



Edmund Rice Centre
Awareness. Advocacy. Action

ERC JUSTICE UPDATES

July 2020 No.26

*God grant me the serenity to accept the people I cannot change
Courage to change the one I can
And wisdom to know that one is me.
Grant me patience for the changes that take time.
An appreciation for all that I have.
A tolerance for those with different struggles
And strength to get up and try again
One day at a time with you Lord God and others
God please set aside everything I think I know about myself,
others and you Lord God, my needs, my desires, my spiritual path, my healing;
Others' needs, desires, spiritual path & healing;
YOUR plans for all creation Lord God.
For an open mind, and new experience of myself, others, and you Lord God.
Please help me see truth, beauty & goodness.*

Dear All,

Welcome to the 26th Edition of ERC Justice Updates your regular newsletter from the Edmund Rice Centre, on all sorts of matters relating to human rights, first nations and environmental justice.

As one wonders where and what this world and all of creation is taking us, one must remember to - in the words of Pope Francis.

**Warm the hearts of the people. Walk through the dark night with them.
Pope Francis.**

In this time of great upheaval & change Justice Updates will be coming to you every fortnight - please send us anything you would like included. Your suggestions, comments both positive and negative or indeed any information you think would be good to include, it is all much appreciated.

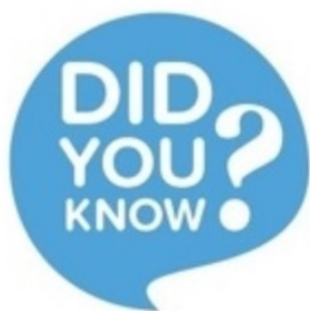
Don't forget to forward Justice Updates onto anyone or let me know their email address and I will subscribe them.

Previous editions are available at <https://www.erc.org.au/newsletters>

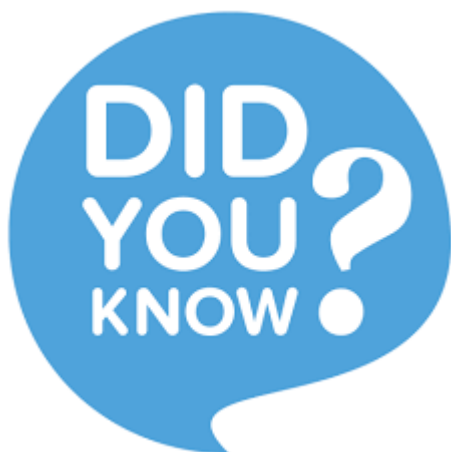
Peace

Marita

Communications Project Officer,
Marita McInerney



On Friday 10th July 2020, the Australian Government will have detained men & women on Nauru and Manus Island/Port Moresby for 2520 days.



A Guardian article on 2nd July 2020 by Lisa Cox on the issue of Land-clearing in NSW shows:

- Land-clearing in NSW has rises nearly 60% since the state relaxed its native vegetation laws in 2017.
- A 2018 report shows 60,800 of woody vegetation was cleared in 2018, up from 58,000 hectares the previous year and an average of

38,800 hectares between 2009 and 2017.

- Of this clearing 73% was unexplained, meaning it was referred to NSW government for assessment, either because it was illegal or because approval was not required for clearing.
- About 50% (29,400ha) of the 2018 woody vegetation clearing was for agriculture, 23,300ha for forestry & 8,100ha for infrastructure projects.
- The NSW Environment Minister said he was concerned by the numbers and "following the bushfires, it's more important than ever to protect habitat for native species, especially koalas".
- A NSW Independent MP called on the government to investigate, saying the data showed biodiversity and land-clearing reform in the state had resulted in "rampant deforestation".
- "There is little wonder we face the the extinction of the koala in NSW if this level of deforestation is being allowed under this government".

Some of the findings in an inquiry entitled 'Koala populations and habitat in New South Wales' by a NSW Upper House Committee released in June 2020 were:

- Following the 2019-2020 bushfires and the general trend of the population decline, the current estimated number of 36,00 koalas in NSW is outdated and unreliable.
- That, given the scale of loss to koala populations across NSW as a result of the 2019-2020 bushfires and without urgent government intervention to protect habitat and address all other threats, the koala will become extinct in New south Wales before 2050.
- The future of koalas in the wild in NSW cannot be guaranteed unless the NSW Government takes stronger action to prevent further loss of koala habitat.
- Climate change is having a severe impact on koala populations by affecting the quality of their food and habitat.
- An estimated 24% of koala habitat on public land has been severely impacted across the State, but in some parts there has been a devastating loss of up to 81%.

