



Order of St. Augustine NGO at the United Nations

May2010 The monthly newsletter detailing Non-Governmental Organization events at the UN

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Welcome!

In the interest of making the activities of the Order's team at the United Nations more known, we have begun an online newsletter. We hope that it will be helpful to you and result in more interest and participation in the United Nations and local NGOs sponsored by the Augustinians.

We intend to bring you information from the weekly briefings on a number of critical issues being discussed by the leaders at the United Nations as well as pointing out resources and links that may help you in your ministry to the poor and needy of the world.

We also would like to hear from you as you confront the issues of hunger, poverty, human rights and the progress being made on the Millennium Development Goals. We would like to be able to help you where and with what we can.

Thank you for your interest and support.

John Deegan, O.S.A.
Coordinator, O.S.A./NGO Team

NOTE: THIS NEWSLETTER HAS ALSO BEEN ATTACHED AS A DOWNLOADABLE PDF FILE.

[Visit us online here!](#)



Ban Ki-Moon speaking at the April 29 briefing.

[Midwest Augustinians](#)

[Augustinian Volunteers](#)

[Haitian Relief Efforts CONTINUE!](#)

[United Nations World Food Program](#)

[UNHCR UN refugee agency](#)

[CERF Central Emergency Response Fund, sponsored by United Nations](#)

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Update: 63rd Annual DPI-NGO Conference



As previously announced, the 63rd Annual DPI/NGO Conference will be held in **Melbourne, Australia, August 30-September 1, 2010**. Additionally, the conference has been officially named: **Advanced Global Health: Achieve the MDGs**

The Conference will be chaired by Dr. Mary E. Norton, Associate Dean and Professor, Global Academic Initiatives at Felician College in Lodi, NJ. More information will be released shortly by the Department of Public Information and provided in future newsletters.

* Details for Augustinian Course in Melbourne *

As you know, the 63rd Annual DPI-NGO Conference will be held in Melbourne, Australia from August 30-September 1, 2010. We will be conducting an Augustinian Course from **Wednesday, August 25 - Saturday morning, August 28**, at the Augustinian Parish of **St. Yarra** in Melbourne. This will be followed by the UN/DPI/NGO Conference on August 30.

Members of APAC are strongly encouraged to give consideration to attending both. If you are interested, you must inform both Jack Deegan (jedeegan@comcast.net) and Brian Fitzpatrick (pmo87330@bigpond.net.au) of your interest in attending either the Augustinian Course and/or the DPI/NGO conference. It is recommended that you attend the Augustinian Course as a background to the DPI/NGO Conference. **The cost of room and board is \$683.50 USD. The O.S.A./NGO budget will give a \$300 USD room and board scholarship to every Augustinian and any Augustinian-sponsored attendee.**

It is highly recommended that anyone interested in attending let us know as soon as possible so that arrangements for space and getting visas to enter Australia can be accomplished. Thanks!

Secretary-General's Statement on World Press Freedom Day

Every year the United Nations observes and celebrates World Press Freedom Day on May 3. The following is Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon's excellent statement regarding the 2010 observance of World Press Freedom Day:

"Freedom of expression is a fundamental human right, enshrined in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. But around the world, there are governments and those wielding power who find many ways to obstruct it.

They impose high taxes on newsprint, making newspapers so expensive that people can't afford to buy them. Independent radio and TV stations are forced off the air if they criticize Government policy. The censors are also active in cyberspace, restricting the use of the Internet and new media.

Some journalists risk intimidation, detention and even their lives, simply for exercising their right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas, through any media, and regardless of frontiers.

Last year, UNESCO condemned the killing of 77 journalists. These were not high-profile war correspondents, killed in the heat of battle. Most of them worked for small, local publications in peacetime. They were killed for attempting to expose wrongdoing or corruption.

I condemn these murders and insist that the perpetrators are brought to justice. All Governments have a duty to protect those who work in the media. This protection must include investigating and prosecuting those who commit crimes against journalists.

Impunity gives the green light to criminals and murderers, and empowers those who have something to hide. Over the long term, it has a corrosive and corrupting effect on society as a whole.

This year's theme is Freedom of Information: the right to know. I welcome the global trend towards new laws which recognize the universal right to publicly held information.

Unfortunately, these new laws do not always translate into action. Requests for official information are often refused, or delayed, sometimes for years. At times, poor information management is to blame. But all too often, this happens because of a culture of secrecy and a lack of accountability.

