



MISSION NEWS

Canadian Jesuits International (CJI)

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Syrian refugee children attend a JRS school in Beirut, Lebanon.

Facing the global refugee crisis

Fr Peter Balleis SJ is the International Director of the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS)

The year 2014 saw the highest number of forcibly displaced people since the end of World War II. The official figure in mid-2014 was 51.2 million people. Such a number goes beyond our imagination – but there are real people behind that number. Perhaps we recall media images from the Central African Republic (CAR) and South Sudan, two countries that reverted to civil war in December 2013 and are still in conflict today. We may also recall the frightened faces of children,

women and men fleeing from Mosul in northern Iraq in mid-2014 to find protection in Kurdistan. The naked terror of the fundamentalist Islamic State (IS) has caused many to flee – Christians, Yazidis and Muslims alike.

Looking at a world in turmoil we see an extremely volatile zone in the Middle East and Central Asia from Gaza to Kabul, with open conflicts in Palestine, Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan, and very high tensions in Lebanon.

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The vision & mission of CJI

The vision of Canadian Jesuits International is a world of peace, justice and integrity of creation, transformed through active commitment and finding God in all things.

The mission of CJI is to love and to serve by working with people struggling for social justice and dignity in the world. Together with Jesuit and other partners, CJI responds in solidarity, through awareness-raising and advocacy in Canada and supporting partnerships in the Global South.

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A word from Jenny Cafiso, CJI Director

Two days ago I received a message from a friend in Liberia, in West Africa. I had written to ask how he and his family were coping with the Ebola outbreak. In his reply, he also gave me an update on his two daughters, Winnie and Faith. I met them almost 20 years ago as little girls living as refugees during the war that tore Liberia apart. They are now both in university, one studying civil engineering and the other sociology. When I think of the conditions under which those girls lived for the first few years of their lives, it is hard for me to imagine the determination and strength it took to keep their hope alive.

At the time I met Faith and Winnie, I was working with the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), and we talked then of approximately 40 million refugees in the world. Since then we have seen the end of the conflict in Liberia and of many others. And yet today, in our cover article, Fr Peter Balleis says that 2014 saw the highest number of forcibly displaced people since the end of World War II – 51.2 million people. How is this possible? As we read in his article and in other stories in this issue, we get some indication: many new conflicts have sprung up across the globe, while others have morphed but continue unabated for decades. What has remained constant is the suffering and vilification of so many people, mostly women and children, who are forced to live as refugees.

When Fr Pedro Arrupe SJ founded JRS in 1980 in response to the so-called “boat people” escaping from Vietnam, he asked us not only to help the victims, but to challenge the world’s perception of refugees, and to advocate for refugee rights and address the root causes of displacement.

To fulfill this mission, we need to draw on the strength of people like Winnie and Faith, and to work so that all those who have been forcibly displaced can live with dignity in their own country or wherever they seek refuge.

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Facing the global refugee crisis

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It is followed by the Sahel zone in Africa. Moving across this zone from west to east, we see Mali, northern Nigeria, Chad, CAR, Sudan, South Sudan and Somalia in conflict. A third zone of high conflict in the world is in Latin America. The drug cartels in Mexico and *las bandas criminales* in Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador are creating warlike situations and driving thousands of people, particularly minors at high risk, toward the US border.

Indeed Muslims are the first victims of Islamist fundamentalists. Children and women suffer in a major way, and comprise the majority of refugees. Half of the world's refugees and displaced people are no longer found in camps but in the slums and on the outskirts of urban centres. They are invisible, barely surviving on exploitative wages and sparse support. Children often do not go to school.

It has 10 regional offices with programs in 50 countries worldwide and it currently provides assistance to nearly 950,000 individuals. This includes educational services to approximately 238,000 young people in 35 countries. These young people are literally living on the edge and in many cases they have witnessed horrific violence. It is a struggle to keep faith in view of so much evil.

The work of JRS is deeply rooted in faith – faith in a God who is present even in the most tragic moments of human history. Faith responds with love for all victims, without discrimination of race and religion. JRS teams are composed of people of different faiths and cultural backgrounds. In the Middle East, Christians and Muslims work together and send a message to the world that the divide is not religious but political. Interfaith praxis is the way we work. JRS is also a collaborative effort of refugees, lay staff, Jesuits and other religious.

The mission of JRS is to accompany, serve and advocate the cause of refugees. Fr Pedro Arrupe, who began JRS in 1980, wrote in the foundational document that this service is “human, pedagogical and spiritual.” These three words embrace a compassionate human response to basic human needs, education as a source of hope and spiritual accompaniment for so many traumatised refugees. In his last message to JRS and the Jesuits, Arrupe reminded us to pray, because such problems as we face cannot be overcome by mere material means. ■



P.Balleis/JRS

Somali refugee women in an adult literacy class at Melkedida Camp, Ethiopia.

