



UNA-USA East Bay

"We the peoples of the United Nations (are) determined to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbors..." — United Nations Charter, 24 October 1945

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JANUARY 2008

(510) 849-1752



Ban Ki-moon

Jan Kavan

Insights: The UN and UNA-USA

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN
HERB BEHRSTOCK

2007 was a year of successes for the East Bay Chapter, its members and friends. Many programs surpassed goals, richly raised awareness, and broadened the impact and messages about the United Nations. This column notes two outstanding, related programs.

Members of the East Bay Chapter of UNA-USA had the unusual opportunity in the last few months of 2007 to hear two extraordinary leaders at programs we sponsored:

Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary General who is soon to celebrate his first anniversary in the job. The SG spoke to 1300 people in San Francisco in July at an event which UNA-USA and our chapter co-sponsored with the World Affairs Council. (Chapter members and other readers of the October-November edition of this Newsletter read about this.)

Jan Kavan, President of the UN General Assembly (2002-2003) and former

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'Human Rights Besieged!'

Symposium and Annual
General Meeting, Jan. 26 2008

It's not often to find human rights in the headlines. However, during the last couple years, the American media, politicians and the public have been seized by stories about the rights of prisoners; about government access to emails, phone call records or booklists borrowed from libraries; and even about the rights of victims of hurricane disasters. Are there US and international laws, standards, or aspirations that apply?

Sixty years ago, member governments of the United Nations voted to adopt the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). The Declaration contains 30 articles that lay out economic, social, cultural, political and civil rights that represent both aspirations and inalienable 'entitlements' for every person of our planet.

The UDHR stands as a high point in the legislative history of the United Nations. Many people around the world consider this, the "best-known human rights document," as an amendment to the UN Charter in the way that the Bill of Rights is viewed as an integral part of the U.S. Constitution.

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Annual Meeting Program, Saturday, Jan. 26, 2008

At Pacific School of Religion,
1798 Scenic Avenue, Berkeley

11:00 Registration for Annual General Meeting, with coffee/tea; Reports, budget, elections, honors and Volunteer of the Year Award(s)

12:45 Adjourn (light lunch for morning participants)

1:30 Registration for Symposium

2:00 Symposium: "Human Rights Besieged!"
– Universal Declaration of Human Rights; Keynote, speakers' panel, Q&A and discussion; Priority actions to take

4:45 Adjourn

Annual Meeting's Keynote Speaker: Jamil Dakwar, ACLU

Jamil Dakwar is the Advocacy Director and head of the Human Rights Program of the American Civil Liberties Union. He is one of a team of ACLU lawyers litigating a suit challenging U.S. interrogation and detention practices in Afghanistan and Iraq. In the past year, Dakwar has led ACLU human rights advocacy before the UN Committee against Torture and the UN Human Rights Committee, which reviewed US government compliance with international human rights treaties.

Prior to joining the ACLU in November 2004, Dakwar worked at Human Rights Watch, where he conducted research and published reports on issues of torture and detention in Egypt, Morocco and Israel/Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Before coming to the United States, Dakwar co-founded and worked as a

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Jamil Dakwar

Symposium on Human Rights Under Siege

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For the first time in 1948, the individual was no longer merely an object of the law. Nation states legitimized the individual as a subject of international law. For hundreds of years, such stature in law was reserved for states. No longer would the nation state's power over the individual be unlimited. Nation states agreed that all individuals have rights, for no other reason than being alive.

Jamil Dakwar, head of the American Civil Liberties Union national Human Rights Program, will present the keynote address about this complex subject.

Dakwar will be followed by several eminent scholar-activists who will re-assess different perspectives of the UDHR. Why, for example, do some third world countries rebuff the UDHR, considering it a tool in the hands of the western industrialized nations who use it to exploit their country's resources and labor market? Are they correct? Are there double standards at play? Are there currently different entities working to uphold the universal nature of the UDHR, applicable to all people? What measures can the UN, the US and other governments, and civil society take to continue building on the dynamic process begun by the UDHR in 1948?

