

Dominicans for Justice and Peace, Dominican Leadership Conference and Pax Christi International, in conjunction with Franciscans International, is concerned about the violation of the economic, social and cultural rights of people in situations where their land is used as a testing ground and target practice for the military. In some instances bombing has been carried out on a daily basis and in close proximity to human settlements. In these situations, the rights of the people to health, to a safe environment, to sustainable development and to participation in the decisions affecting their lives are often violated.

Vieques, Puerto Rico

One example of this is the use of Vieques, Puerto Rico for bombing practice by the US Navy for over 60 years. These activities came to end in May 2003. (See: *E/CN.4/2005/NGO/256*) However, the contaminated areas left behind are adjacent to and immediately upwind of the homes of Vieques' approximately ten thousand residents. Available public health data shows that the incidence of cancer is 27% higher than in the rest of Puerto Rico, that rates of cancer mortality are significantly higher than in the rest of Puerto Rico, as are rates of heart, respiratory and skin diseases.

A recent study of hair samples from more than 2,000 Vieques residents showed that 80% had abnormally high levels of heavy metals and other toxic substances in their bodies. Those substances are known to cause the kinds of disease found in abnormally high rates in Vieques.

The United States government has rejected claims for compensation filed by the victims, arguing that there is insufficient proof that the Navy's activities are the cause of their illness.

Philippines

Another example of the violation of the economic, social and cultural rights of peoples is the Clark Air Force Base and Subic Naval Base facilities in the **Philippines**. (See: *E/CN.4/2005/NGO/30*) Prior to their closure in 1992, the Clark Air Force Base and Subic Naval Base had served as the most important overseas military facilities of the U.S. for intervention on the Asia Pacific region and in the Middle East. The military left behind without doing clean-up contaminated sites in 185,709 combined acres of land and water reserved for the U.S. bases. This has led to environmental damage and cases of toxic-related illness affecting communities, especially children.

Twelve years after the U.S. withdrawal from its military bases in the Philippines, the former base workers and people living near the contaminated sites who are affected by toxic waste, most of whom live way below the poverty line, continue to be the victims of death, illnesses and the high cost of medical care.

Dominicans for Justice and Peace, Dominican Leadership Conference and Pax Christi International, in conjunction with Franciscans International, call upon the UN Commission on Human Rights:

1. To request the Special Rapporteur on *"the adverse effects of the illicit movement and dumping of toxic waste and dangerous products and waste on the enjoyment of human rights"* to examine and investigate the above mentioned environmental and human rights violations in both Vieques and the Philippines.

2. To request the Special Rapporteur on the "*Highest attainable standard of physical and mental health*" to investigate and report on the impact on the health of individuals and communities in Vieques and the Philippines that have been adversely affected by the contaminants deposited and left behind by the US military.
3. To urge the government of the U.S. to provide medical assistance, compensation and other projects deemed necessary to the victims and to request UN agencies and member states to extend medical, technical and other forms of humanitarian assistance to the victims in both Vieques and the Philippines.