Read More: https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/jul/02/land-clearing-new-south-wales-rises-60-per-cent-since-laws-relaxed?utm_term=RWRpdG9yaWFsX0d1YXJkaWFuVG9kYXIBVVMtMjAwNzAy&utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&CMP=GTAU_email&utm_campaign=GuardianTodayAUS



A demonstrator attends a Black Lives Matter protest to express solidarity with US protestors in Sydney on June 6, 2020 and demand an end to frequent Aboriginal deaths in custody in Australia. Photo: AFP

Time for Australia to look itself in the mirror - Phil Glendenning ***Australia cannot ignore the reality about its indigenous people***

Phil Glendenning, Times of Malta, 9th June 2020

Nearly 30 years after a Royal Commission into Aboriginal deaths in custody, Australia still has not acted on its recommendations. Yet, Australians took to the streets in great numbers in abhorrence at George Floyd's murder at the hands of the police in the US, and the ongoing horror of Aboriginal deaths in custody in this country. Since the Royal Commission ended in 1991, 432 First Nations People have died in custody. No one has been convicted as a result of any of these deaths.

Today, too many Australians still do not comprehend the impact colonisation and dispossession have had, and continue to have, on First Nations People in this land. So much was taken away, often violently. Land, language, culture and children were taken away from peoples who had lived on this continent and its islands for thousands and thousands of years. This is not just historical. Just last week mining firm Rio Tinto destroyed a spiritual space that had been held sacred for 46,000 years. Such actions of disregard are news for a day or so and then the caravan rolls on.

In the wake George Floyd's killing, we witnessed the mobilisation of thousands on the streets around the world, while Australians watched on their screens as a policeman in Sydney kicked away the feet of a handcuffed Aboriginal boy and violently slammed his head into the ground. Why? Because the child swore at him. Radio shock jocks rushed to support his right to violently injure a teenager because the boy said something rude. Really.

As a global community, it is important that we support the rights of African-Americans who have endured everything from slavery to second class citizenry and discrimination in their own country. Given Australia's own history, now might be the time to trigger the rest of the country into looking at the systematic discrimination that continues to this day – and for Australians to use their voice and vote to change it.

Recently, the government announced that those most at risk from the COVID-19 virus included anyone over the age of 70, except for Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander people over the age of 50. That 20-year gap - a national report card on the reality of disadvantage and exclusion - was published on a Government website, it was scantily reported and no shock jock was outraged, or even commented. It hardly raised an eyebrow.

Australians have become accustomed to the fact that First Nations people are primarily perceived by the rest of the country, the non-indigenous majority population, through the prism of deficit and disorder. This has to change.

Today, we need to face and accept the truth. White Australians are the descendants of those who came across the seas, primarily in boats, who took away the land, took away the language, tried to eliminate the culture, and took away the children.

This colonial fact cascades down the ages until it finds itself manifest, again, in the hands of a policeman on the streets of Waterloo in suburban Sydney, as he bashes an Aboriginal child. This continuing relic of colonialism says to that young Aboriginal person, and to all Aboriginal people, that you are less equal than me, less human than me. Less than the rest of us. That's the cold and ugly face of bigotry in 2020.

Today, we are at a tipping point. A portal. Unless and until we come to terms with the reality of this continuing systemic disregard for this continent's First Peoples, and work to make amends for it, provide redress for it, learn from it, and build something better, Australia will find itself another 30 years down the track having the same unresolved discussion.

Phil Glendenning is the Director of the Edmund Rice Centre in Sydney and the current president of the Refugee Council of Australia.

Read More: <https://timesofmalta.com/tags/listing/Human%20rights>



Award winning journalist Allan Clarke has investigated unsolved Aboriginal deaths in regional Australia. (ABC News: Greg Nelson)

Covering black deaths in Australia led me to a breakdown, but that's the position this country puts Aboriginal journalists in

Allan Clarke, ABC Background Briefing, 28th June 2020

I'm a Muruwari man from far-western NSW.