The failure of whole states combined with criminal and rebel control of resources such as oil and diamonds are prime causes of the conflicts and the violence. Religion – or more precisely, religious fundamentalism – provides many with an ideological backup.

The majority of displaced persons are Muslim – about 70% of all ref-

The Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) is working in all four of the current “Level Three” emergency areas (those with the worst humanitarian crises as defined by the UN) – Syria, CAR, South Sudan and, most recently, northern Iraq. It is challenging work because it means operating in a context of ongoing conflict. The security risks are high. But JRS works in many other areas of con-

Bridging the education gap: Syrian refugee children in Lebanon

Zerene Haddad, Regional Communications Officer, JRS Middle East and North Africa

The Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) expanded educational activities in 2014 in response to the growing concern that many Syrian refugee children are unable to go to school in Lebanon. Overcrowding, lack of financial means, scarcity of resources and insufficient capacity within the Lebanese public school system are major problems. While the broader NGO community and various UN agencies are working to address these problems, JRS is trying to provide Syrian children with educational opportunities right away. Many of them have already been out of school for as long as three years, severely impacting their intellectual and social development.

In addition to the schools that JRS opened in Jbeil and Kafar Zabad in 2013, it has now opened the Frans van der Lugt (FVDL) Community Centre in Bourj Hammoud, a suburb of Beirut. The new centre is named after Fr Frans van der Lugt SJ, who was killed in Syria in April 2014.

The FVDL Centre operates as a school in the morning for Syrian children, and as a community centre in the afternoon and early evenings for both the local Lebanese people and the Syrian refugees living in Bourj Hammoud. Activities include the Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) for children aged 4 – 16 years; literacy in Arabic and English for women; psychosocial activities; counselling; and remedial classes for children enrolled in the public school system.

“The average time that an individual is displaced or is a refugee is around 17 years. So we need to respond quickly in an emergency, but we also need a long-term plan. In JRS, we believe that education is the cornerstone for the future of the people we work with.”

*Andrea Lari,
JRS International
Advocacy Advisor*

The ALP curriculum offered to Syrian children focuses on English, French, Arabic, math, peace studies and computer literacy. Students at-

tend school for five hours a day, five days a week. They also participate in psychosocial activities such as music, theatre, art and sport.

In these three locations (Beirut, Jbeil and the Bekaa Valley), JRS reaches 1,000 Syrian children with the ALP. Although it is not a permanent solution to the lack of access to education for Syrian children, the ALP is designed to bridge the gap while Syrian children wait to enter the public school system in Lebanon. Through coordination with the Lebanese government, UN agencies and NGOs, greater access to formal education for Syrians should hopefully start in early 2015. ■

A Syrian refugee boy in class at the new Frans van der Lugt Centre in Bourj Hammoud, Lebanon.



Z. Haddad/JRS

In Lebanon, it is estimated that 400,000 Syrian children are of school-going age. At present, only 25% of them have access to any kind of

education, formal or informal. CJI is supporting the educational work of JRS in Lebanon, including the ALP.

Forced displacement in Colombia

Vera Samudio, National Coordinator of Advocacy, Jesuit Refugee Service–Colombia

Forced displacement is a major consequence of the Colombian armed conflict. Between 1985 and November 2014, there were more than 7 million victims of the armed conflict, and of these the government lists 6,044,151 as “displaced persons.” These figures frame the peace talks that have been held between the Government of Colombia and the FARC-EP (the Revolutionary Forces of Colombia–People’s Army) for the past two years in Havana, Cuba. Despite reaching significant preliminary agreements, these talks have been held in the midst of ongoing hostilities.

by the guerrilla armies of “Clan Úsuga,” better known as the “Urabeños.” In this region, the poverty of the people, their subjugation by paramilitaries through blockages, extortion and confinement, the contamination of water sources due to improper gold mining practices, and the forced recruitment of children and youth, stand in contrast to the organizational capacity of the population and the assiduous leadership of women. JRS – the only humanitarian organization in this area – hopes to continue its support, exposing human rights violations that affect the communities and helping to defend their rights, thereby preventing further forced displacement. ■



Magdalena Medio JRS Team
Training session on human rights in the community of Coco Tiquisio, Colombia.

The fighting between Colombia’s armed forces and the insurgents, and the presence of paramilitaries in vast areas of the country, are the main sources of forced displacement today. Especially affected areas include Chocó, Caquetá, Putumayo, Nariño and Valle del Cauca, and badly impacted populations include women, children, people of African descent and indigenous communities.

Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Colombia is present in four regions – Valle del Cauca, Nariño, Norte de Santander and Magdalena Medio – providing humanitarian support to victims and creating conditions conducive to the eventual implementation of the peace accords.

The JRS team in Magdalena Medio, which CJI supports, has been accompanying the communities of Tiquisio, Norosí and Rio Viejo – traditionally a mining region, but historically neglected and now militarized

Colombia in Process

You wonder how it’s done—
this country full of holes
trying to fill itself in.

You sit yourself down to coffee
and today’s Sudoku
and wonder how it’s done—
this numbers game
that doesn’t add up;
it’s not as easy, say,
as 1...2...3...

the disappeared, the out of place,
the lives tentatively set down
and scratched out again

Your page is a mess
with false starts and wrong steps
but beautiful is the boldness
with which you wonder how it’s done
in pen—
you can’t shake the faith
in a solution.

Greg Kennedy SJ

(Greg is a Canadian Jesuit currently studying at Javeriana University in Colombia.)

Ebola Awareness Program in Liberia

Students, staff and faculty at the Kofi Annan Institute of Conflict Transformation (KAICT) have launched a new Ebola Awareness Program (EAP) which they are taking to the communities surrounding all four campuses of the University of Liberia. After the deadly Ebola virus spread to Liberia from neighbouring Guinea, the government declared a state of emergency and classes at KAICT were suspended indefinitely. Canadian Jesuit, Fr John Perry, who has taught at KAICT since 2008, says that so far KAICT has taken its new Ebola Awareness Program to areas of the capital Monrovia and to Sinje, where more than 400 homes

were visited. The EAP distributes posters, urges people to wash their hands regularly, and shows how to prepare a chlorine solution that can kill the virus.

Fr John Perry made the decision to return to Liberia in August 2014, after his home leave. “I want to be their brother and friend both in good times and in bad,” he said. “I did not think that living in the relative safety of Canada would be for me actual solidarity with them during the epidemic.” In November, at the EAP’s request, CJJ made the decision to help support this new program. ■

Teach-In for Justice

Kirsti Tasala

A Canadian delegation of students and educators from six Canadian Jesuit apostolates participated for the first time in the “Ignatian Family Teach-In for Justice” in Washington, DC. CJJ’s youth and outreach coordinator and 26 students and educators from St Bonaventure’s College, Campion College (University of Regina), St Paul’s High School, Loyola High School, and Jesuit Volunteers Canada joined over 1,600 other participants. The annual conference, held in 2014 from November 15–17, is organized by the Ignatian Solidarity Network.

The 2014 Teach-In coincided with the 25th anniversary of the murder of six Jesuits and two lay women in El Salvador – their legacy of social justice advocacy inspired all those in attendance. In addition to hearing from moving keynote speakers, participants attended workshops and networking events, including a meeting with the first-ever Mexican delegation. Another highlight for the Canadian delegation was a special meeting with keynote speaker Fr Ismael Moreno Coto SJ, Director of Radio Progreso, a Jesuit-run station in Honduras. “Padre Melo,” as Coto is popularly known, shared how Canadians can be in solidarity with their Honduran sisters and brothers. On the final day, some Canadian students accompanied their new American friends on advocacy visits to Capitol Hill, while others visited the Canadian Embassy. ■



Members of the Canadian delegation at the Teach-In for Justice in Washington, DC.

K. Tasala/CJJ

Xavier Network partnerships

The directors of Jesuit non-governmental international organizations and of the mission offices of the Jesuit provinces in Europe, Canada and Australia met as the Xavier Network in Visp, Switzerland, in early October 2014. Jenny Cafiso attended the three-day meeting on behalf of CJJ. Participants worked on criteria and priority themes for international partnerships and programs that can be supported by the Xavier Network. They also reviewed progress on the emergency and reconstruction program supported by the Network in the Philippines following Typhoon Haiyan, which has served as a model of successful cooperation. ■

An amazing 25 years!

Twenty-five years ago, Kitty Sarton and a small group of fellow parishioners at St Edward's Catholic Church in Duncan, BC, organized a plant sale to support Jesu Ashram in Darjeeling, India. Back then, Jesu Ashram was a small rural leprosy clinic; today it is a large Jesuit centre with a nursing school and a hospice serving thousands of destitute persons with AIDS, tuberculosis and leprosy every year.

Meanwhile, from the original church basement plant sale that raised \$350 for Jesu Ashram in 1989, the annual event in Duncan has grown. It is now held in three

different venues and it sells much more than plants – baking, books, crafts, toys, “men’s stuff,” Halloween costumes, and a whole lot more. As of 2014, a total of \$75,000 has been sent to Jesu Ashram.

