

Antiwar arrests are significantly underreported by mainstream media. For example, around the fifth anniversary of the invasion of Iraq in March 2008, most news stories wrote that there were 150 to 200 arrests nationwide. Cohen-Joppa and the Nuclear Resister report there were over double that number, well over 400, many outside the cities where regular media traditionally look.

Though arrests typically drop off in election years, as people's hopes are raised that a new president or Congress will make a difference and stop the war, this year looks like arrests are likely to continue to rise. In part, that will depend on the attitude of authorities in Denver and Minneapolis, where the political conventions are being held. In 2004, New York City authorities overreacted so much to protesters at the Republican convention that they arrested historic numbers of protesters - including hundreds who had no intention to risk arrest. If Senator McCain is elected, antiwar resistance activities are expected to rise much higher.

Why do people risk arrest in their resistance to war? Perhaps Daniel Berrigan, on trial for resistance to the Vietnam War, said it best:

*"The time is past when good people may*

*be silent  
when obedience  
can segregate us from public risk  
when the poor can die without defense.  
How many indeed must die  
before our voices are heard  
how many must be tortured dislocated  
starved maddened?  
How long must the world(s) resources  
be raped in the service of legalized  
murder?  
When at what point will you say no to this  
war?  
We have chosen to say  
with the gift of our liberty  
if necessary our lives:  
the violence stops here.  
The death stops here.  
The suppression of truth stops here.  
This war stops here."*

**Though war resistance activities and arrests have not stopped the war in Iraq, those struggling for peace remain committed. "None of us know what will happen if we continue to work for peace and human rights," says a handmade poster of one involved in the resistance, "But we all know what will happen if we don't."**

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#### **ACTION**

**Create a public witness against the war modeled on the weekly, silent peace vigil at the Chicago Federal Building, Tuesday, 8-9 AM, Jackson and Dearborn Sts. This vigil has been conducted since September 2001 and has distributed over 200,000 leaflets to date. For more info, contact 8<sup>th</sup> Day Center.**

Local contact:

**8<sup>th</sup> Day Center for Justice**  
*A Catholic Faith-based NGO  
for Social Change*



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# Arrests for War Resistance Increase Again

Bill Quigley, t r u t h o u t, 6/19/08

*"We can never forget that everything that Hitler did in Germany was 'legal,' and everything the Hungarian freedom fighters did was 'illegal.' It was*



8<sup>th</sup> Day Center staff members help block the entrance to the Chicago Federal Building 6/18/08

*'illegal' to aid and comfort a Jew in Hitler's Germany, but I am sure that if I lived in Germany during that time I would have comforted my Jewish brothers even though it was illegal ... we who engage in nonviolent direct action are not the creators of tension. We merely bring to the surface the hidden tension that is already alive." -  
- Martin Luther King Jr.*

There have been over 15,000 arrests for resistance to war since 2002. There were large numbers right after the runup to and invasion of Iraq. Recently, arrests have begun climbing again. Though arrests are a small part of antiwar organizing, their rise is an indicator of increasing resistance.

The information comes from the *Nuclear Resister*, a newsletter that has been reporting detailed arrest information on peace activists and other social justice campaigns since 1980. Felice and Jack Cohen-Joppa, publishers of the *Nuclear Resister*, document arrests by name and date, based on information collected from newspapers across the country and from defense lawyers and peace activists.

**Since 2002, the Nuclear Resister has documented antiwar arrests for protesters each year:**

**2002 - 1,800 arrests**

**2003 - 6,072 arrests**

**2004 - 2,440 arrests**

**2005 - 975 arrests**

**2006 - 950 arrests**

**2007 - 2,272 arrests**

**2008 - 810 as of May 1**

"Arrests for resistance to war are far more widespread geographically than most people think," according to

Cohen-Joppa of the Nuclear Resister.

"Yes, there are many arrests in DC and traditional big cities of antiwar activity - like San Francisco, NYC and Chicago, but there have also been antiwar arrests in Albany, Ann Arbor, Atlanta, Bangor, Bath, Bend, Brentwood, Burlington, Campbell, Cedar Rapids, Chapel Hill, Charlottesville, Chicopee, Colorado



Chicago Iraq war funeral procession

Springs, Denver, Des Moines, East Hampton, Erie, Eugene, Eureka, Fairbanks, Fairport, Fort Bragg, Fort Wayne, Grand Rapids, Great Dismal Swamp, Hammond, Huntsville, Joliet, Juneau, Kennebunkport, La Crosse, Los Angeles, Madison, Manchester, Memphis, Newark, Northbrook, Olympia, Omaha, Pittsburgh, Portland, Portsmouth, Providence, Richmond, Sacramento, San Diego, Santa Fe, Smithfield, Springfield, St. Louis, St. Paul, Staten Island, Superior, Syracuse, Tacoma, Toledo, Tucson,

Tulsa, Vandenberg, Virginia Beach, Wausau, Wheaton and Wilmington, just to name a few."

### **CHICAGO IRAQ WAR FUNERAL PROTEST**

On June 18, 2008, about 100 persons dressed in black gathered at the Daley Center. They carried three coffins, signs and banners in a silent and deliberate procession to the federal building. Along the way, flyers were distributed to passersby on their way to work.

At the federal building, they circled the building once and then those risking arrest sat in front of the building's doors. Twenty-one were arrested, including several members of 8<sup>th</sup> Day Center for Justice. Everyone was released within two hours. Their court is set for Wed., August 5.

"In fact," notes Cohen-Joppa, "in 2007, antiwar arrests were reported during 250 distinct events in 105 cities in 35 states and the District of Columbia. So far in 2008, arrests have been reported at 65 events in 43 different cities in 19 states and DC."

An example of the scope of resistance can be found in the Chicago-based Voices for Creative Nonviolence. They joined with other major peace groups like

Codepink, Veterans for Peace and the National Campaign for Nonviolent Resistance in early 2007 to launch The Occupation Project, a campaign of resistance aimed at ending the Iraq War. There was a campaign of sustained nonviolent civil disobedience to end funding for the US war in and occupation of Iraq. The Occupation Project resulted in over 320 arrests in spring of 2007 in the offices of 39 US Representatives and Senators in 25 states.

"I am energized by the dedication of so many conscientious activists across the country willing to take the risks of peace and speak truth to power," says Max Obuszewski of the National Campaign for Nonviolent Resistance. "We have been unsuccessful so far in stopping this awful war and occupation of Iraq, but it is not for the lack of direct action. We are taking on the greatest empire in world history, but we will continue to act."

"There are large numbers of new people being arrested," notes Cohen-Joppa, "most typically saying, 'I have tried everything else from writing *to voting*, but I have to do more to stop this war.' The profile of people arrested includes high school teenagers to senior citizens, mostly people under 30 and over 50."