

International Women's Day



Keynote speaker María José Alcalá of the United Nations Population Fund

The 12th Annual International Women's Day (IWD) Celebration took place on March 3rd at Coffman Union at the University of Minnesota. Co-sponsored by Minnesota Advocates and the Human Rights Program of the University of Minnesota, this

National Perspective" and "Global Needs, Global Change: New Developments on Violence against Women."

Five films portraying issues related to women's human rights were screened throughout the day. The student organization Voices Merging entertained the audience over the noon hour with a spoken word poetry slam performance. Luella Greene's "Voices and Images of Women" exhibit was displayed in workshop rooms, and Amnesty International's photo exhibition "Femicide in Ciudad Juarez and Chihuahua, Mexico" was also on display to educate people on the widespread kidnapping and murder of young women in Mexico. Over 65 co-sponsoring organizations had displays and informational materials.

Continued on page 8

year's IWD theme was *Crossing Borders, Connecting Cultures*. The event was a multi-cultural, multi-media celebration featuring speakers, workshops, and visual and performing arts that drew close to 600 people. Eleven workshops offered throughout the day covered a range of topics, including: trafficking in persons, girls and the media, homelessness, reproductive rights, and fair trade. Minnesota Advocates staff presented at two workshops, "Immigrant Women in Detention: A Minnesota and



IWD attendees, including Board Member Marlene Kayser (center), speaking with María José Alcalá

Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights
is proud to announce

The 2007 Human Rights Awards Dinner

June 19, 2007

The Depot, Downtown Minneapolis

Keynote Speaker

Jerome Verdier, Chair of the Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Human Rights Award Winners

Priscilla Hayner, International Center for Transitional Justice and

Sofia Macher, Instituto de Defensa Legal

For more information and tickets, call Sarah Herder at (612) 341-3302 ext. 126

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Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights

The mission of Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights is to implement international human rights standards to promote civil society and reinforce the rule of law. Minnesota Advocates was founded in 1983 by a group of Minnesota lawyers who recognized the community's unique spirit of social justice as an opportunity to promote and protect human rights here at home and worldwide. We are a non-profit, volunteer-based organization that investigates and exposes human rights violations; represents immigrants and refugees in our community who are victims of human rights abuses; trains and assists groups that protect human rights; and works through education and advocacy in Minnesota to engage the public, policy-makers and children about human rights and cultural understanding. Minnesota Advocates holds Special Consultative Status with the United Nations.

From the Director's Desk

Minnesota Advocates recently released its report *Voices from Silence: Personal Accounts of the Long-Term Impact of 9/11*. The report describes the experiences of more than 100 Minnesotans from immigrant, refugee, and religious minority communities in the five years following the September 11 terrorist attacks. The report finds that the government and community responses to September 11 are still affecting the daily lives of these Minnesotans in profound ways. (For more information on the release, see p. 5.) It presents a sobering picture of life for many people in our community who are experiencing prejudice and discrimination based on their race, religion, or perceived religious affiliation.

After September 11, the initial arrests and detention of immigrants, without formal charges, sent a wave of panic through the community. Many of those interviewed reported ongoing general fear resulting from continued aggressive law enforcement tactics and feeling blamed for the criminal acts of others. In addition, people expressed fears related to ongoing surveillance in their workplaces, homes and places of worship.

The laws and policies related to immigration and national security continue to change. The debate around comprehensive immigration reform and the campaign rhetoric from the past three elections have blurred the lines between immigration and national security, creating what many in the report called a new "permission" to discriminate. The public dialogue around immigration policy is perpetuating long-standing stereotypes and myths and creating new fears of immigrants. Many people have reported hateful comments directed at them by strangers in public places and in their homes. The result of the continuing fear, insecurity about laws, and increased discrimination has been the silencing of opinion and dissent from those most impacted by these events.

Minnesota Advocates staff and volunteers saw how the rhetoric has impacted the general public when we presented our *Immigration Fuels Our Nation* campaign at the Minnesota State Fair last year. In discussions with fairgoers, we heard a litany of myths and fears, as well many hateful and

race-based anti-immigrant comments.

The release of the report also highlighted a division between those directly affected by the continuing backlash and the larger community. Several of the people we asked to work with us to present the report said they were not comfortable discussing these issues publicly and feared for their own safety and the safety of their families. Yet, many people not from immigrant, refugee, or religious minority communities expressed surprise that these incidents are still happening and that there is an ongoing impact in the community. These attitudes underscore the need for the voices of those whose rights and dignity are being compromised to be heard.

Our community has become less welcoming to new Minnesotans. This situation is unacceptable; fear does not justify prejudice or discrimination in any circumstance. We continue to hear negative comments in our daily work, sometimes even from people dedicated to human rights and social justice issues. To reverse this trend, we must continue to focus on changing government policies that overreach and violate long-standing principles of democracy and human rights, but we must also challenge our own personal attitudes and behavior that have resulted in dramatic societal changes that are harming members of our community. Minnesota has an international reputation and proud history of leadership on human rights and social justice issues. We must be vigilant in protecting this legacy.



