



Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

NewsNotes

A bi-monthly newsletter of information on international justice and peace issues

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How to Avert a COVID-19 Global Debt Crisis

Wider, deeper debt relief and the issuance of Special Drawing Rights are needed to address the global economic crisis during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The coronavirus pandemic has forced the majority of low-income countries to choose between servicing spiking sovereign debt or spending more to care for their citizens. Without swift, ambitious action, experts say decades of development gains will be lost, millions of people will fall into poverty, and a catastrophic global famine could hit in the early months of 2021.

Religious and humanitarian organizations with decades of experience in low and middle-income countries have named two actions the G20 nations can take to address a rapidly approaching global debt crisis: expansion of the debt relief plan adopted at the April G20 meetings and issuance of Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Expand Debt Relief

In April 2020, the G20 launched the Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI) allowing eligible countries to suspend their debt service to G20 countries. So far, the program has delivered about \$5 billion in relief to 46 of the 73 countries that are eligible. When the G20 met in November, they extended the plan to mid-2021 and could expand it further.

According to a new report by the Brookings Institution, "Doubtless this [\$5 billion] number will increase, but the agreement falls well short of what developing countries owe: \$356 billion in debt service on public and publicly guaranteed debt due in 2021, and another \$329 billion in 2022. Additional amounts of some \$500 billion are also due on private non-guaranteed debt service, amounts that are not yet public liabilities but that, in past debt crises, have become socialized when foreign exchange availability has dried up. In other words, there are significant explicit public debt liabilities and the potential for additional implicit liabilities to arise."

After the G20 met in November, the religious alliance Jubilee USA Network issued a public statement urging President-elect Joe Biden to convene an emergency G20 meeting upon the start of his presidency on Jan. 20. "One of the most important things that a new President Biden can do is bring together world leaders to more robustly confront the crisis," said Jubilee USA Executive Director, Eric LeCompte.

Debt relief immediately eases public finances and allows governments to spend more on their people. And what is good for low-income countries would be good for middle-income countries teetering toward sovereign debt crisis as well.

The G20 urgently needs to address weaknesses

in the debt suspension initiative as well as alleviate the structurally high debt burdens many countries are facing. Some economic experts suspect that eligible countries have been reticent to take the offer to delay debt payments due to fear of losing access to commercial loans if commercial lenders take a poor view of their participating in the program.

Also, the DSSI is only temporary and small; and it does not include private creditors in China which account for roughly 20 percent of the total foreign debt owed by the 73 countries eligible for the DSSI and, in the case of Zambia, China demanded the southern African nation use any relief granted by international financial institutions to repay arrears to Chinese banks.

Issue Special Drawing Rights

In a 15-minute video, humanitarian experts from the Africa Faith and Justice Network and other faith groups explain the urgent need for the IMF to issue Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) to members nations. "It is humane to release these funds and save lives around the world," said Pauline Muchina of the American Friends Service Committee.

SDRs are a type of special international reserve asset created by the IMF to bolster countries' foreign exchange reserves when they are in weak financial positions. The IMF last issued SDRs in 2009 in response to the global financial crisis.

As an emergency fund held by the IMF, SDRs cost U.S. taxpayers nothing while providing developing countries with needed liquidity that can be used to address urgent food, health needs and social services.

AFJN pressed the need for global economic relief in a public statement issued on September 22, in partnership with the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns and others. "Foreign aid, debt relief, debt forgiveness, and the issuance of Special Drawing Rights by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), combined with robust transparency measures, will help save lives and the fragile global economy."

"The global spread of Covid-19 is further evidence that we cannot ignore the fact that we are one global community. It is in the best interest of everyone, including the United States, to participate in a global response to defeat this pandemic." §

Faith in Action: Visit <https://globalcovidresponse.org/> to learn more and to send a letter to Congress asking for Congressional direction to the U.S. Treasury to support IMF issuance of SDRs.

The Roots of Ethiopia's Tigray Conflict

Maryknoll Fr. Frank Breen provides background on the deadly fighting that has gripped the northern part of Ethiopia since November 2020.

The spark that lit the violent conflict in the northern Ethiopian state of Tigray on November 4 was the decision by the Tigray Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF) to hold elections in September, despite the order by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed to postpone all elections to 2021 because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This action angered the prime minister, who hails from the Oromo ethnic group of southern Ethiopia, the largest ethnic group in the country, comprising about 45 percent of the nation's 111 million people. The Oromo have chafed at rule by other ethnic groups, first by the Amhara, the highest-educated and wealthiest ethnic group, and then by Tigrayans in a coalition government.

Since November, savage fighting in Tigray has resulted in countless deaths, massacres in several villages, the flight of at least 50,000 refugees to neighboring Sudan, and the involvement of the nation of Eritrea and Amhara ethnic militias. As of mid-December, Abiy has refused to accept the mediation of the African Union, instead seeking an outright military victory by government troops.

In the decades-long civil war that ended in 1991 with the ousting of longtime president Mengistu Haile Mariam, the TPLF and Eritreans led the battles, resulting in Eritrea's secession from Ethiopia and de facto Tigrayan control of the Ethiopian government, led first by Prime Minister Meles Zenawi (1991 to 2012) and then after Zenawi's death, by Hailemariam Desalegn Boshe (2012 to 2018).

Disgruntlement against Tigrayan rule incessantly grew as Tigrayans, only 6 percent of the country's population, appropriated the majority of leadership positions and governed ruthlessly, imprisoning thousands of opponents while engaging in embezzlement and land-grabbing in and around the capital city of Addis Ababa, including the highly populous Oromo region, which is considered the homeland of the Oromo people.

Desalegn never proved to be an effective leader and, despite admirable economic growth since early this century, demonstrations broke out throughout the country in 2015, in particular in Oromia and Amhara, calling for political and economic reform and an end to state corruption. The protests were met with a brutal response; hundreds died and thousands of opposition supporters were put in detention. During this time, Tigrayan control of the governing coalition was declining while assertiveness by the Oromo People's Democratic Organization was increasing.

In February 2018, Desalegn suddenly resigned and

soon after the coalition chose Abiy Ahmed to be Prime Minister, after the Amhara candidate, Demeke Mekonnen, dropped out of the race and was given the post of Deputy Prime Minister. On April 2, 2018, Abiy, only 41 years old at the time, was sworn in.

