

June 20, 2020 - No. 22

**Matters of Concern to the Polity**

**Let Us Not Permit Change to Be the Casualty  
in the U.S. Once Again**

*- Pauline Easton -*



Longshoremen in Oakland hold a walkout and march to mark Juneteenth and stand with Black Lives Matter. Workers in 29 other ports take similar actions.

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## **Matters of Concern to the Polity**

# **Let Us Not Permit Change to Be the Casualty in the U.S. Once Again**

*- Pauline Easton -*

"Social phenomena are sometimes like the harnessed waters of a mighty river kept in check by the dam of history. When the dam bursts suddenly, it is not history that crumbles into oblivion. No. To the contrary, every drop of that mighty flow resulting from the radical rupture nurtures the soil from which history bursts forth.... the outcome depends on how far the people see and grasp the necessity for change, the necessity to bring about the deep-going transformations demanded by history." – *Hardial Bains*

The main feature of the all-around crisis which is deepening in the United States is that all state institutions, including its governing institutions, bureaucracy, military and political system, are broken. The divisions in the ranks of the rulers are profound indeed, while they are more antagonistic than ever to the people despite the pretense of many to be on the side of the people, on the side of justice.

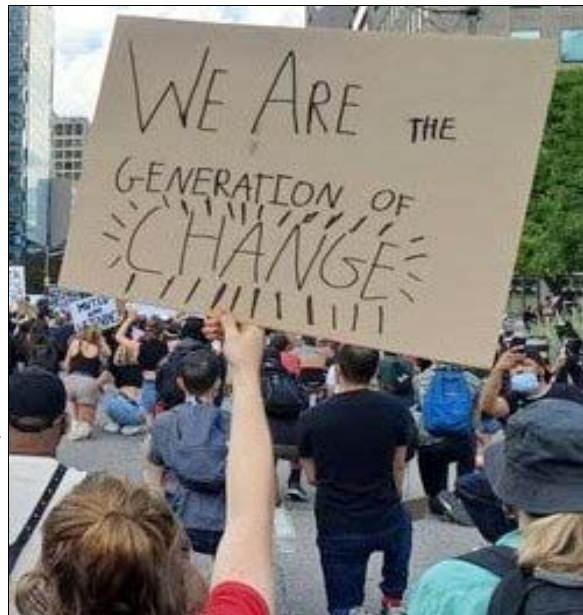




**Garden newly planted at the site of George Floyd's killing in Minneapolis is being tended by the local community.**

The major political parties and their media are held in contempt by the multitudes, while pervasive disinformation leaves the polity with a deadening sense of anger confounded by indifference, a feature of depoliticization intended to leave the people open to the worst demagoguery. Political and economic elites claim the right to speak in the people's name because they constitute a self-promoted "chosen few," a "natural aristocracy" who are entitled to rule and claim the privileges of office. This elite grants itself immunity as protection against incursions on their "right" to hold the monopoly on force by which they rule.

This is what we see on the occasion of Juneteenth 2020, which marks the 155th anniversary since the abolition of slavery in the United States, about which the great Afro-American leader W.E.B. Dubois said: "The slave went free; stood a brief moment in the sun; then moved back again toward slavery."



The degeneration in the United States is such that the clash between Condition and Authority is more glaring than ever before. U.S. President Donald Trump is holding his first re-election rally in Tulsa, Oklahoma -- the site of the worst racial massacre in U.S. history in 1921. Convoking such a rally is a public health nightmare at a time when there are more than 2.2 million confirmed cases of coronavirus and more than 120,000 deaths in the U.S. It is also a deliberate brutal provocation worthy of the Ku Klux Klan, which shows the depths of depravity to which the U.S. ruling class has sunk and is wallowing in today. Powerless to stop the rally, Tulsa has declared a curfew, which will do nothing to control the endangerment of public health and will serve to keep the people's protest in check by criminalizing their demands for Justice Now!

However, the people all over the United States, joined by peoples all over the world, continue to speak in their own name and their striving for empowerment reaches new heights of resistance to police and military violence. The past week saw more actions raise the demands of the movement, including during Pride parades and Juneteenth celebrations, that included demonstrations by longshoremen in some 30 U.S. ports. The world also witnessed more deaths of black youth said by local authorities and media to be "suicide by hanging" but suspected by many to be lynchings.



**Ruins following the 1921 Tulsa race massacre, during which more than 300 African Americans were murdered.**

Meanwhile, it is clear that at present the powers that be are unable to agree on a saviour who can deliver the people, the bureaucracy and the military to serve the claim that the U.S. is the "indispensable nation" entitled to dominate the entire world. Trump's "disapproval rating" is said to be higher than 55 per cent. Reports claim that a majority of Republicans -- 63 per cent -- believe the country is heading in the wrong direction. What is important, however, is to focus not so much on the character or personality of the candidates seeking election but rather to examine the logic of the machinery behind the selection and election process. The machinery refers to the political system based on the Constitution. How the likes of Donald Trump can seize the presidency of the United States, said to be the greatest democracy in the world, cannot be understood apart from analyzing the U.S. Constitution and its political system in the context of the actual historical situation.

How else can one explain what is taking place? The main U.S. media outlets are desperate to stop reporting on the demands of the protesters. Their cynicism is such that they present unfolding events in the manner of a circus worthy of the depraved Roman Emperor Nero who not only murdered his mother, his first wife and possibly his second, but is said to have been such an ineffective leader as to have played music while Rome burned in a great fire.

ABC News reported that "The President already moved his rally back one day to avoid conflicting with a national holiday celebrating the end of slavery. In short, you can expect plenty of protests. The risk of clashes is so apparent that Tulsa has called on the National Guard and FBI to provide security on top of the usual Secret Service flock. Trump's rallies have never been just rallies, but this one feels more like a powder keg. [...]"



"There's still 137 days until the election. What happens in Tulsa this weekend could prove to be among the most pivotal of them. The pundits will speak in urgent tones about the virus. The country's top police forces will fight to keep the protesters and supporters contained in separate pens. Thousands, maybe millions, will tune in at home to watch what happens with the powder keg. And Trump will take to the stage, all ease and smiles, to do what he loves best: speak his unfiltered mind."

This is how the disinformation of the state operates. The aim is to forget that it is not about Trump and his personality and antics. In the actual historical situation, the conflict between the forces and social relations of production underlie the deepening economic crisis, instability and disequilibrium. The productive forces, including the modern working class, exceed by far the bonds of the capitalist social relations of production to which they are allegedly safely tied. This is especially true of the unfolding scientific, technological and industrial revolutions, whose development is in the main driven by competition among sources of capital. Without benefit to the people, these productive forces have grown to such an extent that the sustainability of the natural-social environment is threatened. Such threats result from capitalist social relations that fetter the productive powers. Society's fettered productive powers are actually a block to their organization by society to satisfy the claims of its members in order to meet their needs at a level consistent with the stage of social development.



If this problem is not sorted out, great tragedies face the people. The U.S. government, with its military and bureaucracy, does not have an interest in sorting out these questions to the advantage of the people. The same is the case for Canada, the United Kingdom, France, Germany and other countries, said to be advanced democracies whose nation-states as constituted long ago have passed away, because only the claims of the owners of capital are deemed legitimate, which means that they compete to lay hold of the monopoly of force. This is how the claim to legitimacy is established by these decadent and corrupt forces as well as, according to them, the authority to use this force in the name of society.



The owners of capital place their claims on society by virtue of holding the right to the monopoly of force of the state machinery. Likewise, by claiming legitimacy and the authority to control the right to use the monopoly of force and coercion, the owners of capital restrict and limit the claims of the working class and people. But the claims to legitimacy are necessarily undermined if people in their conditions of life are completely restricted in terms of the satisfaction of their needs. On this basis, the claims of those who hold the authority that says they legitimately control the monopoly of force in the name of society are called into question.

This is what is happening today. It is what lies at the heart of the demands of the people in the United States when they call for the police to be defunded and disarmed.

In an attempt to avoid this situation, large sums of money are being spent in the U.S. to solve the problem of how to give the presidential election, which will unfold over the next 137 days, an air of legitimacy. Billions of dollars are being spent in search of a saviour, in a seemingly public manner for a seemingly public office. The search itself is supposed to bestow legitimacy on the selection process but it seems beyond the grasp of the ruling circles to find someone who can dress up the demand for the right to a monopoly on the use of force with a covering of legitimacy. The state machinery desperately needs a saviour with the attributes of stewardship -- to oversee the relations and arrangements of the vast bureaucracy, military and governing institutions, and stalwartness -- the promise of loyalty to the owners of capital as a class. Their problem is that in the current crisis-ridden situation, from the perspective of the elites, presidential leadership demands acting and deciding with an "energy" that is pre-emptive, and which has been ascribed to presidential dictatorship that has given rise to Donald Trump, a president who is pre-emptive in navigating unstable conditions in disequilibrium. But establishing such a president in a defining historical moment is fraught with danger.