Robin Phillips
 Executive Director

Liberian TRC Kick-off Celebration



Commissioner Massa Washington addressing the audience

Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights, the Organization of Liberians in Minnesota, and the Liberian Truth & Reconciliation Commission (TRC) held a kick-off celebration for statement taking in the United States. Liberia's Cultural Ambassador and traditional queen Juli Endee joined TRC Commissioner Massa Washington in headlining the event to celebrate the beginning of TRC statement taking in the United States. Commissioner Washington gave the audience an update on the TRC process in Liberia and answered questions about the project in the United States. Ambassador Endee sang and performed traditional folk dances. Newly appointed TRC Executive Director Nathaniel Kwabo also spoke.

The evening celebrated a truly historic event - the first time that a truth commission or similar transitional justice body has made a systematic attempt to involve a diaspora community in its proceedings. Prominent members of the diaspora community in Minnesota generously gave of their time and energy to make the evening a success. Radio personalities Al-Jerome Chede and Charles Dennis of KMOJ acted as Masters of Ceremonies for the evening. The Nimely Pan-African Dance Company, directed by Mr. Nimely Napla, and Total Praise Chorus, managed by Mr.

Wayne Doe, performed for the crowd at the event.

At the request of the Liberian TRC, Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights is coordinating a project to collect statements from thousands of Liberians throughout the United States. Working with Liberian community partners across the country, Minnesota Advocates is mirroring the TRC process underway in Liberia. This groundbreaking project will give Liberians in the U.S. a voice in the promotion of international justice and human rights as part of the truth, justice, accountability, and reconciliation processes in Liberia.



The Nimely Pan African Dancers

Liberians are leading the way in a new model of peace-building through a truth and reconciliation commission that includes a U.S. component. Involving the diaspora community will ensure that a broader spectrum of voices are included in the process, improving the likelihood of securing a lasting peace.



Massa Washington, Robin Phillips, Martha Sinoe, Annie Sirleaf, Aviva Breen and Jennifer Prestholdt singing the Liberian National Anthem at the celebration

TAKE ACTION !!
Liberian Refugee Immigration Fairness Act

Temporary protected status (TPS) was first offered to Liberians in 1991, and has been extended each year thereafter due to the conditions caused by the civil war. The U.S. government now plans to end TPS for Liberians as of October, 2007.

Take Action on this important issue!
 Contact your Senators and encourage them to vote in favor of S.656, the Liberian Refugee Immigration Fairness Act, which would allow qualifying Liberians to become lawful permanent residents.

Call 202-224-3121. Ask for your Senators.
 If you are from Minnesota, ask for the offices of Senator Amy Klobuchar and Senator Norm Coleman.

Give Your Statement to the Liberia TRC!

Call (612) 766-7788 or 1-800-799-3688

**For more information contact:
 Kim Babine (612) 341-3302 ext. 113
 Liberia-TRC@mnadvocates.org**

Creating a Human Rights Culture at Crossroads Alternative High School

Minnesota Advocates' Rights Sites project helps K-12 teachers integrate human rights education into their curricula through training and support. The newest addition to the Rights Sites family is Crossroads Alternative High School in Anoka. Since their first training in April of 2006, the teachers at Crossroads have succeeded in creating a human rights culture within their school and providing an example to all schools of how human rights education can flourish in a diverse educational environment.

Crossroads' teachers formed a "Rights Sites Committee" to ensure that all teachers receive a human rights lesson plan to conduct in their homerooms every week. Teachers have also been creatively incorporating human rights into all subjects. For example, three teachers led ten students on a trip to Wyoming to study westward expansion, social justice, and environmental justice, visiting Wounded Knee Museum, Crazy Horse Monument, and the Big Horn Medicine Wheel. English teachers worked with human rights-focused nonfiction and fiction books covering such issues as the genocide in Guatemala, the Northern Ireland conflict, human rights violations in Rwanda and Armenia, the Holocaust, and the rights of migrant children and immigrants. Reaching over 220 students, their approach has helped to create an overall awareness of human rights throughout the school.



Students at Crossroad Alternative High School with Moving Lives Artists (back row): Jesus Purisaca, Ed Bok Lee, and Ibe Kaba

In December, Crossroads held a schoolwide Human Rights Day Celebration. The day's events included workshops by immigrant artists from the Moving Lives Speakers Bureau using music, spoken word, poetry, and photography to discuss issues such as respect, stereotypes, and the need for human rights. One session showed the human rights film "Invisible Children," which chronicles the lives of child soldiers in Uganda, and in another session, students made and sold bracelets to raise money for the Invisible Children Foundation. The highlight of the day was the coffeehouse performances where students shared original human rights pieces through poetry, rap, and music.



Moving Lives Artist Jesus Purisaca and Crossroads Student Wayne Savage create lyrics on peace in a Human Rights Day Celebration workshop

All of these efforts have inspired students to put their newfound passion for human rights into action. Students, along with teachers, have formed a Human Rights Student Committee. The committee holds after-school workshops that focus on human rights basics, activism 101, the shaping of public policy, and volunteerism. The Crossroads Student Council recently began publishing a newsletter, "Dare to Know," which prints student pieces on social issues, such as poverty, discrimination, and injustice.

Minnesota Advocates would like to congratulate the teachers and students of Crossroads Alternative High School for their commitment to human rights. We especially thank Dan Bates, Todd Mensink, Maryanne Dalton, Nathan VanDyke, Lisa Finn, Kirsten Rasmussen, Denny Olson and Amy Vatne Bintliff. If you would like more information about the Rights Sites program, please contact Emily Farrell at efarell@mnadvocates.org or call 612-341-3302 ext. 133.

