

KAIROS in Action

May-August 2011, Vol. 5.2



Building an Effective Ecumenical Movement for Ecological Justice and Human Rights

Our Campaign

Last fall, when Canada endorsed the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, KAIROS urged our government to enact concrete changes that would implement the Declaration. To make our call to government bold and creative, and to advance our movement building goals, KAIROS organized **Roll with the Declaration**, a cross-Canada action in June 2011. Thousands of creative minds made hundreds of beautiful banners – expressions of solidarity and the need for change.

Trains traveled across Canada picking up banners made by individuals, communities, churches, schools and



organizations, bringing them to a Day of Action on June 20 in Ottawa. Banners spoke of the traditional territories across the country, of the Indigenous issues that need to be addressed and about the hope

and possibility of right relations.

We processed the banners through the streets of Ottawa from Victoria Island to Parliament Hill to the Human Rights Monument. We held a press conference featuring Indigenous and church leaders and met with members of political parties. This action proved to be a profound and joyful celebration of the UN Declaration, while also a bold call to action.

Faithful Action for Justice

Website

One of our next big communications initiatives will be the move to a new website (planned for September). This is an opportunity not simply to refresh our look but to improve interactivity. Please have patience with us as we make this transition and develop new tools to engage our constituency.

Up Next!

2011-2012 Campaign

This year's campaign **Truth, Reconciliation, and Equity: They Matter to Us** builds on the momentum of the June 20 action and supports the Truth and Reconciliation's new public witness initiative, "*it matters to me.*" We are inviting Canadians to take action on the inequities of the present while addressing the injustices of the past. Check out the website or contact Caroline Foster at cfoster@kairoscanada.org for campaign resources.

Regional Meetings

All are welcome to attend this year's regional meetings across the country. For more information on dates, locations and how to register, see the following link: <http://www.kairoscanada.org/en/get-involved/the-kairos-network/fall-regional-meetings/> or contact Caroline Foster.

Amira Hass Lecture Series

KAIROS and Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME) will co-host a lecture series by renowned Israeli journalist Amira Hass from September 27 to October 8. Hass is the only Israeli journalist to have lived full-time in the Occupied Palestinian Territories: Gaza from 1993 to 1997 and the West Bank since 1997.

For more information see the link off our website front page at www.kairoscanada.org or contact Julie Graham at jgraham@kairoscanada.org

Women of Courage Tour

This fall, KAIROS is organizing an exciting tour from October 11 to 29. *Living Courage: Dialogue with our Sisters* will link women human rights defenders from Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the Philippines with First Nations and migrant activists.

Help us promote these events! For more information, contact Anne Herteis at aherteis@kairoscanada.org.



Sustainability – Promoting Climate and Mining Justice

Climate Justice Keystone and Gateway

KAIROS has analyzed plans for new export pipelines from the tar sands to Texas and to the Pacific for their impacts on Indigenous rights and climate change. Both the Keystone XL pipeline from Alberta to Texas and the Northern Gateway pipeline through British Columbia violate the rights of First Nations to Free, Prior and Informed Consent. The amount of additional bitumen that would have to be extracted from the tar sands to fill the pipelines would significantly increase emissions and be contrary to KAIROS' policy against further approvals for tar sands projects. See: <http://www.kairoscanada.org/en/sustainability/tarsandresponse/fate-of-tar-sands-pipelines-crucial-for-climate-justice/>

Poverty, Wealth and Ecology

KAIROS' study on poverty and ecological degradation in Canada for the World Council of Churches (WCC) is nearing completion. The study looks at how the petroleum extraction industry creates wealth for some at the cost of deteriorating social conditions and ecological devastation. It also examines the impact of the financial services industry on inequality among Canadians. The study will contribute to WCC's North American consultation on Poverty, Wealth and Ecology in Calgary this coming November.

International Colloquium on the Climate Crisis

In June, John Dillon, represented KAIROS at a colloquium on climate justice co-sponsored by the Mexican Action Network on Free Trade and the Universidad Autonoma Metropolitana. Civil society organizations from the Americas and Europe evaluated the 2010 UN climate conference in Cancún and made plans for the upcoming UN Conference of Parties 17 (COP 17) in Durban, as well as the 20th anniversary of the Earth Summit in Rio next June. They criticized governments for making low and non-binding greenhouse gas mitigation promises, and for adopting market-based climate policies that have negative consequences for the global South.

