

A MADRE OPEN LETTER IN RESPONSE TO THE SEPTEMBER 11 TERRORIST ATTACKS

The September 11 attacks in New York and Washington, DC have caused terrible anguish for all of us in the US. We doubt there are many families in the country who have not been touched by these events in some way, and the MADRE family is no exception. We hope that you and your family and friends are finding renewed strength with each passing day.

We want to assure you that MADRE is working hard to respond to this crisis. We are continuing to think critically, to help people develop their understanding of these terrible events and to formulate a progressive response to the crisis – one that will actually promote peace and justice around the world, instead of generating more destruction.

These attacks have given people in the US a terrible but important insight into the experiences of so many of our sisters and their families around the world, who regularly feel the terror and vulnerability that we came to know firsthand on September 11. MADRE is committed to helping people translate this new understanding into a call for US foreign policy that will promote justice and genuine security for all women and families around the world.

In fact, working for a just US foreign policy has always been MADRE's project. As an international women's human rights organization, we have stood with our sisters around the world for nearly two decades to address immediate needs and oppose destructive US policies in Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa and the Middle East.

As the US government readies for a "war on terrorism," billions of dollars have already been allocated for guns, tanks and bombers. While this may satisfy some people's desire for revenge, retaliation will not bring back those who were killed or repair the damage done. What's needed now is justice, not vengeance. And killing more civilians will not bring justice – or an end to terrorism. Ultimately, the only way to end terrorism is to end the poverty and despair that give rise to fanaticism. Of course, the perpetrators of this attack must be found, tried and punished. But this process must be undertaken by an international court and be guided by human rights principles embodied in international law.

If we oppose the killing of civilians in New York and Washington, then surely we oppose the killing of women and families abroad. As we take this stand, we must also work to stop racially motivated attacks against Arab-Americans and immigrants here in the US. And we must defend civil liberties that the government has already begun restricting in the name of "security."

MADRE is hard at work on all of these fronts, playing a leadership role together with other peace and justice organizations to formulate a cohesive, progressive response to this crisis. We are developing MADRE's *Justice, Not Vengeance* Campaign to help people in the US take a firm stand for a sane and humane US response to the terrorism of September 11. MADRE is organizing:

- Advocacy at the Security Council and General Assembly of the United Nations, urging the international community to uphold the rule of law over the use of force and establish

an international criminal tribunal on the September 11 attacks.

- Speaking engagements to give people the information and critical tools they need to take a stand for justice. Contact us about arranging a speaking engagement in your area.
- *A Justice, Not Vengeance* Tool Kit: a concise compilation of articles and factsheets that provide background and analysis about the crisis.
- Media Campaign: We are spreading the message of the *Justice, Not Vengeance* Campaign through regular press releases and interviews with local and national media.

This crisis reconfirms the importance of our ongoing work for peace and justice around the world. At times like these, each of us gains strength from the knowledge that thousands of others share our belief that eradicating injustice is the best way to promote peace. Please help us continue to stand strong over the difficult weeks and months ahead.

In peace,

Vivian Stromberg
Executive Director, MADRE