We're strong stock. Muruwari literally means to fall with a fighting club in your hand. That's what it feels like I've been doing all my life and as a journalist — fighting unfair battles that no-one wants me to win.

I've spent most of my career reporting on Indigenous issues. Most of those stories have been about the way Aboriginal people are treated in our judicial system.

Last year I stepped away temporarily because I didn't feel right, there was something wrong.

I moved to Paris, where I'm now living and working.

Looking back on it now, it was a breakdown.

To be honest, I just couldn't keep reporting on all the injustice levelled at my community and that's because I am also part of that community and these things are happening to my family.

The final blow came at the end of reporting for six years on the unsolved murder of Gomeri teenager Mark Haines.

The exhaustion of trying to get some justice for Mark's family and trying to convince the public, as well as the police that his life mattered, ate away at me until I had nothing left to give.

The sheer scale of injustice in the case was and remains breathtaking. The depths of despair and grief in that family was and is bottomless.

The reality was that Mark was a black teenager who no-one cared about outside of his family and community and his story was just one of many.

Death, after death, after death ...

I'd report them and then return home to see my own family experiencing the same injustices, day after day after day.

I was becoming numb to the way Australia discards our mob like we're roadkill and I was haunted by the ghosts of my people who have had their lives snatched from them in custody.

But all these months later, it was on my couch in Paris that I opened Facebook and saw the George Floyd vision.

It was death in real-time. It was triggering.

Read More: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-06-28/covering-black-deaths-in-australia-led-me-to-a-breakdown/12390416>

YOU DON'T GET TO BE
A VOICE FOR THE VOICELESS,
BECAUSE THERE IS
NO SUCH THING.
ALL, EVEN THE MUTE,
HAVE A HOLY VOICE
THAT STIRS AND PLEADS
WITHIN THEM.
OUR TASK IS
TO AMPLIFY VOICE,
NOT REPLACE IT.

@blackliturgies



A boat carries ethnic Rohingya off North Aceh, Indonesia, on June 24. Credit: AP

Australia urged to help Rohingya refugees in limbo

James Massola and Anthony Galloway, SMH, 30th June 2020

Australia and Indonesia have been urged to lead a push to avoid a humanitarian crisis after almost 100 Rohingya refugees were rescued when their boat broke down.

The refugees, who are part of Myanmar's persecuted Rohingya ethnic minority, were rescued by local fishermen off Indonesia's Aceh province after the boat appeared to be sinking last week.

Indonesia Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi said the 94 people - comprising 49 women, 15 men, 10 boys and 20 girls were victims of people smugglers.

"We give these people emergency assistance. At the same time we will continue to work with countries in the region through various mechanisms on early detection measures as well as to prevent boat people to take unsafe journeys at sea from their country of origin," she said.

The Sydney Morning Herald and *The Age* last month revealed the [United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees](#) was urging Australia and Indonesia, as co-chairs of an anti-people-smuggling forum known as the Bali Process, to activate high-level discussions between members to avoid a repeat of a 2015 disaster in which hundreds of asylum seekers died in the Andaman Sea.

But Amnesty Australia's Refugee Coordinator, Graham Thom, said Indonesia and Australia — as co-chairs of the Bali Process — needed to step up and do more to manage the flow of Rohingyas fleeing persecution in Myanmar's Rakhine state.

In practice, he said, that meant establishing search and rescue protocols for the countries in the region that would see people disembark boats at designated areas and, most importantly, a mechanism that would lead to people being resettled.

The alternative is to let people stay at sea to drown and that's clearly unacceptable.

Dr Thom said the best solution, in the longer term, would be for the Rohingya who fled Myanmar and are sheltering in Cox's Bazaar, Bangladesh, to return home. But at present that wasn't an option and governments like Australia simply won't settle Rohingya who have fled to Malaysia or Indonesia.

"Australia could offer an important safety valve and say to Indonesia and Malaysia if you let people land, we will get at least some people to safety," he said, "but we have taken that off the table".

"The alternative is to let people stay at sea to drown and that's clearly unacceptable."

