



Shalom News North America

An instrument of hope, formation, and action concerning priority matters of social justice.

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Human Life, Dignity, and Economic Justice

Refugee Services and Unaccompanied Minors

The numbers of unaccompanied and separated children arriving in the United States has doubled each year since 2011. The US government estimates that more than 90,000 unaccompanied children will arrive by the end of fiscal year (FY) 2014. Most are coming from Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador, many fleeing extreme violence in their cities and neighborhoods. Reflections, Congressional testimony, and LCWR's statement on this humanitarian crisis can be [found here](#). Follow [this link](#) to send a message to your legislators about funding services to care for refugees.



Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report

The 2014 Trafficking in Persons Report, which assesses and ranks the efforts of 188 countries to fight trafficking, was released June 20. The report details innovations and improvements in the response to human trafficking, including the use of the private sector, education among law enforcement personnel, and the use of technology to aid victims and identify those involved in exploitation. This year's report also highlights the journey from victim to survivor, featuring inspirational stories of transformation. [Learn more](#).

Human Trafficking and Objectification of Women – Resource Module

The focus of this module is the objectification of women as a significant contributing factor to human sex trafficking and the creation of a climate in which violence and exploitation of women and girls is both tolerated and tacitly encouraged. Developed by the U.S. Sisters against Human Trafficking (Bakhita Initiative), the module creates awareness, analyzes the phenomenon and gives strategies to defeat the treatment of women as commodities. [Download resource](#).



The International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition

“The uprising that took place on the island of Santo Domingo (today Haiti and the Dominican Republic) during the night of August 22-23, 1791 shook the slave system radically and irreversibly and provided the impetus for the process which would eventually lead to the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade.” Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO, August 23, 2002. [Learn more](#).

International Day of World's Indigenous Peoples – August 9

The day is commemorated to promote and protect the rights enshrined in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. It also presents an opportunity to honor diverse indigenous cultures and recognize the achievements and contributions of an estimated 370 million indigenous peoples. As Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO, noted, “No society can flourish without culture – no development can be sustainable without it. Indigenous peoples know this better than most, as custodians to rich linguistic and cultural diversity, carrying unique knowledge of sustainable living and respect for biodiversity.” [Learn more](#).

Women's Equality Day – August 26

This day commemorates the passage of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution in 1920. Securing the right of women to vote was the culmination of a massive, peaceful civil rights movement that had its formal beginnings in 1848 at the world's first women's rights convention, in Seneca Falls, New York. The annual observance of Women's Equality Day not only celebrates the 19th Amendment but also calls attention to women's continuing efforts toward full equality. How well do you know your history? [Take the NWHP Women's Equality Day Quiz](#).

Integrity of Creation

The Life Cairn Project

Throughout human history, cairns have been landmarks to help guide a journey, to memorialize fallen comrades, for spiritual or shamanistic practices, or simply to indicate a reverence for the natural world. The *Life Cairn Project* is a powerful new version to memorialize species rendered extinct by human activity

and to revive our understanding of the absolute biological and spiritual interdependence of all flora and fauna, including humans. It brings attention to the escalation of extinction through climate change; memorializes species, up to 55,000 of which go extinct annually; highlights critically endangered species,

island nations, languages and cultures; and celebrates the value of diversity. [Learn more.](#)

EPA's Proposed Emissions Regulations

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently released its long-awaited draft of carbon pollution standards for existing fossil fuel power plants, known as the [Clean Power Plan](#). The plan represents the first coordinated attempt by the U.S. to regulate carbon dioxide emissions from existing power plants. It establishes state-level carbon reduction targets and then empowers each state to determine how it will meet its reduction target. We have until October 16 to offer public comments on the plan. [Learn more;](#) [let your voice be heard.](#)



Northern Gateway Pipeline

The Canadian federal government has agreed to let Enbridge build its Northern Gateway pipeline, subject to 209 conditions recommended by the National Energy Board and further talks with aboriginal communities. Green Party Leader Elizabeth May, environmental groups, and First Nations reacted quickly to news of the federal approval, releasing statements opposing it. The federal approval is one step in a long line of permits necessary for Enbridge to get access to the Pacific coast to ship crude oil to Asia. [Learn more.](#)

Peace and Non-Violence

Update on Iraq

The recent upheavals in Iraq are threatening the country with civil war. ISIS, the Sunni extremist group also known as ISIL, is challenging the dominantly Shia government of Nouri al-Maliki. ISIS is also active in the violence tearing Syria apart. There are deep concerns that this extremist group is attempting to establish a caliphate, (religious-political state) in a corridor between Syria and Iraq. The three large groups which compose Iraq: Shiites, Sunnis, and Kurds all have a stake in this latest upheaval. The ancient Christian minority is once again vulnerable to attack. [Learn more.](#)

Independence Day

July 4 is a day of parades, picnics, patriotic speeches, and fireworks. But what are we really celebrating? It is the signing of a document 238 years ago which proclaims that "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." History has shown that our government's actions have not always supported those self-evident truths. Corporate rights have often over-shadowed human rights, which raised the question of for whom and from what we declare independence. [Learn more.](#)

US to Join Landmine Treaty

After two decades of waffling, the United States announced last Friday its intention to join an international treaty banning land mines. Human rights advocates applauded the progress while Republicans accused the president of disregarding military leaders who want to maintain land mines in the U.S. arsenal. 161 nations have signed on to prohibit the use, stockpiling, production, and transfer of anti-personnel mines. Canada was an architect of the treaty, which went into force in 1999. [Learn more.](#)



Inspiring Peace through Friendship

July 30 is the International Day of Friendship, proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in 2011 with the idea that friendship between peoples, countries, and cultures can inspire peace efforts and build bridges between communities. Particular emphasis is placed on involving young people, as future leaders, in activities that include different cultures and promote international understanding and respect for diversity. What can you do to recognize and celebrate friendship, understanding, and respect for diversity?

Hiroshima and Nagasaki

It has been 69 years since the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 6 and 9, 1945. It is still painful to even imagine an estimated 200,000 people killed on those two days plus tens of thousands dead in the following years from radiation poisoning. In remembering these horrendous events, let us recommit ourselves to speak out against wars and other violence, to support diplomatic rather than military solutions to conflicts, to be peacemakers in our lives, our ministries, and in the world at large.

Mayors Support Nuclear Disarmament Forums

On June 24, the United States Conference of Mayors (USCM) unanimously adopted a bold resolution calling for constructive U.S. engagement in new international disarmament forums and reorientation of U.S. national priorities by reducing military spending and redirecting those funds to meet the needs of cities. The resolution also "commends the Marshall Islands for calling to the world's attention the failure of the nine nuclear-armed states to comply with their international obligations and calls on the U.S. to respond constructively and in good faith to the lawsuits."

[Learn more.](#)