Trump has not turned out to be the master conjurer the U.S. rulers hope for in these times of crisis with a divided government and the intense conflict among contending sources of capital. It goes to the heart of the problem in the United States -- the problem of legitimacy. If those who govern appear as a self-interested clique, the claim of a legitimate authority to wield state power with its monopoly of the instruments of force and coercion begins to look like the usurper's conceit. The existence of alternative claims to legitimacy and authority presage a sovereign power that no longer passes for being whole and undivided. In such a situation, neither those who govern nor those who are governed accept the old ways of life and of doing business; neither can continue as before.

The fact is that the condition of civil war which has appeared in the United States is no longer farfetched. The constitutional foundations of the governing arrangements and the productive forces can no longer be harmonized. The 18th century constitution does not provide the foundations for a political system of such a calibre that it can deal with the all-around crisis emerging from the clash of the productive forces and capitalist social relations. Today, it is the working class which must constitute the nation. The Constitution as it emerged from the American Civil War does not provide a modern conception of democracy which eradicates racism because this constitution did not abolish slavery. It merged the slave system with the system of wage slavery. The harmonization of the conflicting individual, collective and general interests that emerge in society due to the clash of forces and relations of production can no longer be reconciled.



Even though the U.S. emerged from the period of world depression, world war and the defeat of fascism in a manner which allowed for the leadership necessary to deal with those historical situations, today the social fabric of the United States is ripping apart as never before. No amount of criticism of presidential usurpations as deviations from the perceived constitutional framework will prevent the extreme backlash of the ruling class to the demands for justice, nor will it give rise to illusions that the rulers are fit to govern.

The resistance struggle in the United States continues to militantly uphold the demands of justice

and give expression to the peoples striving for empowerment even as the rulers, their pundits and media provide a circus to disinform them. It is therefore more necessary than ever to calmly view and analyze the actual historical situation so as to find the line of march which informs the polity. It is our responsibility together to make sure that change which favours the people is not once again the casualty in the United States.

*(Photos: Xtine Cameron, Paul Becker, David Geitgey)*



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## **Juneteenth and the End of Slavery**

# **All Out for People's Empowerment: The Time for Waiting Is Over! End the Injustice NOW!**

**- Dougal MacDonald -**

June 19, 1865 or Juneteenth (also known as Freedom Day) is celebrated across the United States in appreciation of the vital contributions made by African Americans in emancipating the four million people enslaved by the system of slave labour, and in carrying forward the fight for justice and equality before and since the U.S. Civil War. This year actions across the U.S. saluted the determined and undaunted resistance to police violence, government impunity and demands for accountability and change that favours the people.



June 19, 1865 was the day when all the people still enslaved at the end of the Civil War gained their freedom. While hundreds of thousands of those enslaved fought in the Civil War to end the system of slave labour, many remained in bondage even after the war ended on April 9, 1865. Slavery remained in effect in Texas until Union soldiers arrived in Galveston, Texas on June 19 to tell everyone that all those enslaved had won their freedom. Celebrations immediately broke out and Juneteenth has been celebrated in states south and north, with a resurgence and broadening of events during the 1960s and since.

Black people played a decisive role in winning their emancipation and defeating the slave owners. They carried out numerous mass insurrectionary movements on the plantations before and during the war. Abolitionists like Frederick Douglass and Karl Marx long advocated bringing Black people south and north into the Army but Lincoln initially refused. Those enslaved organized mass actions to escape the plantations and reach Union lines, joining the fight in various ways. In 1862, even before the 1863 Emancipation Proclamation, Black people formed their own armed militias to battle enslavement in Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri and South Carolina -- regiments later integrated into the Union Army. The "U.S. Coloured Troops" were officially formed in the spring of 1863 which brought more than 180,000 people freed from enslavement and northern Black people into the Army. Another 29,000 served in the Navy and many more joined the fight by securing supplies, undermining plantations, providing information and so forth. Black soldiers participated in about 200 battles of the war and were known for their courage and fighting abilities, giving their lives at a rate 35 per cent higher than other troops.

The millions of people who won liberation from enslavement faced a huge social challenge. People literally had to rebuild their lives from the ground up, including rejecting names given by

the slave masters and adopting new ones. They owned no property, no homes, no land, no farm animals, no implements, and few clothes. They were largely illiterate as it was a crime to teach those enslaved to read and write. For many their lives had been totally restricted to the plantations they worked on and perhaps surrounding ones. They had been largely excluded from political life, but had organized resistance through churches, song and the Underground Railway. Given this, their progress right after the war was extraordinary. They militantly faced the opposition by the still powerful former slave owners who wanted to keep them in bondage and exploit them, including by forming white supremacist terrorist groups such as the Ku Klux Klan (1865) that are still in operation today.

Liberation of the millions of enslaved people and defeat of the slave owners gave rise to major battles for democracy during the Reconstruction period of 1865-1877. People formerly enslaved alongside poor farmers, including many women, joined in demanding representation in their interests, the right to be equal members of the polity, including voting rights. Whole communities were built and debates on state constitutions waged as people came forward south and north to advance the fight for democracy unleashed by the defeat of the system of slave labour. A better future was fought for. But as W.E.B. Dubois put it, "The slave went free; stood a brief moment in the sun; then moved back again toward slavery."

Former slave owners, commonly Democrats, gradually regained power in Southern Legislatures with assistance from the federal government and through terrorism, violence, disruption, outright voter fraud, and other forms of intimidation. In 1876, the presidential election was disputed and a compromise was necessary to preserve the union. Samuel Tilden had won the popular vote but electoral college votes were in dispute. In 1877 Congress arranged the compromise, with troops withdrawn from the south and former slave owners permitted to regain their plantations while Rutherford B. Hayes was selected for president. White Democrats now held political power in every Southern state and they swiftly turned back the clock using the KKK, mass arrests and legislating "Jim Crow" and other laws, officially segregating Black people and forcing many back on the plantations as sharecroppers. By 1905, nearly all Black men were effectively disenfranchised by state legislatures in every Southern state, with federal government support.

Almost 90 years later, Jim Crow laws, lynching and KKK terrorism remained widespread until the mass movements of the 1950s and '60s which achieved desegregation in many respects and passage of the *Civil Rights Act of 1964* and the *Voting Rights Act of 1965*. But KKK violence remained and other forms of inequality and genocide took place, such as mass incarceration. From Jim Crow to the present day, Black people have continued to fight for their rights through their organizations, in the law courts, in legislatures and other government bodies, through the arts, socially active churches, mass protests and through armed self-defence against the racist violence of the state and its clandestine white supremacist organizations. To give one example, in June 1961 in Monroe, North Carolina, black leader Robert F. Williams and his allies organized armed self-defence against the Ku Klux Klan who wanted to prevent desegregation of a swimming pool. Williams was forced into exile by the U.S. government until 1969. He later explained: "I advocated violent self-defence because I don't really think you can have a defence against violent racists and against terrorists unless you are prepared to meet violence with violence, and my policy was to meet violence with violence." The Black Panthers and Malcolm X also called for armed self-defence.

A key issue regarding the criminal legacy of slavery is the demand for reparations. Many recognize that the inequalities faced by Black people in the U.S. today are directly attributable to slavery and continued state-sanctioned discrimination. Some suggest history would have been different if the federal government had followed through on the legislation and promises of Reconstruction for land and defended the political power fought for by poor whites and Blacks, men and women alike. Then and now, the federal government acted to block democracy by disempowering the people. This occurred in part by allowing former slave owners to reclaim their land, which was



supposed to be given to people formerly enslaved and by organizing decades of state-sanctioned oppression and violence. While some cases for slavery reparations have been won at local levels, such as Georgetown University, the demand is for a federal reparations law addressing not only compensation for individuals but collectives and communities as well. Reparations and a formal apology for the perpetration of gross human rights violations and crimes against humanity on the African peoples who were enslaved and their descendants is the just demand of today.

In the face of the growing demand for reparations, last year on Juneteenth the United States House Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights and Civil Liberties held a hearing with the stated purpose "to examine, through open and constructive discourse, the legacy of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, its continuing impact on the community and the path to restorative justice." Since Washington and Jefferson and sixteen other U.S. presidents owned slaves, and since some of the richest families in the U.S. such as the Cabots profited handsomely from the slave trade, much of the talk sounds highly hypocritical. Various African American organizations have been fighting on the issue, including holding town hall meetings. As well, the issue has been taken to the UN. In 2016 the UN called on the U.S. to pay reparations for slavery. Its report brought out that "compensation is necessary to combat the disadvantages caused by 245 years of legally allowing the sale of people based on the colour of their skin."

