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### 2004 Sydney Peace Prize to Arundhati Roy

by Marilyn Harris, Sydney Peace Foundation Executive Officer

At a gala dinner at McLaurin Hall at the University of Sydney on the evening of 4 November, the Governor Marie Bashir awarded the 2004 Sydney Peace Prize to Indian writer and human rights activist Arundhati Roy. In the audience were the Acting Premier, Andrew Refshauge, the Chancellor and Vice Chancellor of the University, and many leading figures from government, business, academia, the arts, and the Aboriginal community. Representatives from the three Aboriginal groups to whom Arundhati donated her \$50,000 were present, and expressed their thanks to her.

It was a busy week for Arundhati. Official events started on Tuesday with a number of press interviews, then Arundhati and her husband Pradip Krishen were whisked away to a Manly pub where they witnessed Australian culture close up with the running of the Melbourne Cup. Wednesday began with a press conference at the Seymour Centre, followed by more press interviews. That night, Arundhati thrilled a sell-out crowd at the City of Sydney Peace Prize Lecture. 1500 people in both the Seymour Centre's theatres rose to their feet in applause after an address in which Arundhati lyrically exposed the cowardly war on Iraq.

"It was a war in which a band of rich nations, armed with enough nuclear weapons to destroy the world several times over, rounded on a poor nation, falsely accused it of having nuclear weapons, used

the United Nations to force it to disarm, then invaded it, occupied it and are now in the process of selling it."

On Thursday morning, Arundhati came down to the Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies in Glebe to meet with the representatives from Mudgin Gal, Weena Mooga Gu Gudba, and The Connection, the three Aboriginal organisations to whom she donated her prize winnings, and to talk to students and guests of CPACS. This was followed by a peaceful harbourside lunch with members of the Sydney Peace Foundation's executive committee, then Arundhati was taken to Government House for a private audience with the Governor, at the Governor's request.

Thursday night's Award Ceremony was the highlight of the week, with Arundhati relaxed and convivial in the formal setting. Guests at the dinner took their cue from Arundhati and in the friendly and warm atmosphere Arundhati welcomed approaches from all those wanting to have their picture taken with her, seeking her autograph, or just wishing to have a few words with her and experience her unique and thought-provoking point of view.

Arundhati's final event in Sydney was a sold-out seminar at the Art Gallery of New South Wales where Stuart Rees, Director of the Sydney Peace Foundation and the Centre For Peace and Conflict Studies, engaged the Booker Prize winning author in a conversation which covered topics of peace with justice, literature, and the corruptive effect of power.

Again Arundhati's humility, humour, and incisive world view shone through. The seminar ended with Professor Rees reading a poem that he had written specially for Arundhati, inspired by the occasion of their first meeting in Delhi. Arundhati then spent 90 minutes signing books and talking to members of the audience.

After their packed schedule of events, Arundhati and Pradip have taken the opportunity to see a little more of Australia, spending a few days exploring the South Coast, and recent rumours have them spotted on an island off the Queensland coast.

*The City of Sydney Peace Prize Lecture by Arundhati Roy, Peace and the New Corporate Liberation Theology, has been published as CPACS Occasional Paper No.04/2.*



Arundhati Roy with the Sydney Peace Prize

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## Arundhati Roy – A Lesson in Infinite Alternatives

by Kath Logan and Luke Fletcher,  
PACS students

On Thursday 4 November 2004, Sydney Peace Prize recipient Arundhati Roy spoke with around seventy CPACS staff, students and friends, answering questions that covered ideas raised in her City of Sydney Peace Prize lecture, and her opinions on recent political developments. She gave advice on how those committed to peace with justice should campaign and stay inspired.

Because the audience included a number of NGO workers, many of the questions concerned Arundhati's observations about the negative effects of NGO operations in developing countries. These observations support her larger theory that human rights discourse has been gradually degraded in line with its appropriation by organisations and corporations who talk about human rights but make few concrete commitments to supporting them.

Arundhati suggested that the question, "Where is the money coming from?" is the litmus test for genuineness of human rights projects. In reality, many human rights projects are corporate whitewashing operations that clean up the organisation's image and create a distraction from the real damage being done. She also argued that NGO projects often disempower and depoliticise the population. Band-aid solutions by NGOs can distract the population from the basic problems of government corruption and corporate destructiveness, thus conveniently eroding dissent.

Arundhati was reluctant to comment on Australian politics, professing she was ill-qualified to do so. Her general advice to the visiting Ceduna Aboriginal women was to find and nurture relationships with indigenous groups from other parts of the world in order to compare strategies and draw inspiration from each other.

Also discussed was the power of the modern media to skew debate on key matters of international importance, by using terms that favour vested interests and not challenging the status quo. Arundhati argued that all who seek justice are responsible for challenging the status quo, and that there are many different ways to do this. She reminded us to remember that, if the task seemed too enormous, it is not an individual responsibility to try and fix every problem. The individual responsibility is to fight the battles that are in front of us. If everyone assumes an individual responsibility for some change, progress will inevitably be made.

She said that messages of dissent and protest did not have to be negative and defensive, and specifically warned against being tricked into answering the question "What is your alternative?" as if there were only one. There are in fact thousands of alternatives when situations are examined on a case-by-case basis. "Everything must be looked at in its context, with the idea of infinity in your head" she said.

## Sudan Peace March

by Christine Janssen, CPACS intern

On Sunday 5 September, a small but passionate group of people gathered in Hyde Park to march for peace in war-torn Darfur in Sudan. Members of the Sudanese community travelled long distances to join with supporters from Sydney to raise awareness in the Australian community of the appalling atrocities being committed in Darfur, and to send the urgent message that unless the international community takes action to provide aid and increase pressure on the Government of Sudan, the situation in Darfur could blow out to the scale of the Rwandan crisis in 1994.

Organising the march proved to be a challenge, as there were many areas that we novice organisers had to negotiate. A number of routes were considered for the march, but the compliance and financial demands made by Sydney Council were prohibitive. We also had a major hiccup when we discovered that insurance was a legal requirement before permission could be granted to hold the march. Having to deal with two separate police authorities caused many headaches, but the march would never have gone ahead without the assistance of the police, as they smoothed many ruffled feathers at the Council and ensured that Hyde Park and Martin Place were made available.

The look on people's faces when confronted by hundreds of colourfully dressed chanting marchers — some of them at least seven feet tall! — was priceless, as was the singing and dancing spontaneously performed by Sudanese during the speeches. The speakers all spoke with deep conviction on the need for humanitarian intervention in Darfur. They included: Safi Hareer, Darfur Union in Australia; David Lokosang, Sudanese People's Liberation Movement; Stuart Rees, Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies; Jack de Groot, Caritas Australia; and Bill Crews, Exodus Foundation. We were particularly grateful to Hugh Riminton for agreeing to MC the event.

The successful staging of the peace march would not have been possible without the help and support of a large number of people, which included many members of the Sudanese community in Sydney. I would like to acknowledge the contributions of the CPACS students and volunteers who gave up their time on nights and weekends; Juraj Horniak for the beautiful 'Peace for Sudan' poster; Caritas Australia for covering the cost of the sound equipment; our sponsors the Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Association, Darfur Union of Australia, CPACS, Caritas Australia and Exodus Foundation; the many NGOs and individuals who publicised the event and, of course, the marchers.

## Challenging the 'Clash of Civilisations'

by PACS students Nicky Morel,  
Erin Robertson, and Kuranda Seyit

*The PACS course 'Faith, Politics and the Clash of Civilisations' examines the idea that there is a fundamental divide between 'Western civilisation' and other civilisations — in particular the Muslim world. One of the best-known scholars to make such an assertion is Samuel Huntington, in his work *The Clash of Civilisations*. As part of the assessment for the course, PACS students organised two events to challenge this notion of a clash of civilisations: an Interfaith Open House and a workshop on the conflict in Cyprus.*

More than 35 students and community members, from various religious backgrounds, attended the Interfaith Open House. The day began with participants taking a guided tour of either Galipoli Mosque in Auburn, Newtown Synagogue, or St. Mary's Cathedral in the CBD. After the tours, everyone reconvened at CPACS to enjoy a delicious kosher/hallal lunch — kindly funded by SUPRA, the Sydney University Postgraduate Union — and listen to three guest speakers: Assistant Pastor Andy Collins from Newtown Mission, Rabbi Mordechai Gestetner from Newtown Synagogue, and Mr David Ilham, a Muslim and Director of the Affinity Intercultural Organisation, which was established in 2001 in order to meet the needs of the Muslim community to interact with the greater society (see <http://www.affinity.org.au>). Their talks focused on their religious beliefs about tolerance and attitudes towards people of other faiths.

