



# GUEST AT YOUR TABLE

## *Message of the Day Calendar*



*Two weeks of human rights messages  
for the Unitarian Universalist Service  
Committee's annual program*



## Guest at Your Table

Thank you for participating in Guest at Your Table, a Unitarian Universalist tradition for over 45 years!

In the following pages, you will find quotes from UUSC staff and partners as well as information about the human rights issues you are helping support. At mealtimes or the start of the day, we invite you to tear off one page per day to reveal the “Guest at Your Table” message of the day.



## ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

“Many people think that climate-forced displacement is a future risk, that it will happen 20 or 30 years from today. But the reality is that in many communities around the world, people are already being forcibly displaced by climate change impacts.”

*-Salote Soqo, UUSC Partnership Officer  
(pictured center right below at the 2017  
Global Compact for Migration)*



## MIGRANT JUSTICE

"It made me angry to think that people migrating across this treacherous desert would come across slashed or vandalized gallons of water, emptied food cans, and think that they are hated. It made me angry to think of how after experiencing all the elements of the desert that border patrol would detain them and separate their families. How heartbreaking! I hope that continuing to leave water and humanitarian aid out there sends a stronger message of love, resistance, and support."

*-Brittney Rose,  
UUSC staff member  
who participated in  
"Faith Floods the  
Desert" action in  
Arizona*



## HUMANITARIAN CRISIS RESPONSE

Designated a genocide by human rights experts, a massive Burmese military onslaught in 2017 killed untold numbers of Rohingya people, and more than 700,000 mostly women and children were forced to flee to Bangladesh, joining previously displaced generations and forming what is today the world's largest refugee camp. Nearly half a million other Rohingya remain in Burma in apartheid-like conditions in IDP (internally displaced person) camps or under lockdown in the few Rohingya homes that weren't destroyed.



## MIGRANT JUSTICE

“The majority of people here live in conditions that are not good and poverty prevents them from fully living their lives....People cross the border in search of new opportunities for their families. That is why we always say that migrating is an act of love. However, migrating people are treated like criminals; when they are captured and returned to their communities, children are left in shelters and other places where their rights are violated.”

*-Adela  
Ramírez,  
staff member  
with UUSC  
partner  
Asociación  
Pop No'j in  
Guatemala*



## ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

“Certain groups are disproportionately impacted by the threat of climate-forced displacement... A good example is here in the United States, where most of the communities who are doing relocations right now are Indigenous communities, who have lived on their lands and the area where they currently live for between hundreds and thousands of years.”

*-Amber Moulton, UUSC Researcher  
(pictured right below in Kiribati)*



## HUMANITARIAN CRISIS RESPONSE

“UUSC and our partners generally refer to the country as Burma, as the current official designation of Myanmar dates back to 1989, when a military junta renamed the country after brutally suppressing the Burmese pro-democracy movement. We use Burma, therefore, rather than Myanmar, as a way to express our solidarity with the Burmese people’s long struggle for freedom from military rule. Both terms are romanizations of the same root word.”

*-Josh Leach, UUSC Policy Analyst (pictured left below with Kyaw Win, center, from UUSC’s partner Burma Human Rights Network)*



## MIGRANT JUSTICE

“When I saw him, he had not slept for two and a half weeks and it showed—he was already becoming broken and losing hope. But this is what the system is made to do—it breaks you down and steals hope so you will feel like deportation is salvation. Together we talked and I shared some groundings and breathing exercises with him. The night after our visit he said was the first night he slept since he had arrived.”

*-Monica Curca,  
UUSC partner  
at Activate Labs  
who supports  
trauma resilience  
for migrants and  
asylum-seekers*



## HUMANITARIAN CRISIS RESPONSE

“In the first week after Harvey, damaged oil refineries and facilities released over two million pounds of hazardous substances into the air. Flood waters also triggered the release of thousands of gallons of spilled petroleum. Neighborhood residents experienced headaches, sore throats, eye irritation, and nausea at greater rates than usual. While air and water pollution has been a longtime point of contention for frontline communities, Harvey magnified the problem.”