One part of the current resistance is the tearing down of symbols and statues glorifying slavery and commemorating slave traders and owners. For example, the statue of slave owner Philip Schuyler was removed from outside Albany City Hall. Statues of various Confederate leaders have also been removed due to their connection with slavery, for example, a Confederate memorial statue was removed in Portsmouth, Virginia. There are also calls for new statues to be raised in their place to celebrate those who fought against slavery rather than those who enriched themselves from it.

Across the U.S., actions that started on May 26 to demand justice for the police killing of George Floyd continue, as organized resistance emerges to take its place. In Minneapolis where Floyd was killed and across the country, calls for justice in numerous cases of police brutality and killings, especially of African Americans, ring out. Calls also demand profound changes to policing that will not permit the people to be victimized by a militarized force that does not represent their interests. It is no coincidence that the police forces in the South were first created to protect the system of slave labour, such as slave patrols to catch those who had escaped their enslavement.



Juneteenth this year is being celebrated by saluting these many actions and demanding that all the continuing remnants of slavery, in the form of broad inequality faced by African Americans on all fronts and police violence and mass incarceration be eliminated. People of all nationalities and backgrounds together continue to affirm their convictions for new arrangements and their own empowerment, through protests as well as other forms of resistance.

*(Photos: Veterans for Peace)*



# The Meaning of the Term "Systemic Racism"

- Steve Rutchinski -



**Toronto action calls for end to police violence and impunity and stands with U.S. protests demanding justice for George Floyd, June 6, 2020.**

At this time, the term "systemic racism" is being used in a manner which twists and turns in attempts to keep pace with the direction in which the wind is blowing. But to suggest that racism is "systemic" is to say that it is everywhere and nowhere and to enforce that the society must live with it.

This mischief took off in Canada in the early 1990s when the Bob Rae NDP government mandated Stephen Lewis to hold an Inquiry following eight shootings of Black youth in Ontario in four years. This was followed with the establishment of an Anti-Racism Directorate whose stated purpose was to "prevent systemic racism in government policy, legislation, programs and services." It held meetings all over Ontario which focused on the failure to address institutional racism. Following this, along with all kinds of recommendations, in 1993 the Ontario Legislature established a "Commission on Systemic Racism in the Ontario Judicial System." A letter from the six Commission members invited "communities affected by this inquiry" to present views on what should be researched, as well as to propose solutions to the problems.

The Commission said its purpose was "to examine the extent of systemic racism in the Ontario criminal justice system, and to make recommendations to eliminate it where it is identified." It was also mandated to examine "procedure, practices, policies, and processes in the institutions of the Ontario provincial criminal justice system that may cause or reflect systemic racism." It was directed to focus on "anti-black racism in urban communities, with special emphasis on women and youth, while at the same time recognizing the vulnerability of all racial minority communities." It clearly stipulated that it had no authority to investigate "individual allegations of wrong-doing."

The Commission defined "systemic racism" as "procedures and practices, some unintentional, that disadvantage and discriminate against racial minorities." In a footnote to this definition it added: "The term racial minority appears in the Commission's terms of reference. The Commissioners acknowledge that many people find it inappropriate."

The Commission's own definition of systemic racism puts into question its own existence and terms of reference. It was obliged to abandon the term "visible minority" which was used by the June 1992 Stephen Lewis Inquiry and caused great offense at that time. The official definition of "visible minority" contained in the 1975 Green Paper on Immigration is "persons, other than Aboriginal, who are either non-white in colour or non-Caucasian in race." Nonetheless, it defined

individuals on the basis of colour of skin which means it too used terminology that people find "inappropriate" precisely because it defines them as something other than members of the polity with equal rights.

By institutionalizing concepts such as "visible minorities" and "racial minorities" through legislation and various agencies and commissions, the notion is ingrained in the society that there are "minority rights" and "majority rights" between which there is constant tension. The state presents itself as the defender of "minority rights." A democratic society recognizes no such categories of rights. On the contrary, it recognizes citizens, who are all entitled to the same rights and duties, with no consideration as to gender, race, social origin, wealth, ability, religion, national origin, belief, etc. All must be equal before the law.

The provincial Commission appointed in 1993 was trying to create the impression that it is difficult to ascertain whether an individual is treated differently before the law, for example in the length of sentences delivered, or in the determination of bail. The approach served to hide that there can only be two possibilities: either the laws and procedures are so arbitrary that the administrators of justice can mete out "justice" without any set criteria, or the state is violating the rights of citizens with impunity and individuals subjected to such violations are obstructed from seeking redress. Redress denied is justice denied.

*(With files from HBRC Archives and Today/Tomorrow 1993. Photo: Xtine Cameron)*

**Supplement**  
**Photo Review**

**Militant Opposition to State-Organized  
Racist Attacks Continues**

**Chantel Moore Shot and Killed by Police in Edmundston, New Brunswick**  
**Not One More Life! End State Organized Racist  
Attacks and Police Violence**



On June 4, Chantel Moore was shot and killed by police in Edmundston, New Brunswick.



Twenty-six years old, Chantel was a member of the Tla-o-qui-aht/Nuu-chah-nulth Nation on Vancouver Island. Her young daughter has lost her mother and her large family and circle of friends have lost a daughter, a sister, an aunt, a friend.

In a period of less than three months since April, at least five Indigenous people have been killed by police. Chantel Moore. Rodney Levi. Eishia Hudson. Jason Collins. Stewart Kevin Andrews.

Another Indigenous man, Everett Patrick, died in police custody. Regis Korchinski-Paquet, a Black-Indigenous woman, fell to her death from her balcony in Toronto while police were in her home. In addition, there is the incident of an Indigenous man deliberately struck by a police vehicle in Nunavut, captured on video for the world to see.

In the case of Chantel, even as police chiefs and establishment forces hasten to distance themselves from accusations of racism, there are once again conflicting stories from the police and what the family saw as evidence at the scene. Brutal facts of life are kept hidden behind suggestions that this killing is not the rule but an exception, an aberration -- "something that does not follow the correct or expected course or something that is not typical or normal." An aberrant cop, aberrant circumstances, an aberrant incident -- an undesirable outcome.



Judith Sayers, from the Hupacasath First Nation in Port Alberni, BC and President of the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council, writes in *The Tyee*:<sup>[1]</sup>

"The police officer who came after midnight to do a wellness check was pounding on her door to wake her up. Police had been sent to check on her because of concerns she was being harassed.

"Imagine being in your own apartment with someone banging on your door in the middle of the night. Police say she had a knife in her hand. Is it any wonder she had felt the need to protect herself, if that was the case?

"The family fails to understand how a large police officer couldn't fend off a smaller woman without shooting her, and why he had no ability to de-escalate the situation. There were no witnesses, so all we have is the police officer's statement. No one can speak for Chantel. This just is not right. This is not acceptable by anyone's standard. It is wrong. It should never have happened."

Sayers raises the most important question on everyone's minds: "Many are crying out for justice for Chantel, but what does that look like?" she asks.

Sayers raises the outcome everyone desires: "[...] Justice for Chantel means that senseless shootings of Indigenous Peoples must stop and never happen again. We must change the way Canada does policing, as it obviously is not working."

Amongst other things, Sayers underscores the need to have "trained, unarmed, non-violent first responders respond to crisis situations involving wellness checks, mental health and addictions -- not police. We need people who know how to work with individuals with mental health issues and teams of people trained to deal with wellness checks and mental health incidents."

Sayers points out that for Indigenous peoples, "this is an act of self-determination. We must determine how we care for our communities and our people. And that must reflect and

acknowledge the legacy of colonialism and the underfunding of education, housing, health and economic development in our communities.

"Indigenous Peoples must be involved in this re-evaluation to change policing in the communities we live in. We must re-examine the First Nations Policing Program and invest in self-administered Indigenous alternatives. We must also stress the importance of investment in economic and social programs for on and off-reserve members."

Pointing out that at the foundation of this police violence is colonialism, Sayers writes: "This violence is a stark reminder that the historical role of policing in forcibly controlling and displacing Indigenous Peoples continues to this day. Indigenous Peoples are disproportionately brutalized, criminalized and killed as a result of policing in Canada. What is our crime? Being Indigenous.

"We ask all Canadians to support Indigenous Peoples and demand action from the Canadian and provincial governments in policing. We must make our homes and communities safe and not have to fear police violence.

