

MEDIA ADVISORY

Carol Jahnkow
Director, Peace Resource Center of San Diego
<http://www.prcsd.org>
prcsandiego@igc.org / 760-390-0775

Raymond Lutz
Coordinator, Citizens' Oversight Projects
(COPs)
<http://www.StopBlackwater.net>
<http://www.CitizensOversight.org>
raylutz@CitizensOversight.org / 619-447-3246

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Nationwide Events Commemorate 17 Innocent Lives Lost in Blackwater's Nisour Square Massacre -- "Baghdad's Bloody Sunday"

Citizens Protest Blackwater Mercenary Training Centers in California, North Carolina, Illinois and Idaho.

SAN DIEGO, CA (Sept. 11) – Activists in California, North Carolina, Illinois, and Idaho, opposing Blackwater mercenary training operations in their states, will protest Blackwater and commemorate the first anniversary of "Baghdad's Bloody Sunday," a shooting spree carried out by Blackwater in Baghdad's Nisour Square on Sept. 16, 2007 where 17 innocent civilians were cut down by Blackwater gunfire without provocation.

The Protests will occur in four separate locations, where Blackwater has expanded their operation past training and extensive operations in Iraq to set up mercenary training centers.

In California, the rally will also protest against Blackwater's new foothold on the West Coast, only blocks from the Cal-Mex border in Otay Mesa, California. Blackwater opened the facility under clouds of subterfuge and obvious circumvention of local laws, finally using temporary restraining order issued by Federal Judge, a President Bush Sr. appointee, to muscle their way into the facility and avoid public hearings, environmental review and traditional public scrutiny.

In Illinois, Blackwater just expanded their training facility by adding a shooting range, dodging public scrutiny.

FOUR PUBLIC EVENTS TO STOP BLACKWATER AND COMMEMORATE "BAGHDAD'S BLOODY SUNDAY"

Blackwater Opponents Announce Nisour Square Commemorative Rally to occur at four locations:

SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

WHEN: Sept. 13, 3-5pm (PT)

WHERE: 7685 Siempre Viva Rd, San Diego, CA 92154.

INFO: www.StopBlackwater.net; 619-263-9301 or info@prcsd.org

DIRECTIONS: 805 South to 905 East, Turn right at Britannia (just opposite Brown Field Control Tower), Turn left on to Siempre Viva (third light).

SPEAKERS: Rep. Bob Filner (CA-51), Mexican American Political Association President Nativo Lopez, StopBlackwater.net activist, Ray Lutz, American Friends Service Committee Border Action Project Director, Pedro Rios, San Diego Veterans for Peace, David Wiley, Peace Resource Center Director, Carol Jahnkow, and many more!

WINSTON-SALEM, NORTH CAROLINA

WHEN: Sept. 13, 2008 4-6 p.m. (ET)

WHERE: North Carolina, at Headquarters of Blackwater's Lobbyist Firm, Womble Carlyle Sandridge & Rice at One West Fourth Street, Winston-Salem, NC 27101

INFO: BlackwaterWatch, Christian Stalberg 919-801-0734 admin@blackwaterwatch.net

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

WHEN: Sept. 14th, 1:30 to 4pm (CT);

WHERE: Downtown Chicago, joining with war protestors at the The Art Institute of Chicago, 111 S. Michigan Ave. Chicago, IL 60603

INFO: Clearwater/NoPrivateArmies - Mary Shesgreen 847-742-1406 mary@noprivatarmies.org or Marcia Bernsten 312.480.1331 marcia@icjpe.org

COEUR D'ALENE, IDAHO

35 miles from Jeremy Scahill's visit on Sept. 30, and home of Blackwater's digital training company. The group will be calling into the San Diego event and addressing the crowd by cell phone. Contact Bonnie Douglas for more information -- 208.664-5659

On September 16, 2007, Blackwater guards shot and killed 17 Iraqi civilians in Nisour Square, Baghdad. Almost a year later, no one has been charged or prosecuted for the murders. Blackwater, a private army and mercenary headquartered in Moyock, NC with over \$1 billion in federal contracts (primarily no-bid) since 2001, operates with impunity, not subject to either military or civilian law. Blackwater is associated with tax evasion, gun running, weapons stockpiling, recruiting death squad paramilitary personnel from Latin America and defrauding US taxpayers. Blackwater operates without oversight, transparency or accountability.

The public is invited to attend all events to commemorate the Sept. 16, 2007 massacre and to express their views about the miscarriage of local laws, the inappropriate use of mercenaries for public security training, and the desire to have facilities shut down in Otay Mesa, California, North Carolina, and Illinois.

"We were successful in blocking Blackwater's attempt to build 'Blackwater West,' an 824-acre paramilitary facility in Potrero," Carol Jahnkow said, Executive Director, Peace Resource Center of San Diego, referring to the proposed facility about an hour east of San Diego, California. "Blackwater's expansion across our nation must be stopped, and we can do it."

