



**Edmund Rice Centre**  
Awareness. Advocacy. Action

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## **ERC JUSTICE UPDATES**

### **February 2022 No.63**

Dear Friends,

This 63rd Edition of ERC Justice Updates, our regular newsletter from the Edmund Rice Centre, on matters relating to human rights, first nations and environmental justice.

As we continue to face a broken world where one wonders what the next disaster, injustice or calamity will unfold before our eyes. We must always remain hopeful for positive change for all humanity and the whole of creation.

*Spirit of wholeness who does not fear brokenness,  
no sorrow, no neglect, no abuse is unseen by you.  
grant us courage not to look away  
-but to bear witness-  
to call for justice, for change, for respect.  
For no one, no one is beyond the reach of your love.  
Julie Perrin: a prayer, a plea, a bird*

Please note that if you come up against a paywall in any of the articles below - please contact me at: [mmcinerney@edmundrice.org](mailto:mmcinerney@edmundrice.org) and I will send you the full article.

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

## Peace & Blessings

**Marita**

**Communications Project Officer,**

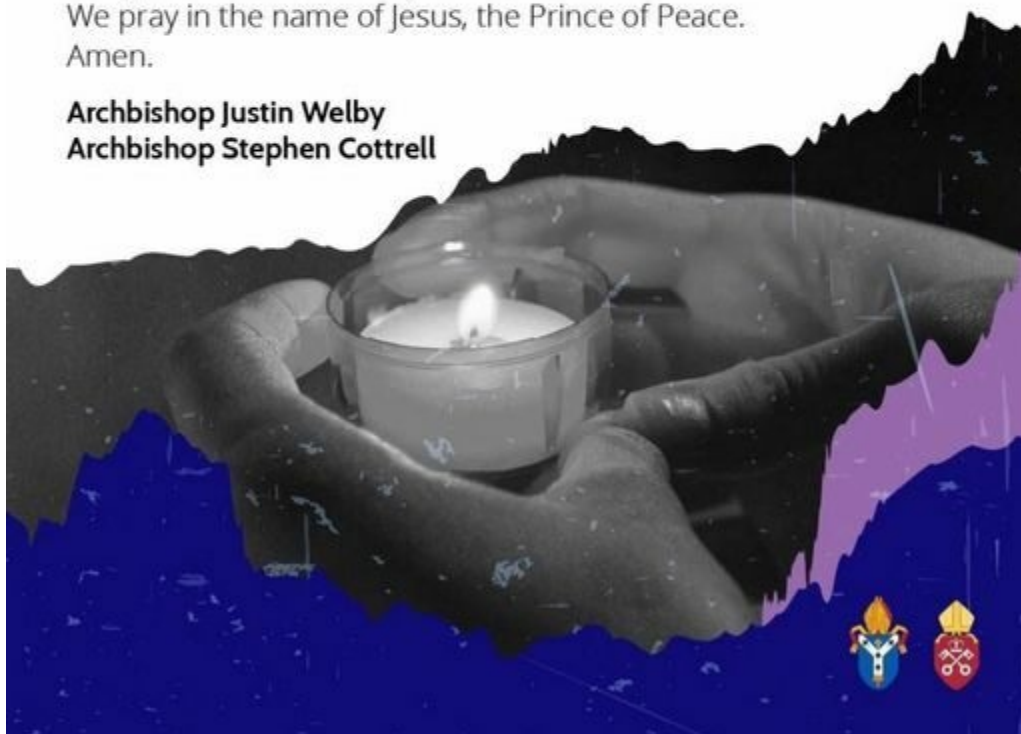
**Marita McInerney**

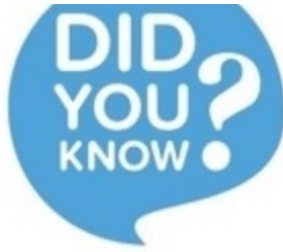
***Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that there may be articles in this publication with names and images of deceased people.***

### **A Prayer for Ukraine**

God of peace and justice,  
we pray for the people of Ukraine today.  
We pray for peace and the laying down of weapons.  
We pray for all those who fear for tomorrow,  
that your Spirit of comfort would draw near to them.  
We pray for those with power over war or peace,  
for wisdom, discernment and compassion  
to guide their decisions.  
Above all, we pray for all your precious children, at risk and in fear,  
that you would hold and protect them.  
We pray in the name of Jesus, the Prince of Peace.  
Amen.