"We are at a turning point. We must recognize this violence as a problem and work together as nations to say enough is enough. Not one more life."

*TML Weekly* expresses its deepest sympathies to Chantel's family, friends and nation. We condole with all those who suffer as a result of the brutal deaths of family and community members and demand an end be put to state-organized racist attacks and police violence.

## Note

1. "A Nation Mourns for Chantel Moore," Judith Sayers, *The Tyee*, June 17, 2020.

(Photos: J. Green, D. Carr

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## The Summer Solstice and Quebec's National Holiday 186 Years of National Day Celebrations



On June 24, 1834, 186 years ago, Ludger Duvernay, founder of the patriotic institution Aide-toi le ciel t'aidera (God helps those who help themselves) inaugurated this day as the National Day of

the fledgling Quebec nation and dedicated the first toast to "the people, the primary source of all legitimate authority." Ever since, "this celebration, the purpose of which is to cement the union between Canadiens,"<sup>[1]</sup> is the occasion to celebrate, through music and song, gatherings, parades and neighbourhood activities, who we are as a people, where we come from and where we are going. It is a multi-dimensional celebration of the season, very much like the summer solstice and celebrates the need for us all, of diverse social and national backgrounds, to come together and take stock of our common history and social relations.

This year, National Day is adapting itself to the physical distancing measures imposed by the pandemic. A performance with over 40 artists, accompanied by 14 musicians, a chorus and dancers will be filmed and televised on June 23 by Quebec's four main television networks. This year's theme is "All of Quebec Joins Together," and the poster, as described by the organizers, represents "two people two metres apart, looking towards the future hopefully and in solidarity, under the rainbow that so aptly depicts this historic moment we are experiencing in spite of ourselves. The painting effect crystallizes the poster's protagonists so that one day we can recall that during these times of great vulnerability, all of Quebec came together to better envision a promising future and happier days."

The ruling elite claims that "Quebec is united" in the fight against the pandemic. In fact, the people are united but the rulers make decisions which go against the interests of the people. Evidence of this are the ministerial orders giving full power to the government's executive branch to undo previously negotiated arrangements with health and social services workers to unilaterally change their working conditions, which are the conditions that ensure the health and safety of all. The conflict between the Conditions and the Authority has become even more acute. This brings forward as never before the need to establish a modern state of Quebec and a new basis, one in which power is vested in the people to decide upon all matters of concern to them.

National Day is an opportunity to reflect on how to ensure the building of a modern Quebec that defends the rights of all, one which is at the forefront of inspiring the Canadian people as a whole to move forward and build a new society that vests the sovereign power in the people and defends the rights of all.

On the occasion of Quebec's National Holiday, the Marxist-Leninist Party salutes the people, especially the youth, for the determination with which they defend the rights of all, irrespective of the colour of their skin or the religious beliefs of any of the human beings who make up this modern Quebec. The determination to speak out in one's own name and defend the path of social progress for the people of Quebec, Canada and all the peoples is strongly expressed and is cause for celebration on this National Day.

By drawing on their own rich history and profound expression of what it means to live together, the peoples of Quebec and Canada and the Indigenous peoples are moving towards renewal. What must be dealt with is the issue of how to empower the people to decide upon all matters of concern to them. Finding a solution to the problem of who decides is the most unifying quest there is.

***Happy National Day!***

## **Note**

1. *La Minerve*, June 26, 1834.





## Quebec Patriots Inaugurate National Day in 1834



**June 24: 1834: Ludger Duvernay and the members of the Aide-toi, le ciel t'aidera Society establish June 24 as Quebec's National Day. ([www.fetenationale.qc.ca](http://www.fetenationale.qc.ca))**

Referring to a banquet held on June 24, 1834, the patriot newspaper *La Minerve*, whose purpose was to "spread education especially in the agricultural class and defend the Just Claims of *Canadiens*," published an article which said: "This celebration, the purpose of which is to cement the union between *Canadiens*, will not be fruitless. It will be celebrated every year as the National Day." Ludger Duvernay, founder of the patriotic organization Aide-toi et le ciel t'aidera (God helps those who help themselves) and publisher and editor of *La Minerve*, led the initiative.

An explicitly political celebration, the first National Day was established within the context of the struggle of the inhabitants of Lower Canada to affirm their rights against the British Crown. In fact, in February 1834, 92 resolutions were passed by the House of Assembly of Lower Canada demanding greater control by citizens over the economic and political decisions made in the colony.

Without waiting for a decision from London, the celebration of the first National Day was organized in the garden of the lawyer MacDonnell. More than 37 toasts and speeches were made, all of them saluting the enlightened ideas of the time and the people defending them. The first toast was to the people as "the primary source of all legitimate authority, and the day we are celebrating."

Far from division on the basis of language or national origin -- which has been imposed on us by the past and present Anglo-Canadian state arrangements -- participants highlighted the contribution of the Irish patriots such as Daniel Tracey, founder of the *Irish Vindicator* and *Canada General Advertiser*, who supported the demands of the people of Lower Canada seeking to exercise control over their destiny.

The struggle of William Lyon Mackenzie and of the "other reformers of Upper Canada" to assert the rights of the nascent nation of the day was also toasted. The arrival of British citizens in Lower Canada was also welcomed. The Patriots who were present at the banquet, *La Minerve* reported, celebrated "Emigration: May the thousands of British subjects who come every year to seek asylum on our shores against the abuses and oppression they are suffering in their native country,

such will not take place amongst us and may they find the welcome they deserve! They will form with the people of Canada an impenetrable and irresistible phalanx against tyranny."

A specific toast was also raised to the "artisans and working classes of Montreal and of this country in general. May education continue to spread among society's useful members; may they procure the well-being and ease that their work deserves."

The first National Day also began another tradition that is alive and well today -- that of offering songs and poems to celebrate Quebec's nationhood.

### Note

1. *La Minerve*, February 12, 1827.

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## Summer Solstice and Quebec's National Day

Originally, Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day was intimately tied to the celebrations surrounding the summer solstice. On the days between June 21 and 24, the longest of the year, activities were organized to pay tribute to the sun as they had been since time immemorial. A tribute to the light, bonfires served as public rejoicing in what was Gaul and northern Europe. The summer solstice is still celebrated in Ireland, Scotland, Iceland, England, Peru, Ecuador, Canada and other countries

In what was to become Quebec, the bonfire tradition was noted by the Jesuit Louis LeJeune on the banks of the St. Lawrence in 1636. In 1646, the *Journal des Jésuites* reported that "on the 23rd of June a bonfire is lit on Saint-Jean's Day at eight-thirty in the evening. Five cannon shots were fired and the muskets were fired two or three times." New France was largely rural at that time. The rhythm of work was linked to the seasons, and the solstice provided a few moments of respite and entertainment before the start of the big haymaking and harvest work.



The Church, through the Council of Trent (1545-1563), attempted to Christianize the solstice celebration of light around a joyous bonfire by replacing it with a portrayal of submission in the person of Saint John the Baptist, "the lamb of God." In the same vein, in 1702, Monseigneur de Saint-Vallier, in his Catechism for the Diocese of Quebec that was intended for the Canadiens, noted that the Catholic Church in the New World -- the colonies of the French empire -- considered that ceremony acceptable so long as the "dances and superstitions" of the Indigenous peoples were banished.

When Ludger Duvernay and the elected members of the Patriot Party inaugurated the National Day of the nascent Quebec nation, they did so within a spirit very different from the orientation desired by the Church. Historians like Leopold Gagner, quoted in Denis Monière's biography of Duvernay, said that Duvernay had been influenced by St. Patrick's Day, which for the Irish is "a precious instrument for the reclamation of their freedom and rights."

Today, it is noteworthy that on June 21, National Indigenous Peoples Day, a "Solstice of the

Nations" takes place. It is "an expression of exchange and friendship amongst the nations living in Quebec." The Fire Ceremony held by the Indigenous nations is "to encourage closer ties amongst the peoples living on Quebec's territory," so that "the coals of that fire light up the bonfire of the Great Show of Quebec's National Celebration, on the Plains of Abraham."

The Quebec people's National Day celebrates the Patriots who fought for independence from Britain in the mid-19th century: Nelson, De Lorimier, Côté, Chénier, Duvernay, O'Callaghan and many others. They fought to establish an independent homeland and republic that vests sovereignty in the people. It includes celebrating all those who have espoused and those who continue to espouse the cause of the Quebec Patriots, in particular all those committed to elaborating a nation-building project commensurate with the needs of the times.