Read More: <https://www.smh.com.au/world/asia/australia-urged-to-help-rohingya-refugees-in-limbo-20200626-p556fr.html>

No Child Left Behind – Refugee Council of Australia

There are currently around 16,000 children in families seeking protection in Australia. Many people seeking asylum have lost their jobs as a result of COVID-19, as they often work in the service sectors worst affected. People seeking asylum are not eligible for the JobSeeker or JobKeeper payments, like many other workers. Some don't even have access to Medicare. The Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA) is bringing together a coalition of educators, carers and students are working to put pressure on the Federal government to ensure adequate support is provided for people in this situation. COVID-19 does not discriminate, and neither should access to a safety net or assistance during this time. We are in this together and there must be support for all who need it, regardless of visa status.

RCOA is collecting signatories from educators, parents and students, and the relevant bodies representing them, for a joint statement directed to the Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Minister for Families and Social Services Anne Ruston. For members of the general public you can support the campaign by signing our petition. Both can be accessed here: <https://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/no-child-left-behind/>

If you are part of a local Teachers Association or Education Union Branch, you can also pass a motion in support of the campaign. [We have prepared a draft motion you can use here.](#)



Eyes on Offshore Facebook Post 5th July 2020

Hayder Jasseb, Kangaroo Point detention

This is a message from a broken heart inside detention.

If anyone is wondering why we came to Australia, if anyone thinks our motivations were shallow or superficial, please open your heart and listen.

We imagined that Australia was a place of freedom and safety. We saw Australia as a welcoming light at the end of a dark tunnel. We travelled over treacherous seas, kept brave only by the thought of being rescued and loved by Australia.

When our engines cut out and we drifted under the hot sun, thirsty and terrified.

When our boats were sinking, or the waves crashed upon us. When we looked into the eyes of our friends and family as we lost our grip on them in panicked oceans. We thought... Australia! Please save us, please open your arms like a mother's embrace and let us feel safe for just a moment.

It has been 7 years, but our longing has not come to an end. The boats that brought us to you, Australia, are still in our dreams. They knock gently against your jetties, bob around in your harbours, moor in your offshore locations, asking permission to come to your shores, to share your boundless plains. We only wanted the chance to give our lives to you, Australia. We only wanted to give you the work from our hands and the love from our hearts. Why did you take 7 years of nothing from us, Australia? Why did you take 7 years of our age, our health, our hope and our dreams, but rejected the love and loyalty we offered from our eager hearts?

Imam Ali said, "Be like the flower that gives its fragrance even to the hand that crushes it."

Even after all this... our petals have not lost their scent.



Caesar Act ushers in a new phase of suffering for Syrians

Daniel Sleiman, Eureka Street, Vol. 30, No.12, 25th June 2020

America has lost the proxy war in Syria and is now looking at punishing ordinary Syrians for the actions of the Syrian government. The so called 'Caesar Act', officially known as the [Caesar Syrian Civilian Protection Act](#), aims to cut off multilateral or direct commerce with Syria's ruling Baath party, effectively inducing record inflation, poverty and market exclusion.

Rebuilding the country after ten years of fighting would be near impossible if external contractors cannot be engaged without American economic retribution. That is effectively what the Caesar Act is designed to do, target the rebuilding of infrastructure, energy and state services. That means schools, hospitals and electricity plants.

Neighbouring Lebanon, which is facing its own economic collapse, would benefit from the rebuilding of Syria as one of its main trading partners, as such many Lebanese see America's actions as also targeting their livelihoods. In the past few months American dollars have been withdrawn from

Lebanese banks at record rates, which has led to the collapse of the Lebanese lira. Both Syria and Lebanon are now struggling to get access to the US dollar making it extremely difficult to trade internationally and access commodities.

The leverage America has with the US dollar being the reserve global currency forms part of its economic sanctions regime which has been in place since at least the Cuban missile crisis. Cuba, Iran, Venezuela, North Korea and Iraq, to name a few, have all and continue to be targeted by economic sanctions, often unilaterally by the US. As of 2019 America has [almost 8000](#) sanctions in place globally. In Iraq alone US sanctions in the 1990s caused the death of an estimated 500,000 Iraqi kids. Madeline Albright, US ambassador to the UN at the time, said the price was worth it.

