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UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION  
*of the United States of America*  
A PROGRAM OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOUNDATION  
Southern New York State Division

## United Nations Association of the USA Southern New York State Division News

Serving chapters, groups, and members-at-large in the five boroughs of New York City and in the counties of Columbia, Dutchess, Greene, Nassau, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Suffolk, Sullivan, Ulster and Westchester and reaching friends across the country.  
UNA-USA is a Program of the UN Foundation.

**January 11, 2015**

Dear UNA Friends and Colleagues,

Make your plans now to attend the [7th Mid-Atlantic Regional Conference / UNA-USA Members Day at the UN](#). The Conference is titled "The UN at 70: A Year for Bold Action."

See the program highlighting anticipated topics and panelists. In addition to the program described, there will be time for networking, Q & A and sharing on social media and a surprise or two. [Link here for the conference flier](#).

In 2015 we are celebrating the 70th anniversary of the United Nations, starting with the signing of the Charter in San Francisco on June 26th and its ratification declared on October 24th (the birthday of the UN). Work on the Millennium Development Goals will come to an end. Decisions will be made on the Sustainable Development Goals (the process to adopt the post-2015 Development Agenda). And in March, the 59th Commission on the Status of Women will focus on Beijing+20 -- what has happened since the Beijing Conference on Women in 1995 and where we want to go. Look for Southern NYS Division and UNA Women programs in March.

The 21st session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is expected to take place in December 2015, in Paris, France. The conference objective is a high and important one: to achieve a legally binding and universal agreement on climate, from all the nations of the world.

I hope that if you belong to a chapter or a student group or a community organization or church, you will plan events, publicize them, and educate and energize the public about their importance.

You can keep up to date with ongoing action items and news on the [www.unausa.org](http://www.unausa.org) website. I hope you will join thousands of UNA members and others by voicing directly to the UN your own priorities for the world. [Click here to get involved](#).

Be sure to see the announcement below of a UNA-NYC booktalk on January 14th.

Wishing you a peaceful, healthy and happy New Year,

"Ginger"

Jeanne Betsock Stillman  
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**UNA Members Day at the UN /  
7th Mid-Atlantic Regional Conference**

**"The UN at 70: A Year for Bold Action"**



Friday, February 20, at UN Headquarters  
8:30 a.m. (registration) to 4:30 p.m.

[Register here](#)

Partial Program

- **"Marching to Paris: The Road to a Climate Deal"**
  - Amb. Tomas Christensen, Senior Advisor at the UN Secretary General's Office with responsibility for Partnerships and Climate Change (Invited)
  - Timothy C. Weiskel, BA, DPhil, Research Director, Cambridge Climate Research Associates and faculty member, Harvard University
- **"The Universal Periodic Review of Human Rights (UPR), the Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) and UNA-USA Participation in these"**
- **"At Home and Abroad: Activism for Universal Human Rights"**
  - Gerardo Porteny Backal, - Global Youth Engagement for HeforShe, UN Women
  - Felice Gaer: Vice-Chair of the UN Committee Against Torture (Invited)
- **"From the MDGs to the SDGs: The Future of Global Health"**
  - David Navarro, BM, BCh, MSc - Senior UN System Coordinator for Ebola Virus Disease (invited)
  - Jo Ivey Boufford, MD, President, New York Academy of Medicine
- **"Back to Iraq: The Rise of ISIL and the End of Arab Spring"**
  - Jeffrey D. Laurenti, Moderator
  - Amb. Sebastiano Cardi - Permanent Representative of Italy to the UN (invited)
  - Amb. Dina Kawar - Permanent Representative of Jordan to the UN (invited)
  - Amb. Maureen Quinn - Director of Programs, International Peace Institute (invited)

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**UNA NYC will hold a book talk and signing  
on January 14th**

by

JENNY NORDBERG

New York-based foreign correspondent

on

**The Underground Girls of Kabul**

[Click here for details.](#)

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**December 10, 2014**

**STATEMENT OF THE BOARD**

**"AMERICAN CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM NEEDS MORE THAN BODY  
CAMERAS"**

The deaths of Eric Garner and Michael Brown and the decisions by the related grand juries highlight again exchanges this summer between the U.S. Government and the reviewing committee of the United Nations on racial discrimination. The U.S. Government presented a [report to the United Nations](#) in August on its implementation of the [International Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination](#).