**Summer Solstice Celebrations in Kinawit, Val d'Or, June 21, 2019.**



**More summer solstice celebrations on the occasion of National Indigenous Peoples Day 2019.  
Left: Quebec City; right: Saguenay.**

## **Note**

With files from:

- La Saint-Jean-Baptiste, 1634-1852, in *Mélanges historiques Études éparses et inédites de Benjamin Sulte*, compiled, annotated and published by Gérard Malchelosse; and
- Le réseau de diffusion des archives du Québec.

(Photos: Val d'Or Native Friendship Centre, Quebec City Native Friendship Centre, Saguenay Native Friendship Centre)



## **Overview of Where Things Stand**

On June 15, World Health Organization (WHO) Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus gave an overview of the pandemic that underscored the ongoing seriousness of the global situation and the situation in the various regions. He pointed out that "It took more than two months for the first 100,000 cases to be reported. For the past two weeks, more than 100,000 new cases have been reported almost every single day." For the past week, the number of cases has ranged from 124,300 to 145,890 on June 17, a new all-time high.

Regarding those regions the most greatly affected, Dr. Tedros noted that "Almost 75 per cent of recent cases come from 10 countries, mostly in the Americas and South Asia." He added that the WHO is "also see[ing] increasing numbers of cases in Africa, eastern Europe, central Asia and the Middle East.

"Even in countries that have demonstrated the ability to suppress transmission, countries must stay alert to the possibility of resurgence," Dr. Tedros warned. He gave the example of China, which on June 13 "reported a new cluster of cases in Beijing, after more than 50 days without a case in that city. More than 100 cases have now been confirmed."

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## **Preliminary Results About Use of Corticosteroid Dexamethasone for Critically-ill COVID-19 Patients**

**- World Health Organization -**

The World Health Organization (WHO) welcomes the initial clinical trial results from the United Kingdom (UK) that show dexamethasone, a corticosteroid, can be lifesaving for patients who are critically ill with COVID-19. For patients on ventilators, the treatment was shown to reduce mortality by about one third, and for patients requiring only oxygen, mortality was cut by about one fifth, according to preliminary findings shared with WHO.

The benefit was only seen in patients seriously ill with COVID-19, and was not observed in patients with milder disease.

"This is the first treatment to be shown to reduce mortality in patients with COVID-19 requiring oxygen or ventilator support," said Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General. "This is great news and I congratulate the Government of the UK, the University of Oxford, and the many hospitals and patients in the UK who have contributed to this lifesaving scientific breakthrough."

Dexamethasone is a steroid that has been used since the 1960s to reduce inflammation in a range of conditions, including inflammatory disorders and certain cancers. It has been listed on the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines since 1977 in multiple formulations, and is currently off-patent and affordably available in most countries.

The researchers shared initial insights about the results of the trial with WHO, and we are looking forward to the full data analysis in the coming days. WHO will coordinate a meta-analysis to increase our overall understanding of this intervention. WHO clinical guidance will be updated to reflect how and when the drug should be used in COVID-19.

Today's [June 16] news builds off the WHO Research & Development Blueprint meeting, which took place in Geneva in mid-February to accelerate health technologies for COVID-19, where further research into the use of steroids was highlighted as a priority. The findings reinforce the importance of large randomized control trials that produce actionable evidence. WHO will continue to work together with all partners to further develop lifesaving therapeutics and vaccines to tackle COVID-19 including under the umbrella of the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator.

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## On the Global Pandemic for Week Ending June 20

### Number of Cases Worldwide

As of June 20, the worldwide statistics for COVID-19 pandemic as reported by Worldometer were:

- Total reported cases: 8,757,734. This is 982,744 more than the total reported on June 13 of 7,774,990. This compares to the increase in cases in the previous week of 1,722,729.
- Total active cases: 3,669,770. This is 310,747 more than the number reported on June 13 of 3,359,023. The increase in total active cases compared to the previous week was 97,238.
- Closed cases: 5,087,964. This is 671,997 more than the number reported on June 13 of 4,415,967. This compares to an increase in the previous week of 653,798.
- Deaths: 462,519. This is 33,566 more deaths than on June 13, when the toll was 428,953. This compares to an increase in the previous week of 30,367.
- Recovered: 4,625,445. This is up 638,431 from the June 13 figure of 3,987,014 and compares to an increase the previous week of 623,431 recoveries.

There were 181,005 new cases on June 19, a new all-time high, which compares to 143,421 reached June 5. The number of new daily cases ranged between 124,455 to 181,005 over the past week. Overall, these figures indicate an increasing rate of new and active cases over the previous week.

There are 28 countries/territories without active cases this week, down from 29 the previous week. They are Isle of Man (336 cases; 312 recovered; 24 deaths); Montenegro (324 cases; 315 recovered; 9 deaths); Faeroe Islands (187 cases, all recovered); Gibraltar (176 cases; all recovered); Brunei (141 cases; 138 recovered; 3 deaths); Aruba (101 cases; 98 recovered; 3 deaths); Sint Maarten (71 cases; 62 recovered; 15 deaths); French Polynesia (60 cases, all recovered); Macao (45 cases; all recovered); Timor-Leste (24 cases, all recovered); Grenada (23 cases; all recovered); New Caledonia (21 cases; all recovered); Laos (19 cases, all recovered); Dominica (18 cases; all recovered); Fiji (18 cases, all recovered); Saint Kitts and Nevis (15 cases, all recovered); Greenland (13 cases, all recovered); the Malvinas (13 cases, all recovered); the Turks and Caicos (12 cases; 11 recovered; 1 death); Vatican City (12 cases; all recovered); the Seychelles (11 cases, all recovered); Montserrat (11 cases, 10 recovered; 1 death); Papua New Guinea (8 cases; all recovered); British Virgin Islands (8 cases; 7 recovered; 1 death); Caribbean Netherlands (7 cases; all recovered); St. Barth (6 cases, all recovered); Anguilla (3 cases, all recovered); Saint Pierre et Miquelon (1 case, recovered).

The five countries with the highest number of cases on June 20 are noted below, accompanied by the number of cases and deaths per million population:

**USA:** 2,297,190 (1,219,722 active; 956,077 recovered; 121,407 deaths) and 6,941 cases per million; 367 deaths per million

- June 13: 2,118,693 (1,159,752 active; 842,068 recovered; 116,873 deaths) and 6,403 cases per million; 353 deaths per million

**Brazil:** 1,038,568 (469,118 active; 520,360 recovered; 49,090 deaths) and 4,887 cases per million; 231 deaths per million

- June 13: 831,064 (361,502 active; 427,610 recovered; 41,952 deaths) and 3,911 cases per million; 197 deaths per million

**Russia:** 569,063 (236,816 active; 324,406 recovered; 7,841 deaths) and 3,899 cases per million; 54 deaths per million

- June 13: 520,129 (238,659 active; 274,641 recovered; 6,829 deaths) and 3,564 cases per million; 47 deaths per million

**India:** 395,812 (168,636 active; 214,206 recovered; 12,970 deaths) and 287 cases per million; 9 deaths per million

- June 13: 310,760 (146,575 active; 155,290 recovered; 8,895 deaths) and 225 cases per million; 6 deaths per million

**UK:** 301,815 (active and recovered N/A; 42,461 deaths ) and 4,447 cases per million; 626 deaths per million

- June 13: 292,950 (active and recovered N/A; 41,481 deaths) and 4,316 cases per million; 611 deaths per million

Looking at the trend over the past week for the 10 countries with the highest number of cases, the U.S. number of new cases is trending upward from 20,161 to 33,539 by the end of the week. In Russia the number of new daily cases has been trending slightly downwards from 8,835 to 7,790 in the past week. In Brazil and India, the number of new daily cases is still rising. Brazil ranged from 17,086 new cases on June 14 to 55,209 on June 19, the latter a new peak. India has added from 11,135 new cases on June 15 to 14,721 on June 19, the latter a new peak. The European countries overall have had a marked decline in new daily cases and daily deaths. Daily new cases in Peru and Chile appear to have peaked in the last week. Iran is still in the midst of a second wave.