Those attending the symposium will have opportunities to ask questions. Attendees will come away with knowledge of how they can deal more effectively with human rights issues, whether environmental degradation, torture, poverty, or the education and health of all the world's children.

Following the business items of the Annual General Meeting, the symposium will address these crucial questions about the UDHR.

6 Global Citizen Awards Highlight UN Day Celebrations

The hall at International House at UC Berkeley was packed to capacity on October 24th for a second consecutive year to celebrate the spirit, achievements and potential of the United Nations.

Water for Life, the theme that links UN Millennium Development Goals of combatting hunger and poverty, climate protection, and improved health, was emphasized by speakers, music and participatory activities.

Demonstrating that local action can make a significant impact and is possible to emulate in order to fulfill the Millennium Goals, the East Bay Chapter presented its second annual Global Citizen Awards for excellent achievements by individuals, groups and organizations. Award winners included:

Berkeley Mayor

Tom Bates (right), recognized for his commitments and the city's activities for environmental protection, health and education. The Mayor, who described Berkeley's programs, also received a UN flag to fly at City Hall.



Dr. Peter Gleick, founder and President of the **Pacific Institute** in Oakland spoke at the Water for Life event about water shortages and some strategies to deal with growing global challenges, about which his Institute does internationally recognized policy studies.

Dr. Anuradha Mittal was honored for her leadership to establish the **Oakland Institute** and manage its policy research and advocacy about international food and development. Dr Mittal roused participants at the UN Day program with her call to redress policies that undermine meeting basic needs of people, especially in poorer countries.



UC Berkeley students (above, center) were recognized with a Group Award for their team's work to help the Shuar people in Ecuador improve drinking water and sanitation. On left, Suzanne Llewellyn, one of the UCB staff who helped sponsor the project. Second from right, Anita Marshall, mother of the group's initiator, Lia Marshall, who was absent working as an intern at the UN/WHO offices in Washington, D.C. At right, Chapter President Herb Behrstock.

The Reverends Este Cantor and Ted Thompson represented the **Episcopal Diocese of California**, which received an organizational Award for its achievements to promote the UN Millennium Development Goals, especially with youth, and to implement programs locally and globally that fulfill the MDGs and alleviate poverty.

Prof Ashok Gadgil, Senior Scientist at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, was recognized for his invention and distribution of an ultraviolet system that inexpensively disinfects water. His work improved health and reduced mortality of millions in developing countries.

The East Bay Chapter invites nominations before 31 July 2008 for potential recipients of Global Citizen Awards to be presented at UN Day celebrations next October 24th. For information, visit the website, phone 510-864-9005, or write us.

Annual Meeting's Keynote Speaker: Jamil Dakwar, ACLU

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senior attorney at Adalah, a leading human rights group in Israel focusing on the rights of Arab Palestinian citizens. At Adalah, Dakwar filed and argued dozens of human rights cases before the Israeli Supreme Court, and advocated before

international forums including the United Nations treaty bodies.

Dakwar has received several human rights and public interest fellowships. Dakwar received his law degree in 1996 from Tel-Aviv University and LL.M. from New York University Law School in 2003.

UNICEF Cards: Big Attraction to UNA East Bay Center

Year-end sales at the Center in Berkeley increased sharply during the pre-holiday season. About 75% of pre-holiday sales were for UNICEF cards. Frequent reorders of the favorite cards and gift items were necessary.

The Center's volunteer staff were delighted that, after a frustrating year when supply of UNICEF cards and gift items was cut and then resumed, traditions could be prolonged to share these special cards and to aid the work of UNICEF. Media coverage, chapter publicity and word-of-mouth spread the message that UNA has continued its strong support to keep the Center open.

UNICEF cards (for birthdays and greetings), books, toys, jewelry, flags, shirts, and other items remain available, so visit the center and tell your friends.

The UNA East Bay Center Library recently received a valuable donation of books and curriculum materials related to childrens' human rights. They belonged

to the former Beverly Edmonds, a human rights educator and activist.

