

# Press Release

## For Immediate Release

**Attention:** News Assignment

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**March 18  
Coalition**

**[www.chicagoactions.org](http://www.chicagoactions.org)**

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# Over 100 Peace Groups to March On Iraq War's Third Anniversary

## Activists win right to march on Michigan Ave. in battle over civil liberties.

CHICAGO, February 23, 2006 – More than one hundred community organizations, peace projects and religious groups from the metropolitan area and neighboring states will come together on Saturday, March 18 to mark the third anniversary of the war in Iraq, with neighborhood feeder marches, a 3PM rally at Union Park and a 7PM 'Festival of Rights' march down Michigan Avenue.

The actions are being organized by a broad coalition of local peace activists and groups organizing around two central demands: an immediate end to the U.S. war and occupation in Iraq and a call to bring the troops home now. Activists credit this year's strong organizing push to the growing peace majority in Chicago and throughout the nation.

Many of the groups organizing for this year's protest have mobilized in the past to oppose the war, including the mass protest when the war began on March 20, 2003. In that action, police reneged on a deal to allow protesters to march back down Michigan Ave. to the Federal Plaza, and instead arrested more than 700, prompting a civil rights lawsuit and a sustained battle with activists over the City's unilateral declaration of major corridors as off-limits to free speech.

But activists are also excited at the large number of grassroots neighborhood groups which have taken the initiative to organize this year's action, including over a dozen community feeder marches to the central rallying point, scheduled for 3PM at Union Park at Lake and Ashland.

Groups in Chicago's Puerto Rican, Mexican, South Asian, Arab American, African American, Muslim, Christian and Jewish communities are building for March 18. At 4:30 PM on Saturday, protesters will begin traveling by bus, public transportation and foot to the main march kick-off site, at Walton and State, for a 6PM assembly and a 7PM step-off time. That site is near the location of peace activists' mass arrests three years ago. Organizers structured this year's permit request to parallel the City's annual commercial 'Festival of Lights' holiday march as a way to shore up their case that in denying a permit, the City would once again be singling out political speech for repression. This year's 'Festival of Rights' march is designed to underscore the growing attack on civil liberties at home at the same time the Bush administration and the Congress shunt a growing portion of the budget to the war abroad.