Sanctions rarely accomplish the desired effect of changing a government's political stance or their actions. One only needs to look at countries like Cuba, which have been under embargo for more than 50 years, to realise that their effectiveness is dubious and their consequences to ordinary people severe. In the age of the COVID-19 for example, sanctions on Iran meant that people and health professionals could not access essential medical supplies and medicines. In a [paper published](#) by the Peterson Institute for International

Economics, it was estimated that US sanctions in 1995 cost the American economy \$15 to \$19 billion in lost export revenue which translated to a loss of 200,000 plus jobs. In today's sanction heavy global economy that loss is likely to be much higher.

The war in Syria was however part of America's larger project for the region, the so called new Middle East, which started with Iraq 2003, Lebanon in 2006, then Libya 2011 and was to continue beyond Syria into Lebanon again and eventually Iran.

Basically, a reshaping of the power dynamics was being played out to remove

any resistance to American hegemony in the region with the help of the petromonarchies in the gulf namely Saudi Arabia and Qatar for money and Islamist fighters and Jordan and Turkey for logistics.

'America's war of attrition against Syria has destroyed the country but not overthrown the government.'

Had Syria been defeated by the Islamist fighters, who hijacked the reform movement, Syria today would resemble Libya, a country run by mercenaries and warlords. While the Western media was cheering the 'moderate rebels' in Syria, the Islamists were chanting 'Christians to Beirut and Alawis to the grave'. Ethnic and religious minorities would have been either driven out or killed by the so called 'moderates'. Father Frans Van der Lugt, a Jesuit priest, was killed in 2014 for speaking out against the violent opposition groups in Syria as was Sheik al Bouti along with 40 others in a mosque in 2013. To suggest that these violent actors operating in Syria were ordinary protestors discontent with the authoritarian government seems naïve.

Read more: https://www.eurekastreet.com.au/article/caesar-act-ushers-in-a-new-phase-of-suffering-for-syrians?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Eureka%20Street%20Daily%20-%20Thursday%2025%20June%202020&utm_content=Eureka%20Street%20Daily%20-%20Thursday%2025%20June%202020+CID_841d8a82434204f58b735708ca8b7b8d&utm_source=Jescom%20Newsletters&utm_term=READ%20MORE#



The President of International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent, Francesco Rocca, speaks during a press conference on Greece-Turkey border near Kastanies, on the Greek side on March 5, 2020. (Photo: Sakis Mitrolidis/ AFP via Getty Images)

As Pandemic Soars in US and Brazil, Red Cross Federation Chief Slams Trump and Bolsonaro for Anti-Science Responses

Andrea Germanos, staff writer, July 2nd 2020

The remarks from International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies president Francesco Rocca for lawmakers to heed science came as Trump said the coronavirus is "going to sort of just disappear."

The head of the Red Cross federation on Wednesday expressed grave concern about the continuing spread of the coronavirus in the Americas and criticized Brazil and U.S. government leaders for their disastrous science-rejecting responses to the pandemic thus far.

Francesco Rocca, president of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), made the remarks at a virtual press conference in Geneva where he warned that "we haven't yet reached the peak of this outbreak."

Rocca said the effects of partisan rhetoric and policies out-of-line with science on the pandemic were clear.

"America as a continent is paying the highest price for this kind of division or not following the advice coming from the scientific community," he said. President Donald Trump in the U.S. and Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro have faced sustained criticism over their handling of the coronavirus. Bolsonaro, who notably dismissed it as a "little flu," has, like Trump, refused to wear a face mask in public gatherings.

The two countries lead the world in coronavirus cases. As of press time, the Johns Hopkins tracker showed the U.S. with the highest number of confirmed cases—over 2.6 million. Brazil is a distant second with over 1.4 million confirmed cases. The countries also have the highest number of Covid-19 related deaths; the U.S. has had over 128,000 such deaths and Brazil over 60,000.

According to Rocca, Bolsonaro "underestimated the consequences of Covid, and his country is living the consequences."

"If the scientific community is saying that it is important to avoid to shake hands, and to wear masks, I think that the leaders should follow and listen," Rocca said when asked about Trump's mask refusal.

Rocca added that other world leaders too "have been irresponsible" in their

response to the coronavirus pandemic and said politicians must "start learning to follow the advice coming from the scientific community."

Rocca's remarks came the same day Trump said the virus would "disappear."

"I think we're gonna be very good with the coronavirus," Trump told Fox Business. "I think that at some point that's going to sort of just disappear, I hope."

