



Edmund Rice Centre

Awareness. Advocacy. Action

ERC JUSTICE UPDATES

April 2025 No.125

Dear Friends,

This is the 125th Edition of ERCJCE Justice Updates, our regular newsletter from the Edmund Rice Centre, on matters relating to human rights, first nations, refugees and people seeking asylum and environmental justice.

As we mourn the sad loss of our beloved Pope Francis let us always remind ourselves of how Pope Francis lived his life, humble, compassionate & in solidarity with the poor & vulnerable and his care for all creation. A man of peace & justice for all humanity who constantly called for an end to conflicts the world over.

*When the power of love overcomes the love of power,
the world will know peace. Jimi Hendrix*

Please note that if you come up against a paywall in "any of the articles below - please contact me at: 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

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



Message of Sadness at the Death of Pope Francis

It is with deep sadness that Pax Christi Australia, which is part of the international Christian movement for peace, shares the pain of deep loss at the death of Pope Francis on Easter Monday. It is also with deep gratitude for his presence, leadership with humanity in the church and into the world. The values that he exhibited very much the values that Pax Christi shared and were also strengthened by. Through his humanity he was untiring in trying to make our world a more justice, peaceful and humane place for all especially the forgotten and most vulnerable.

No doubt many will feel somewhat orphaned and forlorn at the news of the Holy Father's death. During the dark times that the world has lived through in recent times through in war and violence, the culture of death, threats to our Common Home due to climate change and a pandemic, a blaze of possibility ensued through the many gestures of humility expressed in his reaching out to refugees, prisoners, the sick, the abandoned, and people of other faiths.

All in all, he was a man of peace and lived it in his relationships. He called us to a 'revolution of tenderness' through developing a 'culture of encounter.' It was relationships that were paramount. He invited us to have a 'contemplative gaze' when looking at creation in order to appreciate it as a gift in itself, rather than an object to be utilised. The same gaze was applied to all other living things. To appreciate their value and dignity. His care for people regardless of their beliefs and peace was always a key part of his leadership. He transcended boundaries and

exclusiveness, divisions and discrimination of every kind. His call was always to build bridges and not walls and barriers to reach out to all people especially the voiceless, the neglected and the least in whom Jesus was present.

Pax Christi Australia, and Pax Christi International, and all people who seek to make our world more just, more humane, and more peaceful, have lost a great and courageous voice. The world has lost a powerful voice for peace. We thank God for his inspiration.

Rest in Peace, Papa Francesco.

Fr. Claude Mostowik msc
President Pax Christi Australia

Link: <https://paxchristi.org.au>



Br. Paul Conn cfc (1961 - 2025)

It is with great sadness that The Edmund Rice Centre for Justice and Community Education were notified of the passing of Br Paul Conn, Deputy Province Leader of the Christian Brothers Oceania Province. Br Paul was a strong supporter of the work and mission of the Centre and his counsel and presence will be missed.

Our condolences, thoughts and prayers go out at this time to his family, friends, colleagues and fellow Brothers.

A short biography of Br Paul and his significant work as an educator and leader are in the link below.

Link: <https://www.edmundrice.org/br-paul-conn>



The number of Indigenous children in out-of-home care in Western Australia increased from 570 in 2003 to 3,068 in 2023. Photograph: Joel Carrett/AAP

Aboriginal women are scared to seek help for fear their children will be taken, report finds

Sarah Collard, The Guardian, 27 March 2025

Human Rights Watch spoke to 33 Aboriginal parents who between them have had 114 children removed and placed in out-of-home care

Briana* was just starting to get a handle on the unpredictability of feeding, bottles and all that comes with a newborn when she received an email informing her she had lost custody of her three-month-old son.

Days later, child protection authorities took her child. With him, they took many of the milestones the 36-year-old first-time mother was looking forward to. “I’m going to miss those first words, the first rollover, everything,” she says.

“They’re going to stop me from that first-time normal experience. You go from being a mum ... to completely nothing.”

Briana is one of 33 Aboriginal parents who spoke to researchers from Human Rights Watch about their experiences with the child protection system in Western Australia. Between them, these parents had 113 children removed.

Briana was homeless when her son Mica* was taken. A victim of domestic violence, she had been living in a women’s shelter but was evicted after a dispute with a staff member.