Preparation for COP17 (Durban)

KAIROS has been coordinating with the Faith Secretariat in Durban to enable the participation of

KAIROS' global South partners in COP17. Those Southern partners are likely to come from the Pacific Council of Churches, Association for Community Development and Promotion in Guatemala, and Oilwatch Africa. Accreditation for both KAIROS staff Jim Davis and Southern partners is being sought through the WCC. KAIROS has developed a pre-Durban Statement and a pre-Durban policy briefing paper that address climate justice issues at stake drawing on the analysis of KAIROS partners in Africa.

KAIROS has been key in facilitating the fall visit to Ottawa of the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance to which KAIROS partners belong, and who are part of the larger global Climate Justice Now! Network.

Ecumenical Conference on Mining, Toronto

KAIROS and several of its members organized and hosted an ecumenical conference in early May that brought together over 150 church leaders, church members, Indigenous leaders, Southern NGO partners and other allies to discuss the impacts of mining on people and the planet. Bishop Alvaro Ramazzini of San Marcos, Guatemala, delivered the keynote address, to which KAIROS' Mary Corkery was a respondent. The conference was the largest gathering in the ten years of KAIROS to explore the moral and ethical dimensions of resource extraction. The final conference statement at [http://www.kairoscanada.org/en/news/archive/2011/05/article/ecumenical-conference-on-mining-final-statement/?tx_ttnews\[backPid\]=57&cHash=7b24c7d82f](http://www.kairoscanada.org/en/news/archive/2011/05/article/ecumenical-conference-on-mining-final-statement/?tx_ttnews[backPid]=57&cHash=7b24c7d82f) summarizes the key concerns facing churches and mining affected communities and options for action.

KAIROS staff will follow up with members to explore which responses could form the basis for further ecumenical action in Canada. It was encouraging to see the ELCIC National Convention adopt a resolution on responsible investing by its pension funds, inspired by the ecumenical conference. The Presbyterian Church in Canada also passed a resolution at its General Assembly in June on gold mining in Guatemala.

KAIROS on the Canadian mining industry

KAIROS was invited to speak at the Canadian Institute for Mining, Metallurgy and Petroleum annual convention in Montreal in May. Ian Thomson, in his capacity as civil society co-chair of the federal government's Centre for Excellence in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), was the sole NGO representative on a panel to discuss CSR in the

Canadian extractive sector operating internationally. He explained the distinction made between corporate social responsibility (voluntary activities undertaken by companies) vs. corporate accountability (mechanisms to hold companies accountable for their human rights and environmental impacts). He encouraged companies to engage in good faith dialogue with communities, Indigenous peoples and civil society organizations before proceeding with projects.

Workshop on Responsible Investment

KAIROS was a resource at a Maritime Conference-UCC workshop on responsible investment issues. Ian Thomson spoke about the churches' long tradition of responsible investing and some of the considerations for church pension funds in adopting responsible investment practices. Two case studies were explored: Goldcorp and its open-pit mine in Guatemala; and responsible investing to promote a just peace in Israel and Palestine.

Mining Justice in the Philippines and Indonesia

KAIROS' Connie Sorio travelled to Asia this summer to visit mining-affected communities. She witnessed their resolve to defend their water and food resources. She met with members of the Philippine Congress who are organizing formal meetings on alternative mining legislation to replace the Mining Act of 1995. The Canadian embassy in the Philippines is addressing the brewing tension in mining-affected communities, particularly in the Caraga and the Cordillera regions, by organizing CSR workshops and dialogues between Canadian mining companies and workers, Indigenous peoples and affected communities.

Connie was in Dipolog City and witnessed the Diocesan Committee on Mining Issues (DCMI) sign the petition for the Writ of *Kalikasan* (nature). KAIROS was able to assist DCMI petitioners travel to Manila for the actual filing of the Writ. The result was an historic decision by the Supreme Court to ban further issuances of mining permits and operations of already existing mines in the Zamboanga peninsula of Mindanao. This historic decision will affect TVI's expansion plans which account for the majority of the total mining applications processed in the region. The National Union of People's Lawyers, a member of KAIROS partner EcuVoice, is inspired by the Supreme Court decision as it is working with other communities on similar legal action.