### Cases in Top Five Countries by Region

In Europe on June 20, the four other European countries with the highest number of reported cases after the UK, listed above, are Spain, Italy, Germany and France:

**Spain:** 292,655 (active and recovered N/A; 28,315 deaths) and 6,259 cases per million; 606 deaths per million

- June 13: 290,289 (active and recovered N/A; 27,136 deaths) and 6,209 cases per million; 580 deaths per million

**Italy:** 238,011 (21,543 active; 181,907 recovered; 34,561 deaths) and 3,936 cases per million; 572 deaths per million

- June 13: 236,305 (28,997 active; 173,085 recovered; 34,223 deaths) and 3,908 cases per million; 566 deaths per million

**Germany:** 190,660 (7,300 active; 174,400 ; 8,960 deaths) and 2,276 cases per million; 107 deaths per million

- June 13: 187,256 (6,493 active; 171,900 recovered; 8,863 deaths) and 2,235 cases per million; 106



deaths per million

**France:** 159,452 (55,718 active; 74,117 recovered; 29,617 deaths) and 2,443 cases per million; 454 deaths per million

- June 13: 156,287 (54,341 active; 72,572 recovered; 29,374 deaths) and 2,395 cases per million; 450 deaths per million

The European Commission on June 16 recommended that the travel restrictions already in place for all non-essential travel to the EU from third countries be extended until June 30.

Last week, European Home Affairs Commissioner Ylva Johansson urged the 26 countries that make up the Schengen zone within Europe to lift internal border controls by June 15, to allow a gradual reopening to other countries from July, Reuters reports. The Schengen area consists of 22 EU countries plus Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland, which under normal circumstances permit control-free border crossings. News reports indicate that governments are keen to reduce travel restrictions so that the tourism industry can reopen.

European countries have been lifting travel restrictions in varying measures in the past week. As a broad generalization, many countries are still putting restrictions on those countries that have a high number of daily new cases, either outright barring entry to travellers from those countries, or requiring testing or a 14-day quarantine upon entry.

In West Asia on June 20:

**Iran:** 200,262 (31,678 active; 159,192 recovered; 9,392 deaths) and 2,385 cases per million; 112 deaths per million

- June 13: 184,955 (29,477 active; 146,748 recovered; 8,730 deaths) and 2,204 cases per million; 104 deaths per million

**Saudi Arabia:** 150,292 (53,344 active; 95,764 recovered; 1,184 deaths) and 4,319 cases per million; 34 deaths per million

- June 13: 123,308 (39,828 active; 82,548 recovered; 932 deaths) and 3,545 cases per million; 27 deaths per million

**Qatar:** 85,462 (19,960 active; 65,409 recovered; 93 deaths) and 30,437 cases per million; 33 deaths per million

- June 13: 78,416 (23,094 active; 55,252 recovered; 70 deaths) and 27,928 cases per million; 25 deaths per million

**UAE:** 44,145 (12,849 active; 30,996 recovered; 300 deaths) and 4,465 cases per million; 30 deaths per million

- June 13: 41,990 (14,941 active; 26,761 recovered; 288 deaths) and 4,248 cases per million; 29 deaths per million

**Kuwait:** 38,678 (8,175 active; 30,190 recovered; 313 deaths) and 9,062 cases per million; 73 deaths per million

- June 13: 35,466 (9,295 active; 25,882 recovered; 289 deaths) and 8,311 cases per million; 68 deaths per million

In South Asia on June 20:

**India:** 395,812 (168,636 active; 214,206 recovered; 12,970 deaths) and 287 cases per million; 9 deaths per million

- June 13: 310,760 (146,575 active; 155,290 recovered; 8,895 deaths) and 225 cases per million; 6 deaths per million

**Pakistan:** 171,666 (104,780 ; 63,504 recovered; 3,382 deaths) and 778 cases per million; 15 deaths per million

- June 13: 132,405 (79,798 active; 50,056 recovered; 2,551 deaths) and 600 cases per million; 12 deaths per million

**Bangladesh:** 108,775 (63,357 active; 43,993 recovered; 1,425 deaths) and 661 cases per million; 9 deaths per million

- June 13: 84,379 (65,413 active; 17,827 recovered; 1,139 deaths) and 513 cases per million; 7 deaths per million

**Afghanistan:** 28,424 (19,563 active; 8,292 recovered; 569 deaths) and 731 cases per million; 15 deaths per million

- June 13: 24,102 (19,450 active; 4,201 recovered; 451 deaths) and 620 cases per million; 12 deaths per million

**Sri Lanka:** 1,950 (493 active; 1,446 recovered; 11 deaths) and 91 cases per million; 0.5 deaths per million

- June 13: 1,882 (619 active; 1,252 recovered; 11 deaths) and 88 cases per million; 0.5 deaths per million

In India, the nationwide lockdown ended on May 31, while in certain containment zones it has been extended until June 30. On June 8, temples, mosques and churches were permitted to reopen, along with restaurants and hotels, in a process dubbed "Unlock 1." The rate of daily new cases continues to rise, with a new all-time high mark of 13,103 set on June 17. The number of confirmed cases is said to be doubling every 18 days. Daily deaths continue to rise as well, usually around 400, but with a huge one-day spike of 2,006 on June 16, said to be due to counting technicalities.

*Time* magazine reported on June 18 that "On Monday [June 15], the chief minister of Tamil Nadu, one of the worst-hit states in the country, said a stringent [12-day] lockdown would be reimposed in the south Indian city of Chennai and its surrounding districts, beginning on Friday [June 19]. Confirmed cases in the city have now passed 48,000. And earlier in June, the deputy chief minister of Delhi warned the number of cases in the capital could rise as high as 550,000 by the end of July, requiring 80,000 hospital beds -- more than eight times the city's current capacity." The situation in poorer and rural areas is worse, due less health infrastructure and higher population densities.

Despite this situation, Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a virtual meeting on June 17, "advised chief ministers to prepare for the next phase of unlocking the country, dispelling rumours of a fresh round of nationwide lockdown in the wake of the COVID pandemic," the *New Indian Express* reported.

"Asking chief ministers to speed up economic activities, he said, 'We now need to think about Unlock 2.0 and how to minimize all possibilities of harm to our people.' Modi urged them to take steps to boost activities related to infrastructure and the construction sector."

India does not appear to have met the WHO's six criteria for governments to meet to start lifting lockdowns: 1. Disease transmission is under control; 2. Health systems are able to "detect, test, isolate and treat every case and trace every contact"; 3. Hot spot risks are minimized in vulnerable places, such as nursing homes; 4. Schools, workplaces and other essential places have established preventive measures; 5. The risk of importing new cases "can be managed"; 6. Communities are fully educated, engaged and empowered to live under a new normal.

The Indian government is also interfering with the work of journalists to keep the public

informed. A June 18 report from *The Wire*, informs that "A recent report said that at least 55 reporters and editors have been booked or arrested or threatened by different police departments and district administrations for reporting on the COVID-19-induced lockdown. The Uttar Pradesh police has been particularly aggressive against scribes who highlighted the poor state of affairs during the lockdown.

"In end-March, when the lockdown had just begun, two journalists Vijay Vineet and Manish Mishra of a local daily *Janadesh Times*, were sent show cause notices by the Varanasi district magistrate Kaushal Raj Sharma. The two had filed a report on a viral video which showed children of the Musahar community eating grass to survive at Koiripur village in the Prime Minister's constituency.

"Similarly, in April, the UP police filed two FIRs [first information reports] against one of the founding editors of *The Wire*, Siddharth Varadarajan, for a news report about chief minister Yogi Adityanath violating the national lockdown to take part in a religious event in Ayodhya on March 25.

"Such was the enterprise of the UP police to take action in the case that a team of state police officials drove down 700 kilometres in the middle of the lockdown on April 10 to Varadarajan's New Delhi residence to serve him a summons."

In Southeast Asia on June 13:

**Indonesia:** 45,029 (24,717 active; 17,883 recovered; 2,429 deaths) and 165 cases per million; 9 deaths per million

- June 13: 37,420 (21,553 active; 13,776 recovered; 2,091 deaths) and 137 cases per million; 8 deaths per million

**Singapore:** 41,833 (8,348 active; 33,459 recovered; 26 deaths) and 7,152 cases per million; 4 deaths per million

- June 13: 40,197 (12,132 active; 28,040 recovered; 25 deaths) and 6,874 cases per million; 4 deaths per million

**Philippines:** 28,459 (19,951 active; 7,378 recovered; 1,130 deaths) and 260 cases per million; 10 deaths per million

- June 13: 25,392 (18,612 active; 5,706 recovered; 1,074 deaths) and 232 cases per million; 10 deaths per million

**Malaysia:** 8,556 (289 active; 8,146 recovered; 121 deaths) and 264 cases per million; 4 deaths per million

- June 13: 8,445 (1,014 active; 7,311 recovered; 120 deaths) and 261 cases per million; 4 deaths per million

**Thailand:** 3,147 (71 active; 3,018 recovered; 58 deaths) and 45 cases per million; 0.8 deaths per million

- June 13: 3,134 (89 active; 2,987 recovered; 58 deaths) and 45 cases per million; 0.8 deaths per million

The rate of new daily cases in Indonesia has been increasing over the last month, reaching more than 1,000 over the past week, with the result that Indonesia now has the most recorded cases in region, surpassing Singapore in the past week. There is a decreasing rate of new daily cases in Singapore, about 250 or less in the past week, and in Malaysia, which on June 19 had only six new cases. Meanwhile, the Philippines has been adding more than 500 new cases per day throughout June.



