



Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

# NewsNotes

*A bi-monthly newsletter of information on international justice and peace issues*

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# Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

## Peace, Social Justice, and Integrity of Creation

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# Peru: Faith-filled Defense of Safe Water

*Former Maryknoll Lay Missioner Barbara Fraser reports of recent legal victories for water defenders.*

Indigenous villagers high in Peru's Andes Mountains and deep in the Amazon Forest, with the help of the Catholic Church and human rights lawyers, have recently won precedent-setting lawsuits that mark a turning point in the legal right to clean water and a healthy environment.

In Coata, a tiny Andean community of adobe houses on the shore of Lake Titicaca, villagers have long farmed and fished where the Coata River flows into Lake Titicaca. In recent decades, though, the nearby city of Juliaca has grown and sprawled, fouling the Coata and Torococha rivers with sewage, garbage, and waste from the local hospital.

Cows squelch through polluted mud and herons stalk amid trash that washes onto the riverbanks. Less visible but equally harmful are the toxic mine tailings that wash down the river from the hills beyond Juliaca, a legacy of centuries of unregulated or poorly regulated mining. Protests against the contamination went largely unheeded by authorities even when villagers blocked the river at a bridge in Juliaca, flooding the streets with sewage-laden water.

But a few people did listen. Maryknoll Sister Patricia Ryan and the team from the environmental rights organization she helped found, Derechos Humanos y Medio Ambiente - DHUMA (human rights and environment), worked with the community to sue the government agencies responsible for allowing the pollution to continue for decades.

In September, the court ruled in the community's favor, ordering an end to the wastewater discharge, construction of treatment plants for sewage and hospital waste, and installation of water and sewer service in Juliaca, Coata and three neighboring districts.

"This is the first judicial case with a sentence that orders a stop to the dumping of solid waste and wastewater into a river and lake," said lawyer Juan Carlos Ruiz of the non-profit Instituto de Defensa Legal (Legal Defense Institute) in Lima, which worked with DHUMA on the case. "That has never been achieved before. It opens a way at the national level to defend water sources. In reality, this sentence proposes a work agenda to be carried out by different state authorities, which must have oversight from civil society."

At the other end of the country, Loreto, Peru's largest Amazonian region, could not be more different from the Altiplano. While Coata is a small community more than two miles high in the Andes, on a mostly treeless plain, Iquitos, Loreto's capital, is a city of 600,000 people surrounded by water and tropical forest.

Loreto is the Peruvian region with the least access to safe drinking water, according to Peru's National Statistics Institute. Nearly eight out of 10 urban residents, but fewer than three in 10 rural dwellers, are connected to municipal water systems. In Puno the figures are only slightly better — 86.4 percent of urban residents, but only 61.6 percent in rural areas have water hookups. And most urban and rural wastewater simply flows into streams and rivers.

In 2016, Augustinian Frs. Miguel Ángel Cadenas and Manolo Berjón, whose parish included those neighborhoods, helped residents organize to sue national, regional, and local authorities to stop the wastewater flow, clean up the contaminated area, and provide safe drinking water and sanitation services, which those neighborhoods and many other like them lack.

In a case that took seven years to settle because of appeals, the Constitutional Tribunal, Peru's highest court, ruled in the plaintiffs' favor in August 2023. As with Coata, in the Iquitos case the court ordered that the waste flow be stopped, that residents be provided with water and sewer service and health care, and that environmental damage be remediated. So far, however, implementation has been slow.

"Water is a powerful symbol in all religions and cultures, including Christianity. One of the most important rituals, baptism, has to do with water," says Cadenas, who is now bishop of the Vicariate of Iquitos. "We have been accompanying Indigenous peoples and offering alternatives to things that have been happening. It's not possible to accompany without noticing the structures that work against them. We had to raise our voices."

Meanwhile, an organization of Kukama Indigenous women in the Vicariate of Iquitos filed Peru's first rights-of-nature lawsuit, demanding that Peru recognize the Marañón River, one of the main tributaries of the Amazon, as having rights. In March, a district court ruled that the river and its tributaries have a series of rights, including the right to flow freely, maintain their ecosystem functions, be free of pollution and be represented. Indigenous organizations are to participate in safeguarding the river's rights.

The ruling has been appealed, but lawyers at the Legal Defense Institute, which assisted with both cases, are optimistic that it will be upheld, and other rights-of-nature lawsuits are likely to follow.