Human Rights Lecture Series

Presented by
Fredrikson & Byron P.A. and Minnesota Advocates

Challenges to Providing Adequate Housing

Presented by Mayra Gomez
The Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions

Thursday, April 19, 2007

U.S. Bank Plaza
200 South Sixth Street, Suite 4000

Children's Human Rights Lecture Series

Presented by
Faegre & Benson LLP and Minnesota Advocates

May 18: Children and Education: Investing in our Future

July 26: Infant Mortality and Health: A Solvable Problem

Faegre & Benson LLP, The Century Room
2200 Wells Fargo Center
90 South Seventh Street

Minnesota Advocates Releases “Voices from Silence”

Minnesota Advocates recently released a report detailing the impact of 9/11 on the lives of immigrants, refugees, and religious minorities in Minnesota. “Voices from Silence: Personal Accounts of the Long-Term Impact of 9/11” documents personal stories of fear and discrimination in a post-9/11 environment and contextualizes them with an overview of laws and policies that have affected these communities.



Minnesota Advocates volunteers Hyder Khan and Imani Jaafar-Mohammad at the press conference

“We heard repeated stories of persisting prejudice from clients and colleagues who did not feel safe in speaking out,” says Robin Phillips. “This report provides a forum for individuals to expose the stories they have not been able to tell.”

The report is intended to open dialogue about the shift in attitudes after 9/11 and to reexamine our personal and collective responses in the wake of a national tragedy. A Muslim interviewee in the report said of the lasting impact of 9/11: “[Pre-9/11], you had to be tolerant. Now, after September 11, it opened the floodgates...It is okay to discriminate. That was the aftermath.”

Pointing to the effect that these laws and policies have had on the experiences of those interviewed, the report calls for the protection of human rights for all and for consideration of the silenced voices in future policy debates about national security, counterterrorism, civil liberties, and immigration.

“Voices from Silence” was released at a press conference in late February. Elected officials at the local, state, and federal levels issued statements in response. Minnesota Advocates has also been in communication with representatives from the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), Customs and Border Patrol (CBP), and the FBI and will continue to work with these agencies to seek improvements in the treatment of immigrants, refugees, and religious minorities.



Board Member Dipankar Mukherjee speaking about the report at the press conference

Minnesota Advocates thanks all the interviewees who contributed to the report as well as everyone who worked on its publication. Individuals are encouraged to come forward to share their personal experiences with Minnesota Advocates to continue to bring these stories and the issues they raise to light. To share a story, or to view a copy of the report and the statements made in response to it, please visit our website at www.mnadvocates.org and click on “Post 9/11 Project.”

“Voices from Silence” Panel Discussion
 Monday April 23, from 7:00 - 9:00 pm
 Cowles Auditorium, Humphrey Institute
 301 - 19th Ave. S, Minneapolis
 More information at www.mnadvocates.org.

From the Ashes

April 12 - 29, 7:30 p.m.
Pangea World Theater Studio
 711 West Lake St, Minneapolis

Written by Meena Natarajan and directed by Dipankar Mukherjee
 Featuring: Sarah Ahmed, Katie Herron, Annelize Machado, Alberto Panelli, Kiseung Rhee, Katie Vang and Ethan Xiong

What does it mean to be an immigrant? What does it mean to yearn for a place that you’ve never been to? How does that change when something catastrophic happens, when you no longer feel welcome?

Inspired by “Voices from Silence,” Minnesota Advocates’ report of the ongoing impact of 9/11 on local refugee and immigrant communities, *From the Ashes* explores the reality of what it means to be searching for home, for something to believe in, for causes to live for.

Box Office: (612) 203-1088



Women's Program House Party



George and Sally Pillsbury (front) and other attendees at the House Party

Thank you to Jean Thomson and John Sandbo for hosting the Women's Program House Party on March 2nd. Thank you also to the Host Committee members for their hard work and support in making this a successful event.



María José Alcalá speaking about violence against women

Briggs and Morgan, P.A. and Minnesota Advocates present the **Women's Human Rights Speaker Series**

Women's Rights in Islam

Tuesday, April 10 (full)
Monday, April 23
12:00 – 1:00 p.m.

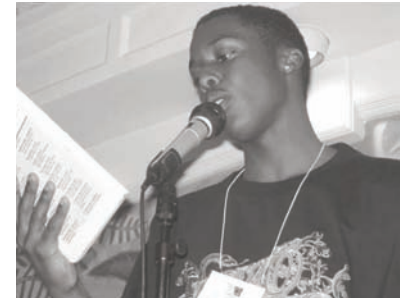
Imani Jaafar-Mohammad
Staff Attorney, Housing Unit,
Legal Aid Society of Minneapolis

Briggs and Morgan, Minnesota Room
2200 IDS Center, 80 S. 8th St.

There are many misperceptions about Muslim women in today's society. This presentation will provide an overview of the Islamic approach to gender equity and women's rights and address common stereotypes surrounding the religious beliefs and cultural practices of Muslim women. Religious practices, such as the headscarf, will also be discussed. Application will be made for one CLE credit. Please RSVP to Tina at shouareau@briggs.com or (612) 977-8126.

Please join us the second Tuesday of June, August, October and December for additional series presentations. For more information, contact Mary Hunt at mhunt@mnavocates.org or (612) 341-3302, ext. 107.

