

**NATIONAL ADVOCACY CENTER PRIORITIES SIGNED ON TO ON
BEHALF OF U.S. PROVINCE LEADERS:** Weeks of May 1 - 10, 2020

Prepared by Brigid Lawlor, Liaison

COVID 19

NAC FOCUS AREA: ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION & VIOLENCE

ISSUE: INCREASED PROTECTION FOR DEFENDER AND SOCIAL LEADERS IN HE BAJO AGUÁN

General Content: Urgent action required to guarantee the rights and safety of defender and social leaders in the Bajo Aguán in the context of the COVID-19 Pandemic and State of Health Emergency

The letter highlights certain cases that need immediate action from the Mechanism in order to protect the lives of social leaders and defenders: the case of the beneficiaries of Precautionary Measures 50-14, which includes approximately 150 people, and the case of the Guapinol water defenders, who are in urgent need of increased protection.

Sent to: Señor Danilo Morales Director General Directorate of the National Protection System, Secretary of Human Rights

CC: Unit on Implementation and Follow-up; Colón Police; Presidency of the Republic of Honduras; Secretary of Human Rights of Honduras; Inter-American Commission on Human Rights; U.N. Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders; U.N. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR); U.S. Embassy in Honduras; Embassy of Spain in Honduras; Consulate of Paraguay in San Pedro Sula; Delegation of the European Union in Honduras, Programme Supporting Human Rights in Honduras (PADH).

Sponsored by: Earthrights.org

NAC FOCUS AREA: POVERTY

ISSUE: ADDITIONAL MEDICAID RESOURCES

General Content: To strengthen Medicaid and CHIP. We ask Congress to consider them as part of any future COVID-19 relief efforts: 1) Further increase Medicaid FMAP to states. Delay the CHIP funding cliff; 2) Protect and expand coverage for all enrollees in Medicaid and CHI; 3) Require Medicaid payment parity with Medicare rates for clinician services, especially for primary care; 4) Ensure predictable federal financing for state Medicaid programs by halting any additional regulatory actions, such as promulgation of a final rule, related to the Medicaid Fiscal Accountability Regulation (MFAR); and 5) Provide emergency financial support to Medicaid providers.

Sent to: Speaker Pelosi, Leader McCarthy, Majority Leader McConnell and Leader Schumer

Sponsored by: Families USA

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ISSUE: HEALTH CARE PRIORITIES FOR 4TH MAJOR COVID-19 PACKAGE

General Content: Letter urging Congress to include the following health care priorities in the next major package:

- Ensure free and accessible treatment for all.
- Expand access to testing for all.
- Provide additional Medicaid funding for states, localities, and tribes, including a significant increase to the Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP).
- Open a special enrollment period for health insurance.
- Direct the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to issue an Emergency Temporary Standard to protect front line health care workers.
- Encourage President Trump to dramatically increase the availability of medical supplies by fully invoking manufacturing authority the Defense Production Act and releasing any remaining medical supplies in the Strategic Defense Stockpile
- Increase funding and access for mental health services.
- Require the Center for Disease Control and Prevention to upgrade data surveillance systems to collect and release robust federal demographic data.

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: WISC (Washington Interreligious Staff Community)

**ISSUE: EMERGENCY RENTAL ASSISTANCE AND RENTAL MARKET STABILIZATION
ACT**

General Content: To ensure housing stability during the covid-19 pandemic, our letter that supports a \$100 billion in emergency rental assistance proposal.

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: National Low-Income Housing Coalition

**NAC FOCUS AREA: US POLICIES THAT AFFECT GOOD SHEPHERD MISSION IN
OTHER COUNTRIES ISSUE: CALLING FOR AN END TO HUMAN RIGHTS
ABUSES AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR COVID-19 RESPONSE IN MYANMAR**

General Content: ,To utilize all diplomatic channels and high-level pressure on the government of Myanmar to strongly urge them take the following actions: 1) The government of Myanmar should call for—and the Tatmadaw should agree to—a nationwide ceasefire in accordance with the UN Secretary General’s call for a global ceasefire in the face of COVID-19 pandemic. 2) The Myanmar Government must immediately end its internet blackout and allow access to lifesaving information. 3) The Myanmar Government must stop targeting journalists and reverse directives to block websites. IV. Freedom of movement and equitable access to testing, healthcare, and humanitarian aid must be ensured, including for Myanmar’s most marginalized.

Sent to: Michael R. Pompeo, Secretary of State

Sponsored by: American Jewish World Service

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OTHER RELATED NAC AREAS

ISSUE: LETTER TO DOL ON UI ELIGIBILITY AND RETURNING TO UNSAFE WORK

General Content: Letter urging ETA to issue new guidance and FAQs that address the standards that apply under the federal UI law to determine when workers remain eligible for regular state UI or PUA if they leave work or refuse to work due COVID-19 health and safety concerns. States should be reminded of the federal “prevailing conditions of work” mandate contained in every state law. Offers of work from employers with conditions that do not comply with the CDC guidelines for preventing virus spread are per se unsuitable under this federal mandate. Second, as Colorado, Texas, and other states have done, ETA should clarify that UI and PUA claimants who reside with older workers and immunocompromised workers should not be required return to work under the suitable work rules. Finally, ETA should remind the states, employers and workers that it is unlawful to terminate a worker or otherwise retaliate against workers for exercising their protected rights under the Occupational Safety and Health Act or their rights under the National Labor Relations Act to engage in “concerted activity” with other co-workers to enforce their health and safety rights, as required by many state UI laws.

Sent to: Secretary Scalia and Assistant Secretary Pallasch; Department of Labor

Sponsored by: National Employment Law Project