“They never had an issue with my parenting until I didn’t have a roof over my head,” she says. “Just because someone’s homeless we shouldn’t be taking the child off them. You should be offering them more help if anything.”

Human Rights Watch and the National Suicide Prevention and Trauma Recovery Project interviewed 54 people over two years to produce the report released on Thursday, titled All I Know is I Want Them Home. They included parents, grandparents, children currently in care and young adults who had grown up in care.

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The report found the most common reason for a child protection notification was because of exposure to domestic and family violence. Other triggers include homelessness, incarceration, food insecurity or allegations the parent had been physically abusive to the child.

Noongar woman and National Suicide Prevention and Trauma Recovery Project support coordinator Marianne Headland Mackay says insecure housing and poverty is contributing to the jump in child protection notifications and furthering trauma for Indigenous families.

Read full article:

https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2025/mar/27/aboriginal-women-are-scared-to-see-help-for-fear-their-children-will-be-taken-report-finds-ntwnfb?utm_term=67e45e8648c6e5b9f00070fe09eed9b8&utm_campaign=MorningMailAUS&utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&CMP=morningmailau_email



The United Nations office in Geneva. Image: Giovanni Torre.

Aboriginal human rights experts take Australia’s racist youth

justice policies to the United Nations

Giovanni Torre, National Indigenous Times, 1 April 2025

Aboriginal leaders are calling on the United Nations to take urgent action to address Australia's "discriminatory and punitive youth justice policies", due to "serious violations of the human rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children".

The complaint has been submitted to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination by Associate Professor Hannah McGlade with the support of the Human Rights Law Centre.

It documents Australian federal, state and territory governments' "significant, persistent and escalating" racial discrimination and human rights violations against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children including:

- Draconian laws and policies in all states and territories, including a dramatic and significant escalation in these policies, which is fuelling a mass incarceration crisis;
- Ongoing cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment of children by criminal legal systems, such as the use of spit hoods, solitary confinement and strip searching; and
- Persistent government inaction on independent recommendations for reform, including on the 1991 Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody and the National Children's Commissioner's landmark 'Help Way Earlier!' report in August 2024.

The complaint calls on the UN Committee to find that the Australian government is in violation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and must urgently address this crisis.

The complaint has been endorsed by Aboriginal, legal and human rights organisations and experts and peak bodies including Professor Eddie Cubillo, the National Children's Commissioner, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, the Australian Human Rights Commission, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services, and SNAICC – National Voice for our Children.

Dr McGlade, an expert member of the UN Permanent Forum for Indigenous Issues and complaint author, said on Tuesday: "We have made this urgent complaint because Aboriginal children's lives are on the line."

"Governments have refused to engage respectfully with Aboriginal people or respect the binding international human rights laws and standards we've agreed to," she said.

"These flagrant breaches of UN treaty law have been underlined by racism

and neglect in Australian politics. We're calling on the United Nations Committee to find that Australia's laws, policies, and government inaction are fuelling a mass incarceration crisis, seriously violate Australia's human rights obligations and must urgently be addressed."

Dr McGlade said ***"there must be accountability and reform, we cannot keep going on this path of destruction, violence and racism towards Indigenous children"***.

"Our kids deserve better and our people deserve better," she said.

Read full article:

<https://nit.com.au/01-04-2025/17134/aboriginal-human-rights-experts-take-australias-racist-youth-justice-policies-to-the-un>





Red Crescent paramedics hugging colleagues after the killings. 'We entered this field out of love, despite the dangers,' Abed said. Photograph: Ocha/Red Crescent

'I heard them take their last breath': survivor recounts Gaza paramedic killings

Malak A Tantesh in Gaza and Julian Borger, The Guardian, 4 April 2025

Munther Abed, 27, was in the first ambulance on the scene of an airstrike near Rafah when Israeli soldiers opened fire

A survivor from a massacre of Palestinian paramedics and rescue workers in Gaza has said he saw Israeli troops open fire on a succession of Red Crescent ambulances and rescue vehicles and then use a bulldozer to bury the wreckage in a pit.

Munther Abed, a 27-year-old Red Crescent volunteer, was in the back of the first ambulance to arrive on the scene of an airstrike in the Hashashin district of Rafah before dawn on 23 March, when it came under intense Israeli fire. His two Red Crescent colleagues sitting in the front were killed but he survived by throwing himself to the floor of the vehicle.