'Love for one's neighbour' was a theme that all three speakers separately pointed out in their individual speeches as a key principle in their respective religions. During his talk, Rabbi Gestetner quoted a well-known excerpt from the Torah: "You should love your fellow as yourself". Assistant Pastor Collins noted that one of the main tenets of the bible was "love your neighbour as you love yourself". Mr Ilham described Islam as having a checking mechanism: "If you are a believer, check if you love your neighbour".

Additionally, Assistant Pastor Collins and Mr Ilham both pointed out that obtaining peace in the world starts with each individual finding peace within him or herself. The Pastor recounted a story written on a plaque in Westminster Abbey: a young man wanted to change the world, but when the enormity of the task became apparent, he decided to change the country. Realising that this too was too great a responsibility, he decided to change his neighbourhood, then only his street. At the end of his life, the man realised that all he really had to change was himself in order to change the world.

Mr Ilham suggested that each person striving individually for peace serves as an example for

fellow humans and that education and awareness can lead to acceptance of people from all cultural backgrounds. He described how the teachings of the Koran help Muslims to achieve peace as well as a balance between spirituality and the physical world. Lastly, Rabbi Gestetner noted that following basic decency and ethics, which are promoted by all three Abrahamic religions, does not leave any room for a clash of faiths. In this respect, conflict is not inherent between members of different faiths, but rather occurs when people stray from the core teachings. All in all it was a successful day, with many people stepping behind the doors of a different faith for the first time and gaining some important insight as to what Muslims, Christians, and Jews really believe, which in many respects isn't so different after all.

It was in the same context of challenging the notion of a 'Clash of Civilisations,' that four students and a psychologist got together and ran a workshop titled *Clash of Civilisations: Cyprus' Decades of Division*. The workshop was facilitated by Eva Deligiannis, who has studied conflict resolution workshops in her broader psychology degree. She is a practising counsellor and hypno-therapist in Sydney. She was invited to devise a workshop that would explore some of the issues facing Greek and Turkish Cypriots on the island of Cyprus. Four students gave presentations about the history and nature of the conflict as well as Huntington's thesis and its relevance to the conflict on Cyprus.

The workshop involved a role-play based around a land dispute over an abandoned property owned, and once occupied, by a Turkish Cypriot family in Nicosia, and now occupied by a Greek Cypriot. Other concerned parties were the local Mayor, the police commander, and the family of the Turkish owner. The workshop was an explorative and educational process, and brought out the complexities of the dynamics of such a process, and how each role player engages in the conflict. Eva took the participants through an emotional analysis and raised ways to deal with the conflict by transforming the deadlock into empathy and understanding.

Although the workshop showed that a clash of interests in Cyprus did exist, it however became clear that it was not rooted in civilisations but in nationalism. The Greeks and Turks, as indicated in the short history of Cyprus under the Ottomans presented by Kuranda Seyit, lived in relative harmony for centuries. Anastasia Mouhtaridis highlighted the causes of the present day conflict and gave a comprehensive summary of the key events that have shaped it.

Brad Johnson also gave an entertaining introduction. He pulled it all so poignantly together when he said: "Perhaps the most provocative statement, in the 'Clash of Civilisations' is 'Islam has bloody borders.' Yet it is in this statement that Huntington has laid the

basis for a counter-argument. Huntington's 'Clash of Civilisations' is built around a clash of cultures. He describes culture as the product of man trying to find meaning throughout the centuries, and as such culture is an inherent part of man's existence – it has always been there throughout various historical epochs. But 'borders' have not. Borders are a result of man's attempt to maximize economically, politically, and socially the impacts of the Industrial Revolution of the late 18th Century. Borders, or the invention of the nation-state, emerged with the invention of capitalism. Essentially, borders came with a shift to a new historical paradigm; they cannot be considered an inherent part of man, an inherent part of culture. It is this concept of nationalism, the concept of nation-states, which is at the root of conflict today, and indeed at the root of the conflict in Cyprus." A final summation by Serena Tarling restated the failure of Huntington's thesis as a self-fulfilling prophecy.

*The Interfaith Open House was organised by PACS students Sarah Elliott, Ron Kroon, Nicky Morel, Lea Norbistrath, Mike Otterman, Erin Robertson and Matsutaro Yamashi. The Cyprus workshop was organised by Anastasia Moubtaridis, Serena Tarling, Brad Johnson and Kuranda Seyit.*

## The Responsibility to Protect

by Mariana Zafeirakopoulos, CPACS intern

I began my internship at the Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies with much enthusiasm and excitement. I was in a new environment looking forward to undertake any challenge that was to cross my path. A first challenge for me was the Gareth Evans lecture held on the 3 September. Our job was to assist in the organisation of the lecture, in which Gareth Evans addressed an audience at the University of Sydney, including school students, university students, honoured guests as well as the general public.

Under the guidance of Marilyn Harris, the Sydney Peace Foundation Executive Officer, the CPACS interns Hussein, Hinn, Christine and I worked to ensure an audience for the event. Everyone worked hard to get the word out; putting up posters, speaking at seminars and handing out pamphlets. Although we all dealt with our fair share of dilemmas and problems, our hard work was not wasted. We achieved an audience of approximately 300 people and everyone involved agreed that the lecture was a success.

Gareth Evans' lecture addressed several concerns, including the continuing threat of terrorism, the problem of 'failing' and fragile states, the proliferation of weapons and how the world has seemed to have lost its way regarding the war on Iraq. However, despite such troubles, Gareth Evans also spoke of how hope is not lost and how even today, the average rate of deaths due to

conflict has dropped from 200,000 annually during the 1990s to 20,000. His main message was of a way forward, and the need for the international community to take more 'responsibility to protect.' He explained how the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) has contributed to this. He discussed the Commission's five criteria of legitimacy for humanitarian intervention: just cause; right intention; last resort; proportional means; and reasonable prospects.

For me, the main lesson learned here was that despite the fact that concepts like 'the international responsibility to protect' are difficult to grapple with, this does not mean that it cannot be done. Despite my cynicism of such optimistic goals, the lecture had a particularly strong impact on me as well as others, renewing hope for change.

So in all, despite what I learned about my own organisational skills and what it's like to work in the real world, the greatest opportunity of this internship for me was to be able to see Gareth Evans face to face. It reminded me of my purpose as a student in the Department of Government in the first place, and it was certainly an inspiration and an event I was very proud to be associated with.

*The lecture by Gareth Evans 'No More Rwandas and Darfurs: the International Responsibility to Protect' has been published as CPACS Occasional Paper No.04/1.*

On 16 December, Iris Wielders leaves her position as Administrative Assistant after two years as a significant contributor to the administrative functioning and intellectual life of the Centre. Amongst her many achievements, Iris edited *PeaceWrites*, managed publications, coordinated the seminars program, organised the 2004 Australasian Peace and Conflict Studies Roundtable, kept the Centre's finances in order, supported the PACS postgraduate program in so many ways, and initiated CPACS' involvement in the international *Civil Society for the Prevention of Armed Conflict* project. In addition to all this, Iris pursued her research on Australia's intervention in the Solomon Islands, presenting several conference papers and a CPACS seminar, in preparation for her move to commence a PhD at ANU in 2005. We wish Iris every success in her academic career, and are pleased that she will not be leaving us entirely as she will be teaching the PACS unit *United Nations and International Conflict Resolution* in first semester and continuing to support various CPACS projects.

## CPACS students tell of their experiences in conflict regions

During the second semester of this year, CPACS organised a series of lunchtime seminars, which included PACS students Abha Shrestha, Andy Mason and Sarah Elliott speaking about their experiences working in conflict situations. All three seminars were well attended and provided an opportunity for fellow PACS students, staff from various NGOs in Sydney, and other people from across the University to learn about the challenges of working in areas of conflict. Abha Shrestha, who received the inaugural 2004 Peace and Conflict Studies scholarship to study at CPACS, spoke about her work with the National Human Rights Commission in Nepal and the conflict in her native country. Sarah Elliott described the conflict in Sierra Leone and the work she has done there in refugee camps with Médecins Sans Frontières. Finally, Andrew Mason and P.C. Mouly took the stage. P.C. Mouly spoke about the history of the conflict in Sri Lanka, while Andrew talked about his experiences working there as a volunteer.

### Internal Armed Conflict and Human Rights in Nepal

*PACS student and 2004 Citigroup Peace and Conflict Studies Scholarship recipient Abha Shrestha (Human Rights Commission Nepal)*

Nepal was one of the peaceful countries in the world before the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) began its insurgency in 1996. The Maoists have demanded a republic instead of constitutional monarchism. To some extent, it can be said that it is a political conflict between two different ideologies.

This conflict has adversely impacted on the human rights situation in Nepal. Immediately after restoration of democracy in 1990, the newly established democratic government ratified a number of international human rights instruments. Likewise, the Constitution of Nepal guarantees to protect the fundamental rights of citizens.