**Archbishop Justin Welby**  
**Archbishop Stephen Cottrell**





**On Monday 28<sup>th</sup> February 2022, The Australian Government will have detained men and women on Nauru for 3120 days and Manus Island/Port Moresby for 3061 days. As of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2022 the Australian Government has handed over the responsibility (abandoned) for the 205 detainees in PNG to the PNG Government.**



**A recent comprehensive survey by the Plastic Free Foundation in conjunction with the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) surveyed over 20,000 people across 28 countries on their thoughts on the global plastic pollution crisis and the need for a plastic pollution treaty that could set global standards for reducing plastic production, consumption and pollution and the ultimate goal of ending plastic pollution.**

**Australia's results showed:**

- **86% of Australians think a plastic pollution treaty is important; one third think its essential.**
- **82% of people want to buy products that use as little plastic packaging as possible.**
- **86% of people think manufacturers and retailers should be made responsible for reducing, reusing and recycling plastic packaging.**
- **77% of people think single-use plastic should be banned as soon as possible.**
- **Every year, Australia lets 130,000 tonnes of plastic flow into our oceans.**

**The information from the survey will be presented before the fifth session of the United Nations's Environment Assembly meeting 28th February - 6th March.**

A more recent review by WWF found:

- Plastic has infiltrated all parts of the world's oceans.
  - Without action ocean plastic pollution will quadruple by 2050.
- 



Lukas Coch/AAP Image

## **Forgiveness requires more than just an apology. It requires action**

***James Blackwell, The Conversation, February 14th 2022***

It has been 14 years since then-Prime Minister Kevin Rudd delivered his apology to the Stolen Generations from parliament house. Words which were so longed for from survivors and descendants of horrific government policies, and which echo through to today.

*For the pain, suffering and hurt of these Stolen Generations, their descendants and for their families left behind, we say sorry. To the mothers and the fathers, the brothers and the sisters, for the breaking up of families and communities, we say sorry. And for the indignity and degradation thus inflicted on a proud people and a proud culture, we say sorry.*

Scott Morrison's speech today on the anniversary of this momentous day made headlines for a different reason. Many have taken umbrage with this line:

*Sorry is not the hardest word to say. The hardest is 'I forgive you'.*

Morrison almost demanding forgiveness belies a false understanding of both how apologies work, and the nature of what it is the government apologised, and is apologising, for.

The policies of the Stolen Generations were acts of government, designed to assimilate us and deprive us of culture. They are also actions which can be remedied by government. To frame the apology in this way is, as Greens Senator Lidia Thorpe tweeted, "outright disrespect", and "not an apology".

## ***A stain upon the nation***

The Stolen Generations remain a national shame for this country. Over several decades, roughly one in five First Nations children were taken from their families between 1910 and 1970, countless communities broken up, and our cultures forcibly suppressed.

In some jurisdictions such as Western Australia, the figure is over one in three First Nations children removed. Nationally, these generations and their descendants make up close to two in five First Nations people, according to a report from The Healing Foundation.

The apology, which many thought would not come, and many sadly did not live to see, remains an important part of Australian and First Nations history. Finally the wrongs of the Stolen Generations were not only acknowledged by the government, but apologised for. ***The apology was, and shall remain, in the words of Linda Burney, a “cultural moment shared by the country”.***

### **Read full story**

[https://theconversation.com/forgiveness-requires-more-than-just-an-apology-it-requires-action-177060?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20February%2015%202022%20-%20202201721833&utm\\_content=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20February%2015%202022%20-%20202201721833+CID\\_d680695fdc1f87e9a1a6493ba1634fb7&utm\\_source=campaign\\_monitor&utm\\_term=Forgiveness%20requires%20more%20than%20just%20an%20apology%20It%20requires%20action](https://theconversation.com/forgiveness-requires-more-than-just-an-apology-it-requires-action-177060?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20February%2015%202022%20-%20202201721833&utm_content=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20February%2015%202022%20-%20202201721833+CID_d680695fdc1f87e9a1a6493ba1634fb7&utm_source=campaign_monitor&utm_term=Forgiveness%20requires%20more%20than%20just%20an%20apology%20It%20requires%20action)



Koala mother and baby (APP)

**First Nations people share importance of koala in wake of**

## **endangered status**

*Rachael Knowles, NITV News, 15th February 2022.*

### ***Connected to the koala through bloodline, Birrbay and Dhanggati woman Gulwanyang Moran fears the impacts on her people if the species becomes extinct.***

First Nations People from Northern New South Wales have voiced their concerns for the future of the Koala species after they were pronounced endangered.

Birrbay and Dhanggati woman Gulwanyang Moran's totem is the Koala, known in Gathang language as Guula.

"Guula is a significant totem in our bloodline, it's attached to our bloodline," she said.

"We are born into it as an identity within our family group and we have a great sense of responsibility attached to that identity."

Ms Moran said the survival of koalas is crucial for 'Maa-Bularrbu' – a Gathang word that acknowledges the "next seven again".

"Everything we do is for the next seven generations, we have them in mind always. It would make us incredibly sad if this is taken from our children's children's identities if Guula no longer exists," she said.

"With it being endangered, a massive part of our identity now becomes endangered."

In the practice of continuation, Ms Moran's family replaces gift-giving in the festive season, with the adoption of koalas from Port Macquarie Koala Hospital.

The practice enables young members of the family to attach strongly to Guula as part of their identity and assigns them a caretaker role.