The U.S. is on a string of record-setting single-day totals for the coronavirus, hitting a fourth record on Tuesday with over 48,000 new cases and over 50,000 cases on Wednesday.

According to the nation's top infectious disease expert, the daily figure could go even higher.

Speaking before a Senate committee hearing Tuesday, Dr. Anthony Fauci said he "would not be surprised if we go up to 100,000 a day if this does not turn around."

Read More: https://www.commondreams.org/news/2020/07/02/pandemic-soars-us-and-brazil-red-cross-federation-chief-slams-trump-and-bolsonaro?fbclid=IwAR07ZzfRbrsl-3j_X3SW7Brzxw4-wZG9yEDR1ukcYmX87xaJTg-YvX97pHU





Their fate isn't sealed: Pacific nations can survive climate change – if locals take the lead

Rachel Clissold, Annah Piggott-McKellar, Karen E. McNamara, Patrick E. Nunn, Roselyn Kumar & Ross Westoby, The Conversation, 30th June 2020

They contribute only [0.03% of global carbon emissions](#), but small island developing states, particularly in the Pacific, are at [extreme risk](#) to the threats of climate change.

[Our study](#), published today in the journal Nature Climate Change, provides the first mega-assessment on the progress of [community-based adaptation](#) in four Pacific Island countries: the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati and Vanuatu.

Pacific Island nation communities have always been resilient, surviving on islands in the middle of oceans [for more than 3,000 years](#). We can learn [a lot](#) from their adaptation methods, but climate change is an unprecedented challenge.

Effective adaptation is critical for ensuring Pacific Islanders continue living fulfilling lives in their homelands. For Australia's part, we must ensure we're supporting their diverse abilities and aspirations.

Short-sighted adaptation responses

Climate change brings wild, fierce and [potentially more frequent](#) hazards. In recent months, [Cyclone Harold tore a strip](#) through multiple Pacific countries, killing dozens of people, levelling homes and cutting communication lines. It may take Vanuatu [a year to recover](#).

[Expert commentary](#) from 2019 highlighted that many adaptation responses in the Pacific have been short-sighted and, at times, even inadequate. The remains of failed [seawalls](#), for example, litter the shorelines of many island countries, yet remain a popular adaptive solution. We cannot afford another few decades of this.

International climate aid commitments from rich western countries barely [scratch the surface](#) of what's needed, yet it's likely funding [will dry up](#) for regions like the Pacific as governments scramble together money for their own countries' escalating adaptation costs.

This includes Australia, that has long been, and continues to be, the [leading donor](#) to the region. Our government contributed about 40% of total aid between 2011 and 2017 and yet [refuses](#) to take meaningful action on climate change.

Understanding what successful adaptation should look like in developing island states is urgent to ensure existing funding creates the best outcomes.

Read More: https://theconversation.com/their-fate-isnt-sealed-pacific-nations-can-survive-climate-change-if-locals-take-the-lead-136709?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20June%2030%202020%20-%201664616034&utm_content=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20June%2030%202020%20-%201664616034+CID_64ca2aee4964f65d3eab25c6f847147e&utm_source=campaign_monitor&utm_term=Their%20fate%20isnt%20sealed%20Pacific%20nations%20can%20survive%20climate%20change%20%20if%20locals%20take%20the%20lead



Timu'a and Punipua Siu with their baby son Tipaulaofaele in Safotu village, Samoa. Their son Opalameko also died shortly after his MMR vaccination. Photograph: Tom Maguire/The Guardian

'It's broken me into a million pieces': six months on from Samoa's deadly measles outbreak

Jacqui Thornton, The Guardian, 5th July 2020

In the shadow of the epidemic that claimed the lives of 83 children, families live with constant reminders of loss.

Early on the morning of 6 July 2018, two mothers living in neighbouring villages on remote Savai'i island in [Samoa](#) took their year-old babies for their routine measles, mumps and rubella vaccinations.

The MMR vaccinations were safe but the nurses administering them – an investigation would later find – wrongly mixed the vaccine with an expired anaesthetic instead of water. Minutes after each injection, the babies stopped breathing.

The deaths sent shockwaves across the tiny archipelagic nation, not just on Savai'i, the largest island, but also on Upolu, home to the capital, Apia, and most of the country's 200,000 people.

