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## **HUMAN RIGHTS WORK**

During the last two decades, NCBL/Chicago (CHI) has been in the forefront in the effort to get justice in the Burge Torture Cases. Chicago police commander Jon Burge, and other officers under his command, tortured of over 100 African-American men into confessing to crimes that they did not commit. Several of these men still languish in Illinois prisons. In an effort to focus international attention on police torture in Chicago, in 2005, Stan Willis led a group of lawyers and community activists to present evidence of police torture before the Organization of American States' Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. In 2006, NCBL/CHI organized the community based "Black People Against Police Torture "BPAPT" in an effort to involve the Black Community in this human rights struggle. In February 2008, Chicago member, Stan Willis presented evidence of police torture before the United Nations Committee to Eliminate Racial Discrimination "CERD" in Geneva, Switzerland. Upon returning from Geneva, BPAPT held town-hall meetings to educate the community about how international human rights relate to local struggles.

Based upon the Community's response and the assessment that the Black Community was lagging behind other communities in its understanding and involvement in the growing human rights movement in the United States, NCBL/CHI/BPAPT decided to undertake the effort to mobilize the Chicago African-American Community around international human rights. For example, Stan Willis went to the United Nations' CERD meeting in February 2008, there were very few Black human rights advocates involved in the Geneva meeting.

### **The plan will, generally, proceed as follows:**

- I.** We must educate our selves over the next several months. The education will include: history of international courts; adjudicating human rights; regional human rights courts; criminal tribunals; international criminal court; human rights litigation; mechanisms and remedies in international litigation, etc.
- II.** Informing the Community. Many methods will be utilized to educate the Community, such as; town hall meetings; various Internet approaches; Black radio; and cable T.V programs directed at the Community.
- III.** Another method that will be used to educate will be to focus on a local issue by reframing it as an international human rights issue. Any number of issues can be used, such as, education of Black children, the criminalization of Black youth, criminalization of the Black Community, the access and quality of health care, police accountability, etc.
- IV.** We will urge our people to get involved in the next United Nations Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination "CERD". The United Nations review of U.S. compliance with the International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination should take place in 2010. The CERD treaty requires the US to submit a written Report on its compliance with the treaty. Once the Report has been submitted, NGO's and community-based organizations are allowed involvement through the submission of a Shadow Report analyzing and rebutting the US Report. After the Reports are submitted, a hearing date will be set for the US to come to Geneva, Switzerland to defend or explain the positions taken in its Report. NGO's and community based advocates will also be invited to Geneva. One of our goals will be to prepare community advocates to participate in the above process.
- V.** We will also urge and assist community advocates, teachers, health care workers, youth, worker advocates and others to apply for NGO status. Non-Governmental Organization status is the prescribed method for civilian participation in the various international forums...there are very few African-American NGO's.