



UNA ★ USA
Iowa Division

Advocacy News

c/o Iowa UNA
20 E Market St
Iowa City, IA 52245
319-337-7290

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Immigrants and Refugees in the Midst of a Pandemic

By Caryl Lyons

World-wide, migration has slowed down, almost to a halt. As a result of lockdowns and the coronavirus, some migrants have turned around and headed home. This applies not only to the Central American routes to the United States but also to Africa and Europe. According to the *New York Times* of May 4, 2020, “the number of East Africans crossing the Gulf of Aden to seek work in the Gulf States has plunged” and “farms in western Europe are contending with severe labor shortfalls as travel bans have blocked the movement of seasonal migrant laborers from Eastern Europe.” Many countries around the world have temporarily closed their doors to refugees.

Immigrants and refugees are facing a variety of consequences, both positive and negative, at least partially as a result of COVID-19. Britain has rescued refugees from the English Channel, while refugee ships have been impounded by Italy. Malta has refused to allow a migrant ship to dock and has expelled refugees and migrants, while Greece has shipped hundreds of migrants to the mainland from the island of Lesbos to ease the overcrowding in refugee camps that poses a coronavirus danger.

Portugal will be taking up to 60 unaccompanied migrant children from Greek refugee camps. (*Reuters*, May 7-11, 2020)

At the U.S./Mexican border, where asylum seekers are now forced to wait in Mexico, some shelters are shutting down in an

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attempt to halt the spread of COVID-19, and as a result of tightened border restrictions, many would-be asylum seekers are being quickly deported, often taking COVID-19 with them to their home countries. For example, a large number of deportees back to Guatemala from the U.S. have tested positive for COVID-19. Another

negative consequence of this immigration slowdown is the potential effect on countries no longer receiving the money migrant workers sent home from their jobs in other countries.

The world-wide responses to COVID-19 will likely have long-lasting effects on societies, jobs, and economies, as well as on the spread or containment of COVID-19. Also, it is highly possible that the resumption of the movement of refugees and migrants will be necessary for the economic recovery of many of the world's nations. Perhaps all of us who care about the fate of this migrant/refugee population should keep track of what is happening across the globe and become aware of the potential political and medical effects of governments' immigration policies.

Take Action Now!

Urge our Iowa members of Congress to support refugees and immigrants. Contact information is provided on page 4. More information on the work of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees is available at UNHCR.org. You can donate to UNHCR at

support.unrefugees.org

Some Ways to Make a Difference During This Pandemic

By Caryl Lyons

In an April 25, 2020, *New York Times* article, “Here’s How You Can Change Lives in the Pandemic,” journalist Nicholas Kristof wrote about the importance, for those who are able, of donating to reliable charities to help out during the pandemic. Noting that there are scores of charities worthy of donations and how difficult it can be to decide where to contribute, Kristof listed 5 charities that he felt were especially deserving, each charity with a different purpose. You may well have your own favorite charities, but below is the list of Kristof’s suggestions, for anyone who is interested:

America’s Hungry:

Catalyst Kitchens provides nutritious meals to families in need of food in 32 states. Food insecurity has increased partly through the lack of food support from schools and from the short supplies in food pantries. “Since 2011, the group’s network of members has distributed some 72 million meals.”

Vulnerable Native Americans:

Native Americans have twice the coronavirus fatality rate as the na-

tional rate as a whole. **The Center for American Indian Health**, a unit of Johns Hopkins University, has over 200 Native American health workers contributing in their own communities.

Refugees and Displaced People:

Refugees and displaced people face a possible nightmare of coronavirus infections in refugee camps and in migrant camps of asylum seekers on the U.S. border with Mexico. **The International Rescue Committee**, founded at the suggestion of Albert Einstein, is a “gold standard organization working in some of the toughest neighborhoods around the globe.”

American Children Out of School:

The United States has one of the highest rates of child poverty in the developed world, and these children may now be missing both school lunches and their education. Many don’t have Internet access and therefore can’t be learning online. **Save the Children**, best known for helping children in Africa and Asia, is now also working in the U.S. to provide “both meals and books, all for less than \$15,000 per

school district.”

Clinics Without Water:

Around the world, “three billion people cannot wash their hands at home because of a lack of water and soap.” **Water for People** “brings water, toilets and hygiene education to villagers in Africa, Asia and Latin America, often by drilling a well at a health center,” where it can be used by both the community and the medical staff.

To learn more about these organizations, or to contribute to them, you may visit: KristofC19ImpactInitiative.org This also can connect you with Focusing Philanthropy, a non-profit Kristof works with that will cover credit card fees so that all of your gift goes to your intended recipient.

In addition, please consider UN agencies combating the pandemic:

UN High Commission for Refugees—see page 1.

UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF), visit unicefusa.org.

World Health Organization (WHO) Pandemic Response Fund, see page 4.

Iowa UNA makes donations

The Iowa UNA made a \$5,000 donation to the COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund. During this unprecedented health challenge, support for the World Health Organization is more urgent than ever. Donations to this fund support the

WHO’s work with partners to track and understand the spread of the virus, to ensure patients receive the care they need. Frontline workers get essential supplies and information. They also accelerate research and development of a vac-

cine and treatments for all who need them.

Donations also support Fund partner UNICEF for its work on COVID-19 among vulnerable children, and the vaccine development alliance, Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations, CEPI.

WHO: Working for Better Health—for everyone, everywhere

Good health is a precious thing. When we are healthy we can learn, work, and support ourselves and our families. When we are sick, we struggle, and our families and communities fall behind.

That's why the World Health Organization is needed. Working with 194 Member States, across six regions, and from more than 150 offices, WHO staff are united in a shared commitment to achieve better health for everyone, everywhere.

(from the WHO website.)



Watch the WHO press conference for the latest updates on the global COVID19 response:

www.who.int/COVID-19

Each Monday, Wednesday
& Friday from 10:00 am
Central Daylight time

Urge Support for the WHO

The Trump administration announced on May 29 its intention to terminate the U.S. relationship with the World Health Organization (WHO). It is imperative that Iowans communicate their support for international cooperation to address the COVID-19 pan-

demic and other threats to public health.

Here is a suggested text of a letter to Senators Grassley and Ernst and your member of the House of Representatives.

Date: _____

Name and address of member of Congress

Dear _____:

I am writing to urge you to stand up for the World Health Organization (WHO).

I am dismayed by the Trump administration's May 29 announcement that the U.S. will terminate its relationship with the WHO.

This announcement, coming in the midst of the global COVID-19 pandemic, is short-sighted and contrary to American interests. WHO plays a major role in combatting COVID-19. The agency has distributed millions of pieces of protective equipment, trained health care workers, and is the only agency capable of coordinating trials of therapeutics and vaccines.

Beyond COVID-19, U.S. withdrawal from the WHO jeopardizes recent progress to eradicate polio, curb malaria, and immunize children from measles and other diseases. U.S. withdrawal ignores the achievements of the WHO including the elimination of smallpox and the reduction of child mortality rates by over 50% between 2000 and 2015.

The U.S. helped to create the World Health Organization. Now we cannot simply turn our back. U.S. leadership in strengthening the WHO will benefit Iowans as well as people around the world. International cooperation to combat COVID-19 and other threats to global health is essential.

I urge you to support continued U.S. membership and financial contributions to the World Health Organization.

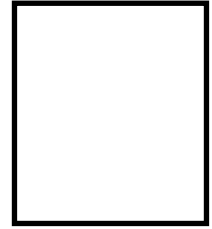
Thank you for your consideration.

[signed]

Your name and address

Advocacy News

Iowa United Nations Association
20 East Market St
Iowa City, IA 52245



Address Correction Requested

How to Contact Your Member of Congress

Senator Charles Grassley

135 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
(202) 224-3744
www.grassley.senate.gov/contact

Senator Joni Ernst

111 Russell Senate Office Bldg
Washington, DC 20510
(202) 224-3254
www.ernst.senate.gov/public/

District 1: Representative

Abby Finkenauer

124 Cannon House Office Bldg
Washington, DC 20515
(202) 225-2911
finkenauer.house.gov/

District 2: Representative

Dave Loebsack

1211 Longworth House Office
Bldg
Washington, DC 20515
(202) 225-6576
[loeb sack.house.gov/
contact](http://loeb sack.house.gov/contact)

District 3: Representative

Cindy Axne

330 Cannon House Office Bldg
Washington, DC 20515
(202) 225-5476
axne.house.gov/

District 4: Representative

Steve King

2210 Rayburn House Office Bldg
Washington, DC 20515
(202) 225-4426
steveking.house.gov/contact

Virtual National UN75 Consultation

June 16

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has asked people around the world to mark the 75th anniversary of the UN by reflecting on the kind of world they want by the time the organization turns 100. You can join in this discussion. On Tuesday, June 16, UNA-USA

will host a national interactive consultation via Zoom. To register, go to unausa.org/UN75-toolkit.state-consultations and click on “national consultation.”

Join United Together June 22-26

Iowa UNA, its chapters and members, will be participating in a week of advocacy for the United Nations, called “United Together.” Culminating on June 26, the 75th anniversary of the signing of the UN Charter, United Together will enable citizens to communicate their support for constructive U.S. leadership in the UN through virtual meetings and other communications with members of Congress. More details to follow.