Abiy was already very popular in Ethiopia, due to settling conflicts within Oromia and his campaign against land-grabbing near Addis Ababa. After being chosen Prime Minister, he embarked on ambitious programs of political and economic reforms, released almost all political prisoners, including some that Tigrayan leaders considered "terrorists," promoted press freedom and additional television stations, and vigorously sought peaceful resolutions of conflicts in neighboring Sudan and South Sudan, as well as securing a permanent peace agreement with Eritrea after a twenty-year stalemate.

For these actions Abiy was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in November 2019. A church-going Protestant, he hails from a Muslim-Orthodox family and is fluent in Oromo, Amharic, Tigrinya and English, in theory making him uniquely qualified to achieve national unity.

However, in the months preceding his award, Abiy exhibited signs of a more autocratic nature, holding few press conferences and answering no questions. Ethnic divisions revealed themselves that November, when Abiy united three of the four major ethnic-based political parties into one national party, the Prosperity Party, an action boycotted by the TPLF.

The governing coalition's federalist system had given the nine ethnically based regions significant autonomy, including control over local taxes, education, and their own security forces. Then, in July 2020, the Abiy government responded ruthlessly to protests in Oromia over the assassination of Hachalu Hundessa, a popular Oromo singer, whose songs captured the sense of Oromo marginalization in the national economy. The government arrested over 5,000 people, many of them government officials.

Thus, the table was set for civil strife within Ethiopia when the state of Tigray went ahead with elections against Abiy's order to postpone them.

As there has been a communications blackout, it is difficult to know the extent of the fighting, destruction, and loss of life in Tigray. In the final days of 2020, news reports of Eritrean troops invading refugee camps in Tigray heightened suspicions of collusion between the presidents of Ethiopia and Eritrea and deepened concerns of a growing war and humanitarian crisis for 2021. §

Zimbabwe: A Way Forward with *Fratelli Tutti*

*Dr. David Kaulem, Dean of the School of Education and Leadership at Arrupe Jesuit University in Harare, Zimbabwe, offers Pope Francis' concept of political charity described in *Fratelli Tutti* as a way to break the cycle of polarization and economic despair.*

As we approach the New Year, the situation in Zimbabwe is characterized by ‘a lot of effort but no work done.’ Many things happen but things do not really change for the better, especially for the majority of Zimbabweans.

The ruling Zanu PF party continues to rule and the opposition continues to be manipulated, to split itself up and to demonstrate signs of fatigue and ineptitude. Civil society has been professionalized and relies on a few international donors who also seem tired. Most foreign diplomatic missions seem to have decided that development which relies on NGOs does not work and so are pushing for their businesses to bring hope to countries like Zimbabwe.

In the meantime, the majority of citizens suffer from poverty, unemployment, and the impacts of climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic. They live daily with unbearable economic pressures.

The Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops issued a message of hope for the 2020 Advent season. They call on political leaders to practice “political charity” in order to cultivate national unity. The bishops are following Pope Francis’ message in *Fratelli Tutti* to cultivate friendship, fraternity, and love. This is an important message for Zimbabwe today, where political polarization has made genuine debate about development “degenerate into a permanent state of disagreement and confrontation” (FT 15).

The opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) Alliance is still contesting the results of the 2018 elections. The ruling party, unperturbed, is already preparing for the next elections in 2023 when the same story will be repeated.

There is no genuine conversation between the two major political movements. Each has called for national dialogue, but only on its own terms. Factional politics continues to distract both parties. As Pope Francis writes, “Political life no longer has to do with healthy debates about long-term plans to improve people’s lives and to advance the common good” (FT 15).

The country is still divided on gender, generational, regional, economic and political lines. The major national players are still seated with major political rivalries, conflicting economic interests and social-cultural suspicions.

Unfortunately, most reporting about Zimbabwe encourages divisions and highlights failures, most of which are real. We are all lost in the details of the atrocities by

the ruling party, the persecution of the opposition, and sometimes the weakness of the opposition.

The ‘new dispensation’ led by President Emerson Munangagwa is still Zanu PF led. But it is a somewhat different Zanu PF party. Yes, it is more militarized and many of its members are still obsessed with maintaining power, acquiring wealth and destroying the opposition. But its grip on power is less decisive, hence it moves gingerly towards reforms. These are great opportunities for democracy and the building of a developmental state that is separate from the ruling party and works more for the common good.

The Zanu PF-led government will be changed more by participating in the state structures and procedures it is creating than by fighting them. The Zimbabwean army and police have established higher education institutions. Academics, civil society, and other professionals must support and participate in the training and education of our security personnel. Reforms are taking place in national development strategies, independent constitutional commissions and the opening up of space for private radio and television stations. New professionalized boards of state-owned enterprises are being established and the devolution process has been initiated to have regions make more decisions about their own development.

The Zanu PF party wants to control these processes, and indeed they are doing so, but Zimbabweans, acting on “political charity” can push them beyond the limited vision and political sensibilities of Zanu PF.

All this requires truly national leaders from all sectors of society to come forward and participate in the building of the state as a common good. For the Church, it means going beyond the issuing of pastoral statements and contributing to the widening of the national social imaginary. It means contributing to the retelling of the Zimbabwean story to make it more inclusive and more humane.

This means honestly confronting the undemocratic, sexist, patriarchal and abusive legacies in which we have all participated. As we struggle to end some of the negative aspects of our politics, it is important to recognise that many of us have been complicit and that the struggle is not always out there, but it is in our minds, our hearts, in our hands and feet and in the social and cultural structures. This is not time to demonize each other but to practice political charity as we confront our national demons. §

Opposing Armed Drone Strikes in Kenya

The Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns opposes the U.S. military launching armed drone strikes in volatile northern Kenya.

On December 11, the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns joined a coalition of interfaith leaders led by the Interfaith Working Group on Drone Warfare in sending a letter to the U.S. House and Senate Armed Services Committees, expressing opposition to a request by the Africa Command of the U.S. military (AFRICOM) to begin carrying out armed drone attacks in northern Kenya.

The proposed strikes would reportedly target Al-Shabaab, a Somali-based terrorist organization tied to Al-Qaeda, which occasionally carries out attacks in Kenya. On January 5, 2020, about 15 members of Al-Shabaab attacked Manda Air Strip on Camp Simba, a military base used by both U.S. and Kenyan forces in Kenya's Lamu County near the Somali border, killing three Americans.

"The regions in which the U.S. seeks permission to use lethal drones are volatile," the letter states, "and such actions could quickly escalate to internal conflict."