Through cases like these, people of faith high in the Andes and deep in the Amazon are putting into practice Pope Francis' call to protect the right to safe water, which he calls the most fundamental of all human rights. §

## Gaza: Faith Groups Call for Ceasefire

*Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns and other Christian groups stand with Muslims, Jews, and others in praying, demonstrating, and advocating for a ceasefire and sustainable, just peace in the Middle East.*

In the aftermath of Hamas' unprecedented October 7 attack on Israel, Israel's response has been characterized by Palestinians, South Africans, and experts around the world as a genocide. In a complaint at the International Court of Justice (ICJ), South Africa alleged that the Israeli government engaged in action with "genocidal intent." The ICJ's preliminary ruling found it "plausible that Israel's acts [in Gaza] could amount to genocide" and issued provisional measures to seek to prevent further deaths. On April 10, USAID Administrator Samantha Power told Congress that famine is occurring and likely to worsen in Gaza. The United States continues to arm Israel, however. The Biden Administration approved a recent transfer of bombs and warplanes on March 29th, Good Friday.

Throughout the conflict, faith groups have been active in calling for an end to the violence. Since October, Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns (MOGC) has participated in a number of Christian and interreligious coalitions calling for a ceasefire, the release of all hostages, and other steps toward just peace. The primary group coordinating Christian action is Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP), of which MOGC is a member. MOGC has also been active in Christians for Ceasefire, an informal coalition of organizations in Washington, DC.

MOGC and other Christians for Ceasefire members participated in an Ash Wednesday Eucharist and non-violent action in Lafayette Square in front of the White House, initiating a Lenten ceasefire campaign. An interreligious prayer vigil was held in front of the White House March 6th, with Muslim, Jewish, and Christians joining to pray and call for a ceasefire.

On March 2, twelve Christian protesters, including Susan Gunn and Dan Moriarty of MOGC, were arrested while wearing pictures of the destruction in Gaza and singing hymns of peace in the rotunda of the Russell Senate Office building. More Christian protesters were arrested at a Good Friday action in front of the Pentagon.

On February 21, MOGC co-sponsored the interreligious Pilgrimage for Peace from Philadelphia to the White House, joining Rabbis for Peace, the Fellowship of Reconciliation, Black Church leaders, Buddhist, Hindus, and others on the final leg from Maryland to the White House.

On March 23, MOGC Director Susan Gunn and other CMEP members joined Gaza Ceasefire Pilgrimage,

walking 22 miles—the distance from Gaza City to Rafah, where Israel has been threatening a ground assault—in the rain through the streets of Washington. Other pilgrimages took place across the country.

During Holy Week, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops joined Pope Francis in publicly calling for a permanent ceasefire and the release of all hostages.

After Easter, an April 4 vigil was held in front of the White House, marking the anniversary of both Martin Luther King Jr.'s 1967 speech condemning the war in Vietnam, and his 1968 assassination. Five days later, after an ecumenical communion service in front of the Capitol, over 50 protesters with a group called Christians for a Free Palestine were arrested in the Senate cafeteria, urging Congress to send "bread not bombs" to Gaza.

Joining both of these prayer vigils was active-duty U.S. Airforce Senior Airman Larry Hebert, who began a hunger strike in front of the White House on April 1st, standing with a sign saying he "refuses to eat while Gaza starves." Hebert's protest was inspired by the self-immolation of another airman, Aaron Bushnell, in front of the Israeli Embassy in February.

Public vigils and demonstrations provide support for private meetings with White House staff and other policymakers. Sister Teresa Hougnon, MM, president of the Maryknoll Sisters, joined a CMEP meeting at the White House with Biden Administration staff urging moral courage for bolder action to end the atrocities in Gaza. CMEP has brought delegations of U.S. faith leaders to the Holy Land, and Palestinian Christian leaders to Washington to meet with policy makers.

MOGC participated in CMEP's 40th Anniversary Advocacy Summit April 9-11 in Washington. Palestinian speakers included Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb, President of Dar al-Kalima University in Bethlehem and author of the recent Orbis Book Decolonizing Palestine, and other Palestinian Christian leaders. Participants met with various lawmakers, asking them to call for an immediate, permanent ceasefire and the release of hostages held by Hamas, and Palestinians held without charge by Israel; halt military aid to Israel; increase humanitarian aid to Gaza; and pursue a lasting peace that addresses the root causes of the conflict. §

**Faith in Action:** Sign CMEP's Catholic letter calling for a comprehensive ceasefire and the halt of arms sales to Israel. <https://mogc.info/CeasefireSignOn>

# Haitians Seek Peace and Self-determination

*Gangs continue to exert power in Haiti as a transitional government takes office, and the United States blocks the path of migrants fleeing the violence while failing to stop the flow of illegal weapons to the Caribbean nation.*

Haitian Prime Minister Ariel Henry officially resigned on April 25, more than a month after promising to do so, and a transitional governing council was sworn in the same day. Henry's term officially ended February 7, leaving the country without a constitutional government—the last senators' terms ended in January, 2023. Henry left the country later in February and has been residing in exile in the United States. As powerful gangs continue to control large swaths of territory in Haiti, especially in urban centers, the transitional council must contend with a deteriorating security outlook and gang leaders who themselves seek a role in Haiti's governance.