However, various rights such as civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights have been continuously violated during the conflict period. Conflict is one of the reasons behind the gross infringements of human rights. Since the breakdown of peace talks in August 2003, the number of killings, forced disappearances, torture, and arbitrary detentions in Nepal has risen dramatically. A large number of persons have been held incommunicado in army barracks. Similarly, the Maoist rebels have also been guilty of serious abuses such as the killing of suspected government informants, local government workers, and local activists of non-



*2004 Citigroup Peace and Conflict Studies Scholarship recipient Abha Shrestha during her seminar. Copyright Yuko Miyazawa*

Maoist political parties, including some cases involving pre-execution torture. Maoists have also engaged in extensive extortion of civilian populations and the punishment with death of those who refuse to pay. Approximately ten thousand people have been killed during this conflict since 1996. Most of the schools have been closed in remote parts of the country, because the Maoists have frequently abducted students and teachers. Security forces have blocked the supply of medicine, whereas the Maoists have looted the stock.

No one is spared from the adverse impact of conflict. The numbers of female-headed households are rising because of death and migration of men in the conflict. Moreover, women are suffering because of the arrest, abduction, disappearance, and death of male members of their families. The work burden of women has increased drastically. Many children have been recruited into the armed forces of the Maoists. Similarly, indigenous people and so-called lower caste people are highly influenced by the Maoist ideology and are involved in the armed forces.

There was no organisation to monitor the human rights violations. Therefore, after pressure from civil society and human rights activists, the National Human Rights Commission was established on 26 May 2000 in accordance with the Human Rights Act of 1997. The mission of the Commission is to develop a culture of human rights in the country, by taking a leading role as an independent and impartial national institution for the protection and promotion of human rights, in accordance with universally recognised human rights principles. Recently, the Commission has adopted a five-year strategic plan and given first priority to establishing peace in the country.

Meanwhile, the Commission developed a code of conduct for both conflicting parties. It emphasises the application of International Humanitarian Law as outlined in the Geneva Convention. Also, during the emergency time, the Commission undertook human rights monitoring in approximately 35 districts, and drew the attention of concerned agencies to human rights violations. It has begun to initiate necessary actions in response to the grave violations. With a view to transforming the conflict in a peaceful process, the

Commission organised separate interactions with high-level leaders. Inspired by the commitments of these leaders, the Commission requested both the government and the Maoists to arrange a ceasefire, and to pursue the code of conduct in order to provide stability to the ceasefire.

The human rights situation is deteriorating day by day. Therefore, it is imperative to resolve the conflict as soon as possible. In order to resolve the conflict, both political and other issues should be dealt with. According to Galtung, structural violence is one of the causes of conflict. Therefore, it should be addressed properly, otherwise there is a chance of recurrence of conflict in future. He defines structural violence as including poverty, hunger, repression and social alienation. Likewise, discrimination results in people being denied important rights such as economic opportunities, social and political equality, and a sense of autonomy and freedom. Therefore, in order to establish positive peace in Nepal, all of these issues should be dealt with properly.

I worked at the National Human Rights Commission for three years as a human rights officer. My major responsibility was to promote human rights. During this period, I realised that human rights are continuously violated because of the conflict between the government and the Maoists. Working as a human rights officer at the National Human Rights Commission, I felt that peace is a way to protect the human rights of the citizens of my country. That is why I joined a course on peace and conflict studies at University of Sydney. This course is designed to help students understand theories of peace and conflict, as well as conflict resolution. I look forward to using my theoretical knowledge to help establish peace in Nepal.

### Grassroots Peacebuilding in Sri Lanka

*by PACS student Andrew Mason  
(Voluntary Services Overseas)*

I spent two years as a volunteer with UK Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) in Sri Lanka, doing work in management capacity building for local NGOs. Those times, and my subsequent MA studies at CPACS, have left me with more questions than answers. Theorists say that we, as Westerners,

should rid ourselves of our imperialist behaviour. I found this incredibly difficult, partly because, regardless of what was in my head, I still occurred to the people in Sri Lanka as a white Englishman. A daily experience of being earnestly listened to, which just didn't happen in London, of being sought for opinions and views on everything - I was once asked to help plan for a possible refugee evacuation from a conflict zone - creates the danger of seeing yourself as your local colleagues do.

A difficult decision is whether to fish or to teach people to fish for themselves. I started firmly in the belief that I wouldn't do the work, like report or proposal writing, only show people how to do it themselves. This, however, was contrary to what the local NGOs wanted. Such a mismatch of expectations was very common for volunteers and is rooted in complex issues such as resources available to voluntary service organisations for assessing placements, the completeness and clarity of the information gathered, and the intentions of the parties involved. Eventually I did as the NGOs asked, and I think that doing so, and getting projects moving, created tangible activities in which then to build capacities.

Overall I was left with the impression that development is a well-established industry, the rules of which are well known by both sides. The donors come and want to see results. The local NGOs are well equipped to extract their money and show them what they want. I felt that in my time I learned more from Sri Lankans than they did from me. A great analogy was kindly offered to me when I mentioned this during the seminar at CPACS. A Sri Lankan person in the audience smiled after I'd finished and said, "you know the mice in Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy?" "Yes", I answered. He replied, "The Sri Lankans were the mice".

## Médecins Sans Frontières in Sierra Leone

by PACS student Sarah Elliott,  
(Médecins Sans Frontières)

Civil war in Sierra Leone was marked by extreme brutality on all sides, aimed in particular at the civilian population. Amputation, terror tactics, robbery of civilians by the armed forces, all contributed to a climate of extreme violence, with little access to international assistance and protection.

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) was one of the few non-government organisations that stayed in the country throughout the war. I went to Sierra Leone with MSF France in 2003, after working for several years as a registered nurse and undertaking postgraduate studies in tropical nursing in London.

The legacy of the war is a completely destroyed countryside. Everywhere you look there are derelict vehicles on the side of the road,

bombed buildings, roofs full of bullet holes, overgrown farms, roads and community buildings left to ruin.

Despite everything, the people are resilient, welcoming and always ready to smile at you. I never felt threatened, even at night in the capital, Freetown. Many people shared stories of rape, kidnapping, and extreme violence including mutilation during the invasion and siege of Freetown.

All I could do was listen and show my horror, but this was enough: people just wanted me to know what had happened to them. Surprisingly my helplessness did not make me feel hopeless. To have someone listen and engage in discussion about their ordeals, over a beer or a ride in a cab, was something positive for people.

Our work involved providing primary and secondary health care to Sierra Leoneans and Liberian refugees. Sierra Leone had to deal with large influxes of refugees after the war escalated in Liberia in 2003. The number of Liberian refugees exceeds 60,000, straining an already inadequate infrastructure, putting pressure on natural resources and pushing many aid agencies to the limit to provide assistance.

We were working in two of the Liberian refugee camps, providing health care and some water and sanitation facilities. The conditions in the refugee camps weren't too bad, although some camps were better than others. The main health problem was malaria, the biggest killer of children under five years old. The suffering of the Liberian people is enormous and immeasurable, yet they too are extremely resilient.

It is a humbling experience to hear a refugee's story of his or her flight: that long journey, full of danger and hardship, living in the bush just trying to survive and avoid detection, finally arriving in Sierra Leone to be herded from one place to another in the back of a truck, arriving with just the clothes on your back, starting over again from zero, building your hut and being dependent on aid from the international community, not knowing where other members of your family are and even if they are alive, and not knowing when you will be able to go home.

We ran a health clinic in both camps, where our services included nutritional screening, vaccination, consultations for children and adults, and pre- and post-natal care plus deliveries.

Every program we ran had daily reminders of why we were there and that we were making a difference. We were realistic with our objectives and never under the delusion that we could save the world or do everything for everybody. But we can make a difference on an individual basis and in areas of public health. The patient-medico relationship is very intimate and every day we would see patients get well and go home, which is always greatly rewarding.

On a larger scale we were able to monitor and detect an outbreak of measles and respond by

vaccinating more than 23,000 children in Kailahun town, where I was MSF's field coordinator. The satisfaction of controlling an outbreak and giving children life-long protection through immunisation is difficult to find in any other job. It really is the most challenging and rewarding work around.

In my work we get to see the extremes of human nature - the brutality and violence of war plus the incredible strength of character and ability of individuals to have hope when there appears to be none. It is always a privilege to witness this side of humanity.

One thing that always amazes me on missions, especially in conflict zones, is the ability of people to get on with their lives. The time I spent in Sierra Leone was no exception. Each time I made a trip up-country I could see reconstruction and progress. It was like witnessing a country pulling itself together, gathering its strength and trying to lift itself up after suffering a heavy blow.

Unfortunately the future for Sierra Leone looks bleak as it continues to struggle with poverty and endemic corruption. The reintegration of former fighters remains an issue as the system was not able to absorb them all and the forced redundancies to take place this year with the scaling-down of the army are potentially destabilising. The UN peacekeeping force is scheduled to reduce and withdraw its presence by December, leaving the vexed question of whether the Sierra Leonean authorities will be able to maintain peace and security in their troubled country.

