As we remember the biblical Exodus, let us also remember the plight of today’s refugees and survivors of mass atrocities facing homelessness and plagues, including COVID-19, today. There are currently approximately 70.8 million forcibly displaced people worldwide. Some 13.6 million of them were newly displaced in the last year.

During the Passover Seder, the symbolic items on the traditional Seder plate help us to tell the story of the Exodus, with its cruelty, hardships, plagues, flight and tears. This year, in particular, the story of the ancient plagues are especially haunting, given the current worldwide COVID-19 pandemic.

Many people amplify their seders by adding new items to their traditional plates to spark conversation about issues of the day. With Jewish World Watch’s third-annual Second Seder Plate, we invite you to focus on the many aspects of this challenging moment, as the COVID-19 pandemic is spreading worldwide, further endangering survivors of today’s forced exoduses – the 70.8 million refugees and internally displaced persons worldwide. We encourage you to create your own Second Seder Plate for your table to inspire reflection: As we recall what the Hebrews endured in Egypt, we can also take time to talk about modern-day survivors of genocide and mass atrocities, and their plight in today’s world.

We have created a sample plate with easy-to-find objects familiar to people of all ages. Each object matches a picture, and an explanation symbolically tying the object to Jewish World Watch’s work. We hope you will be inspired to find your own objects to serve as reminders of the disadvantaged and displaced.

The goal is to deepen our empathy for the world’s most vulnerable people so that we will act on their behalf.

Even in this time of social distancing, we hope your Seder will be filled with new ideas and thoughtful discussion. Please encourage everyone to follow up by reaching out to help the disadvantaged in some way. We offer suggestions on how to do so on each of the cards that follow. Thank you for joining us in helping to heal survivors and to prevent the conflicts that will cause future Exoduses.

Sending you wishes for a meaningful Seder, from the Board and Staff of Jewish World Watch.

Support Jewish World Watch: jww.org/Passover
Why are Scrabble tiles on our Second Seder Plate?

Children in refugee camps need to be educated, yet schools in the camps are limited by a host country’s rules. In Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh, Rohingya children are forced to learn in English, even though often neither they nor their teachers speak the language. The Scrabble tiles on our Seder Plate symbolize the English language, radically different in alphabet and vocabulary from the Rohingya dialect.

With your support, Jewish World Watch is underwriting digital education programs in 75 Rohingya schools in the refugee camps, using technology and innovative programming to teach 7,500 children in their native dialect. This program is essential now in teaching children life-saving information about the COVID-19 virus, especially how to avoid infection. The students share these critical lessons with their families.

FACT: Since the genocide perpetrated by the Myanmar military began in August 2017, nearly 800,000 Rohingya have fled to Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh, where they live in precarious, crowded conditions, easily susceptible to disease. Almost 60 percent of the refugees are children.

ACT: Support projects like this at jww.org/Passover

DISCUSS: What barriers are created by being forced to learn in a foreign language?
Why are postage stamps on our Second Seder Plate?

Stamps represent communication. China has cut off or is surveilling virtually all interaction with the Uyghurs, a Muslim ethnic minority group based in East Turkestan (China’s northwestern Xinjiang region). An estimated 2 million Uyghurs are in internment camps, subject to torture and forced labor without formal charges or legal representation. Given the threat of the spread of COVID-19, the Uyghur diaspora fear that the internment camps holding their relatives are being so strictly quarantined that the interred could starve, and no one will know because all communication has been cut off.

FACT: The Chinese government claims its crackdown on the Uyghurs is a security measure, yet its arbitrary, targeted detention, reported use of torture against detainees, and the transformation of Xinjiang into a surveillance state rise to the level of crimes against humanity.

ACT: The bipartisan Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act was just introduced in both chambers of Congress. The legislation would require importers to prove production of goods is untainted by forced Uyghur labor, and would sanction officials responsible for systematic exploitation of Uyghurs. Go to jww.org/UyghurAct to support this crucial Uyghur legislation.

DISCUSS: What would you say to loved ones under surveillance?
Why are gauze and tape on our Second Seder Plate?