We must work to change attitudes and to raise awareness. People have a right to information that affects their lives, and states have a duty to provide this information. Such transparency is essential to good government.

The United Nations stands with persecuted journalists and media professionals everywhere. Today, as every day, I call on Governments, civil society and people around the world to recognize the important work of the media, and to stand up for freedom of information"



Augustinian NGO to Begin "Tweeting"!

Many of us (myself included) have resisted the inundation of social networking media that currently consumes the Internet. Some of us current craze of social networking media, which includes Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, as a sort of unnecessary informational overload. But, fear not: these modern communication modes are, in fact, not forebearers of the apocalypse. Rather, these websites are the new rage in the NGO community. Not only has the internet provided us with the opportunity to access an incredible variety of information at speeds that would have been considered unthinkable several years ago, it is also linking together NGOs and the greater community to learn, mobilize, and take action.

On May 6, DPI-NGO conducted a communications workshop at the United Nations. Many NGOs and technology experts shared their stories about how modern media has advanced their causes. In the next month, our NGO will launch a Twitter account. With this account, we will be able to "follow" an incredible array of organizations and individuals who work on the issues that are of the greatest interest to our NGO. **Our Twitter**

account will be called "OSA_NGO" and will be easily found from a search on the homepage.

I strongly encourage all of you to sign up for your own individual twitter accounts, so that you may follow the activity of the OSA_NGO account. I will be continually posting items of significance regarding the issues with which we are concerned. I will also be re-posting, or "re-tweeting", items from the organizations we will "follow". I will check back in with everyone in the next week or so, but please think about signing up for an account!

Immigration Takes Center Stage

Like it or (more reasonably) hate it, the recent immigration legislation passed by Arizona a few weeks ago has thrust a pressing issue into the spotlight that hasn't received so much attention since the Clinton administration. Throughout the next two years, the Augustinian NGO will be focusing on the issue of human trafficking. Trafficking is an issue that remains widely unidentified and unprosecuted, even here within our own borders. It is also an issue that is inextricably linked with the disastrous immigration policy that our government has consistently neglected to address.

Due to the highly polarized nature of the political landscape, it seems unlikely that the current administration will have success selling (if they even propose it) any kind of sweeping immigration reform. It will not become part of the agenda until we make it one. It is up to the citizenry, led and mobilized by the NGOs, to push for fair and just reform that works for all Americans. The law in Arizona is an assault on the principles stitched into the American constitution. It represents an illogical stop-gap for a problem that needs an overhaul, not a temporary fix. Perhaps most importantly, though, it is an insult to human rights and human decency.

From Father Jack Deegan, O.S.A.:

"In September of 2009, the General Council of the Order declared human trafficking as the social issue that the Augustinians would educate our Friars and others about and seek ways to prevent this evil from happening especially in areas where we were ministering. The basic cause of trafficking or migration is poverty. The elimination of poverty as one of the Millennium goals needs the cooperation of all people of good will. The basic dignity of each human being is at stake.

The passing of laws that are harsh and demeaning to any ethnic group is not acceptable to the followers of Christ. Racial profiling runs counter to the Biblical call to "welcome the stranger among you".

In the United States there is a pressing need for a comprehensive reform of our immigration laws. The issue should not be dealt with in isolation as the existence of poverty will always force individuals to seek the necessities of life where ever he/she can find them. As St. Augustine tells us, "someone's surplus is another's need". We all came into this world naked and anything we have is a gift of God to be used for the good of all."

Arizona, Immigration Reform, and Christian Values

Arizona, immigration reform and Christian values

By Gabriel Salguero and David P. Gushee

Esperanza for America

and New Evangelical Partnership for the Common Good

We write together representing the partnership of two groups of White and Brown Evangelicals who have an uncompromising commitment to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We hold dearly that two fundamental tenets of the Gospel are to love your neighbor and to be hospitable to the stranger. It is with this commitment in mind that we write this letter to our fellow Americans, especially our fellow Christians. We pray that the conscience of this country would remember that the truest test of America's character is how it treats the stranger, widow, and orphan. We write to provoke that conscience.

In recent days much of the nation's attention concerning immigration has focused on the signing of the [SB1070 legislation in Arizona](#). Among other things this law requires local law enforcement to inquire about a person's legal immigration status if they think there is any suspicion or question regarding the person's status. This law navigates dangerously close to an enforcement-only policy and lends itself to the very perilous and undemocratic practice of racial profiling.

