

## Rapid Response

**9 MARCH:** I am sitting in the library in tiny Pelican Rapids, Minnesota. I read an e-mail request from Claudia Samayoa, NP founding co-chair, that she is in great danger. She and her colleagues need protective accompaniment as soon as possible so they can continue their human rights work in Guatemala.

**10 APRIL:** The NP team coordinator arrives in Guatemala with three more peacekeepers to follow shortly.

**RAPID RESPONSE.** In one month we were able to plan, recruit, fund-raise (50 percent of our ten-month budget so far), gain organizational approval and field a team. The team will be ably coordinated by Betsy Crites, former executive director of Witness for Peace, who has a wealth of experience in Guatemala and Nicaragua.

Organization and intention are required.

Two years ago, David Hartsough challenged us about our slow response time. He and a committed cadre from around the world immersed themselves in the arcane and sometimes tedious detail of rapid response called Capacity Building. It has involved the training of trainers, core trainings, registries, recruitments, assessments—and you, as part of NP, patiently funded this.

And why? Precisely so that we can respond to emergencies.

Our rapid response work will not replace our deliberate and thorough process of project development, yet there are situations in which we will have to send teams much more quickly on a short-term basis. We have a long way to go, but the past two months have been an excellent test case.

*Mel*

## Rapid Response for Claudia Samayoa in Guatemala

**IN THE FACE OF INCREASING PRESSURE** from violent elements threatening human rights defenders, Nonviolent Peaceforce is undertaking a rapid response short-term deployment in Guatemala. Following heightened threats and attacks by military and paramilitary groups, Claudia Samayoa, NP's founding co-chair and member of the Unit of Protection of Human Rights Defenders in Guatemala, has resigned her position of co-chair of NP's International Governing Council to devote more of her energies to countering the renewed violence in Guatemala.

Claudia and her associates in the National Movement of Human Rights of Guatemala have supported human rights workers around the country since 2004. Claudia is also a member the Convergence of Human Rights, which is researching, exposing and denouncing the existence of clandestine groups, organized crime, and social cleansing. She formerly served as director of the Rigoberta Menchu Tum Foundation, named for the Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and an endorser of Nonviolent Peaceforce.

Describing the most recent attack, Claudia wrote, "On the night of February 3, 2007, our offices were raided and one computer was stolen. Other offices in the same building were raided and the computers and video equipment were stolen, too. On the doorknob of our *continued on page 3*



Humans rights defender  
Claudia Samayoa.

Photo by Greg Tarczynski

## Peacekeepers Hit the Ground in Mindanao

### Milestone for NP as second full-scale field project launched

**NONVIOLENT ACTION** is alive in Mindanao! After four years of preparation, Nonviolent Peaceforce launched its second International Civilian Peacekeeping project on the Philippine island of Mindanao in early May. The first phase calls for the deployment of six peacekeepers under Project Coordinator Atif Hameed, with field offices in Maguindanao and Sulu provinces and a main coordination/field office in Cotabato City. Veteran Field Team Member Sreeram Chaulia will assist in in-country training and initial deployment for the first two months.

Building relationships and establishing trust is key to the success of any peacekeeping effort. To this end, the NP Mindanao Project has secured pledges of support from the Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs, the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process, and the leadership of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. Police,

*continued on page 3*

## A Global Gathering of Peacebuilders in Nairobi

### International Conference and NP International Assembly

*Nairobi, Kenya, 24-29 September 2007*

**WHAT DO YOU GET** when you bring together 140 peacebuilders from 48 countries and 100 organizations from every inhabited continent? You get the second International Assembly of the Nonviolent Peaceforce in Nairobi, Kenya, a global village of dedicated advocates of peace, justice, and nonviolence. You get a celebration and evaluation of the work of NP since our 2002 convening event in India and an opportunity to review the strategy and direction of NP as we chart our future course. NP is pleased to announce that Nobel Peace Laureate Mairead Corrigan-Maguire will open this event.