Our longtime partner in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Dr. Denis Mukwege, has just been named provincial coronavirus response coordinator for South Kivu, helping direct the regional response to the pandemic. His hospital is also the leading responder in the DRC to sexual violence against women. At his hospital in Bukavu, as well as when violent attacks by militias happen in remote areas of the DRC, Mukwege’s team utilizes doctors, psychologists and attorneys to help heal survivors and advocate for justice.

The gauze here represents a simple yet vital healing tool. Restoring the whole person, including the broken heart, requires time and care – which your support helps provide.

FACT: An estimated 200,000 surviving rape victims live in the DRC today. Now hospitals are also working to avoid mass suffering from the coronavirus pandemic.

ACT: Ask your elected officials to support the Accountability for Sexual and Gender-based Violence as a Tool in Conflict Act (H.R. 3212 & S. 1777), to prioritize U.S. help with prevention and response to conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence, visit jww.org/AccountabilityAct

DISCUSS: What tools would you take to rescue a pillaged village?
Why are Legos on our Second Seder Plate?

These Legos represent the creative innocence of childhood stolen from as many as 30,000 boys and girls in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) who have been abducted to become soldiers.

Through your support, and with our brave partners in the DRC, Jewish World Watch has been securing the release of these boys and girls through risky negotiations with armed groups. Once the children are freed, each receives psychosocial assistance and help reuniting with family. Those without family get continued care, including education and vocational training.

FACT: Conscripiting children under the age of 18 for armed conflict is prohibited by international law.

ACT: Support projects like this at jww.org/Passover

DISCUSS: How would you reintegrate a former child soldier back into society?
Why is a pile of rubble on our Second Seder Plate?

The region of Idlib, one of the last rebel strongholds inside Syria, is being bombed relentlessly – including targeting hospitals. The rubble on our Second Seder Plate reminds us of the ongoing catastrophe, where civilians are wounded and killed daily as collateral damage in ongoing war crimes. Despite the danger, heroic Syrian doctors have remained in Idlib, making makeshift healing spaces where they continue to save lives. Now they, too, face the imminent threat of COVID-19.

With your help, Jewish World Watch supports these incredible doctors in Idlib by delivering essential, life-saving medical supplies to dozens of makeshift hospitals, supplying them with the tools and equipment needed most.

FACT: More than 3 million people are believed to remain in desperate conditions in the Idlib region. The current humanitarian crisis there is said to be the worst since the conflict began in 2011.

ACT: Support this lifesaving project by making a donation at jww.org/SyriaSupplies

DISCUSS: What does a doctor need to save lives in a war zone?
Why is a cucumber on our Second Seder Plate?

The Darfuris of Sudan fled genocide in 2004; today, more than 300,000 Darfuris remain in refugee camps in Chad. As the world’s humanitarian aid food supplies are stretched thin to meet the growing number of displaced, through your support many Darfuris are being taught perma-gardening techniques to grow their own food. This water-efficient farming produces lush crops of vegetables, including cucumbers, year-round. Refugees now can feed their families without leaving the camps.

**FACT:** Darfuri women are at risk of sexual violence outside the camps, so growing food close to home keeps them safe and well-nourished.

**ACT:** Help the new Sudanese government and create a future for the Darfuris in their homeland by encouraging your representatives to support the civilian-led transition’s reform agenda via the Sudan Democratic Transition, Accountability and Financial Transparency Act of 2020 (H.R. 6094) at jww.org/SudanTransitionAct

**DISCUSS:** What would you miss the most if you were unable to return home?
“I love Passover because for me it is a cry against indifference, a cry for compassion.”

– ELIE WIESEL

ABOUT JEWISH WORLD WATCH

Jewish World Watch is an expression of Judaism in action, bringing help and healing to survivors of mass atrocities around the globe and seeking to inspire people of all faiths and cultures to join the ongoing fight against genocide. JWW currently is working with survivors of conflict in Myanmar (Burma), Syria, Sudan, South Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Join Us!

Make a difference in the fight against genocide and mass atrocities by learning more, advocating for change and supporting Jewish World Watch programs.

Above all, do not stand idly by!

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