*This article was published earlier in Uninews Volume 36 No.18. Reprinted with permission.*

## Citizen of Humanity — Teaching About Human Rights

by Lynda-ann Blanchard, Chair, NSW Human Rights Education Committee

The *Citizen of Humanity* project is a human rights education project for final-year primary students throughout Australia. The project aims to promote a deeper understanding of human rights and a greater appreciation of the globally interconnected human family. On Friday 24 September, Mr Bryce Gaudry MP, the NSW Parliamentary Secretary for Education, Training and Aboriginal Affairs, launched the project in the Jubilee Room at Parliament House, by kind courtesy of Dr Meredith Burgmann, President of the NSW Legislative Council.

This project aims to make support materials for human rights education available to Australian primary schools. In New South Wales, the *Citizen of Humanity Lesson Guide*, which was written in collaboration with the officers of the NSW Department of Education and Training, has been produced to support teachers in their classes on human rights education. Students, principals and

teachers involved in the pilot project were invited to attend the project launch, and students were presented with a *Citizen of Humanity Pledge*.

Thank you to Ms Linda Burney MP, for the welcome to country, to our host Dr Meredith Burgmann MP for her generous hospitality in welcoming us to Parliament House and to Mr Bryce Gaudry MP, who graciously filled in at the last minute for the Minister of Education. It was terrific to see so many principals, teachers and students involved in the *Citizen of Humanity* pilot project in attendance on that busy last day of term three of the school calendar. We were delighted that a former student from St Edmund's School in Wahroonga, Mr Ben Clare, could join us and utilise his specialised talents as a Braille reader to read the *Citizen of Humanity Pledge* to us.

Another talented young man on the launch program was Mr Prashanth Shamugan, United Nations Youth Ambassador. There are thirty United Nations Youth Ambassadors worldwide, each young person representing one article from the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. Prashanth represents the Right to Fair Trial. The Honourable Justice Marcus Einfeld, UNICEF Ambassador for Children, provided a message of support from the National Committee on Human Rights Education.

The New South Wales Human Rights Education Committee is one of a number of state arms of the National Committee, formed as part of Australia's response to the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1994 - 2004). The *Citizen of Humanity* project is therefore a national project, with state application. The vision of National Committee President Dr Eric Tan is to promote human rights education for young people, in particular final year primary school students about to embark on young adulthood.

In NSW, the aim of this project is to make the *Citizen of Humanity Lesson Guide* accessible to 2,500 primary schools across the Independent, Catholic, Integrated and Public sectors, equating to approximately 93,000 young people. The question was really: how could the NSW HREC be a resource for primary schools in this state to help promote human rights education? With a specific focus on the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, the *Citizen of Humanity* project develops educational materials about the capacity of humanness to embrace diversity and tolerance, and work towards social justice. The message of endorsement of the project from the Governor of NSW, Her Excellency, Professor Marie Bashir gives us the cue as she says,

"One of the most rewarding engagements as Governor of New South Wales, is to be able to visit many schools right across the State and speak to so many young people. I am constantly inspired by their understanding of and concern for human and social rights and the environmental issues faced by our nation and beyond."

Thanking the Governor of NSW for her invaluable support of this project is just the beginning. At the risk of sounding like an Emmy Awards soundtrack,

there are some significant project contributors to acknowledge. Firstly, NSW HREC colleagues for putting a 'human face' to this initiative in their roles as School's Liaison and Launch Organisers. The project wouldn't have made second base without the enthusiasm from our pilot primary schools, Burwood, Erskineville, Haberfield, Petersham, St Mary's and Wilkins. We are also grateful to Br Cyril Bosco, Principal of St Edmunds School and his colleague Ms Elizabeth Wegener, for their insights and skills in translating the one-page *Citizen of Humanity Pledge* into an eight-page Braille document.

The Catholic Education Commission, and in



*The Honourable Justice Marcus Einfeld, UNICEF Ambassador for Children, and one of the students holding the Citizen of Humanity Pledge. Courtesy of Ms Yvette Andrews, NSW Parliament Office*

particular Mr Ian Baker, Director of Policy and Programs, has been a collaborative partner since the beginning of this project. However, we would not have made first base without support and expertise of colleagues at the Department of Education and Training NSW. Under the leadership of Mr John Gore (Director Curriculum K-12 Human Society and Its Environment) and thanks to the expertise of his curriculum development team (Ms Lianne Singleton, Ms Ann Southwell and Mr Chris Dorbis) this project has managed to provide a significant human rights education resource for NSW primary schools.

Of course, reaching bases one and two successfully would have been very difficult to achieve without financial and 'in kind' sponsorship. The Franciscan Friars are key financial sponsors of this project. We are indebted to them. We also thank the United Nations Information Centre and the Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies for housing our committee meetings, and in the case of CPACS providing ongoing administrative infrastructure and collegial support. We thank the Conflict Resolution Network, the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart Peace and Justice Centre and the Baha'i Council of Australia for

subsidising food, flowers and posters for the project launch.

Whilst acknowledging colleagues from the National Committee of Human Rights Education present at the launch — Dr Sev Ozdowski, Human Rights Commissioner; Dr Stella Cornelius, Director, Conflict Resolution Network and the Honourable Justice Marcus Einfeld — it was also extremely encouraging to see many CPACS and SPF colleagues supporting this project.

The *Citizen of Humanity* project is sponsored by the National Committee on Human Rights Education. The development of a human rights education syllabus, the piloting of the teaching materials in primary schools, and the launch of the Project in NSW were key activities during this final year in the UN Decade for Human Rights Education. The project will now roll out over the next year to involve schools in remote and regional locations in the project. More information about the project, including the *Citizen of Humanity Lesson Guide*, can be found on <http://www.nswhrec.freesevers.com>

## Honesty and Accountability in Government

by Hinn Li, CPACS intern

Following statements by senior diplomats, military and medical personnel calling for greater honesty and accountability in government, a similar statement was issued by 416 senior academics from 35 of Australia's 38 universities. Initiated by Emeritus Professor Stuart Rees and conducted by CPACS interns Hinn Li, Hussain Chami, Mariana Zafeirakopolous and Christine Janssen, the statement reads: "it's time to reassert the values of impartiality and decency in public service and to restore Australia's reputation for honest and independent government". This is believed to be the first such statement of its kind by a collective of academics.

Among the signatories to the statement are 180 professors from a wide range of fields, including Professor Frank Stilwell from the University of Sydney, Professor Tony Vinson from the University of New South Wales, Professor Derick Marsh of La Trobe University, Professor Geremie Barme from the Australian National University, Professor Gavin Mooney from the Curtin University of Technology, Professor Verity Burgmann from the University of Melbourne, Professor Marie Brennan from the University of South Australia, and Professor Clive Bean from the Queensland University of Technology.

The statement was made public on Sunday 26 September in the Sun Herald and Sunday Age newspapers. It also generated significant interest in other sections of the media, with coverage from ABC radio, SBS television, as well as follow-up reports and opinion pieces in the Fairfax and Murdoch papers. Neither the Coalition nor Labor made a direct public response to the statement, although both cited trust and honesty as a central focus of the election campaign.

## The Challenges of Reconciliation: Lessons from Fiji's Post-Coup Political Dilemma

by Kevin Chang, PACS Alumni

*Kevin recently returned to Australia after completing a 12-month volunteer assignment as a Research Officer in Fiji's Ministry of National Reconciliation and Unity under AusAID's Australian Youth Ambassador for Development Program. Prior to his year in Fiji Kevin completed his MA from CPACS, with his dissertation examining the root causes of Fiji's societal conflicts. This article is broadly based on a presentation he gave at CPACS in June this year, drawing from his MA research and his experience working on reconciliation in Fiji.*

Many of you could probably still recall those chaotic scenes from the streets of Suva that beamed into Australian lounge rooms in the middle of 2000. And many people probably felt some degree of sympathy towards the indigenous peoples of Fiji (hereafter 'Fijian', as customarily understood in Fiji) when a bold and media-savvy George Speight, dressed neatly in a traditional Fijian sulu, calmly articulated his reasons for staging a violent coup d'état to overthrow the democratically elected government led by Mahendra Chaudhry, Fiji's first Prime Minister of Indian ancestry.

Those old enough would realise that this is not the first experience of such calamity for Fiji. No less than three coups have befallen this tiny South Pacific state in the last two decades – a fact that staggers the imagination for a country that had been hailed by many in the world as an example of multicultural peaceful coexistence. "The way the world should be" was Pope John Paul's generous assessment when he visited these shores in 1986, one year before Lt. Sitiveni Rabuka stormed parliament in staging the first ever overthrow of government in the South Pacific region.