Education Program House Party



Thank you to Kathryn Fennelly for hosting the Education Program House Party on February 13th and to our Education Advisory Committee for your support in making this event a success. Thanks to Caribou Coffee, Hampden Co-op, Holy Land Deli, Kowalski's Markets, and Target for donating food for this event.



The event featured performances from (clockwise from top left): Ina Edminister (shown with Sherry Kempf), Isaiah Chandler, Elizabeth Mead, and Aksana Muratalieva, among others

Attention federal employees:

You can support Minnesota Advocates through your donations to the Combined Federal Campaign. Look for us in the CFC catalog under Human and Civil Rights Organizations in America.

Refugee and Immigrant Program Case Victories

Minnesota Advocates' volunteer and staff attorneys recently won asylum or withholding of removal on behalf of clients from Cameroon, Iraq, Togo, Egypt, Tibet, Saudi Arabia, Uganda, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

After nearly a year without asylum interviews in Minnesota, the Asylum Office returned to a regular interview rotation last autumn. Since then, a number of clients have received grants of asylum from the Asylum Office. Among those granted is a Cameroonian political activist. Represented by veteran volunteer David Woodward (Heins Mills & Olson), a client said "I am so grateful to Mr. David and to Minnesota Advocates for helping me." The client received notice of the approval of his asylum claim in record time, just days after his asylum interview. Volunteer attorney Rebecka VanderWerf (Faegre & Benson L.L.P.) won asylum on behalf of an Iraqi journalist targeted by insurgents. Rebecka provided excellent representation in this emotionally difficult and legally challenging case.

The U.S. Bank Asylum Team won asylum for two clients. Suzette Schommer, Karen Canon, and Terri Duchenes won asylum for a Tibetan man persecuted because of his nationality and political opinion. Yvonne Shorts, Lydia Morley, Sonja Torgerson, Christina Lohse, and Jennifer McCormack worked tirelessly to win asylum for a Togolese political activist.

Another tough case involving a woman from Togo who had suffered because of her political opinion was won by Ani Backa-Hartzheim (Hartzheim Law Office). R. Cameron Winton (Robins, Kaplan, Miller & Ciresi L.L.P.) represented a new client on a case sent back to the Immigration Judge from the Board of Immigration Appeals. Cameron won withholding of

removal for his client in Immigration Court and continues to represent the client on ongoing matters.

In a tremendous victory, the Faegre & Benson Children's Asylum Team won Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) for a young woman from Uganda. The girl, orphaned in the United States when her mother died, was left without immigration status. Dianne Heins, an expert in family and juvenile court matters, quickly identified a solution. The team obtained a juvenile court order of guardianship to support a petition for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status before U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. The creative work of Dianne Heins, Kristen Gast, Sara Kilibarda, John Mandler, Allie McElroy, and paralegal Quynh Sperrazza, resulted in a grant of lawful permanent resident status for this orphaned child.

Minnesota Advocates' attorneys also have had great success on tough cases before the Immigration Court. Staff attorney Emily Good won asylum for a Coptic Christian from Egypt, who suffered persecution on account of his religion. Nearly four years after opening his case with Minnesota Advocates, the client celebrated his victory with the entire staff by treating the office to pizza.

Staff attorney Malinda Schmiechen won withholding of removal for a man from Saudi Arabia who feared persecution because of his conversion to Christianity. Emily Good located critical evidence from witnesses in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, winning withholding for a woman persecuted because of her imputed political opinion.

As always, please report your victories to Minnesota Advocates staff so we can recognize your work!

Thank you to recent Refugee and Immigrant Program Volunteers

Many thanks to the attorneys accepting new cases in December, January and February

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------------|
| Joel Andersen | Loan Huynh |
| Brian Aust | Ethelind Kaba |
| Diane Bratvold | Mary E. Kiedrowski |
| Sarah Bray | Chris Kuhlman |
| Richard Breitman | Jeff Larson |
| Donald Campbell | Maggie Lockner |
| Ben Casper | Rod Mackenzie |
| Tom Church | William H. Manning |
| Jim Dorsey | Gabrielle Mead |
| Jeff Ehrich | Alexandra Mertens |
| Michael Feller | Katherine Mesner-Hage |
| Carole Finneran | Jessica Mowles |
| Trevor J. Foster | Laura Myers |
| Mark Frey | Rachel Osband |
| Alan Goldfarb | Dan Palmquist |
| Lesley Guyton | Sheena Paul |
| Tara Harkins | Michelle C. Rivero |
| Kim Hunter | Debra Schneider |

Many thanks to our volunteer interpreters

- Berhe Abraha
- Mourad Ammi
- Abuni Ayno
- Anne Barthel
- Jayne Carlson
- Nicolas Collard
- Carole Diop
- Patrick D'Silva
- Jamal Elmi
- Valerie Ferment
- Patrick Finnegan
- Gail Irish
- Molly Matsumoto
- Mohamed Omer
- Odile Ela Rousselle
- Amy Xi
- Wang Zhi

Many thanks to our volunteer physician

- Dr. Judith Levitan

International Women's Day Continued from page 1



Minnesota International Health Volunteers tabling at IWD

Keynote speaker María José Alcalá of the United Nations Population Fund addressed women's human rights in a global context. Her presentation, "Bridging the Gender Divide: Unfinished Agenda for the 21st Century," touched on gender,



Keynote speaker María José Alcalá talking with IWD participants

which she called one of the great dividers of humanity. Around the world, women and girls face barriers, discrimination, and violence simply because they are born female. When combined with other forms of

discrimination, such as race, migrant status, or education, the problems of gender-based discrimination are increased significantly. She addressed several issues of concern for women, including women as migrants, employment, reproductive rights, HIV/AIDS, poverty, girls, domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking. Alcalá stated, "This general social acceptance of violence against women and girls shows



Co-sponsors tabling at IWD

just how deeply ingrained gender inequality is, how severe the gender divide can be in our societies. Not only are women targeted, but they are often blamed, whether by their own families and communities, opinion leaders or the very justice system."

