

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACTS:

Joel Gullede: 773-878-3815

email: joel@vcnv.org

Lights Out Chicago: Electricity Fast

CHICAGO – For the next thirty days, local activists for social justice will forgo electricity at home, choosing instead to shed light on the failure of reconstruction efforts in Iraq to create significant and reliable improvements in electrical power supply since the U.S. led invasion and occupation. Lights Out Chicago participants will maintain a vigil at the Federal Plaza in Chicago (Dearborn and Adams) each weekday from 1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. and from 5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. then on Saturdays and Sundays from 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. at the Water Tower Park (Michigan and Pearson).

Laura Gardiner and Leah Patriarco, roommates and Chicago teachers, prepared for the fast by purchasing food which will not require refrigeration and by stocking up on extra candles and blankets.

“We’re holding vigils and community activities by candlelight to illuminate the fact that the basic needs of Iraqi people continue to go unmet”, says Neil Brideau, artist and participant in the electricity fast.

IRIN, the U.N. news agency, reports that the current electricity supply remains lower than pre-conflict levels, though reconstruction goals planned to reach 6,000 Megawatts by July of 2004. Unreliable power supply and persistent outages affect many areas of life for Iraqi people, including health care, safe drinking water and education.

Lights Out Chicago coincides with “The Winter of Our Discontent”, a campaign to challenge and resist economic and military warfare against Iraq. Organized by the Chicago-based group Voices for Creative Nonviolence, participants will lobby, fast, and vigil at the US Capitol, the Pentagon, the White House, and the International Monetary Fund from February 15th to March 20th. Further information on The Winter of Our Discontent campaign is located at the website, <http://www.vcnv.org>

Voices for Creative Nonviolence seeks to build and strengthen active nonviolent resistance to the U.S. war against Iraq’s people; to foster international peace teams; and to challenge the United States’ “Global War on Terror”, which is a war OF terror far more than it is a “war ON terror”. Several members lived in Iraq before, during, and after the U.S. invasion in 2003.

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