Largely labelled as an 'ethnic' conflict by the media, Speight, as did Rabuka in 1987, professed that he acted in the interests of the indigenous Fijians. The reality and the consequences from the coups, however, suggest otherwise. Executed and supported by a small group of extreme ethnonationalists, the coups of 1987 and 2000 were more about fulfilling the self interests of chiefly, political and business elites than about bringing genuine benefit to ordinary indigenous Fijians. The violence and racial discrimination that was unleashed toward the Indo-Fijian community was much more widespread in the aftermath of the 2000 coup compared to 1987. The Indo-Fijian community – made up mainly of descendants of indentured labourers brought from India by the British colonial administration, and referred to locally as 'Indians' (as I will do from here on) – was the target of widespread looting and burning of their businesses and homes, as well as the subject of physical violence and sexual abuse. The coups in 1987 and 2000 were the catalyst for large-scale emigration of the

Indian community over the past two decades. Currently leaving the country at a rate of around 5000 per year, the Indian community's share of the national population has dropped by almost 10 per cent since 1987 to a current level of 37 percent. The departure of some of Fiji's best and brightest talents has contributed to severe brain drain and skills shortage in a country deeply in need of social and rural development.

The Indian community's pre-eminence in the business sector has historically generated resentment among many indigenous Fijians. The popular perception of an economically advantaged Indian community, however, is grossly misguided, and is mainly derived from its ubiquity in small and medium commercial outlets, while larger industries are dominated by multinational and expatriate interests. The severe economic downturn that followed both coups proved to be equally devastating to the indigenous Fijian community. The tourism industry, which channels much wealth to the Fijian clans through communal native land ownership, was brought to a near standstill and did not recover to pre-coup levels for many years. Despite the fact that indigenous Fijians have dominated the political landscape for more than 30 years, rural Fijians have over the decades experienced little improvement to their lives compared to those living in urban centres, with many regions still without basic services such as roads, electricity or running water. The ethnonationalists, in exploiting rural Fijians in their anti-Indian mobilisation efforts, sought to attribute rural Fijian poverty to perceived Indian wealth, as well as instilling fear that indigenous land ownership was under threat from Indian political leadership. These claims gained popular acceptance despite the fact that Fijian clans own 90 per cent of the country's land - an inalienable provision that has been enshrined in the country's constitutions since colonial times. Fiji is one of the very few countries in the world where the indigenous peoples, being the majority ethnic group (55 percent of total population), have enjoyed special protection of their rights and interests throughout the colonial era until the present day. The latest constitutional amendment in 1997, despite being hailed around the world for its equitable nature, still carefully maintained the historical orthodoxy of the 'paramouncy of Fijian interests' - by reserving Presidency to a Fijian and strengthening the Great Council of Chiefs, the institution widely regarded as the embodiment of Fijian culture and tradition.

The colonial authority's policies of preserving indigenous rights and interests, though notionally well-intended, were administered through economic, social, political and spatial segregation of the two dominant groups. Considered by many as a familiar divide and conquer strategy used by colonial rulers to serve their own interests, the historical segregation of the two main ethnic groups meant that there was little opportunity for the Fijian and Indian communities to develop mutual trust, understanding and cooperation. While the Indian

community traditionally pursued commerce and farmed sugarcane on leased Fijian land, indigenous Fijians have historically dominated the public service, the police force and the military - all of which had a significant role in assisting or acquiescing to the motives of the 1987 and 2000 coups. Therefore, even though 'race' has been the dominant discourse through which Fiji's woes have manifested, the divisions in Fiji's society are much more complex and deeply rooted in its historical structures and institutions, as well as perceived threats and appeals to collective identities through political mobilisation. Fiji's electoral system, inheriting the colonial orthodoxy of pre-determined parliamentary allocations based on 'race', also ensures that public issues are perpetually viewed and contested through racial lenses, thereby providing a continuous barrier to multi-ethnic discourse and dialogue.

Our experience with post-conflict societies around the world usually point to the period after violence subsides as a critical opportunity to engage in examining the root causes of conflict, as well as creating a space for truth telling, dialogue and healing. Equally important in post-conflict situations is the establishment of equitable and socially just political and economic structures, and the maintenance of the rule of law. Fiji's path to reconciliation, however, has been complicated by the fact that the most critical issues affecting inter-ethnic harmony remain largely unresolved due to the continuing lack of political will and perceptions of political illegitimacy. The current government, led by Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase, was delivered to power on the wave of indigenous nationalist sentiments following the 2000 coup, and governs in coalition with an ultra-nationalist party that not only supported the coup but nominated Speight as one of its candidates while he was serving a life sentence. The Qarase government's controversial affirmative action programme – a set of positive discrimination policies addressing Fijian interests only – has been criticised as racially discriminatory by not only the Indian and minority communities, but also moderate Fijians as well as foreign governments, the Commonwealth and the United Nations.

The highly racialised political climate since the 2000 coup has therefore served to further polarise, rather than ameliorate, Fiji's already fragile ethnic dynamics. What has happened in the past four years on the political front points to a critical opportunity lost in engaging in a process that dispassionately examines the root causes of conflict and taking decisive steps towards addressing issues long ignored. The Labour Party, whose governing coalition was deposed in both the 1987 and 2000 events, has also been reluctant to bridge the political and ethnic divide, with leader Mahendra Chaudhry unable to cast aside the bitterness of injustice after being twice-removed from democratically elected leadership at gun point. Indeed, there has been no formal recognition or compensation from the Qarase government toward the Chaudhry coalition government MPs, who were taken hostage and



*PACS Alumni Kevin Chang with the men of Waikiri village in north-eastern Fiji.  
Photo courtesy Kevin Chang.*

lost their parliamentary positions after just one year into their five-year term.

There have been calls from various members of civil society, including NGOs and religious groups, to establish a truth commission to identify perpetrators and provide a forum for victims of the coups to have their stories heard. However, government fears of agitating the ethnonationalist factions, accompanied by an overall 'forgive and forget' approach, have prevented this process from receiving its deserved political momentum. In the meanwhile, the legal process of identifying perpetrators moves at a painstakingly slow pace, while many coup suspects from 2000 continue to serve in senior government posts or are rewarded lucrative overseas diplomatic postings. Despite having been convicted of involvement in the 2000 coup and currently serving a four-year sentence, the government and the Great Council of Chiefs have retained the position of Vice Presidency for Ratu Jope Seniloli, who continues to receive full salary from prison. The culture of violence and impunity can be traced back to the 1987 coup, when Rabuka and his accomplices were granted amnesty for executing a military takeover that won the approval of the Great Council of Chiefs. Through all this, the suffering of victims from the coups has been largely ignored, with no official recognition for the violence against the Indo-Fijian community through genuine apologies, restorative justice or compensations. The racialised climate of politics has also created a situation where the government is reluctant to take a moderate road toward reconciliation in fear of alienating the ethnonationalist constituency to which it owes its political existence.

The military-appointed interim government that followed the 2000 coup, headed by Qarase with an exclusively indigenous Fijian make-up, established the Ministry of National Reconciliation and Unity to 'promote racial harmony and social cohesion'. This was at a time when Fiji suffered widespread international condemnation for its handling of the coup, especially in regard to the acquiescence by the military and the Great Council of Chiefs to most of the Speight group's demands, as well as the illegitimacy of the interim government itself. The Ministry, though a potentially important actor in engendering reconciliation, has not been equipped with an adequate budget, suitably qualified personnel or the appropriate authority to carry out its tasks throughout the four years of its existence. Operating as a department within the government, the Ministry of Reconciliation has not had the independence nor the legitimacy it needs to seriously address critical issues, and where necessary, the freedom to condemn racially discriminatory policies or denounce political rhetoric that damage ethnic relations. Instead, the Ministry has largely kept its activities to lavishly funding community social and religious events, and is widely regarded as a tokenistic front employed by the government to enhance its own image in the wake of international condemnations and sanctions following the 2000 coup. Rather than focusing on inter-ethnic reconciliation, the Ministry has also directed the majority of its efforts toward promoting 'unity' within the indigenous Fijian communities. While there are certainly many intra-indigenous issues that need to be addressed – such as the role of traditional leaders, incorporation of customary laws and chiefly title disputes, to name a few – a

national reconciliation effort that largely excludes the remaining 50 percent of the population has generated much suspicion and distrust. By silencing the victims and refusing to proactively pursue the perpetrators of violence and injustice, the politicisation of a largely cosmetic reconciliation process imposed from above continues to generate controversy and confusion, and in the meantime denigrate the true meaning and purpose of reconciliation. The culture of impunity and injustice has only served to breed bitterness and discontent, while belittling the suffering of the victims – many of whom now having chosen emigration from their country of birth as their most effective means of exercising political will.