Member Organizations are required to come together periodically to review the work of NP and elect the International Governance Council. The Bylaws describe this gathering as "the base and constitutive assembly of NP [which] provides the platform for consultation *continued on page 3*

# UPDATES FROM AROUND THE WORLD

## SRI LANKA

Following the tsunami of 2004, a leading alternative newspaper dubbed 2005 as Sri Lanka's "Year of the Displaced." But as bad as 2005 was, 2007 is incomparably worse. Some estimates put the number of displaced persons near one million, or one Sri Lankan in twenty.

The highest number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the country are at present in the Batticaloa District within ten minutes' drive of NP Sri Lanka's Valaichchenai and Batticaloa town fieldsites. Many of the nearly 150,000 displacees in the eastern Batticaloa district were displaced by the Sri Lankan military's capture of the secessionist LTTE (Liberation Tamil Tigers of Eelam) areas of Sampoor and Vakaraai earlier this year after intense air raids and artillery duels. Humanitarian agencies in the district feel overwhelmed, while national agencies are not equipped to deal with such a large influx and are finding their access to the displaced somewhat limited.

The displaced persons' experience of degradation, destitution and desperation due to limited supplies of food and severe overcrowding in the shelters is further complicated by issues of insecurity. Sites sheltering the displaced, which are necessarily in government-controlled areas, are plagued by the targeted "disappearing" of those civilians perceived to be supporting the LTTE and abduction of youth to be trained as armed fighters. Forcible underage recruitment is carried out by both the LTTE and the Karuna faction (a breakaway Tamil Tiger faction now opposing the LTTE). Because NPSL does not have access to LTTE areas, it can only monitor and report on the activities of the Karuna faction, which continues to carry out abductions in government controlled areas. NPSL makes frequent protection visits to IDP camps as part of the protection program with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

NPSL staff has worked with humani-

tarian agencies to support the displaced. In the midst of this challenging environment, NP's International Governance Council (IGC) successfully concluded its annual session in Sri Lanka in February.

—Dilshan Muharajine,  
Communications Director for Sri Lanka



Ugandan child wanders into NP meeting.

## AFRICA

This is a period of much activity for NP Africa. A successful NP Core Training took place in Nairobi from 15 November to 10 December 2006. Twenty-four trainees from fifteen countries completed the strenuous training, six of whom are now ready for deployment in the Philippines. Others will be deployed in Northern Uganda once the groundwork for that project is complete. Concerns that violence might erupt before or during the coming elections in Sierra Leone have led NP to consider a Rapid Response Deployment to that country. Plans are also underway for the International Assembly in September in Nairobi, Kenya (see feature, p.1).

Helping to oversee these projects is Ombok Otieno, newly-appointed NP Africa Regional Coordinator. With Latin America Regional Coordinator Alvaro Ramirez-Durini, Ombok recently represented NP at the No Foreign Bases Conference in Quito, Ecuador. Ombok attended a meeting for

Eritrean Justice and Peace in Shalom House Nairobi. He will also join NP Strategic Director David Grant in visiting the Inter-Governmental Agency for Development (IGAD) in Djibouti to share the NP concept of civilian peacekeeping as IGAD struggles with a lack of resources for military peacekeeping in Somalia. Ombok will then continue to the African Union in Addis Ababa to share NP's vision of civilian peacekeeping and discuss the challenges of military peacekeeping in Darfur, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Ethiopia-Eritrea border, and Somalia.

—Ombok Otieno,  
NP Africa Regional Coordinator

## LATIN AMERICA

A landmark event took place this May in Quito, Ecuador – NP's first international training in Latin America of field team and reserve team members. As a result, trained personnel will be ready and able for the first time to respond quickly to

emergency situations in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Our determined efforts also continue toward a full deployment in Colombia. At times, the goal seems impossibly remote, as violence in the Cauca and Meta regions continues undiminished and countless families are displaced to the interior or toward the Ecuadorian border. Such conditions only strengthen our resolve to make our project of peace a reality for the people of Colombia.

We are pleased to welcome four new Member Organizations in the Latin American region, all approved by the IGC at its February meeting in Sri Lanka. They are Andean Action (Bolivia), Mediation Institute Foundation (Argentina), Bolivian Youth Foundation (Bolivia), and CORECO-Commission of Assistance Towards Community Unity and Reconciliation (Mexico).