Ms Moran's family also regularly spend time on Country, assisting bush regeneration and defending the koala's natural habitats.

"We have some cultural land where we do have an agreement with national parks, which is afforded to Birrbay and Dhanggati families," she said.

"We do a lot of bush regeneration work as part of that agreement ... it's also an opportunity to teach our kids how to care for Country, and the significance of looking after our totems of that area."

Listed as an endangered species on Friday, koalas populations in Queensland, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory will now be protected under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC Act) 1999.

The decision comes a decade after koalas were listed as vulnerable and was prompted by advocacy from the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW),

Humane Society International (HSI), and WWF-Australia.

According to reports by ecological consultants Biolinks, koala populations in Queensland have decreased by 50 per cent since 2001. Whilst populations in NSW have crashed 62 per cent in the same time.

**Read full story**

[https://www.sbs.com.au/nitv/article/2022/02/15/first-nations-people-share-importance-koala-wake-endangered-status?fbclid=IwAR21JYY76bRSDkoTDPYxzQCc530QCseT\\_52tFoFaCnEqAl3ddLPuzk99M8I](https://www.sbs.com.au/nitv/article/2022/02/15/first-nations-people-share-importance-koala-wake-endangered-status?fbclid=IwAR21JYY76bRSDkoTDPYxzQCc530QCseT_52tFoFaCnEqAl3ddLPuzk99M8I)



McArthur River in 2021(ABC News: Jane Bardon)

## **Northern Territory government rejects Glencore's bid to override sacred sites watchdog on McArthur River mine**

***Jane Bardon, ABC News, 16th February 2022***

The Northern Territory government has refused mining giant Glencore's request to allow it to destroy an ancient stone tools quarry and threaten an important sacred site without the permission of traditional owners of its McArthur River mine.

***Key points:***

- The government has rejected Glencore's appeal against an earlier decision by the NT's sacred sites watchdog
- The long-awaited decision throws doubt over the company's plans to continue expanding the mine

- Glencore hopes to negotiate a new agreement with the wider traditional owner group

The request was part of the company's plan to double the size of one of the world's largest zinc and lead mines, which is near Borrooloola, 900 kilometres south east of Darwin.

The company was also seeking approval to dump half a billion tonnes of flammable toxic rock on the McArthur River bank over the next 15 years.

Traditional owner Josie Davey welcomed the decision by NT Heritage Minister Chansey Paech.

"I am really pleased and happy about it," she said.

"The mining company need to come back now and listen to the traditional owners, including my family."

Glencore had told the government it had an agreement from six Aboriginal custodians to pile waste rock at the mine to a height of 140 metres beside the adjacent Barramundi Dreaming sacred site, and to build part of the dump on the stone artefact site.

Under the agreement, the six signatories were promised \$250,000 for their houses, an \$85,000 car each and monthly food and fuel vouchers.

The company had appealed a decision by the NT's sacred sites watchdog, the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority (AAPA), which ruled the agreement invalid because all of the mine's 180 Aboriginal custodians had not signed it.

The government's decision to uphold AAPA's assessment came after more than three years of deliberation.

"The minister's decision... sends a very clear message to Glencore and other miners that these sorts of murky deals that seek to disempower Aboriginal people in the protection of their sacred sites will not wash," AAPA's chief executive Ben Scambary said.

"It shows that the processes for protecting sacred sites and for agreement-making are well established in the Northern Territory and any attempt to subvert those processes wont result in a favourable outcome."

**Read full story:**

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-02-16/nt-government-decision-sacred-sites-glencore-mcarthur-river/100831750?fbclid=IwAR2hQkVrF2vKNghWZDsUHBBWeQKeg9MBzUY6oiwD1iXnHKCCTZA7dJRZRZs>



“Not one of us can rest, be happy,  
be at home, be at peace with  
ourselves, until we end hatred  
and division.”

John Lewis



‘The Hazara community has never known safety while the Taliban have reigned.’ Photograph: Australia’s Department of Defence/Reuters

## **Government plans to send Hazara asylum seeker back to Afghanistan may face high court challenge**

*Mostafa Rachwani and Ben Doherty, The Guardian, 13th February 2022*

**Immigration minister Alex Hawke argued the initial decision to send the asylum seeker back to Afghanistan should be upheld regardless of**

## Taliban rule

The federal government faces a potential high court challenge to its plans to forcibly send an Afghan Hazara asylum seeker back to Afghanistan, despite the fall of the country to the Taliban and the systematic persecution of the Hazara ethnic minority.

Late on Friday, the full bench of the federal court allowed an appeal from the government, which is seeking to remove the man from Australia and return him to Afghanistan. The decision is likely to be appealed to the high court, which may or may not choose to hear it.

The decision made by the Immigration Assessment Authority (IAA) in 2017 that the man, while he faced risk of harm in his home country, could safely be sent back to live in the capital, Kabul, was successfully appealed last year. Taliban fighters.