At the heart of Fiji's conflict lies the fact that many indigenous Fijians argue that the group should be guaranteed paramount political rights by virtue of being the first inhabitants, so that political leadership must always remain in Fijian hands. In other words, many Fijians equate indigenous rights to indigenous supremacy. This notion has often led to Fijian leaders and politicians deriding democracy and human rights as 'western' concepts incompatible to the customs and aspirations of the indigenous Fijians. Such convenient rejections of democracy, however, also fail to recognise the legitimacy and contribution of the non-indigenous population of Fiji. Creating two classes of citizenship in a system of ethnocracy is clearly not the answer, and even the most ardent nationalist politicians recognise that such changes to the constitution would never gather international support and would put at risk the aid money Fiji relies so heavily upon for its social and economic development. In reality, indigenous Fijian interests have always been adequately protected in the country's constitutions and institutions. The realisation of Fijian development rests largely on better leadership to eradicate the rampant corruption, nepotism, cronyism and provincialism that has long plagued successive Fijian governments. As Adi Kuini Vuikaba Speed, indigenous Fijian chief and former Deputy Prime Minister in the Chaudhry government succinctly summed up:

"We are the most privileged and most protected indigenous community in the world.

We have had 30 years of indigenous Prime-Ministership for Fijians; we have had all the Permanent Secretaries ... but what have we done? We have 84 percent of the land.

But I would say that Fijians are the poorest community not because of the other communities but because they have not been led by people who care about the Fijian people."

Indeed, race-based affirmative action policies, aside from discriminating against non-Fijians by denying access to disadvantaged Indian and minority communities, have done little to alleviate the plight of those Fijians who need it most. These policies have concentrated on awarding government business contracts to Fijian firms, thereby enriching the Fijian elite and those in the community already well-connected to the Fijian chiefly and political establishment.

Even though many indigenous Fijians regard the era of British rule with fondness as it provided a period of stability and ensured the preservation of their culture, at independence Fiji was left with a multicultural society that was deeply segregated along racial lines. An important aspect of reconciliation is the ability to recognise a sense of commonality. Aside from realising a common purpose and identity, there must also be shared acknowledgement of the historical burdens that both Fijians and Indians carry from a colonial legacy that carved a wedge between the two groups. In this sense, both groups could legitimately regard themselves as 'victims of history', which would in turn provide a common non-racial platform for resolving long standing deep-rooted issues. This may also lead to recognition of the need for Britain to acknowledge responsibility for its role in creating the historical injustices that played a major part in the conflicts over the past two decades.

While this paper has focused on the failures of political processes of reconciliation since 2000, it should be noted that tremendous gains have been made at some community and interpersonal levels by civil society actors such as religious groups, academics and NGOs. However, these gains have not been adequately supported by political processes which have historically driven inter-ethnic discourse in Fiji. It should also be remembered that the 1997 Constitution was born out of a review process that involved unprecedented cooperation between the main Fijian and Indian political leaders (including a born-again Rabuka). This process itself could be regarded as a major symbolic step towards reconciliation at the highest level.

Fiji's experience since the 2000 coup, however, has demonstrated that a government-imposed reconciliation initiative is unlikely to yield meaningful results if it is absent of inclusive society-wide debate or involvement, and is conducted in an atmosphere of suspicion and distrust. Reconciliation in Fiji has largely become part of the political rhetoric, without workable strategies intended to achieve meaningful outcomes. An independent commission, one that is adequately funded and staffed and has a clear mandate, is desperately needed to enable Fiji's communities to finally begin examining fundamental issues that lie at the heart of recent conflicts. However, much valuable time has already been lost through lack of political will and continued racialisation of government policies. With another election on the horizon in 2006, Fiji's political leaders are already fixing one eye on the ultimate prize, while its divided and wounded communities struggle to grasp the true meaning and purpose of reconciliation.

## West Papua Project

by John Wing and Michela Noonan, West Papua Project Coordinators

The West Papua Project workshop *Peace Building and Development in West Papua – Dialogue versus Violence: Hearing Other Voices* was held

at the University of Sydney on 16-17 August. Over two days, up to eighty guests and members of the public interacted with speakers representing academia, non-government organisations, churches, and the development community.

The first day's discussion explored the issue of dialogue, posing some fundamental questions: What is dialogue? How can an understanding of dialogue help create the conditions of peace? What are the prospects of dialogue in the conflict in West Papua? The second day examined the critical issue of development, exploring the pressing needs in West Papua's health and education.

Among those invited to participate in the workshop was John Rumbiak, West Papua's leading human rights advocate. John is the international coordinator for ELS-HAM, the West Papuan Institute for Human Rights Study and Advocacy, and currently a visiting fellow at Columbia University in the US. Mr Rumbiak's visit to Australia as a guest of the West Papua Project enabled many media and public speaking engagements in Sydney and other major centres around Australia.

Other guests included Reverend Dr Benny Giay, Chairman of ELS-HAM and a prominent indigenous Pastor; Mama Josepha Alomang of the women's organization YAHAMAK; Simon Morin, a West Papuan parliamentarian; and the former West Papua Project Coordinator, Dr John Otto Ondawame, now representative of the West Papua People's Representative Office in Vanuatu. Local speakers included Associate Professor Richard Chauvel, Bruce Childs, Justice Elizabeth Evatt and Professor Garth Nettheim.

West Papua Project staff also coordinated Mr Rumbiak's appearance before the Foreign Affairs and Defence Sub-committee of the Joint Foreign Affairs and Trade Standing Committee, at Parliament House in Canberra on 2 August. Mr Rumbiak presented an overview and update from a West Papuan perspective covering current developments within West Papua, within Indonesia and also at the international level. Issues such as human rights, Indonesia's Human Rights Commission (Komnas HAM), and transmigration were raised. A fact-finding mission to Papua was proposed for a time, after the Indonesian elections, when such an initiative would be most beneficial.

The West Papua Project also cooperated with Columbia University and Yale University in the US, who this year released their report *Indonesian Human Rights Abuses in West Papua: Application of the Law of Genocide to the History of Indonesian Control*. This report has become an important reference document, outlining the history of Indonesian repression in West Papua. The West Papua Project provided logistic and administrative support in the lead up to the release of the Yale Genocide report, and the launch of the Genocide Campaign in Geneva.

*Reports of this latest and previous West Papua Project workshops are available on the CPACS website.*

## Unfinished Business: Justice and Reconciliation in East Timor

CPACS seminar presentation by Dr Wendy Lambourne, 7 October 2004

The world's newest nation of East Timor is emerging from a turbulent history comprising 450 years of Portuguese rule followed by civil war, invasion and 24 years of Indonesian occupation characterised by human rights abuses, massacres and violence.

*After the fall of the Subarto regime in May 1998, a United Nations referendum was held to determine whether the East Timorese wanted to retain autonomy within Indonesia. The referendum on 30 August 1999 resulted in 78.5% of East Timorese voting for independence. Immediately following the referendum, pro-integration militia launched a scorched earth campaign in East Timor burning 60,000 houses, destroying 70% of infrastructure, raping hundreds of women and killing 2000 of the population, and displacing 500,000 civilians including 250,000 to West Timor.*

An Australian-led multinational intervention force (INTERFET) was dispatched to restore peace and security, and on 25 October the UN Security Council authorised the establishment of the UN Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) with a mandate to "exercise all legislative and executive authority, including the administration of justice". On 20 May 2002 East Timor became independent and UNTAET was replaced by a smaller UN mission (UNMISSET) which continues to assist with the transition to full independence.

The East Timorese population is divided politically between those who supported autonomy within Indonesia and those who supported independence. In the aftermath of the militia violence of 1999, there are divisions between those who led the militia, those who followed, their families, and those who were targets of the militia violence. Reconciliation is needed between these different sectors of the East Timorese population, as well as between East and West Timorese, East Timorese and Indonesians more generally, and between East Timorese and those members of the international community such as Australia which supported the Indonesian annexation of East Timor and failed to prevent the subsequent violence and human right abuses.

The UN International Commission of Inquiry on East Timor recommended the establishment of an international tribunal and a truth commission to promote both justice and reconciliation for the East Timorese. However, only a truth commission has been established. The idea of an international tribunal was put on hold while the Indonesian government pursued justice in its own courts. In addition to the Indonesian ad hoc tribunal in Jakarta, UNTAET set up a Serious Crimes Unit in Dili to try the perpetrators of serious crimes and human rights abuses committed in East Timor in 1999. While the Jakarta tribunal suffers from a

limited mandate and an absence of political will to prosecute and punish the Indonesians responsible for the militia violence, the court in Dili is hampered by resource limitations and a lack of power to obtain custody of indictees who are in Indonesia.

The East Timorese Commission on Reception, Truth and Reconciliation (known by its Portuguese acronym, CAVR), meanwhile, was established in July 2001 as an independent statutory authority. It had three main purposes: to investigate human rights violations during the period between 25 April 1974 until 25 October 1999 (truth seeking); to assist in the reception and reintegration of those who committed lesser crimes (community reconciliation); and to report its findings and make policy recommendations to the East Timorese government for further action on reconciliation and the promotion of human rights.