Yet, as Ms. Alcalá highlighted, there are many positive developments to celebrate. Today, women are more interconnected around the world. Through the internet, women are able to move past social, cultural, economic, and geographical boundaries to join forces for women's human rights. She pointed out the growing numbers of women in the highest offices, citing examples in Liberia, Chile, and the U.S. House of Representatives. She concluded by stressing the importance of gender equality, stating, "This year the UN appropriately picked as its theme for IWD 'Ending Impunity for Violence Against Women,' sending the message that there can no longer be tolerance for inaction and tacit complicity."



Barbara Frey, Director of the Human Rights Program at the University of Minnesota (top) and Cheryl Thomas, Director of the Women's Human Rights Program at Minnesota Advocates welcoming participants at IWD

The day concluded with full-audience participation in a colorful "movement choir," created especially for IWD 2007 by Global Site Performance. Using movement and music, participants twirled blue and orange ribbons with positive, affirming messages about women. People described this year's IWD as "an enriching experience," and a "thought-provoking, energizing day." Thanks to everyone who made this year's International Women's Day a successful and exciting celebration!



The closing ceremony at IWD



Panelists at a workshop on women in detention: Emily Good, Kathy Moccio, Holly Ziemer and Ifrah Jimale

Financial support for the event was provided by the Women's Foundation of Minnesota, TCF Bank, and the following groups at the University of Minnesota: Office for University Women; Institute for Global Studies, through a Title VI grant in International Studies from the U.S. Department of Education; Center on Women and Public Policy, Humphrey Institute of

Public Affairs; Human Rights Center; Department of Gender, Women and Sexuality Studies; Interdisciplinary Center for the Study of Global Change; The Arleen C.



Keynote speaker María José Alcalá talking with Tsehail Wodajo

Carlson Chair in Political Science; Students Against Human Trafficking; University Pro-Choice Coalition; United Nations Student Association; Aurora Center for Advocacy and Education; Graduate and Professional Student Assembly; Administrative Grant for Student Initiatives; Event Partnership Grant Provided by the Student Activities Office; The University of Minnesota Academic, Community, and Campus Life Initiatives in Partnership with Coca-Cola; and Diversity Education Fund of the Minnesota Student Association. Additional financial support was provided by numerous co-sponsoring organizations and individual donors.



Jessica "Verse" Holloway (top) and Lenora "Nore" Magee-Howard from Voices Merging, performing spoken word at IWD



Panelists at a workshop on girls in the media: Liz Borer, Gauri Subramani, Colette Meller, Anna Campbell, and Mai Chong Xiong

We are grateful for the volunteer efforts of more than 100 people who contributed to the planning and smooth running of International Women's Day 2007.

Special thanks to **Tammy Tucker of Sweet Tea Design** for our print materials, **Melissa Toft** for photography, **Bob Vaaler** for video projection and taping, and **Lily Troia** and **Brittany Brouillette** for assistance with event and volunteer coordination.

Food and coffee at the event were provided by the following generous donors: **Au Bon Pain, Bread and Chocolate, Breadsmith, Coffee News Café, Cub Foods, D. Brian's Deli, Dunn Bros. Coffee, Franklin Street Bakery, Good Earth Restaurant, Great Harvest Bread Company, Hampden Park Co-op, Keys Café, Kowalski's, LUNA Bars, Lund's, North Country Co-op, Peace Coffee, Seward Co-op, Spoonriver Restaurant, Trotter's Café and Bakery, Wedge Co-op, Whole Foods Market, and Wilde Roast Café.**

Asylum Practice Tip: New Custody Review Procedures for Asylum Seekers Impacts Minnesota Advocates' Clients

Beginning in late 2006, custody review procedures for asylum seekers changed dramatically. Asylum seekers whose affirmative cases are not granted by the Asylum Office and who are referred to the Immigration Court are now subject to new custody review procedures, including fingerprinting and assessment of whether they should be detained, placed on an electronic monitoring program, or released on their own recognizance pending the final disposition of the case.

"The new custody procedures represent the largest expansion of detention of asylum seekers in Minnesota since the immigration laws were overhauled by Congress in 1996," says Michele Garnett McKenzie, director of Minnesota Advocates' Refugee and Immigrant Program.

Asylum seekers who have not previously been arrested and fingerprinted by ICE are now served with a notice of appointment for the custody review and are required to appear at the ICE Office of Detention and Removal Operations (DRO). Asylum seekers are assessed for risk of flight and danger to the community. Clients may be detained, referred to the Intensive Supervised Appearance Project (ISAP) for electronic monitoring and supervision, or released on their own recognizance with regular check-in requirements.