—Álvaro Ramirez-Durini,  
Regional Coordinator, Latin America and the Caribbean

## Guatemala (cont. from page 1)

office, a death threat was left behind.” The chilling threat on the doorknob was a hangman’s noose.

These courageous human rights defenders need protection for the next ten months—before, during, and after their national elections in September and in November when a new government is in place and the political situation is expected to stabilize. They believe that international protective accompaniment can help protect their lives and enable them to continue their important work. Peace Brigades International and other accompaniment groups in Guatemala are not able to expand at this time to cover the urgent need and have encouraged NP to respond.

Nonviolent Peaceforce has gone into action to raise funds and recruit people for accompaniment. Candidates are sought who speak fluent Spanish, have some background in Latin America and/or nonviolent peacekeeping, and can volunteer in Guatemala for at least three months.

In-country training and orientation in accompaniment will be provided in the Guatemala context. NP’s Team Coordinator in Guatemala is Betsy Crites, former Executive Director of Witness for Peace.

To apply, contact Gilda Bettencourt at [gbettencourt@nvpf.org](mailto:gbettencourt@nvpf.org) or 415-751-0302.

NP is also seeking special project funding to cover travel, room and board and related expenses to maintain a trained accompaniment team through January 2008. Donations for NP’s Rapid Response for Claudia can be sent to Nonviolent Peaceforce, 425 Oak Grove St., Minneapolis, MN 55403, or made online at [www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org](http://www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org). Please indicate “Guatemala” with your donation.

—David Hartsough,

Rapid Response Coordinator

—Betsy Crites,

Guatemala Team Coordinator

## Mindanao (cont. from page 1)

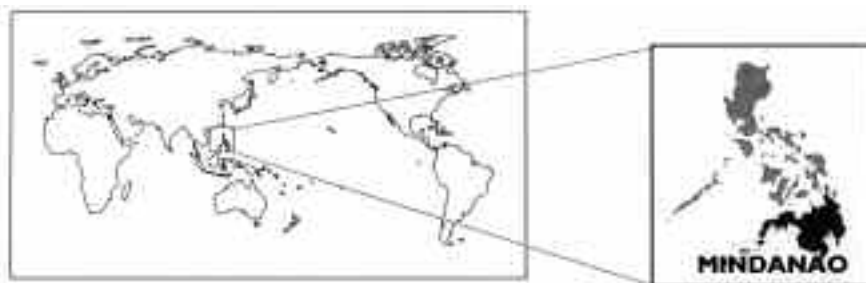
army, and local government units have all approved the planned locations of NP field sites. Without this mutual understanding, a third party can easily be seen as a problem. Having established these relationships, NP is in the best possible position to be a recognized part of the solution.

The peacekeepers will work with local organizations to protect vulnerable communities, strengthen the work of peace and human rights advocates, streamline the peace process at the grassroots level, and build community-based structures to make nonviolence a way of life. NP will also encourage relief and development organizations to include peace and protection components in their projects.

NP has been engaged in the Philippines for more than four years, including nonviolence

trainings, a three-member exploratory visit, and the Advance Team deployment in 2006. To ensure legitimacy and accountability within the local population, an Advisory Board of prominent peace activists has been formed. Before the deployment of peacekeepers in their respective field sites, advisory bodies will also be established in each field site area. Our experiences in Sri Lanka have informed our preparations every step of the way, helping us to build the best possible foundation for a successful and effective endeavor.

Although funds have been secured to initiate the project, NP Philippines still seeks sufficient funding to secure the project for at least 18 months. We are immensely grateful to the individuals and donors who have contributed so generously to support our work in Mindanao.



## Nairobi (cont. from page 1)

and opinion building of the different trends within NP.” Delegates to the 2007 Assembly will affirm our strategic plan, which lays out the next steps necessary for NP to go to large scale deployments between now and 2010. Member organizations will also divide up and take responsibility for the work required in the coming three years.