As part of the truth seeking process, CAVR collected almost 8000 statements from survivors and families of victims regarding human rights violations between 1974-1999. The Commission had no authority to conduct reconciliation processes with the perpetrators of serious crimes such as rape and killings. Instead, it recorded people's stories in the hope that acknowledgement and truth-telling would contribute to their healing. According to the twenty Timorese I interviewed in Dili, Liquica and Suai in July 2004, this is not enough. Their expectations have not been fulfilled. They told the CAVR interviewers their stories and expected the perpetrators of the crimes against them would be arrested and punished. This has not happened. The Serious Crimes Unit in Dili and the court in Jakarta have failed to deliver justice.

For those who had committed less serious crimes such as looting and burning of houses, CAVR conducted reconciliation processes which included amnesty provisions. By the end of its public program in March 2004, CAVR had facilitated 216 community reconciliation events for 1403 deponents throughout East Timor. The Community Reconciliation Process (CRP) involved voluntary acceptance of culpability by the perpetrator (or deponent) and agreement on reconciliation acts such as reparation, community service or public apology. The participation of the deponent and agreement reached were registered with the Office of the General Prosecutor, resulting in amnesty from future prosecution (but not if a serious crime was identified).

The strengths of this process included the participatory approach at village level and the incorporation of an interactive community reconciliation process based on the traditional or local *nabe biti* – referring to the symbolic rolling out of a mat as a venue to discuss and settle an issue among interested parties through consensus. This process of reconciliation is traditionally seen as a bridge to achieve a much greater aim of harmony and peace in the society. The CRP enabled public acknowledgement of wrongdoing and suffering, at the same time as

alleviating pressure on the formal justice system to deal with the large numbers of perpetrators of non-serious crimes. It encouraged the return of refugees and reduced the incidence of revenge, by offering a restorative justice process focussed on rebuilding community.

Some of the concerns highlighted by my research included the feeling that non-serious crimes were being more thoroughly dealt with than serious crimes because of the lack of follow through by the court system. There was also a need identified for more of a focus on socioeconomic justice for the Timorese who lost their homes and jobs, and are now struggling to cope with health problems and insufficient resources to send their children to school. Many victims are dissatisfied because not all of the militia have returned from West Timor and they don't know what happened to their family members – who killed them and where their remains are located.

In East Timor there is still a need to focus on both reconciliation and justice in order to meet the needs of victims, satisfy international expectations and promote social and political transformation. This could mean an extension of the CRP to include more victims and perpetrators of non-serious crimes, and a strengthening of the court system or even the establishment of an international tribunal. CAVR's final report, which is due to be released in 2005, will include policy recommendations in relation to these issues (see <http://www.easttimor-reconciliation.org/>)

## The Bougainville Peace Process: A Grassroots Perspective

by Iris Wielders, CPACS Seminars Coordinator

The Bougainville peace process is often referred to as an example of successful conflict resolution in the Pacific region. In particular when contrasted with the peace process in the Solomon Islands, the process in Bougainville has been characterised by observers as an inclusive process, with enough time for step-by-step negotiation stages.

On Thursday 22 April the Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, together with Dr Paul Dwyer from the Department of Performance Studies, University of Sydney, welcomed four key players in the Bougainville peace process: Chief Moses Havini, Sam Kauona, Marilyn Havini and Josephine Sirivi-Kauona. Around twenty-five participants, including a number of Papua New Guinean students from the University of Sydney, listened as the four speakers recalled their experiences during the peace negotiations. Their stories provided a rare and very moving insight into the Bougainville peace process as seen through the eyes of its most important participants: the people of Bougainville.

The seminar was introduced by Carole Shaw, a Peace and Conflict Studies alumni and currently a PhD candidate at the University of New South Wales. Carole is researching the role of women in the post-conflict reconstruction of Bougainville.

She acknowledged the Eora people, the traditional owners of the land on which the University of Sydney is situated, and gave a brief overview of the conflict and the peace process in Bougainville. She then introduced the first speaker, Moses Havini, an international representative of the Bougainville Interim Government.

Moses thanked the organisers for making the seminar possible, and the other Melanesian people present at the seminar for coming. He spoke about the horror of the conflict as it was raging in the 1990s, and the lack of coverage by the media, despite Bougainville's proximity to Australia. Moses was involved early on in the peace process, lobbying the United Nations Economic and Social Council. After three years, he said, the United Nations Human Rights Commission passed a resolution on the situation in Bougainville, and this was the start of the involvement of the UN to help stop the fighting.

The next speaker was Sam Kauona, who led the Bougainville Revolutionary Army until 1999. Now he is taking a back seat, assisting the other leaders and contributing to the peacebuilding process. He has been working on the issue of containment and disposal of arms in Bougainville. Sam recounted the Burnham Peace Talks that took place in New Zealand in 1997. He told the audience how they were flown to Cairns and then on to New Zealand in a military aircraft that was divided into two parts: one for the BRA and one for the BRF. "It was hard walking through the plane to the front of the aircraft past those who were then our enemies", Sam said. Once the plane arrived in Christchurch, it was the women from the different groups who first greeted each other, then the men followed. Sam described the peace process as having ups and downs, but the general trend has been a steady climb to achieving peace. At the moment, the second constitution for Bougainville has been drafted and circulated for comment, but it has not yet been passed by the Papua New Guinea parliament. Sam said it was difficult for the people to remain patient, as they have been waiting for so long already.

Marilyn Taleo Havini was born in Australia but lived in Bougainville for 20 years, where she was formally adopted into the Nakas Clan in a traditional assembly of Chiefs, and given the name Taleo. Marilyn gave her own perspective on the conflict and the peace process. She emphasised the significance of the role of women in that process, and stressed the importance of reconciliation for Bougainville people. There is also a need for people to talk about human rights and the violations of these that took place during the years of conflict. Marilyn was involved in the peace talks at both Burnham and Lincoln. She has also supported human rights workshops throughout Bougainville and said that people are eager to learn about human rights.

Josephine Tankunani Sirivi-Kauona is the founding President of the Bougainville Women for Peace and Freedom and has represented the position of women in the peace process in many

UN and other international fora. Josephine spoke about the role of women in Bougainville's matrilineal society; how they are the mothers of the land. "Women are always consulted in all decisions"; she said, and in reconciliation ceremonies it is they who receive the compensation. Josephine said it was these facts that gave her the strength to stand up and reach out and be a spokeswoman in the peace process. She concluded with an overview of the work of the Bougainville Women for Peace and Freedom in the building of schools and the training of women for participation in the forthcoming autonomous government.

More information on the Bougainville Women for Peace and Freedom can be found at <http://www.peacewomen.org/resources/Bougainville/BWPF2001.html>

...as *Mothers of the Land: The Birth of the Bougainville Women for Peace and Freedom*, edited by Josephine Takunani Sirivi and Marilyn Taleo Havini, was published in March 2004 by Pandanus Books (ANU).

CPACS would like to thank Dr Paul Dwyer for his efforts in the organisation of the seminar.

## The Mystery of the Disappeared Imam

by Erin Robertson, PACS student

On 30 August 2004, representatives of CPACS attended a symposium dinner in honour of Imam Musa alSadr, a charismatic Lebanese Shia cleric who vanished mysteriously along with two colleagues during an official visit to Libya in 1978. To this day, the fate of the Imam, who fought poverty in Lebanon and advocated for interfaith cooperation, and his associates, Sheikh Muhammad Yaqub and journalist Abbas Badr al-Din, remains unknown. The symposium, entitled *The 26<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Imam Musa alSadr's Abduction: The Humane and Legal Dimensions of the Case*, was organised by the Amal Movement of Australia; the Australian branch of The Supreme Islamic Shi'ite Council; and His Excellency the Ambassador of Lebanon, Mr Michel Bitar. The Imam's son, Sayyed Sadreddine Musa alSadr, a soft-spoken academic, and Chibli Mallat, the internationally renowned human rights lawyer, came from Lebanon for the event. Also present were Members of New South Wales Parliament, the Lebanese Consul-General Robert Naoum, Muslim religious leaders, Australian and Lebanese priests and nuns, representatives of Amnesty International, CPACS Research Officer Dr Paul White, CPACS postgraduate students Erin Robertson and Ron Kroon, and 125 members of the Australian-Lebanese community.