In Minnesota, clients are detained at local county jails, including the Ramsey County Jail, which currently is under investigation by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) following the death of an immigration detainee. Immigration detainees, including asylum seekers, are routinely co-mingled with people serving criminal sentences. Treated like any other prisoner, asylum seekers have no access to outdoor recreation facilities, are issued regulation jail clothing, and are not permitted contact visits with family members. "Detention takes a tremendous toll on asylum

seekers," says staff attorney Emily Good, who represents one client who has been detained for over a year pending the outcome of her asylum appeal. While to date the new custody review procedures have not resulted in widespread jailing of asylum seekers, detention remains an option at the discretion of ICE.

Many of Minnesota Advocates' clients have been placed in the Intensive Supervised Appearance Program, managed under contract with the private firm Behavioral Interventions (BI). Currently part of a six-city pilot program through appropriations to DHS for "alternatives to detention," ISAP combines electronic monitoring, random home visits, and frequent reporting by the asylum seeker to their case worker. ISAP participants must have a regular "land line" telephone, must provide detailed schedules of planned time outside their homes, and abide by a curfew. Monitoring levels typically decrease after the initial 30 day period, depending on the compliance of the asylum seeker with the requirements.

The impact of detention or electronic monitoring on asylum seekers can be devastating, particularly in cases where people have been detained, imprisoned or tortured in the countries they fled. The custody review interview itself, which takes place in the ICE Office of Detention and Removal Operations and is conducted by an ICE detention officer, can be frightening to the asylum seeker. Attorneys must work carefully with their clients to prepare them for the experience and for the possibility of detention. Volunteer attorneys representing clients in removal proceedings should contact their consulting attorney or a staff attorney at Minnesota Advocates to discuss how these new procedures will affect their clients and how to best prepare their clients and themselves.

Human Rights and Justice Film Series

Co-sponsored by: Minnesota Advocates,
the Innocence Project of Minnesota, and the Friends of the
St. Paul Public Library

**April 26, May 24
7:00 pm - 9:00pm**

St. Anthony Park Library
2245 Como Avenue

Films TBA. A Q&A session facilitated by Maury Landsman, a professor at the University of Minnesota Law School will follow the April 26 film. A Q&A session facilitated by attorney David Schultz will follow the May 24 film.

Women's Human Rights Film Series

Co-presented by Minnesota Advocates and
the Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library

Border Echoes/Ecos de Una Frontera

Tuesday, April 17, 7:00 p.m.

Metro State University Auditorium

This documentary tells the story of the slayings of girls and women in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, through the eyes of investigative reporter Diana Washington Valdez. Director Lorena Mendez-Quiroga and producer Shay Moore will be present for the screening and discussion after the film. Free and open to the public.

Minnesota Advocates Delegation Travels to Liberia



Minnesota Advocates' delegation to Liberia: Robin Phillips, Sandra Babcock, Jim O'Neal, and Dulce Foster

A Minnesota Advocates delegation traveled to Liberia in February to meet with Liberia's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and observe first-hand the statement taking process there. Minnesota Advocates began statement-taking in the United States in January. The project is

focused on the Liberian diaspora in the United States is designed to mirror the process in Liberia as much as possible. It is being implemented by a large team of *pro bono* lawyers and a community advisory committee of Liberians living in the United States.



Liberian Minister of Labor and Minnesota Advocates Board Member Samuel Kofi Woods

The four-person delegation included Minnesota Advocates Executive Director Robin Phillips, Jim O'Neal, a partner at Faegre & Benson, Dulce Foster, a partner at Fredrikson & Byron, and Sandra Babcock, clinical professor at Northwestern University School of Law in Chicago. Faegre & Benson has taken the lead in organizing the management and administration of the project. Fredrikson &

Byron has donated the database and technology support for the project. Northwestern University Law School is organizing statement taking in Chicago.



The signing of the Robertsport Accord (memorandum of understanding)

The delegation met with the full commission to brief them on the progress of the project in the United States and to develop more detailed plans for the next phases of the project. The delegation also met with representatives from the United Nations Mission in Liberia, the African Union, the European Union and other international organizations supporting the TRC process, as well as the Solicitor General and the Minister of Labor.

The delegation later traveled to Bomi County and Gbarpolu County to observe the TRC process outside the capitol city, Monrovia. The delegation met with statement takers in the outlying districts, some of whom walked two days to get to the villages where people were to give their statements. As part of this trip, the delegation also visited the St. Dominic Catholic Mission School where the more than 700 students include child soldiers who are being reintegrated into society. The trip ended with a signing ceremony for the memorandum of understanding between the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Robertsport, Grand Capemount County.



Liberia's Cultural Ambassador and traditional queen Juli Endee



Commissioner Massa Washington with statement-takers at the Bomi County Office of the TRC



A sign advertising the TRC in Liberia

2007 Asylum Conference

Friday, June 1, 2007

8:15 am – 5:00 pm

Fredrikson & Byron, P.A.
200 South Sixth Street, Suite 4000
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights is offering a one-day conference to provide practitioners with practical information for representing asylum seekers in the U.S. Participants will learn the essentials of asylum law from filing the asylum application to preparing for the hearing. The conference also offers an advanced asylum track in litigation strategies for the seasoned immigration practitioner.

Through a trained *pro bono* panel of over 300 lawyers, Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights represents hundreds of asylum seekers annually. This annual conference has gained a reputation for excellence, presenting local and national experts on asylum law and practice.