In East Asia on June 20:

**China:** 83,352 (308 active; 78,410 recovered; 4,634 deaths) and 58 cases per million; 3 deaths per million

- June 13: 83,075 (74 active; 78,367 recovered; 4,634 deaths) and 58 cases per million; 3 deaths per million

**Japan:** 17,740 (797 active; 16,008 recovered; 935 deaths) and 140 cases per million; 7 deaths per million

- June 13: 17,332 (917 active; 15,493 recovered; 922 deaths ) and 137 cases per million; 7 deaths per million

**South Korea:** 12,373 (1,237 active; 10,856 recovered; 280 deaths) and 241 cases per million; 5 deaths per million

- June 13: 12,051 (1,083 active; 10,691 recovered; 277 deaths) and 235 cases per million; 5 deaths per million

**Taiwan:** 446 (5 active; 434 recovered; 7 deaths) and 19 cases per million; 0.3 deaths per million

- June 13: 443 (5 active; 431 recovered; 7 deaths) and 19 cases per million; 0.3 deaths per million

From June 11 to 17, Beijing reported 158 domestically transmitted COVID-19 cases.

The WHO reported on June 13 that it is following up with Chinese authorities about a cluster of COVID-19 cases in Beijing. As of June 13, there were 41 symptomatic laboratory confirmed cases and 46 laboratory confirmed cases without symptoms of COVID-19 have been identified in Beijing. The WHO was briefed by China's National Health Commission and Beijing Health Commission briefed WHO's China country office, to share details of preliminary investigations ongoing in Beijing. The WHO has offered support and technical assistance, as well as requested further information about the cluster and the investigations underway and planned.

The first identified case had symptom onset on June 9, and was confirmed on June 11. Several of the initial cases were identified through six fever clinics in Beijing. Preliminary investigations revealed that some of the initial symptomatic cases had a link to the Xinfadi Market in Beijing. City authorities tightened the control of personnel flow on June 18. All cases are in isolation and under care as needed, and contact tracing is underway, Xinhua reports. Genetic sequencing of samples is also underway and rapid sharing of these results is important to understand the origin of the cluster and links between cases.

In North America on June 13:

**USA:** 2,297,360 (1,219,876 active; 956,077 recovered; 121,407 deaths) and 6,942 cases per million; 367 deaths per million

- June 13: 2,118,693 (1,159,752 active; 842,068 recovered; 116,873 deaths) and 6,403 cases per million; 353 deaths per million

**Mexico:** 170,485 (22,759 active; 127,332 recovered; 20,394 deaths) and 1,323 cases per million; 158 deaths per million

- June 13: 139,196 (20,981 active; 101,767 recovered; 16,448 deaths) and 1,080 cases per million; 128 deaths per million

**Canada:** 100,629 (29,280 active; 63,003 recovered; 8,346 deaths) and 2,667 cases per million; 221 deaths per million

- June 13: 98,368 (30,930 active; 59,333 recovered; 8,105 deaths) and 2,607 cases per million; 215 deaths per million

Although the number of active cases is flattening and daily deaths are decreasing in the U.S., various states are reporting significant outbreaks. CNN reported on June 18 that: "Ten U.S. states saw a record number of new COVID-19 cases this week, and one of them could be the next epicenter of the pandemic.

"Florida reported 3,207 additional coronavirus cases on Thursday [June 18] -- the largest single day count in the state since the pandemic, according to Florida Department of Health. Florida's total reported cases climbed to nearly 86,000, according to data released by the state.

"The Sunshine State has 'all the markings of the next large epicenter of coronavirus transmission,' and risks being the 'worst it has ever been,' according to [June 17] projections from a model by scientists at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and the University of Pennsylvania.

"The potential for the virus to take off there is very, very nerve-racking and could have catastrophic consequences' because of the state's aging population and the prevalence of nursing homes and retirement communities, Dr. Jeanne Marrazzo, director of the division of infectious diseases at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, told CNN on Thursday.

"Florida joins nine other states -- Alabama, Arizona, California, Nevada, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Carolina and Texas -- that are seeing record-high seven-day averages of new coronavirus cases per day, according to a CNN analysis of data from Johns Hopkins University.

"Twenty-three states are seeing an upward trend in new coronavirus cases, and health experts continue to stress the importance of taking precautions to reduce the virus's spread. Despite the rising number of cases, the White House has downplayed the risks [...]

"States reporting spikes in new cases will have to re-implement 'significant levels of social distancing' to contain the spread, Dr. Peter Hotez, a professor of pediatrics and molecular virology and microbiology at Baylor College of Medicine, told CNN's New Day on Thursday.

"We've never finished the first wave,' Hotez, dean of the National School of Tropical Medicine, said of spikes in new cases in Florida, Texas and Arizona. 'We didn't complete that social distancing period that we needed to do.'

"Models showed states needed to extend stay-at-home orders through May, according to Hotez.

"Things opened up prematurely,' he said.

"According to data from Johns Hopkins University:

- 23 states are seeing upward trends in newly reported cases from one week to the next: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Kansas, Oregon, Louisiana, Montana, Nevada, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Washington, West Virginia and Wyoming.

- Eight states are seeing steady numbers of newly reported cases: Indiana, Maine, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, South Dakota and Utah.

- 18 states are seeing a downward trend: Colorado, Connecticut, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New Jersey, New York, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Virginia and Wisconsin.

- One state, Vermont, has seen a decrease of at least 50 per cent."

Indigenous peoples in the U.S. are being marginalized during the pandemic. *Politico* in a June 11 report informs that "Federal and state health agencies are refusing to give Native American tribes and organizations representing them access to data showing how the coronavirus is spreading around their lands, potentially widening health disparities and frustrating tribal leaders already ill-equipped to contain the pandemic.

"The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has turned down tribal epidemiologists' requests for data that it's making freely available to states. Authorities in Michigan and Massachusetts since early spring have also resisted handing over information on testing and confirmed cases, citing privacy concerns, and refused to strike agreements with tribes on contact tracing or other surveillance, eight tribal leaders and health experts told *POLITICO*. In some instances, officials questioned tribes' legal standing as sovereign entities.

"The communication gaps threaten to hinder efforts to track the virus within Native populations that are more prone to illness, disability and early death and have fragile health systems. Tribal authorities say without knowing who's sick and where, they can't impose lockdowns or other restrictions or organize contact tracing on tribal lands. The lack of data also is weighing on epidemiologists who track public health for the nearly three-quarters of Native Americans who live in urban areas and not on reservations."

In Central America and the Caribbean on June 20:

**Dominican Republic:** 25,068 (9,816 active; 14,605 recovered; 647 deaths) and 2,312 cases per million; 60 deaths per million

- June 13: 22,572 (8,911 active; 13,084 recovered; 577 deaths) and 2,082 cases per million; 53 deaths per million

**Panama:** 24,274 (9,430 active; 14,359 recovered; 485 deaths) and 5,629 cases per million; 112 deaths per million

- June 13: 19,211 (5,031 active; 13,759 recovered; 421 deaths) and 4,456 cases per million; 98 deaths per million

**Guatemala:** 12,509 (9,607 active; 2,419 recovered; 483 deaths) and 699 cases per million; 27 deaths per million

- June 13: 8,982 (6,929 active; 1,702 recovered; 351 deaths) and 502 cases per million; 20 deaths per million

**Honduras:** 11,258 (9,695 active; 1,214 recovered; 349 deaths) and 1,137 cases per million; 35 deaths per million

- June 13: 8,132 (6,932 active; 844 recovered; 306 deaths) and 854 cases per million; 31 deaths per million

**Haiti:** 4,980 (4,869 active; 24 recovered; 87 deaths) and 437 cases per million; 8 deaths per million

- June 13: 3,941 (3,853 active; 24 ; 64 deaths) and 346 cases per million; 6 deaths per million

In South America on June 20:

**Brazil:** 1,038,568 (469,118 active; 520,360 recovered; 49,090 deaths) and 4,887 cases per million; 231 deaths per million

- June 13: 832,866 (363,201 active; 427,610 recovered; 42,055 deaths) and 3,920 cases per million; 198 deaths per million

**Peru:** 247,925 (104,745 active; 135,520 recovered; 7,660 deaths) and 7,523 cases per million; 232 deaths per million

- June 13: 220,749 (107,308 active; 107,133 recovered; 6,308 deaths) and 6,700 cases per million;



191 deaths per million

**Chile:** 231,393 (35,809 active; 191,491 recovered; 4,093 deaths) and 12,108 cases per million; 214 deaths per million

- June 13: 167,355 (26,958 active; 137,296 recovered; 3,101 deaths) and 8,758 cases per million; 162 deaths per million

**Colombia:** 63,276 (37,243 active; 23,988 recovered; 2,045 deaths) and 1,244 cases per million; 40 deaths per million

- June 13: 46,858 (26,598 active; 18,715 recovered; 1,545 deaths) and 921 cases per million; 30 deaths per million

**Ecuador:** 49,731 (21,129 active; 24,446 recovered; 4,156 deaths) and 2,820 cases per million; 236 deaths per million

- June 13: 46,356 (19,617 active; 22,865 recovered; 3,874 deaths) and 2,630 cases per million; 220 deaths per million

In Brazil, Chief Paulinho Paiakan, one of the most internationally recognized defenders of the Amazon rainforest died on June 17 of COVID-19, activists informed.