Opalameko's short life

The home Punipua Siu shares with her husband, Timu'a, overlooks Safotu rural district hospital. The view from her window is a reminder of the day she

took her baby son Opalameko, her fourth child, to be vaccinated there. They had celebrated his first birthday two days before he died.

Families here keep the departed close by. It is customary in Samoa to have graves in home gardens, decorated with plastic flowers and photos, or in small, neighbourhood cemeteries.

Opalameko is buried behind the family home in a simple grave next to the tomb where his grandfather lies. His nickname, Opa, is drawn into the concrete.

Two years on, there is healing. Punipua has a new baby, Tipaulaofaele, but when it was time for his routine vaccinations she was terrified. Her mother and husband persuaded her – and her new son was treated in the room where Opa had died.

“When I gave birth in November I thanked God for the gift of the child,” Punipua says. “We have managed to move on but we can never forget the one we lost.

Opa’s death – and that of Lannacallysta Tuisuesue the same morning – fuelled widespread distrust in Samoa about the injections, a fear capitalised upon by a growing anti-vaccination movement online. Across the archipelago, an already-low vaccination rate plummeted further.

The government suspended its national immunisation programme while the investigation was conducted. It wasn’t until April 2019 that the programme resumed again – eight months after the deaths – leaving [thousands of infants unprotected](#) from the disease when a measles outbreak hit later that year.

[Eighty-three children died](#) and 1,868 were admitted to hospital. In total, 5,705 were infected.

The grieving parents are stoic, typically saying they have “moved on”.

But the Samoa’s ministry of health believes differently, estimating that 14% were found to be at risk of developing ongoing mental health issues, such as depression, anxiety or post-traumatic stress disorder.

The country’s only psychiatrist, Dr George Leao-Tuitama, who heads the ministry’s mental health unit, says the true figure could be as high as 20% and affected families may turn to alcohol or substance abuse. Some have struggled to return to work.

Six months on from the last outbreak in Samoa, these are the stories of the parents who lost children in the two mis-prepared vaccinations, and the families left devastated by the measles epidemic that followed.

Read More: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jul/05/its-broken-me-into-a-million-pieces-six-months-on-from-samoas-deadly-measles-outbreak?utm_term=RWRpdG9yaWFsX0d1YXJkaWFuVG9kYXIBVVMtMjAwNzA1&utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&CMP=GTAU_email&utm_campaign=Guardia



A cocoa farmer of an agricultural cooperative in Ivory Coast saying it is child-labour free. (AFP or licensors)

Pope: cooperatives for clean energy against climate change

In a tweet to mark the International Day of Cooperatives, Saturday, Pope Francis notes that cooperatives across the globe are making a real difference in the fight against climate change.

Robin Gomes, Vatican News, 4th July 2020

For the past 97 years, the International Day of Cooperatives has been celebrated each year on the first Saturday of July.

Since 1995, the United Nations and the International Cooperative Alliance have chosen the theme of the annual day. The focus for this year is on climate action for sustainable development for a healthier, fairer and more united economy.

In a tweet for Saturday's observance, Pope Francis also focused on the role of cooperatives in the fight against climate change. "In some places, cooperatives are being developed to exploit renewable sources of energy which ensure local self-sufficiency," the Pope wrote on his Twitter account @Pontifex. "They can make a real difference in the fight against climate change, thanks to a strong sense of community and a deep love for the land," he added.

Cooperatives - people-centred development

The aim of the annual celebration is to increase awareness about cooperatives. Being people-centred, not capital-centred, cooperatives distribute wealth in a fairer way. As farms, businesses, or other organizations which are owned and run jointly by members who share the profits or benefits, cooperatives are committed to the sustainable development of their communities, environmentally, socially as well as economically. They support community activities, local sourcing of supplies to benefit the local economy, and decision-making that considers the impact on their communities.

Healthy, social and integral progress

Pope Francis' tweet is an echo from his landmark encyclical *“Laudato Si”*, which addresses issues of justice, peace and development with regard to the use of the goods of creation. He says that technology can be used for a type of progress which is “healthier, more human, more social, more integral”, such as when “cooperatives of small producers adopt less polluting means of production, and opt for a non-consumerist model of life, recreation and community”.

Addressing representatives of the Confederation of Italian Cooperatives on 16 March 2020, the Pope observed that the way of the cooperatives is to “take the lid off” of an economy that risks producing goods but at the cost of social injustice.

