

# LIBERTAS

## Hemispheric Integration and Democracy in the Americas



TED ANDKILDE

**T**he form of 'globalization' imposed by Western power [in Latin America] has been accompanied by a significant deterioration of macro-economic statistics... Financial liberalization also undermines popular sovereignty, as socio-economic policy falls into the hands of what some economists call a 'virtual parliament' of investors and lenders who can block 'irrational' policies that merely help people, not profits... It should hardly be a great surprise that one hears different voices in the streets and villages, throughout the world, outside these doors as well."

— Noam Chomsky, Hemispheric Integration and Democracy in the Americas, June 4, 2000

This year's OAS General Assembly, held in Windsor, took place in a context which reflected many of the challenges, opportunities and paradoxes

presented by the process of hemispheric integration and economic globalization in the Americas. On one hand, ministers, government representatives and NGOs debated what action, if any, should be taken against Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori, who had been heavily criticized for holding fraudulent and irregular elections. At the same time, hundreds of demonstrators took to the streets and gathered outside the OAS meetings. Some were urging the OAS to support human rights and democracy while others, many of whom felt that the organization promotes inequitable economic growth, wished to see it disbanded completely.

Amid the protests and debates, Rights & Democracy held a three-day symposium which brought together government representatives, trade unionists, NGOs, activists and academics from across the hemisphere to discuss integration, democracy, citizenship and human rights. The symposium, entitled *Hemispheric Integration and Democracy in the Americas*, addressed many of the issues of contention in Windsor and allowed for a thorough exploration of the types of institutions needed to protect human rights and strengthen democracies in a hemisphere where traditional boundaries between states are rapidly transforming.

The first day of the symposium, which consisted of expert panels on democratic governance, human rights, and citizenship and participation, pointed to a need to tackle the "democratic deficit" in political systems while expanding civil society

coalitions so that a more equitable and transparent model of development is fostered.

The second day was a well-attended public event which featured some of the most articulate commentators of the Americas, including acclaimed analyst Noam Chomsky, Peruvian women's rights activist Virginia Vargas, Nicaraguan academic and indigenous leader Myrna Cunningham, the multi-faceted Jamaican artist and intellectual Rex Nettleford, and Nobel Laureate John Polanyi.

Summaries of their extremely engaging speeches are available on our Web site at [www.ichrdd.ca](http://www.ichrdd.ca)

On the final day of the symposium, NGOs were provided an opportunity to exchange information on priorities and activities with respect to the upcoming Summit of the Americas, which will be held in Québec in 2001. Some 40 civil society organizations discussed their work and plans for the future, while officials briefed participants on their priorities.

Ultimately, the dissent on the streets of Windsor and debates within the General Assembly illuminated the scope of the challenges faced by all people of the hemisphere at a time when economic liberalization is contributing to increased impoverishment, human rights violations and democratic deficits. The *Hemispheric Integration and Democracy in the Americas* symposium, however, illustrated the potential of civil society organizations in giving rise to change and creating a new vision of the Americas.



**Rights & Democracy**

International Centre for Human Rights  
and Democratic Development

Rights & Democracy is a Canadian organization with an international mandate. It works with civil society and governments in Canada and abroad to promote human rights and democratic development through dialogue, advocacy, capacity building and public education. It focuses on four themes: democratic development, women's rights, indigenous peoples' rights, and globalization and human rights.



## International Appeal for Colombian Human Rights Activist

Rights & Democracy participated in Amnesty International's letter writing appeal on behalf of Jairo Bedoya Hoyos of the Organización Indígena de Antioquia (OIA) and signed the joint letter to the Colombian government. This high profile appeal sought to pressure the government to ensure the safety of Mr. Bedoya, who has not been seen since March 2<sup>nd</sup>. As a member of OIA, Mr. Bedoya works for the respect of the cultural rights and security of the Embera indigenous community in Colombia. His 'disappearance' is consistent with a long-standing pattern of attacks on indigenous rights activists by both government and armed opposition forces. Several human rights groups, including the Assembly of First Nations and the Inter-Church Committee for Human Rights in Latin America, joined the appeal calling for an investigation to establish Mr. Bedoya's whereabouts and secure his release.

Rights & Democracy also expressed its deep concern to the Colombian government about the continued threats and intimidation of the Kankuamo indigenous peoples by the Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC). The AUC has been threatening to massacre the Kankuamo indigenous population if they do not leave their land in order for the paramilitary group to establish a military base.