This collection adds to the existing Center library's materials, covering the United Nations and issues related to the environment, human rights, development, women and children, education and health, and war and conflict. Educational materials for teachers are also available. A list of the videos is posted to

the Chapter website. Most all the items circulate to UNA members so come check it out.

If you have a few hours to help make a difference that would keep the Center functioning well, please let us know.

The Center, open Tuesday-Saturday from noon til 5PM, is at 1403 B Addison Street in Berkeley (behind the Andronico's on University Ave).

Insights: Support the UN and UNA-USA

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Czech Foreign Minister, in November addressed the public and leaders of the Northern California Division of UNA-USA. The East Bay chapter organized this program while Kavan was visiting the USA (as announced in our last Newsletter and on our chapter website.)

It's worth returning to glean more from their impressive presentations.

Audiences appreciated Ban's and Kavan's revealing personal anecdotes about their careers as well as dealing with many government leaders, including President George W Bush.

Likewise, praise was high for their respective assessments about the varied functions and achievements of the UN, and the urgency and importance of collective action to address current and future global priorities.

Affirming this point during Kavan's visit, Al Gore and the UN's Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) were jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. In almost a third of the years since 1945, the Peace Prize has gone to a UN agency or individual UN leader. The UN's relevancy and effectiveness were also recognized recently when the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency received the Peace Prize in 2005; Kofi Annan and the United Nations received the award in 2001.

UN: "Now more than ever"? Kavan and Ban each made the case that "the time for the UN" and for stronger multi-national collaboration has grown. Both suggested this is in part due to rising frustrations in the USA and elsewhere about the shortcomings of recent unilateral and divisive actions by member states. Mentioned were the need to reduce global tensions and increasing international divisiveness, and to exert collective pressures to resolve long-festered problems (e.g. Darfur, Middle East). Independently,

each called for UN members to deal more collaboratively with longer-term challenges like climate change and poverty alleviation (implementing the MDGs).

Both Ban and Kavan were firm in their beliefs about the potential to implement practical reform – if UN member governments would exercise their paramount responsibility and opportunity to make cooperation work better.

Kavan (a friend and now an informal advisor to Ban – himself also a former foreign minister) was more direct in noting that excellent opportunities for collaboration to utilize the influence and instruments of the UN have too often been either deferred or derailed by the USA and other nations that favored unilateral action.

Ban and Kavan Support UNA and public voices: One remark that both Ban and Kavan offered – perhaps overshadowed by so many other ideas – was their enthusiastic support for the United Nations Association – USA.

In effect, the UN Secretary General and the past President of the General Assembly both diplomatically but firmly underscored the importance of civil society to become better informed, and more actively supportive of the UN.

Each urged UNA-USA, its members and the American public to strengthen our role to supplement the votes and actions of our government. Each encouraged the public to advocate greater US support of the UN and international cooperation.

As these pages reflect, we're planning another fine program of activities throughout 2008. The East Bay Board of Directors and I invite your continued support, involvement, and your membership. Together, we can raise awareness, share inspiration, and collaborate to make our world more peaceful, secure and sustainable for all.

UNA-USA East Bay Mission: To educate, mobilize and inspire people to support the principles and vital work of the United Nations, to strengthen the United Nations system, and to press for constructive United States policies and activities in that system.

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Newsletter

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

● **JANUARY 10:** Terje Roed-Larsen, former UN Special Representative to Palestinians. At World Affairs Council in SF, 5:30. Chapter co-sponsoring. Visit our website.

● **JANUARY 26:** Annual General Meeting 11:00. Symposium of "Human Rights Besieged" at 1:30. See story, Page 1 and on website. Info about candidates for election: review the insert.

● **FEBRUARY 23-25:** 8th Annual UNA Traveling Film Festival, Berkeley. See flyer insert and visit website.

● **MARCH 8:** International Women's Day, program at Mills College. See website for more information.

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PLAN TO ATTEND THE ANNUAL MEETING:
Saturday, January 26 2008, Pacific School of Religion, Berkeley
Meeting with lunch, beginning at 11:00. Human Rights Symposium: come at 1:30.
For information, see Page One or visit www.unausaeastbay.org