While the council was created by the United States and Caribbean CARICOM leaders, the international community continues to discern what to do about the chaos and violence in Haiti. A Kenyan-led international security force, first proposed and funded by the United States, has yet to materialize, as the plan faces political and legal challenges within Kenya. Maryknoll has met with numerous foreign policy observers and policymakers in Washington who continue to suggest sending U.S. troops to quell gang violence, but the Biden Administration has shown no interest in pursuing such a response.

On March 11, Maryknoll Lay Missioners were forced to suspend their presence in Haiti due to security concerns. Lay Missioner Sami Scott, who evacuated the country after armed gangs attacked the rural town of Gros Morne where she lives, visited Washington, DC in March to speak with policymakers and faith leaders about the situation on the ground. In a presentation hosted by MOGC and the Stuart Center, she emphasized the need for Haitians to determine their own path forward.

Scott described a complete lack of trust in political leaders among her neighbors in Gros Morne, and a shared sense that the government does nothing for them. She says Haitians must be allowed to determine what kind of government they want for themselves if they are to trust any government the council may establish.

Scott operates a henhouse project in Gros Morne, to improve food security and income generation in the community. Almost half of Haiti's people are struggling to feed themselves as gang violence spreads across the country, forcing people to stay home. Inflation and poor harvests have also helped push Haiti to its worst levels of food insecurity on record.

Despite a violent attack on Gros Morne in February,

Scott describes the gangs' presence in the area as much less visible than in Port-Au-Prince, four hours south. But supplies are short and economic activity in the area has been hobbled by the violence in ports and on main roads. Given the chance and a place to go, she said, most inhabitants would leave Haiti to escape both physical and economic insecurity. However, while the United States has already pledged \$200 million to send an armed international security force into Haiti and has failed to stop the flow of weapons into the country from its own shores, the government continues to detain and deport fleeing Haitians who attempt to enter the United States.

On April 8, MOGC joined 100 other faith organizations in delivering a letter to President Biden, Secretary of State Blinken, and Homeland Security Secretary Mayorkas urging them to extend Temporary Protective Status (TPS) for Haiti, halt plans to bring detained Haitians to Guantanamo Bay or other detention centers outside the United States, halt deportations to Haiti and release Haitian detainees, expand parole and maintain access to asylum for Haitian migrants. Citing the displacement of over 160,000 Haitians since February, and expressing special concern over "reports of rape, indiscriminate kidnapping, and vigilante violence against the civilian population," the letter explains, "Mass migration from Haiti is closely tied to historical Western foreign interventions. The ramifications of this history and ongoing crisis continue to put the lives, rights, and freedoms of all Haitians at risk."

Scott also emphasized the need for the United States to better control illegal shipments of arms and ammunition from its own shores to Haiti. Gang affiliates buy the weapons in states with weak gun control laws and smuggle them on ships leaving the Port of Miami River Terminal for the Caribbean.

"In the five years I have served in Haiti, the number of guns in the hands of criminals has increased dramatically," Scott explains. "The United States must stop being complicit in the insecurity of Haiti (by stopping) the illegal trafficking of arms from the U.S. to Haiti. To let it continue is a crime against humanity."§

**Faith in Action:** Join Sami Scott in telling Congress to strengthen oversight of small arms shipments and stop the flow of illegal weapons: <https://mogc.info/HaitiArmsFlow>

# Sudan: Path to Peace Unclear

*April 15 marked one year of fighting in Sudan between the military and rebel forces, each appearing to be loyal only to power and profit.*

The war in Sudan between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) is one year old and has left tens of thousands dead, ten million displaced inside and outside the country, and 18 million food insecure.

U.S. Special Envoy for Sudan, Tom Perriello, reiterated his support for the Jeddah process as the most viable path towards a lasting peace agreement in Sudan. The Jeddah process, facilitated by the United States and Saudi Arabia, has facilitated discussions regarding humanitarian aid distribution and a ceasefire. “We believe that the best platform for formal negotiations is for Saudi Arabia to host negotiations in Jeddah that is inclusive of key partners,” Perriello told the Sudan Tribune.

Earlier in April, Perriello said the talks between the Sudanese army and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) would resume after the end of Ramadan. Previous dates had been scheduled and then postponed. No new date is now determined.

The primary concern in the peace process is interference by external actors who supply weapons and materials to rebel groups. “We are concerned about reports that the UAE is providing material support for the RSF and have directly raised our concerns about this with Emirati officials,” Perriello said.