As the Taliban overran Afghanistan, Australia told asylum seekers they should expect to return

The man, given the pseudonym EGZ17 before the court, is an ethnic Hazara and a Shia Muslim, and sought protection in Australia claiming he faces harm in Afghanistan.

Barrister Jay Williams, appearing for EGZ17, argued the IAA's decision was now "legally unreasonable" given that when the Taliban seized control of Kabul and the functions of government, the Republic of Afghanistan was replaced by the self-proclaimed Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.

He argued that the IAA assessment had been made against a country that no longer exists, and therefore "suffered from an absence of jurisdictional fact and fell into jurisdictional error".

Judge Alexander Street agreed, and the appeal was successful.

But the minister for immigration, Alex Hawke, appealed to the full bench of the court, arguing the initial decision by the IAA should be upheld, regardless of the changed circumstances in Afghanistan and the illegality of the Taliban coup.

Lawyers for the government argued "a change in governance of a country, even if secured through activity which does not conform to the laws of the country, does not inexorably lead to a conclusion that the country has ceased to exist".

Late on Friday, the government's appeal was allowed by the full bench of the federal court.

## Read full article

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2022/feb/13/government-plans-to-send-hazara-asylum-seeker-back-to-afghanistan-may-face-high-court->

[challenge?utm\\_term=62085813792a741f168a899086208ea4&utm\\_campaign=GuardianTodayAUS&utm\\_source=esp&utm\\_medium=Email&CMP=GTAU\\_email](https://www.gtau.com.au/challenge?utm_term=62085813792a741f168a899086208ea4&utm_campaign=GuardianTodayAUS&utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&CMP=GTAU_email)



Noorullah Shirzada/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images

## **A Journalist Went Undercover as a Refugee. It Became an Act of Love**

***Jessica Goudeau, The New York Times, 15th February 2022***

### ***THE NAKED DON'T FEAR THE WATER***

An Underground Journey With Afghan Refugees

Author: Matthieu Aikins

Since the first allied attack on the Taliban in October 2001 began what many consider the longest war in U.S. history, few foreign journalists have written about Afghanistan with the depth and doggedness of the Kabul-based Canadian journalist Matthieu Aikins. His first book, “The Naked Don’t Fear the Water: An Underground Journey With Afghan Refugees,” follows his friend and longtime translator Omar (who, like most of the Afghans portrayed in the book, uses a pseudonym) as he flees economic uncertainty and political instability to find a new life in Europe. The journey took place in 2016 — but after Kabul fell to the Taliban last year and the U.S. withdrawal forced tens of thousands of Afghans to flee the country, the book feels prescient. Aikins poignantly frames the question many of us have been wrestling with since the chaotic events of 2021: *“What does it mean to be free in our world? The refugee is freedom’s negative image; she illustrates the story of progress that we tell ourselves.”*

It has become a cliché to state that a book is “urgent” or “necessary” when it touches on a critical humanitarian issue; almost any book about Afghan

migrants would be important right now. But this book is exceptionally well done. That's primarily due to Aikins's painstaking, unflinching portrayals. In refusing to make saints or sinners of ordinary people caught up in extraordinary circumstances, Aikins crafts an expansive, immersive work that reads like the most gripping novel but is all the more compelling because the events are both true and ongoing.

At the heart of the book is Aikins's relationship with Omar, who worked closely with him for years as a translator in some of the most volatile situations in Afghanistan. In leaving his country, Omar is driven by his love for a woman named Laila, whose Shia father — his landlord — will not consider a marriage proposal from his Sunni tenant unless he can vastly improve his prospects. When Omar's plan to emigrate to the United States through the Special Immigrant Visa program is dashed, he is faced with what Aikins calls "the smuggler's road to Europe, a long and dangerous journey across the mountains and sea." When Omar leaves, Aikins goes with him to document the crossing.

Going deep undercover, Aikins disguises himself as a fellow migrant with the name "Habib." The back story he creates — born in Kabul, but Malaysian-raised — helps explain Aikins's slightly foreign accent when speaking Dari; and as the son of a Japanese American mother and a Scottish Canadian father, he is often mistaken for someone from northern Afghanistan. But even after he leaves his passport with a friend, Aikins never forgets that his citizenship opens doors his fellow migrants cannot access. He grapples with the ethics of choice on a journey that only a journalist would choose, and with the impossibility of maintaining impartiality when he is living among the people he's writing about and becoming a part of the story. This is especially true when they cram into an overpacked dinghy on a tumultuous sea; Aikins, a strong swimmer, makes sure Omar has the last life jacket and mentally prepares for how to help if the boat sinks.