Amnesty International states that in disappearances such as the Imam's, "the violation continues as long as the fate and whereabouts of the victim have not been established". But where to look for answers to questions about the Imam's fate? He was last seen in public on 31 August 1978 as he left his hotel to attend a meeting with

Libyan President Muammar al-Gaddafi. Libya claims that alSadr and his two colleagues left on an Alitalia flight to Rome on that day, but Italian officials maintain that the men never boarded the flight, let alone arrived in Italy. Lebanese officials say they have evidence that proves the men were kidnapped while in Tripoli, and are looking to al-Gaddafi for more information. Last month, a twist in the case occurred when Yaqub and alSadr's passports were found in Rome. Passport stamps show that the two men left Tripoli on 31 August 1978, which matches Libya's claim. Chibli Mallat, who represents the alSadr, Yaqub, and al-Din families, has been a crucial figure in pushing the Imam's legal case forward. In August of this year, thanks to Mallat's work, Lebanon's Prosecutor-General issued arrest warrants for a number of key figures in the case, including Colonel al-Gaddafi himself. The Libyan government, under increasing international pressure to answer questions about alSadr's disappearance, issued a statement in September of this year which dismissed the incident as, "a link in a chain of kidnappings and assassinations that took place in the Arab east in the seventies".

The Imam's disappearance is a great source of diplomatic tension between Libya and Lebanon. Libya closed its embassy in Beirut in 2003 due to overwhelming harassment from alSadr supporters, whose popularity did not end with his disappearance. AlSadr was born in Iran but emigrated to Lebanon in 1960 to serve as a religious leader for the city of Tyre and gained popularity by working to improve the socio-economic conditions of Shi'ites. In the seventies, facing an impending civil war, he urged unity between the Muslim, Druze, and Christian religious factions in Lebanon. A Catholic priest from Beirut noted during his symposium talk that alSadr had been an extremely popular speaker in the Christian churches in Lebanon, always urging people to look past religious differences in order to focus on the humanity that unites us all. AlSadr was the founder of *afwaj al-muqawamah al-lubnaniyyah* (the Lebanese Resistance Detachments), otherwise known as Amal (which means "hope"), which he created to fight the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon. According to an article in *The Australian* of 4 September 2004, "he was considered too moderate by some supporters, who formed a breakaway group that attracted Iranian support and eventually became Hezbollah". Before his disappearance, alSadr was the head of the Higher Shi'ite Council, the most important body of the Shia community in Lebanon.

The issue of the Imam's whereabouts is "the biggest outstanding unresolved issue that stands between Libya and the world community", says Dr Paul White, who spoke at the symposium. Dr White says that the resolution of this case is key to Libya's reconciliation with the Muslim East and the rest of the world. In recent months, Libya has been demonstrating a desire to reconnect with the world. Hopefully, this increased openness, combined with the current legal campaign, will result in the fate of the Imam and his companions becoming known to his family, his followers, and those who care about international human rights.

## CPACS Alumni Corner

PACS alumni Donna Mosford writes:

In my role as Community Project Officer Multicultural/Indigenous at Fairfield City Council, I coordinate strategies that ensure residents of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds have access to service provision. This is achieved in a variety of ways, including through the Multicultural Advisory Committee which comprises leaders of local communities and councillors who come together to discuss issues and policies that affect them. I also co-convene the Fairfield Migrant Interagency (FMI), a network of workers who provide direct services to Fairfield's multicultural community.

Once concerns are identified, the Council attempts to support and resource workers by developing appropriate projects. A recent focus has been on the needs of the 'emerging' African communities, whose numbers continue to increase in the Fairfield area. We identified mental health as a priority area, so I initiated a research project in mental health service provision for youth in these communities.

The Indigenous focus of my role involves the development and implementation of a Reconciliation Strategy. This is a multi-faceted responsibility that includes awareness raising and understanding of Aboriginal history, heritage, values and protocols; the development and accessibility of culturally specific services; and the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents in decision-making processes.

At present, I am working on a horticultural project called the 'Plantlines Project', which aims to strengthen link between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, and work towards the protection of Indigenous cultural heritage. The project provides a practical context through which Aboriginal people can express traditional, contemporary and spiritual connections with the land, and non-Aboriginal people can better understand these connections in relation to their own.

The knowledge I gained through my MA (PACS) degree has taught me how important it is for people to have a 'voice'. When the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes is extended to individuals and communities, they feel recognised and valued. The conflicts that occur because people are being marginalised can be avoided when a genuine attempt to understand another point of view is made — when individuals are able to transcend the barriers created by differences in culture, religion and ideologies. I have also come to better understand the power and presence of structural violence, and have become passionately committed to supporting the work of community members striving for access, equity and social justice.

## Conflict Solutions Australia

by Paul Clark, Coordinator Conflict Solutions Australia

CPACS has now formed a business group called Conflict Solutions Australia. This a development of the previous Conflict Resolution Desk. A team of CPACS associates is now available to work together or individually to deliver a range of conflict resolution services on a commercial basis. These include conflict resolution skills training, research, facilitation and other forms of consulting.

On 18 and 19 September we conducted our first weekend workshop in Mediation Skills Training attended by some 20 students from the community and from our postgraduate PACS program. The workshop was led by Abe Quadan who has been a practising mediator for twenty years. We also conducted a training workshop on the Gold Coast, on 25 November, led by Lynette Simons for the Australian community radio broadcasters. We are currently seeking clients in the university, government agencies, NGOs, private corporations and consulting firms, and are looking forward to some exciting opportunities.

## 2004 Peace and Conflict Studies Graduations

A record number of 31 students graduated from the PACS postgraduate program in 2004:

### MA (PACS)

Wissam Adas, Dilnaz Boga, Alison Boyd, Zuleika Candan, Ron Chan, Kevin Chang, Munther Emad, Jennifer Fisher, Steven Goldfinch, Eva Haahti, Hiroto Kobayashi, Nita Koukedes, Valerie Ley, Khadijah Madihi, Patrick McCusker, Sayuri Muraki, Brit Myrvoll, Elna Pedersen, Christopher Ramsdell, Yuko Sakurai, Andrew Sarlas, Sukri Sharbini, Nina Shore, Mahamud Sirat, Nargis Talib, Kelvin Zee, Synneva Zempel

### Grad Dip in Arts (PACS)

Gail Diserens

### Grad Cert in Arts (PACS)

Anne Herro, Agnes Lim, Bozena Zawisz

Congratulations to all these new PACS alumni!



Ron Chan at his MA (PACS) graduation on 4 June 2004 along with his dissertation supervisor Dr Ken Macnab, lecturer Dr Wendy Lambourne and fellow graduand Aggie Lim. Courtesy of Anne Chan.

## In Memoriam: Ron Chan

Dr Wendy Lambourne, Postgraduate Coordinator Peace and Conflict Studies

Ron Chan made an impression before classes even started in his MA in Peace and Conflict Studies. One international student recalls how Ron was quick to make her feel welcome at the Faculty orientation session, handing her his business card and inviting her to his home for dinner with other new students. True to his word, Ron organised an expansive home-cooked Chinese meal complete with very nice wine for a group of international PACS students and academics early in his first semester. Coming from a science background, Ron sometimes struggled with the research enquiry style and methods of peace studies, but he was remarkable in his curiosity, enthusiasm and strong desire to learn. He inspired us all with his generosity of spirit.

Ron finished his MA (PACS) degree at the end of 2003, and graduated on 4 June 2004. Sadly, within

two weeks he was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and on 30 June he was admitted to hospital. He died on 27 July. He is mourned by his wife Anne and two daughters, and remembered fondly by fellow students and teachers alike. One fellow student sent this condolence message: "I am really shocked by the sudden death of a mate who I sincerely looked up to. He was always quick and responsive in class. Despite his tight schedule with work and family commitments, he still managed to find time to undertake not one, but three Master level programs. Most of us, including myself, complained about the heavy workload from CPACS, but Ron was different. I guess he was one of the few men who must have realized that life is short; and life one has must not go to waste, even a minute of it." (Sukri Sharbini, fellow MA (PACS) graduate writing from Brunei)

## Poetry for Peace

### Arundhati Roy

by Emeritus Professor Stuart Rees

Your loving and convictions  
stop the teeming millions sink  
by asking politicians  
to pause, to look, to think.

Your messages are carried  
by the paragraphs in rhymes  
about the great powers' cruelties  
and the justice in your dreams

for the victims of Narmada  
and the latest bombing feat,  
for the people of no consequence  
in a suffocating heat.

A frangipani softness  
belies the steel within,  
a river flowing vision  
decries the mortal sin

of pouring tons of concrete  
in ever bulging girth  
to flood the verdant valleys  
to drown the nurturing earth

where people found a living  
from the goddess of small things,  
where sunshine through the forests  
assumed the birds had wings,

where grinding wheels of poverty  
still come as no surprise  
yet need the powerful lustre  
from the justice in your eyes.

You wistful brown eyed author  
with a music sounding name  
whose gift lies in your beauty  
of treating all the same,

the dark, the light, the lepers  
and all who know the cost  
of ever trying to ignore  
the unloved and the lost.

So thank you Arundhati  
for reaching to the skies  
from time of birth or was it when  
you received the Booker Prize ?

Delhi 17<sup>th</sup> July 2004

A new anthology of poems by Stuart Rees titled *Tell Me The Truth About War* was published by Ginnindera Press in 2004.