by a massive increase in support for small-holder farmers, and the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices.

Hungry for Justice: Fighting Starvation In An Age Of Plenty: <http://www.christianaid.org.uk/resources/policy/christian-aid-week-report-2011.aspx>

Change IMF Selection

The resignation of International Monetary Fund (IMF) head Dominique Strauss-Kahn has put the spotlight on an institution responsible for economic policies that have proven harmful to many. After Strauss-Kahn's appointment and the financial crisis, the IMF began to recover some of the influence lost as middle income countries found they could borrow money without its stringent conditions. With his departure NGOs like CWS are asking that the new director be selected in a transparent process based on merit rather than from Europe. Since their founding in 1945 Europe has appointed the IMF director from its midst while the USA chooses the head of the World Bank – currently Robert Zoellick.

On Strauss-Kahn's legacy by Mark Weisbrot see: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/cifamerica/2011/may/19/imf-dominique-strauss-kahn/>

Aid Effectiveness Agenda

Staff, board and Working Group members participated in the latest workshop organised by the Council for International Development (CID) last month. The workshop is part of a global initiative to develop a civil society response to government efforts to build a new consensus on aid delivery. The workshop considered recent statistics that showed aside from China many developing countries will not meet the UN Millennium Development Goals by 2015. Both Sub-Saharan Africa and Oceania are of particular concern with limited improvement on key indicators. CID will host meetings in Wellington and Auckland as part of the development of a global civil society position. The next major consultation by governments will take place in Busan, South Korea.

Concern for Uganda

In May, a day prior to the investiture of the 'new but 25 year old government', a staff member of CWS partner, the Church of Uganda, wrote asking for prayers 'because people who experienced first hand what happened to this country in the 70s and the late 80s are very worried about the situation.'

"Uganda right now is in many ways like in the times of Idi Amin. There is so much that we do not know at this point because all media has been banned from broadcasting live and therefore what we get on the news is censored but even that is too scary to imagine.

"It is all part of the history of this country but I will only tell you of what happened yesterday and Thursday. For about a month now, the opposition parties declared a walk to work campaign in protest of the high prices of fuel and essential commodities. Literally between December and now [end of April], prices of almost all household essentials especially food have doubled. While this can to a large extent be attributed to the rising fuel prices world over, there is also scarcity of food due to weather patterns. This walk to work campaign sounds like a decent way of people to express themselves.

The whole trouble came because it was the opposition parties leading this campaign and therefore it had a political connotation to it. As a result, the government chose to use brutal force to break the campaign which has instead turned a rather peaceful campaign into a violent demonstrations. The opposition leaders were arrested in a brutal manner, citizens especially in Kampala the capital were washed in tear gas and the city turned into a war zone.'

The new government needs to take immediate steps to improve the human rights situation.