**Link to full article for subscribers:**

[https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/15/books/review/the-naked-dont-fear-the-water-matthieu-aikins.html?campaign\\_id=7&emc=edit\\_mbae\\_20220218&instance\\_id=53509&nl=morning-briefing%3A-asia-pacific-edition&regi\\_id=132157641&segment\\_id=83092&te=1&user\\_id=cfe005d35b6b49d751e71065346565f7](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/15/books/review/the-naked-dont-fear-the-water-matthieu-aikins.html?campaign_id=7&emc=edit_mbae_20220218&instance_id=53509&nl=morning-briefing%3A-asia-pacific-edition&regi_id=132157641&segment_id=83092&te=1&user_id=cfe005d35b6b49d751e71065346565f7)

***NB: If you would like to read the full article and don't have a subscription please contact me [mmcinerney@edmundrice.org](mailto:mmcinerney@edmundrice.org)***

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

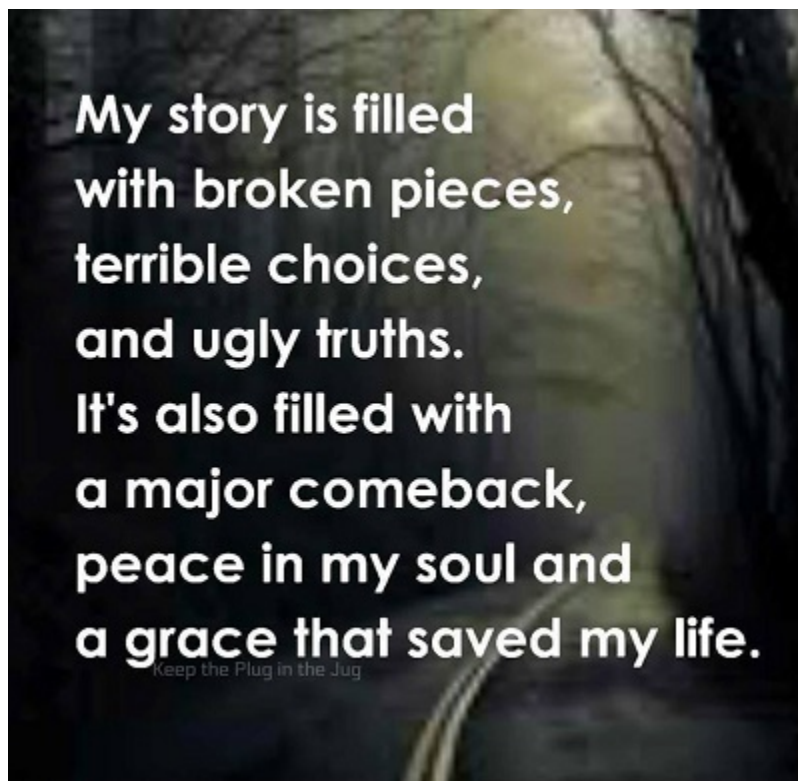
### *Our double standards*

Anne O'Keefe, Letters, The Age, February 26th, 2022

As heartbreaking as the invasion of Ukraine is, I take exception to the article, 'The plight of Ukraine's mothers and fathers has broken the world's heart' (The Age, 25/2). Apparently the images of people fleeing with their suitcases show how the lives of 'ordinary families' have been turned upside down.

It seems that the 'ordinary families' fleeing decades of war and dislocation in Yemen, Syria, Myanmar, Afghanistan and countless other countries are not as heartbreaking to people in the West.

And our government will move refugees from Ukraine to the top of the list for granting humanitarian visas, ahead of Afghans and certainly in front of the poor souls who have been languishing in detention for nine years. It seems that white Christians suffer much more than people of colour and other religions and are deserving of far more sympathy.





**Edmund Rice Centre**  
**for Justice & Community Education**  
*Awareness ♦ Advocacy ♦ Action*

*PCP Patrons: His Eminence Cardinal John Ribot, msoc,  
Dr Richard A O'Brien, Hon Dr Meredith Burgmann*



**Letter to Senator The Hon Zed Seselja**

***Minister for International Development and the Pacific***

**Senator Marise Payne**

***Foreign Affairs Minister & Minister for Women***

**& Mr. Pat Conroy MP**

***Shadow Minister for International Development and the Pacific***

**Re: Urgent Assistance for Kiribati**

Dear.....

We are women from Kiribati residing in Sydney Australia. We both work with the Pacific Calling Partnership (PCP) at the Edmund Rice Centre for Justice and Community Education. Maria Tiimon Chi-Fang is the PCP Pacific Outreach Officer and Tosy Tataua is a volunteer Project Officer.

The PCP was founded in 2006 in recognition of the negative impacts climate was having on the peoples of Kiribati, Tuvalu and islands of the Torres Strait. PCP is committed to listening to what Islanders are saying about imminent threats to their way of life.

Since 2006, the PCP has developed close working relationships with communities in Kiribati and other parts of the Pacific. We write today because we are concerned about the significant impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on people in Kiribati.

In particular, we wish to convey the message from COVID-19 patients, families and frontline workers in Kiribati, who urgently need further humanitarian aid from the Australian Government. It is critical that more services and funding be given especially for the communities on Tarawa Island where the community transmission is greatest.