What criteria would law enforcement use to determine if one is to be suspected of being an illegal or undocumented immigrant? Is there a certain phenotype or look that determines suspicion? Perhaps overhearing the speaking of Spanish might be relevant? There are very good reasons why the passing of this law in Arizona has sent a shudder of fear through the entire Latino community in the United States.

In this country we have not required or insisted on people carrying documentation to prove their citizenship. The passing of this law in Arizona runs the danger of exposing many of our brothers and sisters of color to being harassed, detained, and arrested without cause. It threatens to unleash forces of hatred against Brown-skinned Americans that are already barely contained in this nation.

This is disastrous. It is not in keeping with Christian principles or, for that matter, with basic American values. Think about other provisions of the law. Clergy and people of good will could be arrested for keeping Christ's commandment to love our neighbor by, for example, offering someone a ride to church, school, or work. As Evangelical Christians we cannot refuse to serve and love the immigrant, legal or not. We will not begin screening immigrant status on Sunday morning in our churches. The Gospel will not allow it. We answer to a higher authority.

This odious law threatens to divide children from their parents. It emphasizes enforcement without offering any common-sense or workable solutions to immigration challenges. It threatens to alienate and strain existing healthy relationships between law enforcement and immigrant communities. It could leave these communities defenseless before predators who can exploit their fear of local police. The SB1070 law will create an ecology of fear, scapegoating, and abuse.

We are deeply concerned that this legislation in Arizona may set a nefarious precedent around the country and will be imitated by other states. All this will not solve our immigration challenges but further tear the country apart. Latino Americans will feel all the more cornered and rejected all over the country.

For some time many leading White Evangelicals have joined Brown Evangelicals and argued that comprehensive immigration reform is what is best for this country. They have said

in press conferences and statements that such reform reflects our principles of loving God and loving neighbor. Now, in the teeth of fear and reactionary hysteria, such White Evangelicals must do more. They must stand up for Christian principle in a more costly way. They must act to make immigration reform a reality right now. They must decry the Arizona legislation as inconsistent with our Christian faith.

In particular, we address our many Evangelical brothers and sisters who have for years advocated a Gospel that seeks reconciliation and integration of the whole human family. These Evangelicals have known that if we claim "one Lord, one faith, and one baptism," we must also live out that confession in solidarity as one family. Evangelicals who claim to care about racial integration and reconciliation must act now. Silence is not an option. Silence is complicity.

Just as Evangelicals in times past have stood together on the abolition of slavery, women's suffrage, and global struggles against poverty, religious persecution, and AIDS/HIV, we must once again demonstrate a mosaic of solidarity around comprehensive immigration reform--a reform that reflects God's mandate to remember the stranger for we were once strangers.

We are asking our Evangelical brothers and sisters to use that moral courage that has often led to some of the most sweeping moral reforms in this country and around the world to act on behalf of the immigrants among us. We are calling on national and local leaders to lift their voices with us and say no to Arizona's reactionary immigration law while pressing Congress for comprehensive immigration reform now. Immigration reform is a spiritual and moral issue that requires Christians to live up to the meaning of our creed. If Christ welcomed me unconditionally should I do any less with others? Silence is not an option.

Rev. Gabriel Salguero is a leader of [Esperanza for America](#). Rev. Dr. David Gushee is a leader of [New Evangelical Partnership for the Common Good](#).

This article, courtesy of the Washington Post, can be accessed [here](#):

Cardinal Mahony Speaks at Fordham Law about Immigration Reform



On May 3, Fordham Law School hosted an event on immigration reform, featuring presentations by Cardinal Roger Mahony, Dr. Clara Rodriguez of Fordham University, and Glen Cove Mayor Tom Suozzi.

Cardinal Mahony has made his disapproval of the new law in Arizona no secret. During his presentation he spoke on a wide variety of topics, beginning with the need for action in the wake of such a violation of justice.

In many ways, the Governor of Arizona "stirred the stew" to encourage people to talk about the immigration issue. Immigration as an issue has been on the back burner for

over 20 years. The people at the night's meeting are those who most probably have strong beliefs about reform. [Surely the same can be said about the NGO community.] It is up to us to "stir the stew" and be able to speak intelligently about the facts regarding immigration. Many people will be challenged to "show papers", even regarding insignificant town and county rules. This will bring a tremendous fear to those documented and undocumented in Arizona and other states who may follow suit.

Entering the United States legally makes economic sense. Our country has a worker policy, and having legal status increases wages and enables economic progress. But while there are great benefits conveyed to legal immigrants, we cannot label those who look foreign as being in one category (legal) or the other (illegal). We cannot continue to view immigrants as strangers, but rather as real human beings whose lives are adversely impacted. We must put a face on the undocumented.

