



UNA ★ USA
Iowa Division

Advocacy News

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October 2020

Action to Support the UN's 75th Anniversary

by Jim Olson

UNA-USA members and friends in Iowa are urged to contact our members of the U.S. House of Representatives to ask them to be co-sponsors of H.Res. 1024, "Recognizing the 75th Anniversary of the Establishment of the UN." (See contact information on Page 4.)

This resolution recognizes the UN for its role in maintaining international peace and security, applauds the UN for its leadership in responding to global health and humanitarian crises, and urges the President to call on Americans to observe the UN's 75th anniversary.

To read about the 75th Anniversary, go to unausa.org. Click on the words "Take Action" from the top of the page.

Netflix Releases Drama Series "Stateless"

"Stateless," a dramatic series recently released on Netflix, was co-created and produced by Cate Blanchette, a UN Goodwill Ambassador, actress, and director. Blanchette also plays a supporting role. The six-part series covers stories of several detainees in an Australian immigration detention system. Problems with detention are not only an American problem. Worldwide, people are losing their homes, their countries, and their identities. "Stateless" premiered in Australia in March 2020.

Iowa UNA Collaborates with The NAACP

by Debra DeLaet

The Iowa UNA partnered with the NAACP Des Moines Unit Political Action Committee to sponsor a series of posts on Iowa college and university social media accounts to encourage voter registration and voter turnout, especially among young adults in Iowa. Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirms the right to vote, and this initiative represents advocacy in support of voting as a human right. This campaign took place during the week of September 14 and concluded on the first-ever Black Voter Day on September 18, 2020. The campaign was designed by Stacey Berry, a new member of the Iowa UNA Board.

Five Ways to Help Refugees in a Time of Coronavirus

by Caryl Lyons

1. Join an online culture of language exchange with refugees. Refugees have many skills that some are learning to share with others through online cultural exchanges, some involving such skills as cooking new cuisines or learning new languages.

2. Help teach children about the refugee experience and learn alongside them. The UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) has available a free toolkit for parents, teachers, and primary and secondary school students to learn about refugees and migrants. The toolkit has videos, activities, and lesson plans and could be very useful in this time when more families are home-schooling out of necessity. See the UNHCR website: www.unhcr.org

3. Support refugee-owned businesses (or those that support refugees). Consider buying online from refugee artisans.

4. Start a virtual book club that includes books by refugee authors or share books about the refugee experience with younger readers. The UNHCR and the New York (continued on page 2)

Women and Girls: 25 Years after Beijing

by Nancy Porter

Coronavirus affects everyone, but the impact on women, children and minorities is devastating.

Those trapped in an abusive situation have no way to seek help, or go to family clinics. School lunches are not being served. Maternal deaths are on the rise around the world. (See the website for Human Rights Watch, hrw.org)

Women made great progress with support from leaders around the world. With the pandemic, much of this is gone. Around the world and at home, abortion care during this crisis is being prohibited. This puts more peoples' lives at risk. Women have helped their families by becoming farmers and breadwinners. We will slip backward without continued support for education, economic equality, and health. We all need to fight for equal rights.

The website PassBlue, www.passblue.com, an independent coverage of the UN, says: "This year was intended to be a celebratory time for women: the 25th anniversary of the momentous Beijing conference on women's rights and how to advance them. It isn't working out that way, however, as a global health crisis and disagreements among advocates for women rewrite the script."

Universal Periodic Review for the USA

by Alice Dahle

The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) is an ongoing function of the UN Human Rights Council. Every five years, each of the UN's 193 Member States comes before the 47-member UPR Working Group for review. This year, on November 9, the United States is scheduled for its third review.

Although the UN does not have an enforcement mechanism to ensure that its member states honor their human rights obligations, the UPR process provides all states with an opportunity to report on progress they have made and receive suggestions for next steps toward compliance with their human rights commitments.

The performance of each state under review is assessed according to obligations under the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, any human rights treaties to which a state is a party, and any applicable international humanitarian law. The United States has ratified only three of the ten core UN human rights treaties and will be held accountable for those three. They are:

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

UPR sessions are interactive between the State under review and other UN Member States. Any member state can ask questions or make comments or recommendations. Non-governmental organizations can also submit information for discussion. UNA-USA asked local chapters to contribute to a UPR Consultation:

unausa.org/human-rights/upr-reports

Another NGO submission from Amnesty International USA is available at:

www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/AMR5114072019ENGLISH.pdf

Iowa UNA will be monitoring the outcome of the USA review and take action to follow up with recommendations as appropriate.