The people of Kiribati appreciate the Australian Government's continuing commitment to the Pacific. Currently, in Kiribati there are 2,737 cases and numbers are worsening as we speak. Unfortunately, Kiribati is experiencing a shortage of medicines such as Paracetamol and anti-inflammatory drugs, and people have to queue many hours for a mere 2-4 Panadol tablets. There are

also reports of people turning to local medicines as the hospital cannot afford to provide medicine for everyone in need.

The impact of COVID-19 on the people of Kiribati is far reaching. For example, fishermen and women who sell fish and local produce at the markets who are affected by COVID-19 are unable to continue working. Those who have COVID-19 are unable to provide food and services for their own families and communities. People are struggling to survive. To be able to respond to the needs of all communities, it is critical that supplies and medicines do not run out. With this, it will help the communities and front liners to carry out a robust and effective COVID-19 response.

We urge the Australian government to provide urgent additional resources to Kiribati including more vaccines and treatment, hand sanitizers and masks. People in Kiribati need urgent access to vaccines and treatments right now.

Without Australia and an effective global response, many people in Kiribati may not survive.

Thank you for your help and compassion. We look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

Maria Tiimon Chi-Fang

Tosy Tataua



Image: Kiribati, Vladimir Lysenko (I), CC BY-SA 4.0

## **Kiribati battles to contain COVID-19 outbreak**

***'The Good Oil', Good Samaritan Sisters February Newsletter.***

The tiny Pacific nation of Kiribati, which until January this year had survived the COVID-19 pandemic without recording a case of the virus, is now battling to contain an outbreak brought in by a planeload of returning missionaries.

Kiribati, where the Sisters of the Good Samaritan have a ministry presence, had managed to remain virus free after swiftly closing its borders to all visitors

when the pandemic began in 2020.

However, as part of a staged repatriation process, last month the government was in the process of slowly re-opening borders with two weeks' quarantine for returning citizens when the virus arrived and broke free. Both Samoa and volcano-hit Tonga have also recorded cases in recent weeks.

Associated Press reports that dozens of passengers on a flight to Kiribati from Fiji (the first to arrive in the nation since borders reopened) tested positive for the virus.

Despite those passengers (returning i-Kiribati Mormon missionaries) being held in quarantine, the virus escaped into the community and now, according to the World Health Organisation, 2847 people have tested positive. So far there have been 11 deaths and most cases are being treated at home.

On January 22, the government imposed a seven-day lockdown on the capital, South Tarawa, which is home to almost half of the country's 120,000 citizens. The lockdown was subsequently extended.

Under the restrictions, locals must stay home unless in need of essentials like food or healthcare.

Kiribati-born Good Samaritan Sister Taabeia Ibouri, who is currently based in Sydney, said one of the big concerns for the people is a lack of hospital facilities.

"All the hospitals in Kiribati are funded by the government," she said. "There are no church-provided health services. The main hospital is in South Tarawa, which has more services than the outer islands.

"The health system is very poor. They do not have intensive care units or ventilators, and that is a big worry.

"COVID-19 is a new thing to understand, and I think people need a lot of help, both in South Tarawa where most of the cases have been so far, but also in the outer islands.

"For most of my life I lived on one of the outer islands where the health system is insufficient both in terms of availability and quality. There are about 300 people living there with no doctor, only one nurse and three local people who help the nurse in monitoring the sick or providing other services needed around the hospital or to people at their home."

Taabeia said another concern is that sometimes 10 or 15 people live in one household, preventing social distancing and increasing the risk of infection.

**Read full story**

[https://www.goodsams.org.au/2022/02/14/kiribati-battles-to-contain-covid-19-outbreak/?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=TGO%20February%202022&](https://www.goodsams.org.au/2022/02/14/kiribati-battles-to-contain-covid-19-outbreak/?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=TGO%20February%202022&)



[utm\\_content=TGO%20February%202022+CID\\_8f9ca0676d3d67025b7db3ef340a7805&utm\\_source=Email%20marketing%20software&utm\\_term=Kiribati%20battles%20to%20contain%20COVID-19%20outbreak](https://www.gofundme.com/f/help-for-kiribati?utm_campaign=p_lico+share-sheet&utm_medium=copy_link&utm_source=customer)