The great injustice is our inability to hear the cries of the poor. God hears the cries of the poor, and expects the same from us. If we don't listen to the poor, will God listen to us?

Twelve million people need to be lifted "out of the shadows" to legal status. This will require responsibility on the part of the immigrants. For example, to make every effort to learn English, to pay a fine if they have worked without paying taxes, and to obey the laws of the country/state, just like all who were born in the United States or who have become citizens legally. It must be made clear that this is not amnesty. This path is one that requires sacrifice.

NOTE: Cardinal Mahony has his own internet blog, and his rather poignant opinion of the Arizona law can be read [here](#).

Next, Dr. Clara Rodriguez of Fordham University made remarks that concentrated on the history of the United States. We have seen over time that anti-immigration is related to the state of the economy. If the economy is down, the documented Americans tend to blame the undocumented. Immigrants are made scapegoats, despite many of them working hard, being good neighbors, obeying the rules, and wanting to be a productive part of American society.

Unfortunately, many documented Americans attribute the rise in crime to our undocumented brothers and sisters. We must address our own lack of planning. The undocumented must pass the criminal background check. This will allay some of the blame and fears of crimes being attributed to the undocumented. Dr. Rodriguez also pointed out that without immigration, the current birthrate would not be growing, and fewer people would be available to farm and feed the United States. Under God we are all equal. These things are not just words but must be shown in action.

Mr. Tom Suozzi, Mayor of Glen Cove and former candidate for governor, has for many years been meeting with police and fire departments, banks, store owners, etc. about immigrants, documented and undocumented. They have established town rules and have agreed to keep them and pay the consequences for breaking them. It has worked. Suozzi has begun and continues to learn the culture of the newcomers just as they learn English, continue their schooling, job training, and working to be able to improve skills and improve their wages. Education above all will help to bring about the solution and trust in human nature. Suozzi echoed what the other speakers also said: it is terrible public policy to make people "fear government and go underground."

The following is a statement from Sister Jean Marshall, whom I thank for the notes from this event. Sister Jean has run St. Rita's Center for Immigrant and

Refugee Services in the Bronx since 1983, helping thousands of refugees from all over the world find better lives.

“Understanding what immigrants need, those here 200 years ago and those in the present day, takes time, education, and caring for one another. Yes, it is possible—otherwise we would have never intermarried, lived among different cultures, stood up for human rights, or have immigrants harvesting our crops to provide us with food. We keep our documented and undocumented from hearing the cries of the poor and answering the call.”

Featured Briefing: Internally Displaced Persons

On April 15, DPI-NGO conducted a briefing that focused on an international demographic that goes widely unrecognized and unhelped. Internally displaced persons (IDPs) are people who have been forced to relocate within their own borders. These people suffer from severe deprivation, hardship, and discrimination, yet they are citizens who are supposed to be protected under the law.

With so much of our focus on the immigration and emigration of peoples, we tend to overlook a staggering part of the population that fits into neither of these categories. “Internally displaced persons”, or IDPs, are people who are forced to move within the borders of their own country because of armed conflicts, internal strife, gross violations of human rights, environmental degradation, natural disasters, and other traumatic events in search of a safe haven. Unlike refugees, IDPs **have not** crossed an international border, but remain inside their native countries. There are 26 million IDPs around the world. The morning’s briefing focused on how people become displaced, what their needs are, and what governments and organizations can do to assist them. Please refer to the briefing summaries for the presentations of the panel of experts.

Spring 2010 Briefings

Upcoming 2010 Briefings:

- - - 13 May - *The Impact of Migration on Families Around the World*
- - - 20 May - *"May I ask a Question: Madame Administrator?" - Helen Clark From the United Nations Development Programme*
- - - 27 May - *Blue Helmets Go Green*
- - - 3 June - *Theme TBA - In Observance of World Environment Day*
- - - 10 June - *High Tide, High Crime: Piracy and other Crimes of the Sea*

***** Thursday briefings can often be seen LIVE via UN webcast, which can be seen here: <http://www.un.org/webcast/>**

***** It should also be noted that all briefings can be heard IN THEIR ENTIRETY by visiting the audio library section of the UN website, located here: <http://www.unmultimedia.org/radio/library/>. Briefings take place on Thursdays.**

***** DPI-NGO will be launching a new, more user-friendly website shortly. Stay tuned for more details!**