## Election Observation in

## Haiti

Following up on a March mission to Port-au-Prince to pressure for 16-month overdue parliamentary and local elections, an NGO delegation returned to Haiti to observe the vote, finally held on May 21. Rights & Democracy was represented on the three-person delegation by Jacques Champagne, who has extensive experience in international development. Working with the Organization of American States electoral observation mission, the *Concertation pour Haiti* members observed the vote and the count in Port-au-Prince and in the provinces. The presence of over 200 international observers is believed to have acted as an important deterrent to violence. At a Montreal press conference on their return, the Canadian observers declared the vote acceptable



according to international election norms. The significant Canadian media coverage of this delegation contributed to the reinforcement of democratic development in Haiti as a foreign policy priority for Canada.

## Towards a Canadian Contribution

## to the Colombian Peace Process

As peace talks in Colombia falter, offering little hope for any real solution to the country's 35-year war, Rights & Democracy is encouraging Canada's role as peacebuilder. Consultant Eleanor Douglas is carrying out an in-depth study to identify specific ways in which Canada can support those who are working strategically to promote a peace based on meaningful negotiations.

Preliminary findings were presented to Canadian government and NGO representatives in Montreal on June 22. In a country where most

human rights violations are committed by paramilitary groups aided and abetted by the armed forces, many are concerned at US plans to reinforce the latter through the controversial *Plan Colombia*.

In the context of increased bilateral contacts, Canada has a role to play. Issues currently being discussed include: How can the promotion of peace and human rights be linked to commerce? Can Canada's armed forces provide a role model for their Colombian counterparts in peacetime? Is the time ripe for Canada to lead initiatives to form a multinational peace commission?

# The OAS and Peru – A Fine Balance

One of the most contentious issues at the OAS General Assembly was that of the recent Peruvian elections; President Alberto Fujimori, now in his third term, held a round of elections which were reported to be so illegitimate that both the opposition candidate and the OAS observation mission withdrew. As the only candidate, Fujimori inevitably retained the presidency.

While OAS delegates debated resolutions and appropriate actions, Rights & Democracy joined the Coordinadora Nacional de Derechos Humanos, Peru's human rights umbrella group, and Transparencia, an election monitoring organization, in calling for a new round of elections. At a press conference held by all three organizations,

Rights & Democracy President Warren Allmand supported the Peruvian human rights activists' request that the country be forced to work within the hemispheric human rights system rather than being suspended from the OAS.

In the end, OAS members voted to send a post-electoral mission to Peru led jointly by Canada's Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy and OAS General Secretary César Gaviria from June 27 to 30, 2000.

In a letter to Mr. Axworthy, Warren Allmand insisted that the mission provide an opportunity for constructive dialogue between government, opposition and civil society for the restoration of democracy in Peru. He also urged him to consider

the alternatives proposed to an electoral process marred by so many irregularities, for example, holding a referendum on the validity of the elections, calling a Constituent Assembly or shortening the mandate of Fujimori.

Rights & Democracy has been working with partners in Peru since its creation and conducted a democratic development study and workshops in 1997 to help strengthen democracy in that country. It has actively supported the Coordinadora and participated in a joint electoral observation mission of the first round of elections in April.

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Rights & Democracy's Documentation Centre is open to the public. Call (514) 283-6073 for an appointment.

• **Editor:** Augie van Biljouw ([avbiljouw@ichrdd.ca](mailto:avbiljouw@ichrdd.ca)). • **Production:** Laperrière Communication. • **Translation:** Claudine Vivier.

**Board of Directors:** Kathleen Mahoney (Chairperson), Thérèse Paquet-Sévigny (Vice Chair), Warren Allmand (President), Harry W. Arthurs, Iona Campagnolo, Michel Corbeil, Kamal Hossain, Lydia A. Hwitsum, Suzanne Laporte, David Matas, Juan E. Mendez, Willy Munyoki Mutunga, Robert Pace.



# Official Opening



On May 10 in Montreal, Rights & Democracy hosted an official opening at its new offices at 1001, de Maisonneuve Blvd. East. The open house was well attended by many of our old friends as well as many new ones. The new premises are comfortable and efficient and give us better access to other non-governmental organizations, university research students, library facilities, and volunteers. We have a much larger board room, which will enable us to hold small conferences and meetings. We also welcome

our friends to use our board room to hold their own meetings and to visit our Documentation Centre.