*-Syma Mirza, human rights consultant supporting UUSC’s Hurricane Harvey disaster response in Houston*



## MIGRANT JUSTICE

“It is no small thing to be an activist in Honduras. When people make the simple demand that the government follow its own environmental procedures and laws, they are threatened and intimidated, beaten and arrested, driven from their homes, and even murdered for their activism. It is because of this history of extreme violence that international observers were asked to come to Honduras to accompany the Guapinol environmental activists.”

*-Rev. Kathleen McTigue, UUSC staff member reflecting on her time observing a court hearing in Honduras*



## **ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE**

“We need to have our sovereignty respected and protected. As of today, many of our Louisiana tribes have State Recognition and we still have tribes that need recognition. The Federal government has a process based on exclusion for recognizing tribes. You have to meet seven mandatory criteria and quite frankly, there should only be three. The State of Louisiana is currently working on a process through the Native American Commission and we’re thankful that this is at least a step in the right direction.”

*-Chief Shirell  
Parfait-Dardar,  
UUSC partner in  
Louisiana*



## MIGRANT JUSTICE

“It is important to point out that the comrades are victims of two viruses. The virus of the judicial system, which biases the application of justice in favor of big business interests and against defenders of nature, and the threat of COVID.”

*-Juan López,  
member of UUSC  
partner San  
Alonso Rodríguez  
Foundation  
speaking about  
the unlawful  
detention of  
environmental  
activists in  
Honduras*



## HUMANITARIAN CRISIS RESPONSE

"I realized it is very important that the Rohingya hold the agenda, otherwise there are so many experts and actors out there (NGOs, UN), everybody thinks they are experts so the Rohingya voice has not been heard enough....Because they see us as victims/disempowered/vulnerable communities, we are kept aside from the main discussions and decisions. Yes, our people might be victims, we could be vulnerable, but we are also stakeholders, and we understand our issue more than anyone. If you want to address the issue, our involvement and agency are essential."

*-Wai Wai Nu,  
Rohingya activist  
and leader of  
Women Peace  
Network in Burma*



## ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE



“Climate change displacement is real and we are experiencing it on our small island nation of the Solomon Islands where people have lost their home villages due to rising sea water and the strong forces of high tides that damage coastal villages.”

*-David Boseto  
from UUSC partner  
Ecological Solutions  
in the Solomon  
Islands (pictured  
right above)*



## MIGRANT JUSTICE

“It gives me hope to support other women who can use some of our strength to break out of the roles that have been imposed on them, to keep seeking strategies of resistance that deconstruct the patriarchy. We could have disappeared a long time ago, but we are still standing against so many adversities. We will continue to fight for dignity and justice.”

*-Marta  
Velásquez,  
feminist organizer  
with UUSC  
partner Foro  
de Mujeres in  
Honduras*



“The story of the founding of our Unitarian Universalist Service Committee 80 years ago may seem distant, unlike anything we could or would do. But it really isn’t. The most important thing Martha and Waitstill Sharp did was face what was happening. They did not turn away. They acted.”

*-Rev. Mary Katherine Morn, UUSC  
President and CEO*



Martha and Waitstill sharp, UUSC founders who rescued Jews and political dissidents from the Nazis

# **JOIN US!**

Guided by the belief that those most impacted by injustice should lead the way in developing the response, UUSC works to advance human rights in partnership with more than 60 grassroots organizations in 20 countries around the globe.

- We partner with First Nations and Indigenous Communities losing their lands and livelihoods to climate change.
- We work with communities affected by natural disaster and humanitarian crisis, including ethnic minorities facing a campaign of genocide in Burma.
- And we support the right to safety, dignity, and justice for Central Americans in Central America, along the migration route, and in the United States.

UUSC is an independent, member-supported organization. Please join us by becoming a member or renewing your membership today at [uusc.org/guest](http://uusc.org/guest)!