Topics will include:

The ABC's of Asylum Law
Preparing the Affirmative Case
Preparing the Removal Case
Asylum Law Updates from the BIA and the 8th Circuit
Asylum and Material Support
Practice Before the Asylum Office
Proving Asylum Cases in Court: REAL ID, Entry and Identity
Detention: Custody, Bond Hearings & ISAP

Featured Speakers

* denotes invited, not yet confirmed

Scott Baniecke* (Office of Detention and Removal), Ben Casper (Attorney at Law), Immigration Judge Joseph Dierkes, Paula Duthoy (Attorney at Law), Karen Ellingson (Attorney at Law), Emily Good (Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights), Kevin Lashus (Attorney at Law), Kenneth Madsen (Chicago Asylum Office), Lynn Mershon (Behavioral Interventions), Nancy Peterson (Attorney at Law), Paschal Nwokocha (Attorney at Law), Immigration Judge Kristin Olmanson, Acting Chairman Juan P. Osuna (Board of Immigration Appeals), Dinesh Shenoy (Aronson & Associates), Chief Counsel Richard Soli (Department of Homeland Security), and Joseph Vail (University of Houston Law Center)

For more information on how to register, visit www.mnadvocates.org or contact Ingrid Haugland: (612) 341-3302 ext. 120; ihaugland@mnadvocates.org

2007 Human Rights Law and Policy Conference

Children Left Behind: A Child's Right to Education in the U.S.

Friday, June 15, 2007
8:30 am – 4:30 pm

Dorsey and Whitney LLP
50 South Sixth Street
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Minnesota Advocates will host its fifth annual human rights law and policy conference, *Children Left Behind: A Child's Right to Education in the U.S.* Children deserve equal access to a quality education without discrimination. The human right to education promotes a child's right to a quality education in a safe and respectful learning environment. When education assists children in recognizing their capabilities, they are able to reach their full potential and contribute to society. The conference will address the current state of American schools, including barriers to access to equal education such as race, class, technology, geography, segregation, poverty, legislation, funding, etc., and discuss strategies to eliminate inequity within the education system.

Topics include:

Education as a Human Right
The Current State of Education
Barriers to Education in the U.S.
Approaches to Overcome Barriers to Education
Strategizing a Minnesota Response

Featured Speakers:

Featured speakers include representatives from the National Economic and Social Rights Initiative, the Minnesota State Legislature, African American Family Services, the Anoka-Hennepin Independent School District, the University of Minnesota Human Rights Center, the Department of Human Rights, the University of Minnesota, and parents, teachers and school board members. Local youth artists will present an artistic program on human rights and how they converge with education.

CLE, CEU and university credits will be applied for.

All those interested in the fate of our children's education – educators, parents, school board members, legislators, policymakers, lawyers, students, superintendents, principles – won't want to miss this Conference!

For more information on how to register, visit www.mnadvocates.org or contact Julia Kashaeva: (612) 341-3302, ext. 127; jkashaeva@mnadvocates.org

New Collaboration Supports New Asylees

**Extended Support
Services for
New Asylees
(ESSNA)**

Bienvenue!
Soo Dhawow
رحب
Bienvenidos
Welcome!

Minnesota Advocates is part of an exciting new project to help new asylees and their families access resources and services. The **Extended Support Services for New Asylees** project, in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Health, Hennepin County Office of Multicultural Services and the Refugee Services Program of Minnesota Council of Churches, significantly expands the support available to new asylees in Minnesota. The project seeks to increase the enrollment in existing services for asylees and to provide services never before available to asylees. Unique in the country, this partnership is the first to offer a full range of services to asylees and their families.

to access the limited public assistance, social services, and health screenings available to them.

According to Williametta Saydee, case manager for the project with Minnesota Council of Churches, “the response has been tremendous – we have already helped so many people.” One Minnesota Advocates client was able to contact the program before her husband and four children arrived. When the family arrived from Kenya, the children were quickly enrolled in school, and received bus passes for their first trip to the MCC offices, and the husband and oldest child are receiving help with their job searches. Additionally, the project helps with other needs, including finding housing, clothing, and applying for government benefits. Asylees qualify for a health screening, and some may qualify for limited cash assistance if they enroll within thirty days of being granted asylum.

HOW TO ENROLL

The Refugee Services Program of Minnesota Council of Churches coordinates the project. Call **612-230-3213** to enroll.

WHEN SHOULD ASYLEES CALL?

Asylees should call as soon as possible after being granted asylum or arriving in the United States as the family member of an asylee. Though asylees are qualified for some assistance up to five years after being granted asylum, clients must call within 30 days to be eligible for the full range of benefits.

Although often hailing from the same nations as refugees, people granted asylum are not eligible for many refugee assistance programs. Existing programs for asylees, including the Match Grant program, has limited capacity in Minnesota. Consequently, many asylees encounter difficulties after arrival. Families remain in overcrowded housing, do not promptly enroll children in school, do not access free health screenings, and fail

Staff and Intern Update

Sarah Herder has become Minnesota Advocates’ Development and Communications Director after a year of working as a Program Associate. Congratulations, Sarah!