We are excited to bring our NP family together to review our work in Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Guatemala and (funding permitting) Colombia and Uganda, reflecting on our successes, mistakes, and lessons learned.

Prior to the Assembly, NP will host an International Conference entitled Nonviolent Civilian Protection: Building the Global Capacity. This conference brings together key stakeholders (including the UN, governments, nongovernmental organizations, and academics and practitioners in the field) to encourage greater deployment of protection missions and to build and expand the global capacity for civilian protection and violence reduction.

Event preparations include fundraising, conference planning, paper writing, and logistical groundwork. NP Member Organization Chemchemi ya Ukweli (“Wellspring of Truth” in Swahili) will be our Kenyan host. In April, NP Member Organizations received invitations to register representatives to the Assembly. Registration for the International Conference will be announced soon.

With a second deployment underway in the Philippines, two more projects poised to advance in Uganda and Colombia, and NP’s response capacity growing faster than ever before, there has never been a better time to come together to plan for a more peaceful future.

**RUMORS OF PEACE** is published three times a year by Nonviolent Peaceforce, a nonpartisan, unarmed peacekeeping force composed of trained civilians around the world. In partnership with local groups, NP members apply proven nonviolent strategies to protect human rights, deter violence and help create space for local peacemakers to carry out their work.

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## Voices from the Field / Major Donor Profile

### PARWEZ ANIS



The village in eastern Sri Lanka is similar to the one in which I was born and raised in the north of India. I had seen mothers crying in my own village, but none as helplessly as the

mother who now sits before me, describing her son's abduction less than fifty meters from his home.

My telephone rings, and despite the emotional intensity of the moment, I answer. Every call in the field, however bad the timing, might be important. A local religious leader is on the line: A claymore [directional fragmentation mine] attack has been carried out on an army convoy. The significance is clear: the army often retaliates indiscriminately after such attacks. Not even two months earlier, five civilian youths were killed in retaliation for a similar attack. A quick international response is needed to prevent another tragedy.

We rush to the location of the incident, only to find the roads blocked by the army. We remain in place for three hours, giving the message that internationals are watching. No retaliation is attempted. Maybe the international presence has made the difference. As is often the case, we will probably never know.

Later, in the midst of a discussion with IDP [Internally Displaced Persons] camp management on protection issues, we receive a phone call from another IDP camp one kilometer away. An armed group has entered the

camp. Please come immediately. We rush to the scene. The army has surrounded the camp as armed cadres searched inside. I go directly to the camp management office while my colleague continues patrolling the main road in our truck so the international presence is clear. Tension is high as we wait for the reaction. Ten minutes later, the armed cadre moves out of the camp and the army withdraws. No one has been arrested or physically abused—a very unusual thing indeed.

The escalating situation in Sri Lanka keeps us busy all the time. The small supports we bring to the people make a lot of difference in their lives, and that keeps us going. The support of wider NP for our work makes it all possible.

### HOWARD ALBER

While bumperstickers urge us to “Visualize World Peace,” artist and passionate NP supporter Howard Alber spends his days making world peace more visual.

“Peace can seem like an abstraction to people,” says Howard. “Artists can do a lot to change that by offering something tangible that people can grab on to.” There is no end to the ideas and plans that spill forth from this remarkable man—practical,



workable, innovative ways to put the cause of peace before the eyes of the world.

Implementing these plans is a full-time occupation for Howard, whose days, in his words, are “NP, NP, NP, morning to night.” He encourages artists in the Philadelphia area to donate 20 percent or more of the sale of gallery pieces to NP. He scours the newspaper for “people who should be on our team,” identifying and contacting one or two per day. He has convinced fellow artists to create peace-themed greeting cards, T-shirts, flags and posters, contacted student and community groups to form “in-house” NP clubs, and is planning a campaign of coin collection boxes to gather “change for peace” at retail outlets—all while running the Haverford, Pennsylvania chapter of NP he founded last year.

Just listing the activities is enough to leave a man of twenty breathless—yet Howard Alber, who actually does these things, passed that age during the Hoover Administration. This tireless advocate for peace is 95 years old.