The founder of Amazon Planet Gert-Peter Bruch said the leader died at a hospital in the northern locality of Redençao, in the state of Pará, Brazil after 19 days of having caught the coronavirus, adding that he "worked all his life to build worldwide alliances around indigenous peoples to save the Amazon. He was far ahead of his time. We've lost an extremely valuable guide."

Paiakan, leader of the Kayapo people, was best-known as the guardian of the Amazon, after heading several fights to protect the rainforest against the exploitation of its natural resources.

In 1980, the Indigenous chief led a fight against the construction of the Belo Monte hydroelectric dam on the Xingu River in the Amazon.

To prevent the company from damaging the rainforest and its communities, he forged alliances with other Indigenous groups, international activists and celebrity backers, and was a lead organizer of the Altamira gathering, a 1989 conference that rallied opposition to the project.

Paiakan and other community leaders fought the battle to include the Indigenous people's right to land in Brazil's 1988 constitution.

He also fought to expel illegal miners and loggers from Indigenous areas and often criticized Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro about the intention to expose the Amazon rainforest to massive agricultural infrastructure and mining.

The Articulation of Indigenous Peoples of Brazil (APIB) described Paiakan as a "father, leader and warrior" for Indigenous peoples and the environment.

According to figures compiled by APIB, deaths from COVID-19 in among the country's 900,000 Indigenous people have risen from 46 on May 1 to 262 on June 9. Together with numbers tallied by state health departments around the country, APIB's statistics show that 9.1 percent of Indigenous people who contract the disease are dying, nearly double the 5.2 percent rate among the general Brazilian population. Amidst the political crisis of the Bolsonaro government and its refusal to address the pandemic, it is also reported that government health care workers who tested positive for the coronavirus while deployed to work in Indigenous villages, as well as others who did not observe proper quarantine protocols, along with illegal mineral prospectors and others intruding into Indigenous territories, have introduced COVID-19 into the vulnerable Indigenous communities. Brazil's Indigenous peoples are already under great pressure from

environmental destruction and direct attacks. A recent statement by three UN experts and a rapporteur from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights decried the fact that over the last 15 years, Brazil has seen the highest number of killings of environmental and land defenders of any country, up to an average of about one every week.

In Bolivia, a similar situation exists among the Indigenous communities. On June 17, Miguel Vargas, Director of Bolivia's Center for Legal Studies and Social Research (CEJIS) said that the coup regime led by *de facto* president Jeanine Añez neglects the Amazon's Indigenous communities during the pandemic, *teleSUR* reports. Supporters of the reactionary Añez and others involved in removing democratically elected President Evo Morales from office, carried out terrible crimes against the Indigenous peoples as part of the coup.

"Concerning the Indigenous peoples, the government has not given any response to the problem; in any case, it has made the situation worse," Vargas stated.

"The situation is critical in the Yuqui and Cayubaba villages, which are demographically very small. The possibility of a virus expansion and having a high number of deaths is latent and is very worrying," the CEJIS director explained. Health care available to the Yuqui people is almost non-existent and many cannot access government programs for assistance because they have no official identity records. On June 14, the Yuqui communities reported three COVID-19 deaths and 11 deaths suspected to be due to COVID-19.

Vargas also explained that there is an under-reporting of COVID-19 deaths and infections among Indigenous groups, as they lack sanitary supplies, diagnostic and clinical tests.

"The government has limited attention to the pandemic to the urban area and has forgotten about the rural area," Vargas added.

Indigenous peoples in Ecuador also face a dire situation. On May 30, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) expressed concerns about the number of COVID-19 infections and deaths among Amazon's Indigenous people in Ecuador. Overall, Ecuador is one of the worst hit countries in South America, while the social programs and development carried out under the Correa government has been undermined by the betrayal of President Lenin Moreno.

"The IACHR alerts the [Ecuadorean] state to the special vulnerability of Indigenous peoples and recalls the need to take extreme measures to guarantee their right to health through intercultural, gender and intergenerational solidarity approaches," the Commission said in a statement on Twitter. Indigenous community leaders have also spoken out about their communities being abandoned during the crisis, with state authorities unable to conduct tests and dismissing initial members presenting symptoms. In the absence of responsibility taken by the Ecuadorean government, NGOs and non-state actors such as the Confederation of Amazonian Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONFENAIE) had to take the situation in hand, sourcing and delivering tests and translating safety protocols into native languages among other duties.

Amazon's Indigenous peoples including the Kichwa, Waorani, Achuar, Shuar, and Siekopai original nations, are being dangerously threatened by the pandemic, IACHR warned.

In Africa on June 20:

**South Africa:** 87,715 (38,059 active; 47,825 recovered; 1,831 deaths) and 1,480 cases per million; 31 deaths per million

- June 13: 65,736 (27,463 active; 36,850 recovered; 1,423 deaths) and 1,109 cases per million; 24 deaths per million

**Egypt:** 52,211 (36,266 active; 13,928 recovered; 2,017 deaths) and 511 cases per million; 20 deaths

per million

- June 13: 42,980 (29,967 active; 11,529 recovered; 1,484 deaths) and 420 cases per million; 15 deaths per million

**Nigeria:** 19,147 (12,079 active; 6,581 recovered; 487 ) and 93 cases per million; 2 deaths per million

- June 13: 15,181 (9,891 active; 4,891 recovered; 399 deaths) and 74 cases per million; 2 deaths per million

**Ghana:** 13,203 (8,585 active; 4,548 recovered; 70 deaths) and 425 cases per million; 2 deaths per million

- June 13: 11,118 (7,091 active; 3,979 recovered; 48 deaths) and 358 cases per million; 2 deaths per million

**Algeria:** 11,504 (2,483 active; 8,196 recovered; 825 deaths) and 263 cases per million; 19 deaths per million

- June 13: 10,810 (2,630 active; 7,420 ; 760 deaths) and 247 cases per million; 17 deaths per million

Africa as a region has 289,009 cases as of June 20. On June 11, the UN High Commission on Refugees reported on the situation it is facing in its work in Africa. It reported that:

"The West and Central Africa region has seen a 22 per cent percent increase in confirmed COVID-19 cases in the past week with a total of 73,664 contamination as of June 16 compared to 60,678 on June 9, 2020.

"The COVID-19 pandemic is accelerating in Africa and moving from the continent's main urban centers into the remote rural areas where it will be more challenging to contain the spread of the virus. "With the rainy season starting in the region, UNHCR operations strengthened their preparedness and emergency response mechanisms to mitigate the potential impact of floods in high risk hosting areas."

In Oceania on June 13:

**Australia:** 7,436 (453 active; 6,881 recovered; 102 deaths) and 292 cases per million; 4 deaths per million

- June 13: 7,302 (388 active; 6,812 recovered; 102 deaths) and 287 cases per million; 4 deaths per million

**New Zealand:** 1,509 (0 active; 1,482 recovered; 22 deaths) and 302 cases per million; 4 deaths per million

- June 13: 1,504 (0 active; 1,482 recovered; 22 deaths) and 301 cases per million; 4 deaths per million

**Guam:** 192 (5 deaths)

- June 13: 176 cases (5 deaths)

**French Polynesia:** 60 (all recovered) and 214 cases per million

- June 13: 60 (all recovered) and 214 cases per million

**New Caledonia:** 21 (all recovered)

- June 13: 21 (1 active; 20 recovered)

*(With files from Euractiv, Al Jazeera, Xinhua, CNN, Reuters, Politico, teleSUR, National Geographic)*