Maryknoll Fr. Frank Breen, who served for 29 years in Kenya, explains, "Northeastern Kenya is home to a group called Shifta – former Somali militants who fought a war to secede from Kenya in the 1960s. When they lost the war, they became bandits and they still have many weapons. In recent years, the banditry has been reduced but on occasion there is an incident."

"Who are the drone strikes supposed to go after?" Breen asks. "Al-Shabaab coming over from Somalia, or Kenyan citizens of Somali ethnicity who live in northeastern Kenya? Drone strikes have proven to have many collateral casualties and as the region is almost solely Muslim and ethnic Somali (but Kenyan citizens) they would suffer and it could lead many of them to side with Al-Shabaab rather than with the Kenyan government."

"Kenyans are aware of the threat that Al-Shabaab poses," the letter to legislators states, "but the added insecurity created by drone strikes will not mitigate that threat; instead, authorizing the use of drone strikes will increase tensions and provoke further attacks while creating substantial human rights implications in the region."

Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta told French journalists that he would refuse permission for the U.S. to carry out drone attacks inside Kenya.

U.S. drone strikes globally, and specifically in Somalia, have increased dramatically under President Trump, while accountability and vetting requirements for such attacks have been removed.

"Yet this approach has not eradicated the threat of Al-Shabaab," the letter continues, "and has had incred-

ibly damaging effects on the safety, stability, and social fabric of countries in the Horn of Africa. Further expanding this approach into Kenya, including the use of drones, poses grave risks.

"Moreover, we would like to highlight the impact that such strikes have had elsewhere on social cohesion, family structures, legitimacy of the respective national governments, and communities' perception of U.S. intervention. As evidenced by the last 13 years in Somalia, U.S. drone strikes do not bring an end to terrorist attacks. Instead, they have historically played a part in exacerbating destabilization and spurring further radicalization. Drone strike programs lack adequate transparency, accountability, and reparations for civilian casualties."

The interfaith group makes recommendations for alternative, nonviolent security measures.

"Instead of lethal drones, we need to invest in community systems that encourage youth to stay in schools and shun violence. Local influencers and non-traditional partners (like religious actors, media personalities, etc.) are important to shape social norms of inclusion and agency. The U.S. approach to addressing Al-Shabaab requires a transnational approach, but it also requires new tools that have proven effective in changing the environment enabling Al-Shabaab to operate in Somalia and along the Swahili Coast."

The AFRICOM request to initiate drone strikes in Somalia requires the permission of the Secretary of Defense. On November 9, President Trump fired then-Secretary of Defense Mark Esper, the first in a series of personnel changes among top Pentagon leadership.

Acting Secretary of Defense Christopher Miller has not indicated how he might respond to the request. As Assistant Secretary of Defense for special operations and combating terrorism, Miller was behind an aborted plan to enlist Qatar's help in weakening Al-Shabaab ties to Al-Qaeda.

President Trump has since announced a withdrawal of U.S. troops from counterterrorism operations in Somalia. It is unclear how AFRICOM's request would fit into the Administration's strategy for the region, or how that strategy will change under the incoming Biden administration.

The interfaith coalition appeals to Congress to bar the U.S. military and the White House from pressuring Kenya to permit the use of lethal drones within its borders. §

Faith in Action: Follow updates from Interfaith Network on Drone Warfare:

<https://www.interfaithdronenetwork.org/>.

Pope Francis On Universal Basic Income

Guaranteed monthly income is seen as a way to stabilize society in an era of turbulent shocks and change.

In his new book, *Let Us Dream: The Path to a Better Future*, Pope Francis writes, “Our definition of the value of work is... far too narrow. We need to move beyond this idea that the work of the caregiver for her relative, or a full-time mother or volunteer in a social project, is not work because it pays no wages. Recognizing the value to society of the work of nonearners is a vital part of our rethinking in the post-COVID world.”

“That’s why I believe it is time to explore concepts like the universal basic income (UBI)... an unconditional flat payment to all citizens, which could be dispersed through the tax system.”

With this, the pope joins a growing body of world leaders and economists looking more seriously at a regular transfer of funds by governments to citizens as a solution to a host of social, environmental, and economic problems. Historical figures as varied as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., former President Richard Nixon and economist Milton Friedman have all backed versions of such a policy. Modern-day proponents include the governments of Spain and Germany, as well as Tesla CEO Elon Musk and Facebook’s Mark Zuckerberg.

Most recently in the United States, eleven mayors launched a campaign to guarantee a basic income for the more than 5 million people they collectively represent. “Mayors for a Guaranteed Income” aims to lift people out of poverty and use UBI as a tool for racial and gender equity.

This comes after U.S. presidential candidate Andrew Yang elevated the issue to the national stage by making a \$1,000 monthly payment his signature policy idea. In the final days of 2020, Yang’s Humanity Forward organization said it has discussed potential “recurring economic relief” with the incoming Biden administration.

Like many others, Pope Francis sees the UBI as a vehicle to “reshape relations in the labor market, guaranteeing people the dignity of refusing employment terms that trap them in poverty. It would give people the basic security they need, remove the stigma of welfarism, and make it easier to move between jobs as technology-driven labor patterns increasingly demand. Policies like the UBI can also help free people to combine earning wages with giving time to the community.”

University of London professor and co-founder of the Basic Income Earth Network, Guy Standing, believes the UBI could address the “eight modern giants blocking the paths to a Good Society” – inequality, eco-

nomic insecurity, debt, stress, precarity, robots, extinction and populism. Research also shows the power of UBI to reduce domestic violence by providing the financial security needed for people to leave abusive relationships and begin anew.

A survey by Vox of UBI experiments around the world found that a basic income tends to “boost happiness, health, school attendance and trust in social institutions while reducing crime.” Contrary to the belief that a UBI would result in people working less, most experiments saw little change in employment. But, almost universally, participants reported less stress and more overall happiness.

While the UBI has support from people of different political persuasions, detractors often cite the possibility of generating inflation, the loss of motivation to work, unforeseen societal effects and the overall cost of such a program. Some also worry that poorer families would be worse off with a UBI if important means-based programs are eliminated to pay for it.

Critics point out that the results of UBI experiments thus far are temporary and include only hundreds or thousands of low income and unemployed workers, and thus are not universal nor permanent, two basic characteristics of a true UBI.

The cost of a UBI tends to be the predominant concern of most critics. Cost estimates for different proposals that would provide \$1000 per month to all adults in the United States range from \$2 to \$3 trillion, more than what is spent on Medicare and Social Security each year.