Some of the women of St Edward's who planned the first sale are still working on it today. It's a big job. Many work year-round for the September event. But as the planners for 2014 said, “It's more than just a sale. It's a community builder!” And as long-time coordinator Ro Debreë noted, “We know

how much Jesu Ashram counts on St Edward's Church and the good folks of the Cowichan Valley to keep thousands of patients alive and well.”

What can we at CJI say but a big THANK YOU – and carry on! ■



A. Monacelli

Volunteers at St Edward's annual sale for Jesu Ashram.

Meetings address resource extraction

In October 2014, CJI hosted visitors from Europe and the US who gathered to discuss the work of Jesuit organizations on the Governance of Natural and Mineral Resources (GNMR). GNMR is one of the priority areas of the Global Ignatian Advocacy Network (GIAN). Participants working with the Jesuit European Social Centre (JESC) in Belgium, ALBOAN in Spain, Jesuit Missions in the UK, Saint Louis University in the USA, as well as CJI met in Toronto and also visited Ottawa and Montreal to hear what faith-based and civil society organizations in Canada are doing on the issue of resource extraction.

The GNMR meetings were held in Canada since more than two-thirds of the world's mining and mineral exploration companies are registered in this country. As such it is an appropriate place to reflect on the best regulatory mechanisms to implement in both North America and Europe in response to the concerns of our partners in the Global South. ■

Jesuit Provincial of Darjeeling visits Canada

Fr Kinley Tshering SJ, the Provincial of Darjeeling, India, spent a busy two weeks in Canada in November. He spoke with high school students, educators, long-time supporters and parishioners in Toronto, Guelph, and Zurich, Ontario, as well as in Winnipeg and Calgary. Fr Kinley shared news of the programs and challenges of the Darjeeling Province and also spoke of the legacy of Canadian Jesuit missionaries who began the work in Darjeeling over 60 years ago.

Fr Kinley said his visit had two primary purposes: to say “Thank you!” to all the Canadians who have supported Darjeeling for so long and to ensure that a vibrant dialogue between Jesuit friends in Canada and Darjeeling would be sustained in creative ways so that mutual support would continue for many more years to come. ■



J. Caffiso/Cull

Fr Kinley Tshering SJ

Fr Nawras Sammour SJ on the Syrian crisis

On 16 December 2014, Fr Nawras Sammour spoke at Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Toronto on the humanitarian crisis in Syria. He also gave an update on the work that the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) is doing both in Syria itself, with internally displaced persons, and in neighbouring countries where many Syrians have fled. Fr Nawras is himself a Syrian. He lives in Damascus and has served as the director of JRS in the Middle East since the Syrian crisis began.

The event was co-sponsored by Canadian Jesuits International (CJI) and Development and Peace. Thanks to the supporters of both organizations, JRS is providing educational space for Syrian children and assisting families through home visits and food support. The courageous work of JRS in Syria was recently recognized by an award from Pax Christi International. ■



P.Ketterer/Caritas

Fr Nawras Sammour SJ

New board member

CJI welcomes Fr David Creamer SJ to the Board of Trustees. Originally from Saint John, New Brunswick, Fr David joined the Society of Jesus in 1969. He later earned a doctoral degree in the history and philosophy of education at the University of Toronto. Fr David taught at the University of Manitoba for 25 years in the Department of Religion, at the Jesuit Centre for Catholic Studies and, from its inception, at

the Arthur V. Mauro Centre for Peace and Justice. During these years, he also led study abroad programs, including to Darjeeling, India, where CJI supports a number of projects. Recently Fr David moved from Winnipeg to Toronto. CJI looks forward to the wisdom and experience he brings to the Board. ■

Fr David Creamer SJ



M.Caligiuri

CJI remembers Bob Gaudet

On 7 November 2014, Robert Gaudet died peacefully after a brief struggle with cancer. His life was marked by selfless service, passion, gentleness, commitment, integrity and loving kindness.

CJI owes much to Bob. He served as CJI director from 1986 to 1990. He then served on the board of trustees for six years and, until recently, he was an active member of the finance committee. Bob was always ready to help with anything we asked and was present at all our activities. He loved CJI and had a special place in his heart for the Canadian missionaries who served overseas.

On a personal note, current CJI director Jenny Cafiso said, "To me, Bob was a mentor and a friend. I know that his spirit will live on in the people CJI continues to serve." ■

Robert Gaudet



CJI

REFUGEE APPEAL

Forcibly displaced people need your help!

CJI supports the work of the Jesuit Refugee Service in Africa, Latin America and the Middle East.

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