### **'Help for Kiribati'**

A Gofundme fundraiser organised by Mike Roman in Kiribati

#### ***A few words from Mike***

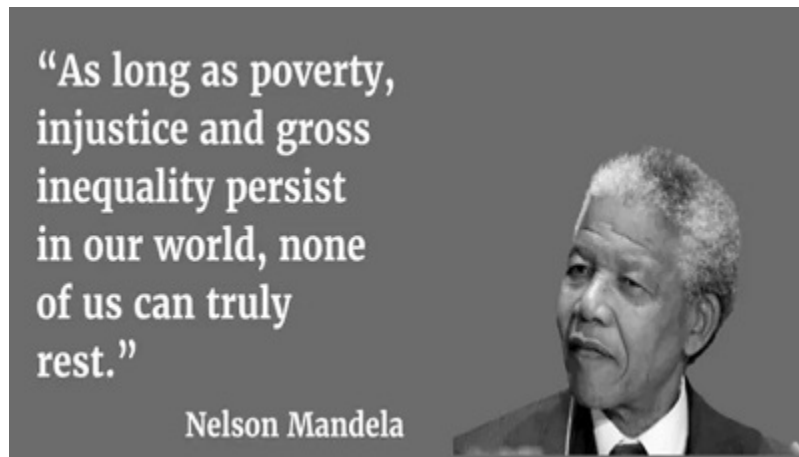
COVID hits one of the last uninfected places on the planet and in the Pacific, Omicron is causing Covid-19 to rapidly spread. UNICEF Pacific says the Covid-19 outbreak in Kiribati is worrying given the rapid increase in cases and the population density in the capital, Tarawa. Two weeks ago, the country was Covid-free. However, despite a nationwide lockdown, there are now more than 3,000 confirmed cases and several deaths.

Initiated by the staff of the Ministry of Education in Kiribati, humanitarian outreach for families affected by covid-19 has already made a difference. With a focus on the welfare of young children, financial donations are continually being accepted for basic food items and other essentials distributed to families. Created at the onset of lockdown, donations have made a difference in the lives of our young people, our most important resource and leaders of tomorrow. If you would like to contribute to the efforts, please do - small, medium, or big will go a long way to assist families in Kiribati.

Thank you greatly, take care and stay safe for your families and children!

#### **Link to full details:**

[https://www.gofundme.com/f/help-for-kiribati?utm\\_campaign=p\\_lico+share-sheet&utm\\_medium=copy\\_link&utm\\_source=customer](https://www.gofundme.com/f/help-for-kiribati?utm_campaign=p_lico+share-sheet&utm_medium=copy_link&utm_source=customer)



On 26 November 2007, the UN General Assembly declared that, starting from the 63rd session of the Assembly, 20 February will be celebrated annually as the World Day of Social Justice. [Twitter/@UNGeneva](#)

## **World Day of Social Justice 2022: Find out theme, history, significance of this day**

***Firstpost, 20th February 2022***

***The theme for this year's World Day of Social Justice is 'Achieving Social Justice through Formal Employment', which the United Nations believes is a necessary condition to reduce poverty and inequalities in society.***

World Day of Social Justice is annually marked on 20 February. The objective of the day is to raise a voice against social injustice happening across the world. On this day various communities come together to address issues such as illiteracy, religious and physical discrimination, poverty; matters related to race, ethnicity and culture among others. By doing so, these communities work to make a socially integrated society.

### ***Theme***

The theme for this year's World Day of Social Justice is "Achieving Social Justice through Formal Employment". Through this theme, the United Nations plans to promote the need to transition to formal employment, which is a necessary condition to reduce poverty and inequalities in society.

The UN believes that availability of decent work can lead to increase in productivity and sustainability of enterprises, which in turn can help countries grow. To help make this plan possible, several countries are utilising new technologies to identify potential employees.

### ***History and Significance***

The General Assembly announced that 20 February will be celebrated annually as the World Day of Social Justice on 26 November, 2007. The following year, the International Labour Organization (ILO) on 10 June

collectively accepted the declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization.

During that time, this declaration became a powerful reaffirmation of ILO values that works towards helping achieve progress and social justice in the context of globalisation.

***Here are some inspiring quotes on social justice:***

- Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere - Martin Luther King, Jr (minister and activist)
- Social justice cannot be attained by violence. Violence kills what it intends to create - Pope John Paul II (Former head of the Catholic Church)
- Sometimes, the only way to get justice is to take it for yourself - Leigh Bardugo (Israeli-American fantasy author)
- Until the great mass of the people shall be filled with the sense of responsibility for each other's welfare, social justice can never be attained - Helen Keller (American author and political activist)

**Link to full story**

<https://www.firstpost.com/world/world-day-of-social-justice-2022-find-out-theme-history-significance-of-this-day-10384041.html>



Image: a demonstrator displays a placard during an anti-war protest, after Russian President Vladimir Putin authorized a military operation in eastern Ukraine, in Saint Petersburg, Russia, February 24, 2022. The placard reads: 'No to war in Ukraine! Return the forces home!' REUTERS/Anton Vaganov

***The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) is a coalition of civil society organisations in over 100 countries working for a world free of nuclear weapons. We work for all nations to join and***

***implement the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.***

## **ICAN AUSTRALIA**

### ***Statement on Russia's invasion of Ukraine***

***February 25th 2022***

***ICAN Australia strongly condemns the Russian invasion of Ukraine and Putin's threat to use nuclear weapons. A war of aggression is never acceptable or lawful. Wars have terrible, long-lasting impacts for civilians. Potential escalation to nuclear war risks catastrophic, existential consequences for the entire world.***