Ahmed Sirleaf has joined the staff as a program associate working with the Liberian TRC Project. Ahmed, who has experience as a community mediator and a paralegal, recently completed his M.A. at the United Nations University in

Costa Rica, where he wrote his thesis on the Liberian TRC process. Ahmed has been volunteering with the project since its inception in June 2006. Welcome, Ahmed!

James Weissbrodt has left Minnesota Advocates for a position at 3M. Best of luck, James!

Minnesota Advocates welcomes new interns to our programs: **Brittany Brouillette** (University of Minnesota), **Olivia Rick** (University of Minnesota), **Emily Sipiorski** (Hamline University School of Law), and **Lily Troia** with the Women’s Program; **Michael Dinnen** (Bethel Seminary), **Ann Ertl** (ESL teacher at Champlin Park High School), **Nicholas Fasching** (University of Minnesota), **Shelby Leigh Hanson** (University of Minnesota), **Jamie Leadens Johnson** (Hamline University), **Laura Scripps** (University of Minnesota), **Angela Weber** (St. Olaf College), and **Haley Wotzka** (University of Minnesota) with the Education Program; **Valery Atanga**, **Sam Brown** (Hamline University), **Benjamin Fink** (St. Thomas School of Law), **Andrea Wegner** (University of Minnesota), **Anne Parson**, and **Ellen Stargardt** (University of Minnesota) with the Refugee and Immigrant Program; **Mahima Achuten** with Special Projects; **Nanette Ba** (Minneapolis Community and Technical College) and **Tracy Baumgardt** (Humphrey Institute) with Development and Communications; **Anna Dunbar-Hester**, **Stacia Rosas** (Humphrey Institute), and **Karly Zufall** (Humphrey Institute) with Policy Advocacy.

In Memoriam

Minnesota Advocates Mourns the Loss of Two Volunteers

Selahadin Abdulahi Mohammed Volunteer Interpreter



Selahadin Mohammed joined Minnesota Advocates as a volunteer shortly after arriving in the United States. In November 2006, Minnesota Advocates honored Selahadin for his tremendous generosity in sharing his talents as an interpreter. Selahadin had volunteered with the United National High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR) while living in Sudan, and continued his extraordinary lifelong commitment to service as a volunteer interpreter and translator helping asylum seekers in Minnesota. Selahadin died in an automobile accident on December 11, 2006 at the age of thirty-four.

A speaker of Arabic, Tigrinya, Amharic, Tigre, Saho and Russian, Selahadin was always ready to assist with his remarkable language skills. He filled many of the Refugee and Immigrant Program's requests for interpreters and translators of those languages, sometimes with only a few hours notice. Staff members recall a particular day when Selahadin interpreted for two different clients at different times of the day, a reflection of his sincere dedication to human rights. His smiles and gentle demeanor put Minnesota Advocates' asylum clients at ease, allowing them to feel more comfortable in telling their difficult stories. Selahadin interpreted for clients in such a skilled and thoughtful manner that these clients would often schedule their appointments around his availability.

Selahadin is survived by his wife and two young daughters, to whom we extend our deepest sympathies. We are very grateful for his commitment to Minnesota Advocates' work in protecting the rights of asylum seekers, and we miss him very much.

Emily Sandall Nepal School Volunteer

Emily Sandall, 25, was a passionate volunteer with the students at the Sankhu-Palubari Community School in Nepal. Emily died in a hiking accident in Yosemite National Park on November 8, 2006. Emily lived a life full of service and adventure, from working with the Sankhu children in Nepal, street children in Mexico and evacuees in New Orleans to leading teens on wilderness trips in Montana, Minnesota and Canada. The people she served deeply influenced her lifestyle and worldview. Introspective and insightful beyond her years, Emily's hope for her life was to "...continue to evolve in a way that is gentle on the world around us. I come from a background, a race, a culture where I know I breathe easier. I hope to live in a way that balances it. Live in a way where my choices don't hinder another, and rather support a system, a movement, and a lifestyle where others, animals, and the natural world live in a place that is just and fair." Emily achieved this hope. She was a minimalist in her lifestyle and generous with her concern, her attention, and her bright and shining personality.

To honor Emily's work with disadvantaged youth and her hopes and plans for the future, her family established the Emily Sandall Foundation. The foundation's first donation was given

in honor of Emily's life, dreams and aspirations to support the Sankhu-Palubari Community School children. We extend our heartfelt sympathy to Emily's family for their loss.



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Min Y. Chong	Assistant to the Executive Director/ Administrative Associate
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Emily Farell	Education Program Associate
Emily Good	Refugee & Immigrant Program Staff Attorney
Ingrid Haugland	Refugee & Immigrant Program Assistant
Sarah Herder	Development & Communications Director
Mary Hunt	Women's Program Associate
Fatima Jawaid	Administrative Assistant/ Receptionist
Julia Kashaeva	Education Program Assistant
Kay Kautio	Administrative Director
Michele Garnett McKenzie	Refugee & Immigrant Program Director
Laura Nelson	Women's Program Staff Attorney
Rebecca Palmer	Women's Program Staff Attorney
Rosalyn Park	Staff Attorney, Special Projects and Women's Program
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Kathy Seipp	Education Program Associate
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Ann Theisen	Education Program Online Editor
Cheryl Thomas	Women's Program Director
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TRC Commissioner Massa Washington (center) with TRC Advisory Committee Members Patrick Kugmeh (left) and Momolu Sirleaf at a gathering for Liberian TRC volunteers