"The door opened, and there they were – Israeli special forces in military uniforms, armed with rifles, green lasers and night-vision goggles," Abed told the Guardian. "They dragged me out of the ambulance, keeping me face down to avoid seeing what had happened to my colleagues."

He was beaten, detained with his hands tied and made to lie on the ground, from where he was able to see some of what happened as other friends and colleagues arrived on the scene in ambulances and fire trucks, each one running into a hail of gunfire. In all, eight Red Crescent ambulance crew members and paramedics, six civil defence rescue workers and a UN employee were killed. Their bodies were found alongside their crushed vehicles

last weekend in a sandy pit that Abed watched the troops dig. Other witnesses have told the Guardian that some of the dead had had their hands or feet tied.

Abed has volunteered for the Red Crescent since he was 18 and worked in the ambulances since the start of the war.

“We entered this field out of love, despite the dangers that surround it and the risk we face during missions,” he said. But the work was sliding rapidly from the dangerous to the lethal.

“We no longer find it surprising when someone is killed. Anyone can be targeted as we are dealing with an occupying force that disregards international laws and treaties,” Abed said. “Every mission we go on feels like it might be the last.”

Read full story:

https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/apr/03/i-heard-them-take-their-last-breath-survivor-recounts-gaza-paramedic-killings?utm_term=67eee6ab08adcf46431a054d5825e57c&utm_campaign=MorningMailAUS&utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&CMP=morningmailau_email



Mohammed Mustafa, a British-Australian doctor whose testimony from a Gaza hospital has gone viral

**This British-Australian doctor has seen the unspeakable in Gaza.
He wants to shout from the rooftops**

Nour Haydar, The Guardian, 23 April 2025

Mohammed Mustafa, who worked at al-Ahli Arab hospital before it was

bombed, says ministers are wrong to say Australia is 'not a major player'

When Israel shattered the ceasefire in Gaza last month and resumed its large-scale bombardment, the British-Australian doctor Mohammed Mustafa had just clocked off at the emergency department of what was the last fully functioning hospital in Gaza City.

“It was so intense that the windows blew off their hinges and I had fallen out of my bed,” he tells Guardian Australia’s

The 35-year-old emergency physician from Perth was on his second medical mission in the besieged territory volunteering for the Palestinian Australian New Zealand Medical Association at al-Ahli Arab hospital, also known as the Baptist hospital.

Children and women began arriving at the hospital with extreme injuries, including burns and missing limbs. Mustafa knew many would not survive the night.

“The department was so full that it spilled out on to the streets and we were cutting people’s chests open to put in chest drains in the streets,” he says.

“Because I am 6’2” and about 18 stone I ended up just carrying two or three people at a time on my back, on my chest, carrying them and just running to the CT scanner to get people in.”

His eyewitness testimony from inside the hospital went viral online. He has learned that the organisation he volunteered for feared the attention he received would get him killed.

“They actually prepared a press release of my death and they showed it to me a couple of days ago,” he says.

More than 400 aid workers have been killed in Gaza, with Médecins Sans Frontières saying Israel has turned the territory “into a mass grave of Palestinians and those coming to their assistance”.

While Mustafa is aware that the high profile he has gained may prevent him from being permitted re-entry to Gaza, he says if given the chance he “wouldn’t skip a heartbeat”.

“I miss Gaza so much, I miss the people there, how brave they are, how resilient they are, their kindness towards me.”

Read full article:

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2025/apr/23/this-british-australian-doctor-has-seen-the-unspeakable-in-gaza-he-wants-to-shout-from-the-rooftops?>

This world needs
more kindness, more
smiles, and more people
FB/positivelife.fbk
who lift others up.



A child is tested for malnutrition last month at the World Food Programme (WFP) camp at El Fasher, in Darfur, Sudan. Photograph: WFP/Reuters

Sudan in ‘world’s largest humanitarian crisis’ after two years of civil war

Rachel Savage, The Guardian, 15 April 2025

NGOs and UN say country is ‘worse off than ever before’ with wide-scale displacement, hunger and attacks on refugee camps

Sudan is suffering from the largest humanitarian crisis globally and its civilians are continuing to pay the price for inaction by the international community, NGOs and the UN have said, as the country’s civil war enters its third year.