"Although human rights have become much more firmly entrenched in our culture in the last 10 years, the work of Rights & Democracy is still desperately needed in today's complex world. Our mandate remains vitally important as we are faced with the challenges of defending the rights of women, indigenous peoples, the poor and the marginalized in an era of globalization. We must continue to provide leadership and encouragement both here and abroad. We also have a vital role to play in Canada, working with Canadian groups and ensuring our government maintains its international human rights commitments."

—From Chairperson Kathleen Mahoney's speech at the official opening.



## Rev. Timothy Njoya of Kenya to Receive

### 2000 John Humphrey Freedom Award

Kenyan human rights activist Reverend Timothy Njoya has been selected as this year's John Humphrey Freedom Award recipient for his efforts to strengthen human rights and the democratic process in Kenya. This annual Award, which includes a \$25,000 grant and a speaking tour of Canada, will be presented in Montreal on December 10, 2000, International Human Rights Day.

Reverend Timothy Njoya has been calling for freedom from the political dictatorship in Kenya for almost two decades. With this Presbyterian Minister in the lead, the church has emerged as one of the few institutions willing to challenge Kenya's government under President Daniel Arap Moi. Njoya's fearlessness and outspokenness have led Kenyan authorities to accuse him of subversion. At pro-democracy gatherings in 1997 and in 1999, Reverend Njoya was brutally beaten by police and hospitalized.

For more information about the Award and Reverend Njoya's cross-Canada tour, please contact Augie van Biljouw at [avbiljou@ichrdd.ca](mailto:avbiljou@ichrdd.ca)

## ICC: New Manual to Help Countries Ratify and Implement the Rome Statute

A new *Manual for the Ratification and Implementation of the Rome Statute* produced by Rights & Democracy in collaboration with the Vancouver-based International Centre for Criminal Law Reform and Criminal Justice Policy, was launched at the fifth and final ICC Preparatory Commission at the end of June in New York.

Warren Allmand, President of Rights & Democracy, who attended the Commission to finalize the Rules of Procedure and Evidence and the Elements of Crime, explained that the new manual is designed to assist interested States with the ratification and implementation of the Rome Statute. It provides practical advice to governments and legislators on how to implement the provisions of the Statute. For more information: [www.icclr.law.ubc.ca](http://www.icclr.law.ubc.ca)

## Tshisekedi Calls on Canada to Support Peace Process in Congo

Étienne Tshisekedi, the principal opposition leader in the Democratic Republic of Congo, was a guest of Rights & Democracy in late May as part of a North-American tour to meet government officials and business people in a bid to build support for the peace process in his country.

In a news conference and in a private meeting with Rights & Democracy President Warren Allmand, Mr. Tshisekedi, leader of the Union for Democracy and Social Progress, called for the deployment of the long-awaited peacekeeping force in his war-torn country.

Under the terms of the Lusaka accords signed last summer, 5,537 UN troops were set to be deployed in the former Zaire as early as June to maintain peace in the country. The peacekeeping was seen as a first step to rebuilding the country's democratic institutions after years of strife.

While the UN has promised the peacekeeping force, there is no firm agreement on the date



of the deployment. "It is now obvious that much more than 5,537 troops will be required to maintain peace in Congo," Mr. Allmand said, noting that in Sierra Leone, the UN Security Council originally agreed to send 11,100 troops to oversee implementation.

Rights & Democracy is supporting the participation of civil society in the Inter-Congolese dialogue, a first step in the normalization of relations between the citizens of the former Zaire and the present government. A preparatory commission for dialogue met in Cotonou in early June but was forced to adjourn, when the DRC government failed to participate and refused to allow members of the opposition or representatives of civil society to travel to Benin.



# Calgary Oil Giant Called to Account for Sudan Human Rights Violations in

**K**athleen Mahoney, Chairperson of the Board of Directors of Rights & Democracy, attended the annual meeting of Talisman Energy Inc. in Calgary in early May to press the company to produce an independently verified report on compliance with its code of ethics and with international human rights standards. Ms. Mahoney stressed that the report must be accompanied by a procedure for implementation and monitoring.

