News



Protesters risk arrest April 9 while trespassing in a pipeline materials storage area in Carlton County, Minnesota, to oppose the proposed Enbridge Line 3 pipeline project. Twenty-seven participants in the 2018 Midwest Catholic Worker Faith and Resistance Retreat in Duluth, Minnesota, entered the yard with sacred objects, blessed water and banners. (NCR/Maria Benevento)



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Editor's note: Welcome to NCR's Justice Action Bulletin, where every Tuesday we bring you the latest news on active nonviolence in the service of peace and justice. Do you have news you would like to share? Contact Maria Benevento at mbenevento@ncronline.org.

ST. PAUL, Minnesota — Activists are gearing up for resistance after the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission approved a new route for Enbridge's Line 3 pipeline which faith-based, indigenous and environmental activists have opposed for months, according to a June 29 report from Minnesota Public Radio.

The new pipeline route would skirt lands belonging to the Ojibwe people, but would threaten their sacred wild rice lakes and could affect areas where by treaty they are allowed to hunt, fish and gather. It would also allow Enbridge to increase the volume of oil being sent through the pipeline, which some activists say will contribute to global warming (because more oil transported equates to more oil burned).

Opposition to Line 3 was the subject of a Catholic Worker faith and resistance retreat in early April; and in early June, hundreds of faith leaders delivered a letter expressing their concerns with the project.

Although the commissioners voted unanimously to approve the plan, some indicated that it was a difficult decision. While sympathetic to protesters' concerns, they worried the alternative was even more dangerous. Enbridge had said the current pipeline, which is corroded and cracking, would continue operating for at least 11 years if their proposed re-routing were rejected. "It feels like a gun to our head," said Commissioner Dan Lipschultz.

SEATTLE — Gethsemane Lutheran Church began offering sanctuary to José Robles, a Mexican immigrant and father of three, on June 28, the day he was supposed to be deported. Robles is the first immigrant offered sanctuary by the church.

According to the Seattle Times, Robles has been in the country for 18 years and owns a painting company but can't work while he's in sanctuary. He has three

daughters ages 24, 19 and 8; his older daughters are protected from deportation and allowed to work legally under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program for young immigrants who were brought to the U.S. without permission as children.

Robles is attempting to apply for a U-Visa, which is available for crime victims who cooperate with the police, but the officials from the city of Lakewood haven't been willing to sign off on the report that he was attacked.

Meanwhile, Miriam Vargas, an immigrant from Honduras, sought sanctuary with her family June 26 inside First English Lutheran Church in Columbus, Ohio, the Columbus Dispatch reported July 1. Vargas, who has two U.S. citizen daughters ages 5 and 9, didn't want to leave them behind or bring them to a dangerous country. She fled Honduras due to threats from gangs in 2005.

Churches are able to protect immigrants by letting them live on their grounds because although immigration officials aren't prohibited from entering churches by law, they consider them "sensitive" locations that should be avoided except in emergencies.

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BRUNSWICK, Georgia — On July 2, attorneys filed motions to dismiss all charges against seven Catholic activists known as the Kings Bay Plowshares group who entered a nuclear submarine base in Kings Bay, Georgia, April 4 in protest of nuclear weapons.

According to a press release from the group, the motion to dismiss argues that use or threat to use nuclear weapons is illegal under U.S. and international law, that the defendants were acting on their religious beliefs and that prosecuting weapons protesters but not those who illegally threaten to use weapons is "illegal selective prosecution."

Francis Boyle, professor of law at the Illinois College of Law, Captain Thomas Rogers, a retired career Navy commander of nuclear armed submarines, Catholic Bishop Thomas Gumbleton and Jeffery Carter, Executive Director of Physicians for Social Responsibility, made declarations in support of the motion.

GLASGOW, Scotland — Justice and Peace Scotland, which advises the nation's bishops' conference on issues of human rights, justice and peace condemned an Underwater Defense Technology conference held in Glasgow as an "arms fair by any other name," and said it is "a disgrace to continue to squander so much of our planet's wealth and resource in pursuit of ideologies of destruction and power," the Scottish Catholic Observer reported June 29.

A few hundred people including representatives of Justice and Peace Scotland, peace groups and unions participated in protests during the conference, which took place from June 19-28 and was attended by around 1,100 people from 40 countries.

The Glasgow Catholic Worker also signed a letter to the Glasgow City Council condemning the conference and held a protest outside of Glasgow City Chambers.

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