Five Ways to Help Refugees in a Time of Coronavirus

(continued from page 1)

Public Library has a book list that reflects the contributions of diverse writers.

5. Donate to the UNHCR, the UN refugee agency. See www.unhcr.org

Update on Refugees, Asylum Seekers, Temporary Protective Status, and Immigrants

by Caryl Lyons

“I lift my lamp beside the golden door.” These words of Emma Lazarus from the poem inscribed on the Statue of Liberty seem to be meaning less and less these days as rules change for refugees, asylum seekers, those with Temporary Protective Status, and Immigrants.

Refugee Resettlement: According to the Amnesty International Report “United States of America: Rolling Back of Human Rights Obligations,” the number of refugees resettled in the U.S. is reaching a low unprecedented in recent times. From 1980 until recently, the admissions goals for resettled refugees has averaged 95,000 annually; the goal in 2019 was 30,000 resettled refugees, while the goal for 2020 is down to 18,000. Meanwhile, the number of refugees worldwide is about 26 million, with those needing resettlement for their safety in the vicinity of 1.4 million, according to the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR).

Asylum Seekers: Under the title of “Migrant Protection Protocols,” (also called the Remain in Mexico policy), beginning in January 2019, more than 75,000 migrants have been forced to remain in Mexico pending the processing of their asylum claims. As of last June, unresolved asylum cases have been pending for an average of 759 days, so migrants can be stranded in Mexico for years. Most have no le-

gal representation. Doctors Without Borders had called this a “humanitarian crisis” even prior to COVID-19. The UNHCR is now assisting the Mexican government in trying to prevent an outbreak of COVID-19 among asylum seekers. Although the Migrant Protection Protocols were struck down last year by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in the U.S. because they violate the due process of asylum seekers, the Supreme Court allowed the protocols to go ahead while on appeal.

Temporary Protective Status: As of September 14, 2020, the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals has ruled that Temporary Protective Status (TPS) for citizens from El Salvador, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Sudan can be halted. Some of these people have been protected for decades based on their inability to return safely to their “countries of origin” because of natural disasters, armed conflicts, or other conditions that make it unsafe for them to return home. Although TPS is supposed to expire after 18 months, it has been extended many times for people from places that remain unsafe for them to return to. As many as 300,000 immigrants may be affected by this ruling, many of whom have become integral parts of their communities, have been considered essential workers during the pandemic, and have children who are permanent U.S. citizens and have never seen their parents’ countries of origin. A lawsuit was filed alleging that the

terminations of TPS were brought based on racial animus, but the court decided that the plaintiffs failed to prove that racial animus was a factor in the decision to revoke TPS. Thus, TPS for people from these countries is again terminated. This ruling will likely continue to be litigated.

Immigrant Fees: For those who have a chance to immigrate to the U.S., there is another new impediment: increased filing fees as of October 2, 2020. For example, Form I-129 for an H-1B petition, previously \$460, will now cost \$555; for an L-1, previously \$460, now \$805; Form I-765 (used for naturalization filings), previously \$640, now \$1,170. For those working toward permanent residency, the costs to file for adjustment of status have nearly doubled to over \$2,200.

Take Action

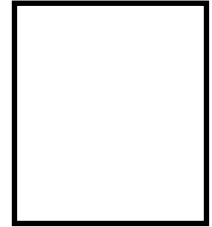
The Refugee Council of the USA and 1182 other organizations have called on President Trump and Secretary of State Pompeo to set a goal of 95,000 refugee resettlements in FY2021. Add your voice by contacting the President. See rcusa.org/resources

Donate to the UNHCR, the UN refugee agency.

See: www.unhcr.org

Advocacy News

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Address Service Requested

How to Contact Your Member of Congress

President Donald Trump

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www.whitehouse.gov/contact

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Senator Joni Ernst

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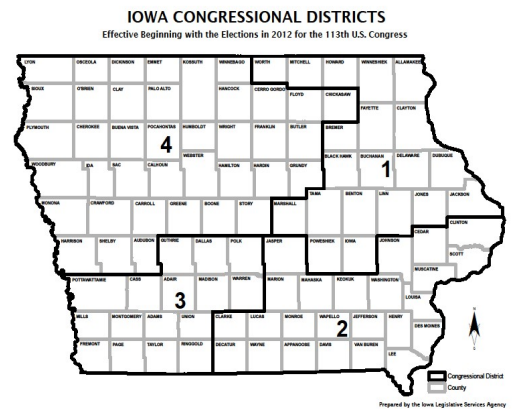
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Whatever you do,

VOTE!

It is more important than ever!