A possible solution came in January 2019 in a public statement by the largest number of economic experts yet – more than 3,500 economists, Nobel laureates and former chairs of the Federal Reserve. Their proposal, a carbon tax and dividend system, could pay for a UBI program while also dramatically reducing carbon emissions.

One of the drawbacks of the proposal – that the carbon dividend would eventually fade away – could be addressed by securing other sources of funding after the positive effects of a UBI are recognized on a national scale.

With more crises like COVID-19 predicted in the near future due to climate change, loss of biodiversity, and future pandemics, it is time to consider how we can guarantee that we survive such struggles with minimal suffering. A UBI could be an important part of our future. §

Border Agencies Prepare for Change

Immigrant social service agencies on the U.S.-Mexico border are preparing for rapid changes in the months ahead.

A webinar hosted by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops on December 7 featured four leaders of Catholic social service and advocacy organizations on the U.S.-Mexico border discussing current border policy and anticipated, dramatic changes ahead. These were Dylan Corbett of Hope Border Institute in El Paso, Texas; Teresa Cavendish of Casa Alitas shelter in Tucson, Arizona; Sr. Norma Pimentel of Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley (CCRGV) in McAllen, Texas; and Fr. Sean Carroll of the Kino Border Initiative in Nogales, Arizona.

All four leaders spoke about the impact of the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP) policy on their work with migrants at the border. Implemented in January 2019, MPP requires migrants who arrive for processing at the border to wait in Mexico while their U.S. immigration cases are being processed.

MPP has led to the creation of large camps of migrants living in tents or temporary shelters in Mexican border towns, in poor conditions and often without access to work, education, physical safety from gangs or inclement weather, or legal counsel. Ashley Feasley, webinar moderator and director of policy on immigration issues for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, said there have been about 68,000 migrants returned to Mexico through MPP. MPP has been widely condemned as cruel and inhumane by immigrant rights advocates and faith groups.

“We used to receive about 1000 migrants per day at our shelter [in McAllen, Texas], but now [during MPP] it is in the 10’s,” said Sr. Norma Pimentel, executive director of CCRGV. Instead, her organization has largely shifted its resources to providing aid to the migrants living in tent camps just across the border in Matamoros, Mexico.

Teresa Cavendish of the Casa Alitas migrant shelter in Tucson said that they are also receiving a fraction of the number of migrants they used to receive from Border Patrol or Customs and Border Protection custody after migrants are processed by U.S. authorities.

All four agencies have had to change their operations to manage and prevent COVID-19 infections within the populations they serve. Cavendish explained that Casa Alitas is now receiving migrants who are either released from detention centers or exempted from the MPP policy and allowed into the United States due to severe vulnerability to COVID-19.

Cavendish explained that, given conditions in the border towns and in detention and processing centers, it is reasonable to assume that every migrant has been exposed

to COVID-19. There are high infection rates among migrants processed in U.S. government centers. Casa Alitas offers quarantine and isolation space for these individuals upon arrival.

Similarly, Sr. Pimentel and CCRGV have been helping coordinate the isolation of migrants in motels, as well as sanitation and testing in camps in Mexico. These efforts have in part been funded through the CARES Act, the first pandemic relief package. Sr. Pimentel expressed the need for more government funding.

Looking ahead, the agencies are expecting their resources to be strained as MPP is lifted, pandemic-related border restrictions are eased, and as the Biden administration seeks to fulfil its promise to adopt more humane border enforcement policy. While MPP has been in place, the capacity of border agencies has been greatly reduced. Cavendish explained that before MPP, there were about 30 migrant shelters along the border, with high capacity. Now, there are about 10, with much lower capacity, especially with COVID-19 precautions in place.

Despite these challenges, the leaders expressed hope that, with coordinated effort and support, they could meet the challenges. “We need to have confidence in resilient border communities to respond to the needs presented,” said Dylan Corbett of Hope Border Institute in El Paso. “We cannot allow complexity...to be an excuse for inaction.”

Corbett stressed the difficulties ahead, including the longer-term challenge of reforming the broken border enforcement and immigration systems, which he described as motivated by racism and xenophobia, and the anticipated increase in the flow of migrants, due to eased border restrictions and the fallout from the recent hurricanes and economic crisis in Central America. However, the agencies are already beginning to plan their response, holding monthly meetings and asking for support from their allies around the country, as well as from the U.S. government.

During previous crises, including the family separation crisis in summer 2018, faith-based organizations created what Corbett called “highways of charity and justice” throughout the United States to allow for the flow of funds, aid, and migrants themselves to and from places where help was available or needed.

Reflecting on that experience and anticipating the coming months, Corbett remarked, “We’re going to need Catholic partners around the country to step up in unprecedented ways.” §

Hurricanes Devastate Central America

Two devastating hurricanes hit Central America in November, leaving widespread destruction for local communities already struggling from the fallout of the pandemic.

After hurricanes Eta and Iota hit Central America in November, experts are worried that their effects could be felt for years, prompting an even deeper economic crisis and more widespread migration north. They also are concerned that this year's Atlantic storm season – the worst ever recorded – could be only a preview of the intense storm seasons to come, which scientists say are more likely as the global climate continues to change.

Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Honduras were the hardest hit nations, but El Salvador, Panama, Costa Rica, and Belize also felt the hurricanes' effects. The reported immediate loss of life was at least 200, but the infrastructural and agricultural devastation wrought by the hurricanes will have life-threatening consequences for local communities for a long time. In addition, many people were crowded into shelters to escape the storms, putting them at risk for coronavirus infection.

Approximately 5 million people were affected by the storms, and about half a million have been displaced. Entire towns have been submerged under water and mud. The devastation is being compared to that of Hurricane Mitch in 1998, which prompted mass migration north out of Central America.

"This was harder than Hurricane Mitch (locally) in the sense that the water density was far bigger," Franciscan Father Alberto Gauci wrote in an email from the Olancho region of Honduras to Catholic News Service after Hurricane Eta passed through. "What happened here was that two big rivers ... became one big ocean of water that changed all the map of Olancho."

Government officials in Central America are admitting that they do not have the resources to manage these disasters and asking for more aid. Devastation in Guatemala alone has been estimated at about \$740 million – about 6 percent of the country's GDP.

The Washington Office on Latin America has called the relief initiatives so far "slow and inefficient" and "lackluster." They urged for more relief given with "significant oversight and control mechanisms, and transparency to guarantee that aid is efficiently and appropriately used...[and not] embezzled." They explained that corruption has stymied the regional response to the pandemic from reaching those who need it most.