The UK is hosting ministers from 20 countries in London on Tuesday in an attempt to restart stalled peace talks. However, diplomatic efforts have often been sidelined by other crises, including the wars in Ukraine and Gaza.

Two years to the day since fighting erupted in Khartoum between the Sudanese army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, hundreds of people were feared to have died in RSF attacks on refugee camps in the western Darfur region in the latest apparent atrocity of a war marked by its brutality and wide-scale humanitarian impact.

The consequences for Sudan’s 51 million people have been devastating. Tens of thousands are reportedly dead. Hundreds of thousands face famine. Almost 13 million people have been displaced, 4 million of those to neighbouring countries.

“Sudan is now worse off than ever before,” said Elise Nalbandian, Oxfam’s regional advocacy manager. “The largest humanitarian crisis, largest displacement crisis, largest hunger crisis ... It’s breaking all sorts of wrong records.”

There were “massive-scale” violations of international humanitarian law in the conflict, said Daniel O’Malley, the head of the International Committee of the Red Cross delegation in Sudan. “All of the civilian population, irrespective of where they are in the country, have basically been trapped between one, two or more parties. And they have been bearing the brunt of everything. The sheer numbers are just mind-boggling.”

Leni Kinzli, the World Food Programme’s head of communications for Sudan, said the other conflicts, as well as a lack of access for journalists, and Sudan’s relative international isolation since the days of the regime of the ousted dictator Omar al-Bashir all meant Sudan was not getting the attention it needed.

“We don’t see the level of international attention on Sudan as we do for other crises,” she said. “There should not be a competition between crises. But unfortunately we’re seeing with everything going on in the world, other conflicts,

other humanitarian crises and other things making headlines, that unfortunately Sudan is – I wouldn't even call it forgotten – it's ignored."

Read full article:

https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/apr/15/sudan-in-worlds-largest-humanitarian-crisis-after-two-years-of-civil-war?utm_term=68034b1fc5911b3c4c3ec9bb3e9020b6&utm_campaign=SaturdayEdition&utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&CMP=saturdayedition_email



Pax Christi: 'Proactive nonviolence is the key to peace'

Rocío Lancho García and Lisa Zengarini, Vatican News, 4 April 2025

Martha Inés Romero, Secretary General of Pax Christi International (PCI), illustrates the Catholic peace organization's commitment to proactive nonviolence as an effective means to foster peace, citing its work in Latin America.

Pope Francis has relentlessly worked to wean humanity from its tragic belief that violence is the solution to conflict, arguing that rather than resolving the great challenges of our time, violence often perpetuates and escalates them.

Echoing his predecessors, he has repeated endless times that "War is always a defeat for humanity." In his speeches, writings, and interviews he has insisted that there is another way than violence to resolve conflict, foster justice, heal the earth, safeguard immigrants, and ultimately end war, all of which are interconnected.

This idea is at the heart of Pax Christi International's (PCI) mission, a global Catholic peace movement founded in Europe in 1945 bringing together French and Germans after World War II which today has over 100 member organisations active worldwide. The movement seeks to transform a world ravaged by multiple forms of violence—be it physical, structural, or environmental—into one that embraces peace and justice.

Secretary General of PCI, Martha Inés Romero, and previously coordinator of Pax Christi for Latin America and the Caribbean for over 15 years, spoke with L'Osservatore Romano Vatican newspaper on the organization's work and its concrete impact, particularly in Latin America, where violence and armed struggles have long shaped the socio-political landscape.

Rearmament and militarization is not the solution to conflicts

At a time when global discussions increasingly revolve around militarization and rearmament as solutions to security challenges, Ms Romero explained that Pax Christi strongly opposes this narrative.

She describes the current crisis as not just one of war but of civilization itself, marked by growing intolerance towards migration, individualism, and consumerism and the erosion of ethical and cultural values.

In line with Pope Francis' arguments, the Catholic peace movement believes that resorting to arms perpetuates a cycle of violence rather than addressing the root causes of conflict.

“Rearmament will only fuel the spiral of violence and that violence cannot sustainably or comprehensively resolve conflicts. On the contrary, we believe we have both the certainty and responsibility to prevent violent conflicts through nonviolent means. We agree with Pope Francis when he says that ‘war is always a defeat for humanity.’”