***The international community must stand united in ensuring that we protect and support civilians, and strongly reject the violations of international law by Russia.***

***While all wars are unacceptable, ICAN warns that the recent Russian behaviour risks escalating the conflict to one involving nuclear weapons. Last week, Russia conducted a strategic nuclear weapons exercise, practising dropping weapons of mass destruction on civilians with intercontinental ballistic missiles, submarine launched missiles and bombers. Even more concerning, yesterday morning President Putin stated that: "No matter who tries to stand in our way... Russia will respond immediately, and the consequences will be such as you have never seen in your entire history," in a thinly-veiled threat to use nuclear weapons, prohibited under the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. The use of nuclear weapons remains on the table for all states that possess and deploy nuclear weapons. Putin's words and actions escalate further the risk of nuclear weapons being used.***

***This conflict is already harming the civilian population. Adding threats to mass murder civilians indiscriminately with nuclear weapons does nothing to protect people. The only thing nuclear weapons do in this situation is elevate the risk of a massive humanitarian catastrophe.***

***We urge Russia, Belarus and all other states to not engage in any military activities involving nuclear weapons, such as nuclear weapons exercises and other possible deployments of nuclear weapons. Belarus' referendum on Sunday to revoke its nuclear-weapon-free pledge in its constitution adds fuel to the fire in an already tense time.***

***We urge the international community to strongly pressure Russia to engage in dialogue and diplomacy, to return to compliance with the UN Charter, respect international humanitarian and human rights law, join relevant treaties***

***to reduce nuclear weapons risks, including the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, and negotiate with other nuclear-armed states the verified, time-bound elimination of all their nuclear weapons.***

**Link to original statement from ICAN International:**

<https://www.icanw.org>

[/ican-condemns-russia-invasion-of-ukraine-an-escalation-risking-nuclear-war](https://www.icanw.org/ican-condemns-russia-invasion-of-ukraine-an-escalation-risking-nuclear-war)

## **REFLECTIONS**



**Thomas Merton as monk, priest, prophet and mystic**

***I see war as an avoidable tragedy and I believe that the problem of solving international conflict without massive violence has become the number one problem of our time. As President Kennedy said, "If we do not end war, war is going to end us." Pope John XXIII, Pope Paul VI, have said this with all the solemnity of their position. The task of man and of the Church is to end all wars, to provide a satisfactory international power to police the world and subdue violence while conflicts are settled by reason and negotiation. Therefore the entire human race has a most serious obligation to face this problem and to do something about it. Each one of us has to resist an ingrained tendency to violence and to destructive thinking. But every time we renounce reason and patience in order to solve a conflict by violence we are side-stepping this great obligation and***

*putting it off. How long can we continue to do this? Our time is limited, and we are not taking advantage of our opportunities.*

Thomas Merton On Peace, p. 16



## APPEAL

My heart aches greatly at the worsening situation in Ukraine. Despite the diplomatic efforts of the last few weeks, increasingly alarming scenarios are opening up. Like me, many people all over the world are feeling anguish and concern. Once again the peace of all is threatened by partisan interests. I would like to appeal to those with political responsibility to examine their consciences seriously before God, who is the God of peace and not of war; who is the Father of all, not just of some, who wants us to be brothers and not enemies. I pray that all the parties involved refrain from any action that would cause even more suffering to the people, destabilising coexistence between nations and bringing international law into disrepute.

And now I would like to appeal to everyone, believers and non-believers alike. Jesus taught us that the diabolical senselessness of violence is answered with God's weapons, with prayer and fasting. I invite everyone to make next 2 March, Ash Wednesday, a Day of Fasting for Peace. I encourage believers in a special way to dedicate themselves intensely to prayer and fasting on that day. May the Queen of Peace preserve the world from the madness of war.

*Franciscus*

## Pace - e - Bene Nonviolence Inspirations

***"Wherever [people] are persecuted because of their race, religion, or political views, that place must — at that moment — become the center of the universe."*** Elie Wiesel

***"The more prohibitions you have,  
the less virtuous people will be.  
The more weapons you have,  
the less secure people will be.  
The more subsidies you have,  
the less self-reliant people will be."***

Excerpt from verse 57 of the Tao Te Ching – Stephen Mitchell version

***“I don't want to be an opposition, as was said of me. I want to be simply an affirmation. When one says yes to one's own conviction, one is not confronting. Naturally, some others don't think the same way and thus confrontation arises.”*** Bishop Oscar Romero

***“The nonviolent person does not seek an impossible compromise with the times, nor a prior, intemperate synthesis for the times. The nonviolent person sees life in terms of a choice toward change, involving a re-ordering of life.”***  
Daniel Berrigan

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.

The Edmund Rice Centre wholeheartedly supports and endorses the  
ULURU STATEMENT FROM THE HEART  
and urges all Australians to get behind this wonderful statement.

**Our mailing address is:**

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