In a November 25 statement, the Latin American Bishops' Conference (CELAM) called for a campaign among Catholics to redouble aid efforts, urging a day of prayer and action on December 12, the feast of Our Lady

of Guadalupe.

Besides immediate aid efforts, experts say the region and global community need to prepare for the long-term, given the ever-growing threat of climate change and the likelihood of increasing intensity of storms.

The exact effect of climate change on storms such as these is difficult to pin down, climate scientists explain. The number of storms is not so much the measure of changes in patterns due to climate change, but rather the way storms behave. Research is showing that climate change is making storms more deadly, causing them to warm faster in oceans, linger longer over land, and drop heavier rains.

"The evidence is building that there is a human fingerprint on this behavior," Jim Kossin, climate scientist with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, told Reuters, speaking of the ways storms are occurring.

"If we don't manage to contain global warming to 2 degrees Celsius, we can expect an intensification of such natural disasters in the region with increasing costs," stated Luis Miguel Galindo, a climate change expert and economics professor at Mexico's UNAM university.

However, Ilan Kelman, a professor of disasters and health at University College London, stressed that this is a two-fold problem – the possibility of more frequent high-intensity storms coupled with the general vulnerability of the population in the region due to poverty and inequity. "Irrespective of how human-caused climate change is affecting hurricanes, Central America does not need to have hurricane disasters, if vulnerabilities are fully tackled," Kelman said.

Until these issues are addressed, there will be continued pressure to migrate north for people made desperate by the devastation and economic fallout. Advocates in the United States are calling on the incoming Biden administration for a redesignation of Temporary Protected Status for people from the region, which would allow temporary legal avenues to stay in the U.S. for people from areas affected by the hurricanes. §

Faith in Action: See compelling photos and read stories of family in Honduras impacted by the two hurricanes <http://bit.ly/2X6cyd8>. Support relief efforts by Catholic Relief Services:
<https://support.crs.org/donate/hurricane-eta>.

Bangladesh: Seeking Justice for Factory Fire

Eight years after 112 died in a fire at a garment factory, survivors stage protest calling for help from the prime minister. UCANews published this article, excerpted here, on November 25, 2020.

Dozens of former workers and survivors of a deadly 2012 fire at a garment factory marched on the streets of Bangladeshi capital Dhaka to demand justice and compensation on the eighth anniversary of the tragedy.

Some 45 survivors of the Tazreen Fashions factory fire that killed 112 workers and injured hundreds participated in what they called a “walking dead march” from the National Press Club to Gono Bhaban, the official residence of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, on Nov. 24.

The workers sought the PM’s intervention to fulfill their demands and end their suffering. As they were blocked by police, most lay down on the street in a protest that created an emotional scene in the presence of dozens of media workers, rights activists and onlookers.

For the past 68 days, the workers have been staging an indefinite sit-in protest in front of the National Press Club for demands including justice, compensation and rehabilitation of Tazreen fire victims. They say that in the absence of support and compensation their misery and suffering have been unbounded.

Rehana Akter told reporters with tearful eyes how four of her family members perished in the fire and she jumped from the high-rise building to save her life, badly injuring her legs.

Razia Begum said she hurt her backbone and a leg as she too jumped off the building to escape the blaze. She is among workers who received no compensation from the government and Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), the main trade body.

The eight-story Tazreen factory in the Savar suburb of Dhaka employed more than 1,000 workers when it caught fire on Nov. 24, 2012. It supplied clothes for major Western retailers including H&M, Gap, Walmart and C&A.

As the fire engulfed the building, the fire alarm sounded. However, factory managers allegedly told workers to continue working. Panicked workers trying to escape found themselves trapped on smoke-filled staircases and behind locked doors.

Some bodies were burned beyond recognition and authorities buried them in a Dhaka graveyard after preserving their DNA samples.

One year later, police charged 13 people including factory owner Delwar Hossain and his wife Mahmuda Akter with culpable homicide and violating construction rules.

In February 2014, the couple was sent to jail after they surrendered to a Dhaka court to seek bail, which was rejected.

The cases made no headway in the ensuing years as the prosecution failed to produce enough witnesses to prove crimes and all the accused, including Hossain and his wife, are now out on bail.

Church demands justice

Father Albert T. Rozario, member of the Catholic bishops’ Justice and Peace Commission, called for immediate support for Tazreen fire victims and a proper trial of those accused of negligence.

“Positive changes have taken place in the garment industry since the Tazreen fire, but it is unacceptable to see workers continue to take to the streets for justice and compensation after eight years. I believe the government will look into their plight and pay heed to their call for help,” said Father Rozario, parish priest of St. Joseph Church in Savar.

Following the tragedy, Catholic charity Caritas lent support for the treatment and rehabilitation of 104 Tazreen victims in collaboration with several Western retailers and the BGMEA.

Bangladesh’s US\$25 billion garment industry is the world’s second largest after China’s thanks to investments and cheap labor. It employs more than 4 million workers, mostly poor rural women who stitch clothes for high-street Western brands with a low minimum monthly wage of 8,000 taka (\$95).

Despite being a lifeline for the country’s economy and accounting for 80 percent of annual foreign exchange income, the industry has been plagued by poor labor practices and hazardous working conditions for years.

More than 2,000 workers have died in deadly fire and building collapses in the past decades, data from the Fire Services Department shows.

The Tazreen fire came barely six months before an even worse tragedy, the Rana Plaza collapse on April 24, 2013, that left 1,134 workers dead and thousands injured in what was one of the world’s worst industrial disasters.

Following the Tazreen and Rana Plaza tragedies, Western retailers, under huge pressure from consumers, labor groups and governments, invested in long overdue structural and safety reforms in some 4,500 garment factories in Bangladesh, making the industry relatively safer for workers. §

New Book: 'Advancing Nonviolence'

New book highlights women leaders who advance the practice of nonviolence by pursuing open and sincere dialogue.

The Catholic Nonviolence Initiative (CNI), a project of Pax Christi International that began with a conference at the Vatican in 2016, continues its work promoting Catholic understanding of and commitment to Gospel nonviolence with a new book, *Advancing Nonviolence and Just Peace in the Church and the World*. The fruit of a global, participatory process culminating in a second Vatican conference in 2019, the book includes “biblical, theological, ethical, pastoral and strategic resources, presented to serve as a contribution to Catholic teaching on nonviolence.”

