

Suggestions for Actions and Solidarity in 2005

by Shelley Anderson

- Issue a statement, press release or letter to the media, and to the editor of your favorite newspaper or magazine, to mark May 24, International Women's Day for Peace and Disarmament. Call for an end to military aid for Indonesia, which is responsible for human rights abuses in Aceh and West Papua.
- Organize a special worship service for women peacemakers; take a collection and send it to a women's peace group in the Pacific.
- Hold a gathering to write legislators on topics like ratifying the nuclear test ban treaty; or the transfer of military funds to meet human needs; or whatever is necessary for your community.
- Invite local women's organizations together to speak on how women can contribute towards a culture of peace. Invite a speaker from the Pacific or from a Pacific Solidarity group, or organize a showing of videos like Keeping Watch on Fijian women's Blue Ribbon Peace Vigil (available from fem'LINKpacific), or IFOR's Women Peacemakers Program's 'Pacific Women Exploring Nonviolence'.
- Organize a celebration for peace on May 24; invite speakers from the Pacific or from Pacific solidarity groups, such as Aceh Women in Crisis (AWIC) (email: awic_aca@hotmail.com) or the Acehnese Community of Australia (ACA) (email: achehcomaust@hotmail.com)
- Educate women peacemakers on UN Security Council Resolution 1325. Distribute copies of the Resolution (which can be downloaded from www.peacewomen.org) during meetings and public events.
- Issue a press release rating your legislators on their efforts to implement UN Resolution 1325.
- Make a special effort to reach girls: talk with Girl Scouts/Guides or other girls' groups about how war and peace affect girls. Share an action with them like writing a letter to a government official or to women and girls in one of the groups listed in this pack. Sponsor an essay contest for girls to express their ideas about creating peace.
- Hold a fundraiser to jointly benefit a local peace organization and a peace group in the Pacific.
- Invite women veterans with a peace perspective to speak about their experiences at local schools.

- Educate yourself and the groups you belong to about military recruitment of girls and boys.
- Order the leaflet Make Our Schools Military-Free Zones from American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), Youth and Militarism Program, 1501 Cherry St., Philadelphia, PA 19102, USA. Picket schools and hand out leaflets (such as Do You Know Enough to Enlist? from AFSC's Youth and Militarism Program at www.afsc.org/youthmil; email: youthmil@afsc.org) when military recruiters visit.
- Insist that school officials always include a speaker on peace whenever military recruiters visit schools, so students can get an objective and fair perspective on the reality of military life.
- Support groups such as Iraq Veterans against the War: www.veteransforpeace.org
- Translate and reprint articles from this pack (please credit the pack and don't forget to send us a copy!) to educate others about the issues.
- Encourage groups to include ending violence in their agendas and events, and to increase their support for women in that part of the world working for peace.
- Inform your networks (your women's organization, place of worship, school, labor union or work place) about May 24 and possible solidarity actions for women peace activists.
- Encourage your school and community libraries to display on May 24 books by and about women peacemakers (for example, set aside a table near the entrance), violence against women, or about women as decision makers.
- Organize a public panel, demonstration, or film showing on May 24, to highlight women's work for peace. Invite women decision makers, and women leaders from different ethnic and religious groups in your community to speak about women's role in stopping violence.
- Support the United Nations 'Decade for a Culture of Peace and Nonviolence for the Children of the World' (2001-2010). Contact IFOR for more information.
- Organize a discussion group on ways to support women working for peace in conflict situations.
- Invite women from all sides of a conflict in your community to come together on May 24 in order to explore ways to reduce tensions within the community or neighborhood.

- Write letters of support to the groups profiled in this year's pack on May 24, to express your solidarity for their work. Twin your group or network with a women's peace group in another country. Create a website about what women are doing for peace and justice in your community, or link your existing site to ones listed in this pack.
- Create awareness in your community by holding marches and demonstrations for peace which call for public commitment to end violence. Carry posters, banners, etc. which contain clear messages and demands for the local government.
- Invite members of your community to write and submit poems which reflect how violence against women during conflict has affected their lives as well as the lives of close friends and relatives. Ask your local newspaper to publish some of these poems and/ or ask a local bookstore to hold a poetry reading which features these poems and their authors. Hold a silent candle light vigil at the end of the readings in memory of all women and girls who have lost their lives to war.
- Sponsor an essay contest which focuses on the positive steps that governments have taken to ensure women's decision-making in security issues. Include recommendations for how your city, state or national government can further promote a culture of peace.
- Hold a festival with other groups or women business owners in your town to celebrate women and a culture of peace. Include music, dance and theater performances as well as information booths to create awareness of women's role in creating peace.
- Contact your local radio or television station and see if they would be willing to donate time for a public service announcement on an issue related to women and peace and disarmament. *(For information about how to plan a radio campaign, contact the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (email: tachi@amarc.org.ec).*
- Ask stores, libraries, city government buildings, local radio stations, etc., to declare themselves 'violence free spaces' on May 24. Activities for this space might include, giving women an opportunity to talk about solutions to tensions within the community, or about international security, which they might not normally have the opportunity to do.

- Encourage your religious leaders to speak out in support of peace. Organize a workshop on women and peace issues at a seminary, rabbinical school, madrasa or other places where religious leaders are taught.
- Encourage their libraries to carry books and magazines on women and peace.
- Ride public transportation on May 24 and distribute information to women about local peace groups. Include telephone numbers for peace organizations and organizations that work to empower women and girls.
- Plan a photo exhibit or music festival with local artists that highlight the work of grassroots women peace activists.
- Coordinate a city-wide essay contest for middle and high school students with a special focus on the work of women and girls for peace.
- Work with the local or state media to acquire programming space where women peace activists can be highlighted.
- Contact community organizations and ask them to feature a grassroots woman peacemaker in their newsletters.