He learned about NP in early 2006, just as he and his wife Carolyn were looking for a way to focus their energies as a team. Carolyn passed away shortly thereafter, but it was her memory that inspired him to give his energy, ideas, and generous donations to NP. “When she died, I realized I would have to be the team myself, to work for the two of us. I was so impressed with the logic of the NP approach, I just knew it was the right place to put my efforts. They have the right idea—it has to start with people, not just governments. If the people of the world united and demanded an end to war, there would be no war.”

## ON THE PEACEWIRE



**A GENEROUS NEW AGREEMENT** between UNICEF and NP Sri Lanka will provide much-needed support for the Sri Lanka project. The

grant provides \$353,500 in cash, plus two vehicles, five laptops, a printer/scanner/copier, two generators, and three satellite phones. NPSL Project Director Marcel Smits said that he considers the agreement “a good example of how two agencies have come together and agreed on partnership from which the communities hopefully benefit.”...



**DR. LINDA SARTOR**, a Field Team Member in Sri Lanka since the project launch in 2003 and co-presenter of last year’s “Season of Peace” Tour, has named NP

as a beneficiary in her will. This is only the latest act of generosity from one of NP’s most tireless advocates. “I believe that the vision of NP is worth living for,” Linda said after making the bequest. NP is endlessly grateful for the many gifts Linda brings to the organization, not least her inestimable talents and heart. . . .Ten NP Advocate Team Members (ATMs—supporters who make significant financial gifts to NP and encourage others to do the same) and five guests from NP San Diego and Fellowship of



Reconciliation of Riverside/San Bernardino gathered with presenters David Grant, Michael Nagler and Erika Shatz March 9-11 for the Third Annual **ATM RETREAT** at Manzanita Village, a Buddhist center in the mountains northeast of San Diego. The ATMs were updated on the ongoing work of the organization, including some of the essential needs of the Field Teams and important fundraising goals. . . .NP is



delighted to announce the hiring of **PHIL ESMONDE** as NP’s new Capacity Building Director. Phil moved to Sri Lanka in 1991 as the representative for British Quakers. He became an advisor

on human rights and humanitarian issues to the Canadian High Commissioner, then ran a Quaker peace project in North Carolina, counseling military personnel on their rights and supporting conscientious objectors. Phil returned to Sri Lanka in 2000 as Programme Representative for Oxfam, then became their

regional advisor for South Asia, developing a strategy for peacebuilding and conflict reduction. He next moved to Save the Children as Director of Advocacy and Communications in Sri Lanka, the position he leaves to



join NP. . . .In February, one day after being elected co-chair of the International Governance Committee (IGC) during its annual meeting in Sri Lanka, **OMAR DIOP** of

Senegal suffered a heart attack and was taken by ambulance to a hospital in Colombo. Omar’s daughter Nogaye was able to come from France, and NP’s Sri Lanka Project staff has continued to offer heartfelt support. Five weeks after the heart attack, Omar was strong enough to have open-heart surgery and is recovering well in Sri Lanka. Omar’s many friends hope for complete healing and for his return to Senegal. . . .



Minneapolis artist **NELL HILLSLEY** continued her life’s passion for peace and justice by giving all of her remaining work to NP. In less than one week, the sale of

Hillsley’s art at a live exhibition and on the NP website netted over \$61,000 for NP! Consider a similar event in your area!

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## TEST YOUR NONVIOLENCE QUOTIENT

1. Ten percent of all casualties in the First World War were civilians. What percentage of casualties in today's armed conflicts are civilians?  
A. 20%                      B. 50%                      C. 90%
2. In which country did Mohandas Gandhi first apply the nonviolent principles of satyagraha?  
A. India                      B. S. Africa                      C. Sri Lanka
3. Some consider the fact that Gandhi never received the Nobel Peace Prize the single greatest oversight in the history of the Prize. How many times was he nominated?  
A. Never                      B. 5 times                      C. 12 times



Answers to Nonviolence Quiz:  
C (90%); B (S. Africa); C (12 times)

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