The authors of the new volume – peace practitioners, theologians, and social scientists from 39 countries around the world – describe nonviolence as a spiritual orientation, a way of life, and a practical tool. Presented as “the foundational, universal ethic for building a culture of peace, disarmament and development,” nonviolence has deep roots in scripture and spirituality.

But the CNI also illustrates the practical ways nonviolence is successfully employed to reduce, resist, and transform both direct, physical violence and systemic, institutional violence and injustice.

Women lead in dialogue

Pope Francis and his predecessors have repeatedly called for the faithful to pursue “forgiveness, dialogue, and reconciliation” as alternatives to violent conflict. But to critics, such concepts sound lofty and impractical in the face of real, intractable violence. The CNI offers a concrete counternarrative.

Dialogue may refer to high-level negotiations between political elites – the kind of talks diplomats and mediators have facilitated between warring parties from Northern Ireland to Afghanistan. But other forms of dialogue – at the middle- and grassroots levels, and often led by women – pave the way for such high-level negotiations.

In Mindanao, Philippines, violence between Muslim Moro rebels and the government grabs headlines worldwide. But for local peace activist Myla Leguro with Catholic Relief Services, the picture is more complicated: questions of identity, colonialism, extractivism, human rights, and autonomy are all closely tied to disputes over land.

Leguro developed “the Three B’s,” of dialogue to prepare individuals (“binding” with healing and education) and whole communities (“bonding” by expressing inclusive visions for the future) for negotiations between conflicting groups (“bridging”) to settle land issues. The three-stage process builds skills, trust, and agreements that serve as a basis for addressing wider conflicts. Leguro’s Three B’s have been adopted in conflict zones around the world, including central Africa, where other local leaders

have further developed her model.

In northern Kenya, Pax Christi peacebuilder Elizabeth Kanini Kimau facilitated dialogue amid “disorganized, armed, communal violence” between warring pastoralist communities – “a situation vulnerable to political manipulation by armed militias.” Understanding the respect afforded elders, she invited elders from all sides to a neutral location, where they could dialogue safely. The elders recruited warriors to follow suit, and the warriors invited youth. The elders have now established ongoing dialogue to resolve conflicts before they erupt into violence.

While Leguro and Kimau bring a local expertise to peacebuilding, other times third parties from outside a conflict zone play a crucial role.

In Syrian refugee camps in Lebanon, Sara Ionovitz with Operazione Colombia (Operation Dove), describes how ordinary Syrians came up with a plan for the creation of safe zones that allow them to return to their country, but because they were not armed actors in the conflict, they were not included in peace talks.

Operation Dove’s volunteers facilitated conversation between the Syrians and European Union leadership. “We needed schemes of listening that were outside the frames we already knew,” explains Ionovitz. “Mediation is made by dialogue, starting from the ground to the top, to governments. [We are] just the microphone: we go to the Italian government, which possibly talks to the Lebanese or German government or institutions. It’s a popular democratic diplomacy.”

Inside the camps, the presence of the international nonviolence organization was a deterrent to violent attacks on the refugees. Ionovitz and her colleagues were able to reach out to surrounding communities, building “bridges of dialogue between the local Lebanese host population, who are scared and sometimes hostile, and the Syrians themselves.”

Women at the fore

Too often in the Church and in documents on Church teaching, the indispensable, transformative leadership of women is erased and ignored. *Advancing Nonviolence* offers a refreshing corrective, highlighting the voices and leadership of women throughout.

A book on nonviolence could hardly do otherwise, as study after study demonstrates that sustaining peace is only possible when women are fully included. The integral inclusion of women is one of the many ways the Catholic Nonviolence Initiative is pointing the way forward for the Church and the world.

Advancing Nonviolence and Just Peace in the Church and the World, Berger, R.M., Butigan, K., Coode, J., and Dennis, M. (Eds.) is available in the U.S. from Winchester Book Gallery: <http://bit.ly/3ohtBoD> §

Christmas Retreat on Gospel Nonviolence

On Dec. 18, more than 500 people from around the world, including members of the Vatican COVID-19 Commission, joined a 3-hour retreat on nonviolence hosted by Pax Christi International. Participants were asked to read the following reflection prior to the start of the retreat and watch a video available at <http://bit.ly/RetPxNonv>

The turbulence of this historical moment calls us to conversion – a conversion that is soul-deep and worldwide. In this spirit, Pax Christi International's Catholic Nonviolence Initiative has organized a "Christmas Retreat on Gospel Nonviolence" in cooperation with the Security and Ecology Taskforces of the Vatican's COVID19 Commission.

As we come to the end of this challenging year, we invite people around the world to gather with us virtually to deepen the spirit of nonviolence and to reflect together on ways forward to a more just and nonviolent world. In preparation for this special retreat, we offer the following thoughts on Gospel nonviolence.

Pope Francis has helped the Church and the world gain a deeper understanding of active nonviolence. In his 2017 World Day of Peace message, he said that "to be true followers of Jesus today...includes embracing his teaching about nonviolence." In a letter to Cardinal Blase Cupich he said, "the consistent practice of nonviolence has broken barriers, bound wounds, and healed nations" and pledged "the assistance of the Church in every effort to build peace through active and creative nonviolence." In numerous interviews and statements the pope has promoted nonviolence, and he has taken many actions that dramatize its spirit.

That the Church is rediscovering nonviolence now as a spirituality, a way of life, a strategy for social change, and a universal ethic is not an accident. The human community is facing a spiritual, ecological and social crisis inflamed daily by a worldwide culture of violence, which has only worsened in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Nonviolence - as both an ancient paradigm of the fullness of life and an increasingly

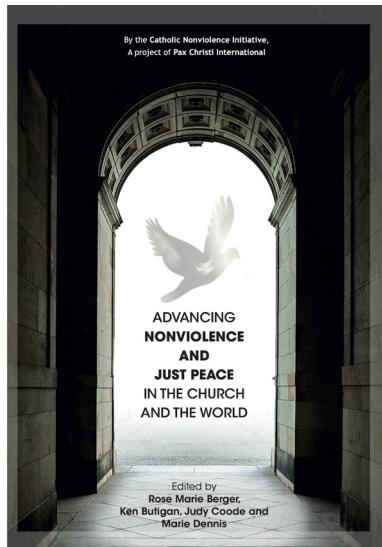
emergent global method for social transformation-offers humankind a powerful way forward in the midst of these massive worldwide challenges.