Read More: <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2020-07/pope-francis-cooperatives-day-climate-renewable-energy-justice.html>



Public housing estate residents in lock down to be treated with respect

Statement from Catholic Social Services Victoria

5 July 2020

During this time when nine sites across three public housing estates have been completely locked down in two Melbourne suburbs for public health reasons, it is of vital importance that each one of the 3,000+ residents is treated with respect in regard to their inherent dignity.

This decision of lockdown by Government has clearly been made in line with the advice of the Chief Medical Officer and with the intention to benefit our public health — both the health of tenants of these buildings and the health of all of us in Victoria.

We are grateful to those individuals, families and households now locked down in these specific public housing sites as directed by the Victorian Government. Their welfare is of key concern to us during this time.

The Victorian Government has particular responsibility for these individuals and families who they have directed to be house-bound for at least five days and we are appreciative and acknowledge the work and recent announcements of supports that the Government are implementing, including the appointment of Tony Nicholson to assist with the response, who is known and respected in the social services sector. We appreciate that the Government has acknowledged the complexity of many of the situations of individuals, families and households who are residents of these towers.

Catholic social service agencies have served and been a part of the community in North Melbourne and Flemington for many years and are intimately aware of the complex challenges and resilience of many of those who live in, and have created a community around, these high-rise towers.

Catholic social service agencies will continue to cooperatively serve and assist residents at this time. We stand in readiness to work with Government and their designated agencies to provide a person-centered response in line with the Catholic tradition of upholding the dignity and preciousness of each person.

- We call on the Government to ensure that residents are comprehensively informed about the plan after the five days of this lockdown are completed;
- We ask that residents be fully supported with health and social services and material aide and supports required, and that all interactions with

residents are based in an attitude of gratitude and acknowledgement of their difficult situation at this time for the common good of Victoria;

- We ask that the Government to fully utilise the expertise of social service and community organisations for Operation Benessere, particularly agencies and organisations with existing connections to the communities affected;
- We also call for the Government to listen carefully to the residents and their needs. We ask that law enforcement is used with real discretion during this lockdown and that a community development approach is taken alongside this public health directive.

Please contact: joshua.lourensz@css.org.au **Executive Director of Catholic Social Services Victoria, for any further enquiries.**

REFLECTIONS

‘People of religion have no choice in the matter. Where there is injustice and oppression, where people are treated as if they were less than who they are — those created in the image of God — you have no choice but to oppose, and oppose vehemently and oppose with all the force that you have in your being, that injustice and oppression. And so we can't help it if we oppose the obscenity of apartheid, which says that racism is the policy of a particular government. It isn't as if you sit down and say, 'Do I want to, or don't I want to?' If you are a believer you must oppose injustice, whether you are a Muslim, whether you are a Christian, whether you are a Hindu or a Buddhist, because you see, this is one of the common factors in these faiths: not one of them has a low doctrine of human beings.

So each of these religions (Christianity, Judaism and Islam) in its intrinsic nature compels its adherents to be people who strive for justice and for peace and for goodness. If you do not, in the face of injustice, stand up and oppose it, then every night you must confess and say, 'God, I have sinned, because I have disobeyed a fundamental law of our relationship.'

Desmond Tutu, excerpt from ***God Is Not a Christian and Other Provocations***



Ever Inviting, Gifting, Generating

Morning mist gently opens to nature's richness.

Nature ever inviting deeply attentive

committed to its rhythms of days, seasons, climates.

Nature, with mercy's awareness of the yesterdays, opens to new todays.

Nature, ever gifting, addresses its own deep pain.

Fine balances and life-giving rhythms distorted by

People's invasive buildings, spaces, noises, pollution.

Nature ever generating urges

Environments and people: heed and heal

Nature's disturbed beauty, music, spaces.

Engage as one in hope with nature each new today.

Jude Butcher June 23-26, 2020 grateful to nature and its loyal companions who have opened myself and others to nature's pain, gifts and invitations.

Br Jude Butcher cfc AM PhD

We acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples of Australia as the traditional owners and custodians of the land. We commit ourselves to actively work alongside them for reconciliation and justice. We pay our respects to the Elders; past, present and future. As we take our next step we remember the first footsteps taken on this sacred land.

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