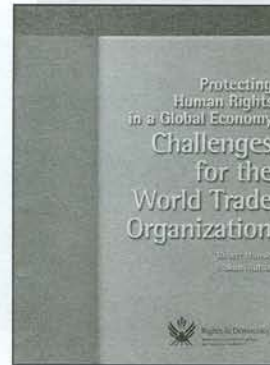
"The evidence is now overwhelming that Talisman's operations in the Sudan are contributing to the desperate human rights situation in that country. It is unconscionable that Talisman has not issued a public response to the findings of the Harker mission," Ms. Mahoney said at a news conference with a coalition of religious and institutional investors prior to the annual meeting.

In his report to the Minister of Foreign Affairs earlier this year, John Harker found evidence that people were being displaced for oil development and that the government of Sudan had used company installations and oil revenues to conduct armed attacks on civilians.

The Talisman case points to a need for other reforms: large shareholders should develop human rights criteria before investing their money to ensure that their investments do not conflict with their values and the *Special Economic Measures Act* needs to be reformed so that the Canadian government has the ability to act quickly when private firms refuse to meet their human rights obligations.

## Protecting Human Rights in a Global Economy: Challenges for the World Trade Organization

**O**ver the past decade, there has been increased public debate about the rapid integration of the world's economy and its impact on human rights. Rights & Democracy launched a new publication at the United Nations in Geneva at the end of April, which examines the relationship between trade law and human rights law. Written by Robert Howse and Makau Mutua, the study



argues that trade and human rights law need not be in conflict as long as the trade regime is held accountable to existing human rights law. The study is available in English and French at Rights & Democracy.



**I**n late June, Asia Programme Officer Mika Lévesque attended the annual Burma Donors Group, which met in **Dublin**. She attended meetings with the

**Burma** Roundtable in Vancouver and the Burma Coalition in Ottawa in May. Marie Léger, Coordinator of the **Indigenous Peoples' Rights** programme, and legal consultant Love St-Fleur travelled to **Panama City** in June to attend a meeting of the Continental Network of **Indigenous Women**. They presented draft proposals for a standard commercial contract, which would protect the designs and art of indigenous women and ensure ethical commercial transactions. On June 15, Warren Allmand participated in government-sponsored consultations for new guidelines governing the Export Development Corporation. Rights & Democracy has been advocating a new open and transparent decision-making process. On June 12, Warren Allmand was part of a roundtable discussion on **globalization** organized by the Standing Committee on International Trade in Ottawa. The **Vietnamese** eminent professor and

journalist Doan Viet Hoat visited Rights & Democracy in June from his home in exile in Washington D.C. Hoat, a former political prisoner and winner of a number of international human rights prizes, urged the Canadian government to take up the cause of writer Ha Sy Phu, who has been under house arrest since his release from prison in December 1996 for calling for the democratization of **Vietnam** in his writings.

Isabelle Solon Helal, Assistant Coordinator of the **Women's Rights** programme, attended a two-day meeting in Toronto with the Women for **Afghanistan**. Kamal Hossain, member of the Board of Directors of Rights & Democracy, also met with the group to brief it on his work as UN Special Rapporteur on **Afghanistan**. Ariane Brunet, Coordinator of the **Women's Rights** programme, attended the **Beijing Plus 5** meeting in New York in June. Tunisian human rights activists Alya and Khémaïs Chamhari met with journalists, human rights NGOs and Rights & Democracy in late May to remind Canadians of the plight of human rights defenders in their country and urged them to continue to pressure the government of **Tunisia** to respect human rights. Director of

Programmes Iris Almeida attended the **NGO Millennium Forum** in New York in May and chaired the Drafting Committee which prepared, coordinated and negotiated in plenary session the final NGO Declaration and Agenda for Action. This Declaration was then submitted to UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and will become the main NGO advocacy tool at the Millennium Summit of World Leaders meeting in New York in September. It is available at: [www.millenniumforum.org](http://www.millenniumforum.org). The **Mexico** consultative group, which is co-ordinated by Rights & Democracy, met on May 15th to assess the political situation in **Mexico** and to plan a mission to observe the presidential elections to be held July 2. Americas Programme Officer Madeleine Desnoyers and Michel Corbeil, a member of the Board of Directors of Rights & Democracy, participated in the mission to Mexico. In May, Mr. Allmand testified before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade on Bill C-19, the ratification of the Rome Statute establishing the **International Criminal Court**.