The modern term "nonviolence" names a central dimension of the vision and mission of Jesus: the thorough rejection of violence combined with the power of unconditional love in action. At the core of Christian nonviolence stands the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus' blueprint, vision and instruction for mature discipleship. He showed us how to live nonviolence, even in the midst of violence and oppression, by calling us to love our enemies, to not kill, to put down the sword, to respond actively to the cry of the poor, and to put sacrificial love into action. The paschal mystery of Jesus's Cross and Resurrection lays at the heart of Gospel nonviolence. Like justice, peace, mercy and reconciliation, nonviolence is at the core of our identity as Christians and constitutive to our life of faith.

As the global community struggles to respond to the short- and long-term crises of our time, a fundamental shift is needed from systems of exploitation and domination toward a new order of universal communion. What is required in this age is a revolution in consciousness – a shift from the "old story" to a new, nonviolent default-in which the infinite worth of every person is honored, the earth is healed, and the primordial unity of all beings is recognized and acted upon.

Nonviolence is a process for nurturing such an ecological conversion to right relationships among humans and between humans and the rest of the natural world. As a universal ethic, nonviolence offers the Church a theological, pastoral and strategic foundation for the long-term work of struggling for and building the future envisioned in *Laudato Si'*. Each of us is called to deepen the journey to this nonviolent future, especially in the midst of this moment of crisis and opportunity.¶

Faith in Action: Watch the 45-minute film "The Third Harmony" <http://b.link/thirdharmony> that was presented during the retreat.



To learn more about nonviolence, explore *Advancing Nonviolence and Just Peace in the Church and the World*, a volume of essays by nonviolence practitioners and scholars published by Pax Christi International.

World Needs U.S. to Join COVAX Campaign

Questions around how COVID-19 vaccines will be distributed, to whom they will become available, and at what cost, pose challenging human rights concerns.

The global plan to deliver COVID-19 vaccines to 20 percent of populations in poorer countries in 2021 was reportedly at “very high” risk of failure in early December primarily due to the lack of funding commitments from the United States and China. After intense lobbying by public health and humanitarian experts, Congress included \$4 billion for GAVI, the international vaccine alliance co-leading the plan, in the final stimulus package of the year.

Now all eyes look to the Biden administration to keep the momentum going, even as the United States and other wealthy nations have reserved the majority of vaccines available – far more than their population size require, according to a new report by Amnesty International. On Dec. 29, the Vatican issued a joint statement to “remind world leaders that vaccines must be provided to all fairly and equitably, prioritizing those most in need.”

The majority of low- and middle-income countries will get the vaccine through GAVI’s COVAX Advanced Market Commitment (AMC), a global plan to ensure fair and equitable access to vaccines – which the Trump administration refused to join, partly due to its connection to the WHO. President-elect Joe Biden has not officially committed to joining COVAX but his team has reportedly met with those leading the effort.

On December 18, COVAX announced that they have met their goal to secure 2 billion vaccine doses but they still need \$133 million for distributing and storing the doses and \$4.6 billion to secure other vaccines when they are approved.

A risk assessment by Citigroup warned the effort might fall short and some countries might not see a vaccine until 2024. How countries distribute the vaccine internally is another question of equity. It will determine who can most fully participate in society, whether that be within a city or at an international meeting such as the 2021 UN climate talks.

Intellectual property rights present another barrier to access an affordable, timely and quality vaccine. The WTO’s Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights provisions allow for some flexibilities on patents if they are in the public interest.

The Holy See spoke in favor of a proposal to waive intellectual property barriers at the October WTO meeting. The United States and the E.U. opposed the waiver. After public and private pressure, including from the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns, the United States remained silent on the issue at a December WTO meeting, signaling a willingness to allow such a waiver in the near future. §

Weakened Anti-Corruption Rule Favors Oil Industry

On December 16, the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) adopted a final rule that takes the teeth out of an important reform meant to end corruption in the resource extraction industry.

Section 1504 of the Dodd-Frank financial reform act, also known as the Cardin-Lugar amendment, received bipartisan praise in 2010 for empowering communities and investors to hold governments and extractive industry companies accountable for the ways they contribute to corruption and inequality in resource-rich developing countries. It went on to become the global standard adopted by 30 other countries. But nearly a decade on, the U.S. has yet to implement it and with a new rule adopted by the SEC on December 16, activists say it has lost its power.

The law required oil, gas, and mining companies to report payments made to host governments – payments many saw as bribes – in exchange for the right to extract natural resources. Activists around the world say the payments support corrupt governments and dictatorships, conflicts and human trafficking.

With the new rule adopted by the SEC on December 16, companies are not required to disclose payments

on a project-by-project basis, thus rendering Section 1504 powerless at holding corrupt companies and governments accountable.

This is the third rule that the SEC has developed in response to lobbying by a small group of companies within the American Petroleum Institute, the largest U.S. trade association for the oil and gas industry. In 2013, the Institute won a lawsuit vacating a 2012 rule. The Republican-controlled Congress, in one of its first acts under the Trump administration, overturned a second rule in 2016, using a little known deregulatory law called the Congressional Review Act.

The faith community and global advocates have long sought implementation of Section 1504. U.S. advocates and legal experts are considering next steps they or a Biden administration can take to return Section 1504 to its original intent, to bring transparency and end corruption in resource-rich countries where the majority of people live in poverty. §

HIV/AIDS Response During the Pandemic

Maryknoll Fr. Rick Bauer in Kenya shares this message from the Interfaith Health Platform.

World AIDS Day is commemorated on the 1st of December each year as a time to honor the memory of the people we have lost, give thanks for the progress we have made and commit ourselves anew to ensuring that no one is left behind. The 2020 theme selected by UNAIDS, “global solidarity, shared responsibility,” embraces a renewed consciousness and commitment in promoting the right to health of all, and it recognizes the multi-dimensional aspects of global health while underscoring that “no one country can do it alone.”

In 2020, the world’s attention has been on the COVID-19 pandemic and on how pandemics affect lives and livelihoods. Yet, HIV is not over. 38 million people globally are living with HIV. Every day, men, women and children become infected with HIV and many still lack access to quality treatment.

The UN agency UNAIDS warns that the pandemic has pushed the world’s AIDS response even further off track, and that 2020 targets are being missed. It urges countries to learn from the lessons of underinvesting in healthcare and to step up global action to end AIDS and other global health emergencies.

Citing new data showing the pandemic’s long-term impact on global HIV response, UNAIDS says that there could be up to nearly 300,000 additional new HIV infec-

tions between now and 2022, and up to 148,000 more AIDS-related deaths.