Disarming minds, words, and societies

As Pope Francis has emphasized, achieving peace necessitates the "disarmament" of not only weapons but also minds and words. According to Romero, this transformation can only occur “through valuing different beliefs and cultures, fostering interculturality in the defence of life, ancestral traditions, and otherness.”

One of the key elements in this process is the recognition of Indigenous wisdom and eco-spirituality. Indigenous worldviews, such as the Andean concept of "Buen Vivir" (Sumak Kawsay), promote harmony with nature and communal well-being over material exploitation.

PCI sees these values as essential in countering a global system that prioritizes economic gain over the protection of people and the planet.

Read full article:

https://www.vaticannews.va/en/church/news/2025-04/pax-christi-proactive-non-violence-is-the-key-to-peace.html?fbclid=IwY2xjawJq4K5leHRuA2FlbQlxMAABHpP3ItsFShanTAEEnOA57L94vU1ckKBOaM-Fyvw09rZOdDjifeJfo5UEpUjqr_aem_rPi5hH6YNXq5-KTOgqMC-



Taliban Fighters on patrol in Kabul. Mohammad Ibrahim and his family are in hiding because he worked on an aid program funded by Australia. Photograph: Felipe Dana/AP

Fleeing Taliban fighters, Ibrahim begs the country he helped – Australia – to save his family

Ben Smee, The Guardian, 10 April 2025

Mohammed Ibrahim spent four years as a translator for aid workers who taught children and trained doctors. In today's Afghanistan the penalty for that is death

Huddled on Afghanistan's chaotic border with Pakistan, his young son shivering in the cold, Mohammed Ibrahim stared at the unmoving metal gates – willing them to open, even just for a moment.

“We spent the night there in the middle of the street with little Daniel and it was [the most] difficult night of my life,” he says.

“Without food, water and blankets we stood until morning in the middle of thousands of people ... but they did not allow anyone in and we come back again to Kabul.”

Back to the Taliban (<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/apr/10/peter-barbie-reynolds-british-couple-interrogated-taliban-since-imprisonment>).

Stranded

Since the fall of Kabul and the descent of Afghanistan back into Taliban rule, there have been many dark days. The passage of nearly half a decade has dimmed neither the fear nor the threat.

Mohammed Ibrahim, now in hiding with his wife, Amina, and two children, Daniel and Helene, is a target of the Taliban because he worked on behalf of the Australian government.

Between 2011 and 2015 in republican Afghanistan, he was employed by the international NGO Save the Children on a program known as Children of Uruzgan. It was funded by Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

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Government figures provided to Guardian Australia show that to the end of January, 2,427 Afghans have been Lee certified: 674 by Dfat, 1,741 by the defence department and 12 by Australian federal police.

Barely a third of them have reached Australia – 817 have travelled to Australia on class XB visas (with 2,368 immediate family members), while 82 have been granted visas (with 321 family members) and 116 applications for humanitarian visas are before the Department of Home Affairs.