In Indonesia, Connie was hosted by KAIROS partner JATAM who have engaged Indonesian churches' support in mining-affected communities. JATAM facilitated community meetings, public discussion events with 4-6 villages at a time, radio interviews, meetings with church leaders, parliament officials and local governments. There was intense and widespread frustration by local people at the government's inability to protect them and their communities from the highest bidding mining and fossil fuel companies.



**Dignity and Rights:
Acting for human
rights at home and
abroad**

Indigenous Rights

Tour of Ecuador

In late July KAIROS staff Rachel Warden and Sara Stratton traveled with George Poitras from Fort Chipewyan (the Indigenous community that church leaders visited as part of the KAIROS tar sands delegation in 2009) to visit oil-impacted communities in Ecuador. It was a very moving trip where they witnessed both devastation and resilience. Global activists and Indigenous people in communities were shocked by George's story of Canadian corporate behaviour in Canada.



The purpose of this KAIROS trip was to learn more about the human and ecological impacts of oil extraction in Ecuador, to hear about alternatives and to share experiences from Canada's tar sands. The trip juxtaposed PetroEcuador's gas flares and oil spills against the alternative development paradigm of *buen*

vivir (well being). The trip was hosted by KAIROS partners Acción Ecológica and OilWatch. It coincided with the OilWatch Assembly of more than 40 delegates from 19 countries where the experience of the Canadian tar sands was shared. See photos at: <http://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.10150264473006686.324293.19277141685&type=1>



Southern Sudan

On July 9 2011, KAIROS joined with the WCC and others to congratulate the churches and partners in South Sudan on the establishment of the new Republic. We continue to monitor the situation, particularly the conflict in Sudan's border regions. KAIROS shared these concerns with the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The letter can be found at: <http://www.kairoscanada.org/fileadmin/fe/files/PDF/couintires/Sudan/11-06-EscalatingViolence.pdf>

Just Peace in Israel/Palestine

In our commitment to education on Israel/Palestine, Jennifer Henry led a workshop at the Presbyterian General Assembly in June on KAIROS' partnerships in the Middle East. Human rights coordinator John Lewis is on an extended visit to the region to develop stronger analysis of the emerging context and greater relationships with partners.

Women of Courage

In May 2011, as part of the Women of Courage program, KAIROS completed its report *Women's Rights: Instruments for Lasting Peace*, containing research and analysis on gender-based violence and military conflict. Using interviews with our partners,

we highlighted the context and the experiences of key women human rights defenders in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, Colombia and the Philippines. This research began last August during the women of courage delegation to Colombia, when KAIROS organized a partners' roundtable to share experiences from diverse backgrounds and develop common strategies at an international level.

The final report highlights the work of partners in four countries and looks at the different experiences and strategies of women defending human rights in the context of military conflict. The **Sudan** case, *Planning for the Long-Term Consequences of Multiple Conflicts*, is written in the context of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the recent referendum. The **Democratic Republic of Congo** case, *Rape as a Weapon in the War for Natural Resources*, looks at the links between resource extraction and violence against women. The **Colombia** example, *Women's Movements against Militarization*, looks at the historic role of women in the movement against war. The **Philippines** case looks at *Women's Bodies as Tools of Colonization*, showing the impact of colonization, militarization and presence of foreign military bases.

Although the cases show the diverse contexts and strategies of women human rights defenders, they point to clear, cross-cutting recommendations including the need for the Canadian government to provide political and financial support to women's human rights organizations as they are important catalysts for peace. The findings of this report were highlighted in an Opinion Editorial in the July 27 edition of Embassy Magazine. For a copy of the report please contact Rachel Warden at rwarden@kairoscanada.org.

We hope to bring these messages to Canada and to link them to the struggles of Canadian women human rights defenders, particularly Indigenous and migrant women during the KAIROS tour, *Living Courage: A Dialogue with our Sisters*, from October 11 to 29.



Eleven Canadian churches and religious organizations working together for ecological justice and human rights.
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