COVID-19 and HIV show that health is interlinked with other issues, such as reducing inequalities; promoting human rights, social protection and justice; and ensuring economic growth and equity in distribution of health resources. COVID-19 has also been a wake-up call: an opportunity to do things differently, better, and together.

In a new report, “Prevailing against pandemics by putting people at the centre,” UNAIDS is calling on countries to make far greater investments in global pandemic responses and adopt a new set of bold, ambitious but achievable HIV targets. Joint efforts and actions by faith leaders, groups and communities are needed to contribute to reaching these bold targets. Indeed, religious and spiritual leaders can be a strong voice in favor of supportive legal, regulatory and social environments that advance human rights, gender equality, social justice goals, and call for successful strategies for HIV prevention, testing, treatment, care and support. §

Faith in Action: Endorse the 13 Million Campaign, a global interfaith campaign to promote access to health services to the million of children, women and men living with HIV who are not yet on antiretroviral treatment: <http://bit.ly/13MilAids>

World Day of Peace 2021 Message

On January 1, Pope Francis issued the 54th annual World Day of Peace message, “A Culture of Care as a Path to Peace.”

In the 2021 World Day of Peace message, Pope Francis returns to the theme of fraternity, the focus of his first World Day of Peace message in 2014 and of his most recent encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti*. Like the encyclical, the 2021 message lifts up the integral whole of Catholic social teaching as an expression of Christian care for all people, particularly in the light and wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. In presenting fraternal care as a path to peace, the pope highlights the connection between social injustice and violent conflict, and the critical role of women at all levels of peacebuilding.

Francis calls on leaders in all sectors – the state, business, science and academics, international organizations, and media – to adopt the principles of Catholic social teaching: the dignity and rights of each person, the common good, solidarity, and the protection of creation, explaining that these can act as “a ‘compass,’ capable of pointing out a common direction, and ensuring ‘a more humane future.’” Significantly, he asserts that “[this] can

only come about through a widespread and meaningful involvement on the part of women, in the family and in every social, political and institutional sphere.”

The pope draws a direct connection between violent conflict and humanitarian crises such as mass migration, economic collapse, lack of access to education, and famine. For the third time in recent months, Francis repeats Pope Paul VI’s call for a global fund, in which a portion of each country’s military budget would be set aside for economic development and – most urgently during the global food crisis caused by the pandemic – to fight hunger.

Francis’ vision of care stems directly from the belief that all people are children of God, and therefore sisters and brothers to one another. Where there is violence, the pope calls on peacemakers to promote healing and renewed encounter. Harmony among all people and with creation is the only path forward: “Peace and violence cannot dwell together.” §

Resources

- 1) Sign up to attend the **Ecumenical Advocacy Days virtual gathering April 18-21**, for which this year's theme is the intersection of climate and racial justice: <https://advocacydays.org/>
- 2) Read our office's letters to the **incoming Biden administration** outlining recommendations for policy: <http://bit.ly/3hGmzHu>
- 3) Watch a recording of the webinar "**Faith Speaks to UN**," featuring **Sr. Marvie Misolas, MM**, exploring the ways religious actors influence proceedings at the UN: <https://bit.ly/2X8Jq55>
- 4) Read this briefing report from the Center for Migration Studies, "**Improving the U.S. Immigration System in the First Year of the Biden Administration**," <http://bit.ly/CMSBiden1>
- 5) Read this report from the Migration Policy Institute, "**At the Starting Gate: The Incoming Biden Administration's Immigration Plans:**" <http://bit.ly/MPIBiden1>
- 6) Explore this series of events from the UN on **climate change and food systems adaptation**: <https://bit.ly/34nz3hX>
- 7) Watch a webinar recording from the Carnegie Endowment on International Peace, "**Nuclear Ban Treaty 'What Now?'**" webinar: <http://bit.ly/NBTWhatnow>
- 8) Watch a webinar recording of an event for the 20th anniversary of the UN resolution on women, peace, and security, hosted by **Pax Christi International and Miriam College** in the Philippines: <http://bit.ly/PICMIRCol>
- 9) Watch a recording of a webinar on ***Fratelli Tutti* in the context of the Philippines**, hosted by Ateneo de Manila University's John J. Carroll Institute on Church and Social Issues, along with the NGO Simbahang Lingkod ng Bayan: <http://bit.ly/2WmRVJs>
- 10) Read about this new book on water defenders in El Salvador, "**The Water Defenders: How Ordinary People Saved a Country from Corporate Greed**," by Robin Broad and John Cavannaugh: <http://bit.ly/3b7vAbl>
- 11) Read "**Human Rights Education as the Solution to Religious Persecution**" by United States Institute of Peace to explore how educating youth about human

rights can increase respect for religious pluralism: <http://bit.ly/3r6mvVD>

- 12) Over 300 organizations have signed on to a policy framework for the Biden administration for addressing the **root causes of migration in Central America**: <http://bit.ly/RootCauFrm>
- 13) Read the new report, "**Venezuela's Complex Humanitarian Crisis: Humanitarian Response, Challenges for Civil Society**," from the Washington Office for Latin America: <https://bit.ly/34lbMNi>
- 14) Explore this infographic from the UN's UNEP Gap Report. This yearly report measures the commitment-action gap between what the international community should be doing to **mitigate climate change** and what it is doing. <http://bit.ly/3nwu3Pk>
- 15) Read this article from the Washington Office on Latin America published in Americas Quarterly entitled "**Can Francisco Sagasti Hold Peru Together?**" <https://bit.ly/3amRx60>
- 16) Read this report by Center for Migration Studies and Refugee Council USA, "**Charting a Course to Rebuild and Strengthen the US Refugee Admissions Program**," <https://cmsny.org/publications/rebuilding-usrap/>
- 17) Read the 75th Anniversary Issue of the **Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists**. The issue will be free-access online until February 7, 2020: <https://thebulletin.org/magazine/2020-12/>
- 18) Read this report in the Africa Focus Bulletin, "**To build back better on Africa policy**, the Biden administration needs new thinking on priorities." <http://bit.ly/37u4iT>
- 19) Watch the recording of a webinar, "**No Warming, No War**," hosted by the Institute of Policy Studies on the connections between **militarism and the climate crisis**: <https://youtu.be/DdK40kOkpls>
- 20) January is human trafficking prevention month. Explore this **toolkit on ending human trafficking** from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops: <https://bit.ly/35pi0YD>