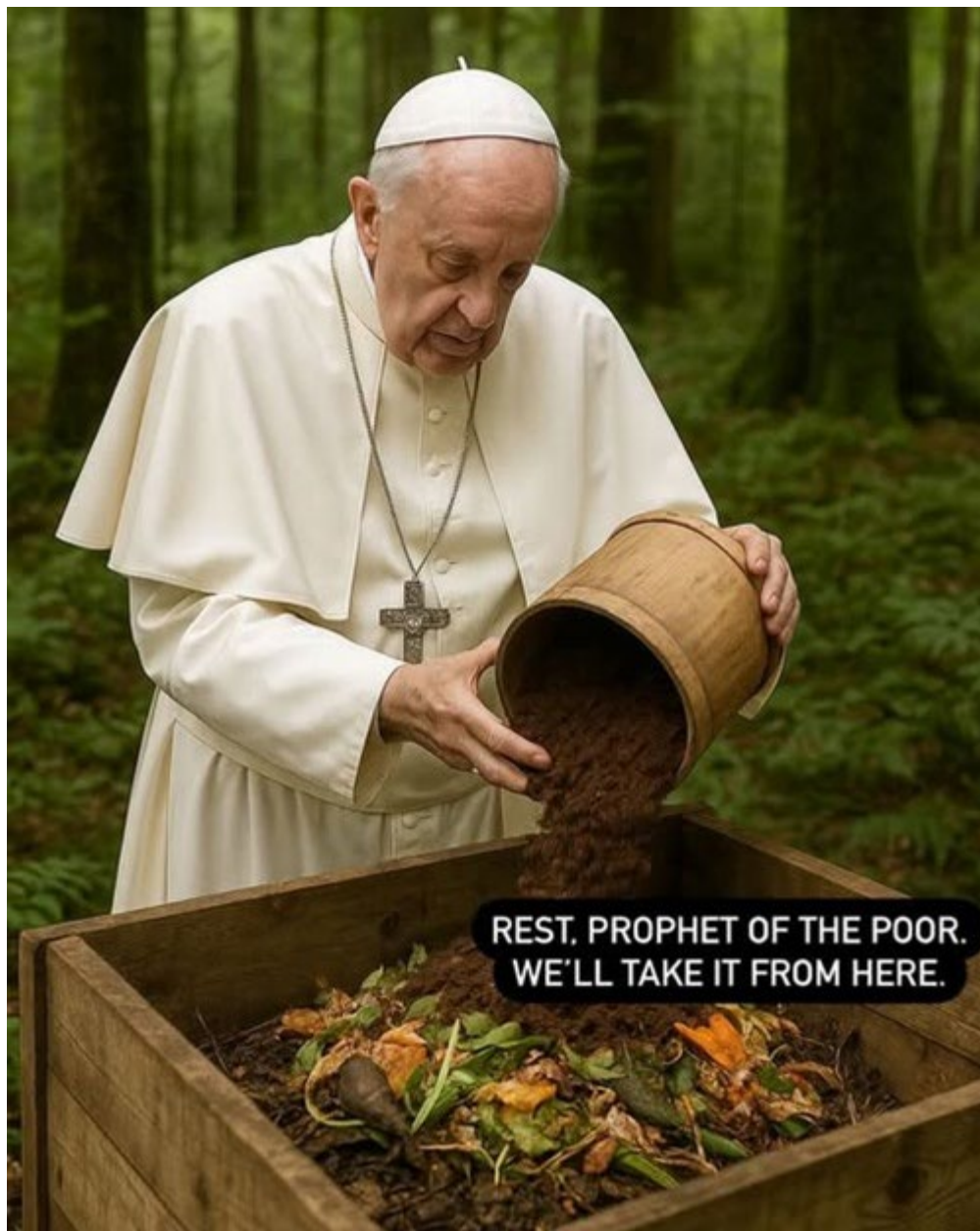
“The former Liberal government failed to adequately plan for the evacuation of Afghan LEE and former ministers, including Peter Dutton, oversaw a program plagued by inconsistent and irregular decision making and poor communication with applicants,” said a spokesperson for the foreign affairs minister, Penny Wong.

Since Wong took office in 2022, more than 500 applicants have been certified under Dfat's program –including Ibrahim – more than all previous foreign ministers combined.

“The Albanese government is focused on cleaning up the serious mess left by the Morrison government and we remain committed to doing what we can to assist those who helped Australia's mission in Afghanistan.”

Read full article:

https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2025/apr/10/fleeing-taliban-fighters-ibrahim-begs-the-country-he-helped-australia-to-save-his-family?utm_term=



REST, PROPHET OF THE POOR.
WE'LL TAKE IT FROM HERE.



Malarndirri McCarthy on Monday with Torres Strait leadership in Cairns. The government has committed \$77 million for more, as well as infrastructure around waste management. (Image: Supplied)

Climate change resilience the focus of Torres Strait government funding

Dechlan Brennan, National Indigenous Times, 7 April 2025

Labor has promised more than \$70 million in funding for seawall structures and waste infrastructure for the Torres Strait in a bid to help boost climate resilience.

The region is one of the most vulnerable to the growing dangers of climate change, and on Monday, the government committed \$36.2 million over five years to help fund Stage 3 of the Torres Strait Seawalls Program.

It will offer additional engineering and seawall structures on five islands: Poruma, Iama, Masig, Warraber and Badu.

Furthermore, stage 7 of the Torres Strait Major Infrastructure Program will see an investment of \$41.2 million over five years to build and upgrade wastewater, solid waste management and potable water supply infrastructure in remote communities.