For many, Blackwater represents the ultimate expression of the worst decisions made by the Bush administration and their extreme privatization agenda. "The way the Blackwater convoy shot into the crowd of civilians is symptomatic of a company that is out of control," Ray Lutz said, coordinator of Citizens Oversight Projects (COPs). "They strong-armed their way into this Otay Mesa facility, avoiding the usual public hearings and community oversight, mistreating the community just like the Iraqis in Nisour Square who were murdered just one year ago."

North Carolina has the largest facility, over 6,000 acres, near the small town of Moyock. The locals recently turned down the request by Blackwater to operate dozens of shooting ranges until midnight, and are now pushing against a new proposed runway. In Illinois, Blackwater just installed a 3,600 sqft shoot house, sneaking past public scrutiny. In Idaho, locals stopped an agreement between the Peace Officers Standards and Training (POST) Council that would make them a tenant in a Blackwater facility.

Jeremy Scahill, author of the International and New York Times bestseller and the winner of prestigious Polk Book Award, "Blackwater: The Rise of the World's Most Powerful Mercenary Army" will appear on Sept. 30 in Spokane, WA, only 35 miles from the Idaho protest site.

Scahill, whose book inspired the movement against Blackwater, is currently on a national tour to launch the fully updated paperback edition of his bestseller, featuring an exposé on the Nisour Square shooting incident.

"Despite the deadly events of the past year, Blackwater's business has never been better," said Jeremy Scahill. "Amidst the scandals, controversies and allegations of killing innocent civilians, Blackwater continues to be rewarded with lucrative, multi-million dollar contracts from the federal government, all the while expanding its reach inside the US and now into California. The residents of Potrero and their allies were right to confront Blackwater as it attempted to open shop in their community on the US-Mexico border and the people of San Diego are justified in their deep concerns about Blackwater's facility in Otay Mesa."

Lobbyists retained by Blackwater, like Womble, Carlyle, Sandridge & Rice, insured that Blackwater's contracts with the US State Department were renewed this past April. This, despite the Iraqi government having ordered Blackwater out of its country and the stonewalled investigation into the Nisour Square massacre. Although media reported the contrary, Blackwater has confirmed that it has no intention of leaving the security contracting business. Blackwater is expert at using influence peddling professionals like Womble Carlyle and its connections with the White House administration to remain free from harm and open for business.

A Bush administration appointed federal judge recently forced the city of San Diego to allow a shell company created by Blackwater to open a training facility inside the city limits, within blocks of the Mexican border. The Bush administration has hinted at militarizing our border with Mexico, and Blackwater is positioning itself for future federal contracts to provide border security.

Info: 619-263-9301, info@prcsd.org or www.prcsd.org

SPONSORED BY San Diego Peace Resource Center, Activist San Diego, CitizensOversight.org, StopBlackwater.net, San Diego Veterans for Peace, Blackwater Watch, North Carolina Stop Torture Now, Clearwater (IL)

About Citizens' Oversight Projects (COPs)

Citizens' Oversight Projects was founded in 2006 to promote involvement by citizens in their government. In a democracy, it is the duty of each citizen to oversee the entire government. Unfortunately with our government now being so large, this task is essentially impossible, unless the

citizenry works as a team. Each "COP" should select a board, council, commission, or elected official to watch and attend meetings as a representative of the public. COPs was heavily involved in activating locals in Potrero to resist the Blackwater facility in that quiet rural town. More information is available at www.CitizensOversight.org and www.StopBlackwater.net

Ray Lutz, coordinator for COPs is also a candidate for the California State Assembly, 77th District. See www.LutzForAssembly.com for more information.

About BlackwaterWatch

BlackwaterWatch exists to shine a light on Blackwater Worldwide specifically, and private armies/mercenaries generally. We represent a growing contingent of concerned individuals and groups including, but not limited to, human rights and peace activists, people of faith, civil libertarians, and veterans. BlackwaterWatch is primarily concerned about human rights violations and the absence of accountability for Blackwater Worldwide and others like them. We support the passing of legislation to ban private armies on U.S. soil, as well as the regulation of private contractors operating in a war zone, placing them under either civilian and/or military law. For further information visit <http://blackwaterwatch.net>

About Clearwater/NoPrivateArmies

The Clearwater/NoPrivateArmies group was formed in January 2007 to bring attention to and confront the Blackwater Worldwide Company that opened a training facility in Jo Daviess County of northwest Illinois. The group is also actively engaged in trying to prevent Blackwater from expanding the facility.

About Womble Carlyle

Headquartered in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, Womble, Carlyle, Sandridge & Rice is the third lobbying firm hired by Blackwater since October 2007. Womble Carlyle lobbyists representing Blackwater are: John Mashburn, former general counsel and policy director for Sen. Judd Gregg, R-N.H., who is the top Republican on the Senate Budget Committee; and Mark Harkins, who was chief of staff to Rep. Brad Miller, D-N.C., chairman of the Investigations and Oversight subcommittee of the House Science and Technology Committee.