Despite progress, the reviewing committee asserted<sup>[1]</sup> and the U.S. agreed<sup>[2]</sup> there are "stark racial disparities in the administration and functioning of the criminal justice system, including the disproportionate number of persons belonging to racial, ethnic and national minorities in the prison population."

The UNA Southern NYS Division<sup>[i]</sup> and over 90 other organizations submitted related reports. Our report, "Race and the American Criminal Justice System," was based on a seminar with several co-sponsors; it highlights important problems and gives possible solutions. Racism is endemic to the American criminal justice system in many ways, and must be addressed aggressively and with urgency. Simple solutions will not suffice. Needed steps go well beyond body cameras and in-service training for police, and must address broader issues including adequate resources for public education, health and housing, stemming gun violence and increasing employment prospects. Police residence in and reflection of the communities they serve, community-police partnerships, and recruitment of ethnic minorities and women into police departments are all vital ingredients for long-term success.

Important to highlight: (1) In New York State (and elsewhere) officials use elementary school test results to help predict future needs for prison cells; (2) The state's inmate population is three-quarters African-American and Hispanic; (3) The state's recidivism rate is currently 40 percent; (4) Gov. Cuomo estimated college courses in prison to cost about US\$5,000 a year versus \$60,000 a year to house each prisoner; (5) Programs that focus on education for prisoners sharply reduce likelihood of repeat criminality; and (6) Support for reintegration and employment is similarly important.

For African-American and Hispanic youth especially, it can be terribly important not to become entangled in a system that currently is less "protect and serve" and more "contain and control." In an effort to help, the New York Chapter of Blacks in Law Enforcement of America has published a pamphlet entitled "How do you survive police confrontation?"

We pledge to do our part in the following ways:

- Wide circulation of this statement to the media, public officials and other organizations and individuals;
- Provision of our shadow report to those desiring copies;
- Sharing the report of the December 10, 2014, Human Rights Day event by the UNA Mid-Hudson Valley Chapter, on the subject "Bringing human rights home: inequality, race and the United States," held at the FDR Presidential Library in Hyde Park, NY.
- Convening, in early 2015, by the UNA Southern NY Young Professionals, a seminar to explore racism, police brutality, and UN oversight in America -- with a specific emphasis upon recent events;
- Presentation, in February 2015, of our work and that of UNA-USA on the UN Universal Periodic Review of human rights and our Division's shadow report on racial discrimination and the American criminal justice system, at the UNA-USA Mid-Atlantic Conference and National Members Day that is to be held at the United Nations.

Much has yet to be done, at all levels of government, by civic organizations and by individuals to ensure justice and embody the founding principles of the U.S. and the UN.

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[1][http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolNo=CERD%2FC%2FUSA%2FCO%2F6&Lang=en](http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolNo=CERD%2FC%2FUSA%2FCO%2F6&Lang=en) paragraph 20.

[2][http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolNo=CERD/C/USA/7-9&Lang=en](http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolNo=CERD/C/USA/7-9&Lang=en) paragraph 68.

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[i] Co-sponsors of the July 2014 seminar -- Black Westchester Magazine, Blacks in Law Enforcement of America, The Correctional Association of New York, The Fortune Society, Hudson Link for Higher Education in Prison, Theodore D. Young Community Center, Town of Greenburgh, New York, Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office.

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The United Nations Association of the United States of America (UNA-USA) is a membership organization dedicated to inform, inspire, and mobilize

the American people to support the ideals and vital work of the United Nations. [www.unausa.org](http://www.unausa.org)

The UNA-USA Southern New York State Division includes a Young Professionals Group, chapters in Brooklyn, the Mid-Hudson Valley, New York City (Manhattan), Queens and Westchester, and work in the surrounding counties from Columbia to Suffolk.

The views in this article are those of the Board of the Southern New York State Division.

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### How to Get Involved

Join (students under 22 are free of charge): [www.unausa.org/join](http://www.unausa.org/join) and select the Southern NYS Division or a chapter near where you live or work.

Young Professionals should join UNA Southern NYS Division and indicate they are Young Professionals.

For more information, email us at [unasouthernny@gmail.com](mailto:unasouthernny@gmail.com)

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