The money, reflected in this year's budget, is part of both Outcome 8 of the Closing the Gap Agreement, which calls for "stronger economic participation and development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their communities", and Outcome 15, which pushes for Indigenous people to maintain a "distinctive cultural, spiritual, physical and economic relationship with their land and waters".

Minister for Indigenous Australians, Malarndirri McCarthy, took aim at the Coalition, arguing there was a lack of care for the impacts of climate change on

some of the country's most vulnerable.

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Last year, a new \$5 million, 1 km seawall on Poruma was opened to help mitigate both erosion and coastal flooding of the low-lying coral cay island community home to only 164 residents.

At the time, TSIRC Mayor Phillemon Mosby said the seawall was already showing its benefits, arguing: "Seawalls are critical in helping safeguard not only our homes and vital infrastructure – such as roads, health and education facilities – but also our culture and livelihoods."

Read full article:

<https://nit.com.au/07-04-2025/17246/climate-change-resilience-the-focus-of-torres-strait-government-funding>



Image: Shutterstock

Making a Difference: Earth Day –an urgent call to protect God’s creation!

Tony Magliano, Catholic Outlook, 23 April 2025

Earth Day (April 22) is an excellent reminder for Catholics to reflect on Pope Francis’ famous environmental encyclical letter “Laudato Si’, on Care for Our Common Home”. *

Citing Francis of Assisi – patron saint of ecology – Pope Francis writes “Our common home is like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us.

“This sister now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will.”

Pope Francis explains, “Each year hundreds of millions of tons of waste are generated, much of it non-biodegradable, highly toxic

and radioactive, from homes and businesses, from construction and demolition sites, from clinical, electronic and industrial sources. The earth, our home, is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth.”

The Holy Father then weighs in on climate change. Ignoring the weak scientific claims of those who deny the climate is changing and that the earth is warming – due principally to human pollution – he writes, “A very solid scientific consensus indicates that we are presently witnessing a disturbing warming of the climatic system.”

Indeed, the scientific consensus is very solid. According to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), “97 percent or more of actively publishing climate scientists agree: Climate-warming trends over the past century are very likely due to human activities”.

In fact, the last 10 years were the hottest on record.

And Antarctic land ice, which covers 98 percent of the continent’s land mass, is melting at an alarming speed thus causing a dangerous rise in sea levels. Furthermore, human-induced climate change is happening so quickly that many animal and plant species don’t have enough time to adapt, thus causing various species to die. Frogs, which are among first to die when ecosystems start losing their balance, are now dying off in great numbers.

Now consider the endangered human species – especially the poor.

According to a Catholic Relief Services (CRS) policy brief titled “Climate Change and Global Solidarity” today “there are 3 billion people estimated to be at serious risk to the effects of climate change. Many people live in Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States, and their simple lifestyles contribute little to the problems we face. Pope Francis calls us to action – for our immediate response to their needs, but also for longer-term solutions which ensure the enduring benefits of nature for generations to come.”

.....
Planet Earth – God created it. It’s good. And it’s the only home we have. Let’s treat it with the respect it deserves for our good, the good of the poor and the good of generations to come!

* NB: *Poignant that this article was published the day following our beloved Pope Francis death.*

Read full article:

<https://catholicoutlook.org/making-a-difference-earth-day-an-urgent-call-to-protect-gods-creation/>



The People's Plenary in the Caspian Plenary Room in Blue Zone during the United Nations Climate Change Conference COP29 in Buku (Dominika Zarzycka via Getty Images)

The world needs Indigenous voices at COP30 and beyond

Ray Minniecon & 'Alopi Latukefu, The Lowy Institute - The Interpreter, 8 April 2025

As the climate crisis deepens, Indigenous leadership is essential.

As the world gears up for COP30 in Brazil and the hopefully soon-to-be-announced COP31 in Australia (co-hosted with the Pacific), the urgency of the climate crisis has never been more apparent. Yet, amid the political negotiations and corporate commitments, one critical voice remains marginalised – that of the world's Indigenous peoples many of whom bear the brunt of the climate crisis. From the Amazon basin to the oceanic ecology of the Pacific, to the multitude of environments that are part of our own island continent in Australia, Indigenous peoples have lived, walked and observed their environment with a shared view and responsibility, that as stewards of these environments with a responsibility for future generations.

For generations, Indigenous communities have managed the world's most biodiverse regions, not through coincidence but through a deep, intergenerational understanding of land, water, and climate systems. Traditional knowledge is not just cultural heritage; it is science, it is sustainability, and it is survival.

There is a danger that the world sees, hears and interprets the Indigenous voice through the colonial prism of “blissful innocence”, “noble savage” or other paternalistic tropes. This would not only be ignorant, but a fatal error of judgement in the face of catastrophic climate change. In fact, the most

consistent voice of warning to the rampant extractive exploitation of the world's finite resources and the protection of the natural environment has been that of those who have lived in these places the longest.

https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/world-needs-indigenous-voices-cop3beyond#msdynttrid=nlhZrJsVt2Gs8LtkEdDBBiUm6wp0pDoIFeJXXBPG_8

REFLECTIONS



Facebook Post John Roedel 21 April 2025

he never raised his voice—
he just helped the world
unclench a little.
he wasn't a fist.
~ his life wasn't a shout
to obey.
he was an open palm.
~ his life was a soft call
to be compassionate.
he didn't light bonfires.
~ he reminded us
of our light.
he didn't lead with power—
he just kept choosing mercy.
of course, as a soul who
was entangled with humanity

he made mistakes,
but his kindness
was never one of them.
now his absence feels like
a window closed
somewhere deep inside me—
and I didn't realize
how much light
had been coming through.
oh Pope Francis,
may the perpetual
light shine upon you
~ john roedel



Photo by Lisa Maree Williams/Getty Images

In praise of Pope Francis

Andrew Hamilton, Eureka Street, 22 April 2025.

Pope Francis died as he had lived. His last action was to join the crowd as they celebrated the rising of Jesus from the dead at Easter. Having preached the Gospel of hope and life in hard times through his life he left it to us whom he had inspired to carry it on.

In a world that sees refugees and immigrants as a threat, disregards the victims of war, trashes the environment, rewards self-interest and cheapens

religious faith, he wept with those mistreated, pleaded their cause and radiated joy and hope. He faced all the things that make for gloom, did what he could to change them, reached out to those who suffered and caused them, and remained full of hope. There will come a time to reflect on his work. Now it is more decent to treasure and grieve him.

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Jorge Bergoglio saw himself as an unprofitable and joyful servant. His dying on Easter Monday seemed appropriate. He had followed Jesus and shared with others the way of the Cross. He had also shared the buoyant hope of life with the risen Jesus. And having done that he left us without fuss to live boldly as he did.

Read full article:

https://www.eurekastreet.com.au/article/in-praise-of-pope-francis?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Eureka%20Street%20-



Pace - e - Bene Nonviolence Inspirations

"It's not the violence of the few that scares me, it's the silence of the many." Martin Luther King, Jr.

***“Connections are made slowly, sometimes they grow underground.
You cannot tell always by looking what is happening.
More than half a tree is spread out in the soil under your feet.
Penetrate quietly as the earthworm that blows no trumpet.
Fight persistently as the creeper that brings down the tree.
Spread like the squash plant that overruns the garden.
Gnaw in the dark and use the sun to make sugar.”***

Marge Piercy, "The Seven of Pentacles," Circles on the Water

“I am firmly convinced that nonviolence cannot exist only in books or on the seminal level on our university campuses, but it must exist in the flesh. I have always believed that people are the most important element we have. We must put flesh into our nonviolence rather than simply talk about it.” César Chávez

“War does not just harm man*, it also harms Mother Earth. The wounds, destruction, and pollution inflicted on her hurt us, because it is to her we owe everything we are and will be.”

From a report by Lucero Oyarzun of ICAN covering the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity in Cali, Colombia.

“The only way for prejudiced people to change is for them to decide for themselves that all human beings should be treated fairly. We can't force them to think that way.” Rosa Parks

“The world has enough for everyone's need but not enough for everyone's greed.” Mohandas Gandhi

“We can no longer afford to ignore our obligation to work for the abolition of war as a means of solving international problems.”

Thomas Merton, Peace in the Post-Christian Era

“I think we brought to the world, the United States anyway, the whole idea of boycotting as a nonviolent tactic. I think we showed the world that nonviolence can work to make social change.” Dolores Huerta



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.