The paramilitary RSF fighters led by Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, known as Hemedti, have an abundance of AK-pattern rifles and more sophisticated high-caliber weapons. A 2019 investigation by Global Witness revealed that more than 1,000 vehicles—most of them Toyota Hilux pick-up trucks—were purchased from dealers in the United Arab Emirates, and later equipped with mounted weapons. The funds to purchase the vehicles were likely sourced from Hemedti’s vast gold mines in Sudan.

A 2023 article by Geneva Graduate Institute cited video posted on the social media platform X of RSF fighters holding man-portable air defense systems, or manpads, on the steps of the presidential palace in Khartoum. Jubilant fighters also waved various small arms, including G3A4 rifles that may be of Saudi origin.

“The manpads could target Sudanese army aircraft and are a serious threat to civil aviation,” the report said. The report also mentions allegations the Wagner Group – a Russian paramilitary force with close ties to Hemedti and with mutual gold mining interests – offered to supply the Rapid Support Forces with arms, including manpads.

The desire for power and profit at any cost is driving the conflict in Sudan, said Niemat Ahmati, a Sudanese woman peace activist and founder of Darfar Womens Action Group. “It was a mistake for civilian leadership to allow SAF to be at the table [of the Transitional Sovereignty Council],” Ahmati told a meeting of faith-based peace and justice advocacy organizations in Washington, D.C. on April 19. She was referring to the coup led by SAF in 2021 that dissolved the government and ousted the civilian members of the Transitional Council, turning it into a military junta. “The SAF ignored them and pursued war for power and profit – fighting for gold and oil.”

The extent of the humanitarian crisis in Sudan is vast says a new report by the Council of Foreign Relations. “The conflict is destroying Sudan’s infrastructure. Air strikes and shelling have hit hospitals, prisons, schools, and other facilities in dense residential areas.”

The resulting rise in food and fuel costs has pushed 18 million people to be food insecure. The World Food Program says Sudan could become the site of “the world’s largest hunger crisis” if the fighting doesn’t stop. In total, almost 25 million people, or more than half of Sudan’s population, need aid and protection, according to the UN.

More than 570,000 people have fled Sudan and entered Chad. Another estimated 500,000 refugees are South Sudanese who had previously fled to Sudan and have since returned to avoid this war.

UN experts say that Sudan is experiencing the world’s largest internal displacement crisis, and that the total number of refugees will keep growing as fighting continues. There have also been reports of ethnically driven mass killings and weaponization of sexual violence against the Masalit people, particularly in the West Darfur city of El Geneina. Both the SAF and RSF have been accused of war crimes, which a UN fact-finding mission is formally investigating.

The easy access to weapons fuels the violence, a five-member panel of experts on Sudan told the UN Security Council in their latest report. U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Linda Thomas-Greenfield described the report’s findings as “stomach-churning” and said it detailed “atrocities after atrocities after atrocities.”

“[The conflict], as this report details, is being fueled by arms transferred from a handful of regional powers – arms transfers that must stop,” Thomas-Greenfield said. The world is left to wonder “How?” §

# Solidarity with the Maasai of Tanzania

*The Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns supports efforts by the Maasai people of northern Tanzania to protect their ancestral land.*

The Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns, as a member of the Maasai International Solidarity Alliance, released a statement on World Heritage Day, April 18, in support of the human rights of the Maasai in northern Tanzania:

“On this day, known as World Heritage Day, we give thanks to God, our Creator, for the diversity of cultural heritage in our global community. As missionaries committed to living the teachings of the Gospel of Jesus Christ with compassion and justice for all, we recognize that all persons are made in God’s image. We recommit ourselves to fostering mutual respect across cultural expressions, recognizing diversity in cultural heritage to be a source of beauty and strength in the many threads that make up the unified tapestry of creation.

“As a part of our commitment to building a welcoming, peaceful world, we feel obligated to raise awareness about the human rights violations currently subjected upon Indigenous Maasai people in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA) of northern Tanzania. UNESCO designated the NCA a World Heritage Site in 1979 as a multiple land use area, with wildlife coexisting with semi-nomadic Maasai pastoralists. Members of the Maasai community there tell us that, under the guise of promoting conservation efforts, the government of Tanzania favors a policy of ‘nature conservation’ prioritizing the care of wildlife for tourism revenue, rather than an ‘integrated conservation’ supporting the ancient eco-relationship between the pastoralists, their herds, and wildlife. As a result, thousands of Maasai herders in Ngorongoro Conservation Area are at risk of forced eviction from their ancestral land. Maasai have reported arbitrary arrests, beatings, and unlawful confiscation of their cattle along with an increasing military presence. The government of Tanzania has also cut health and education services in the NCA, including grounding of the air ambulance transport known as the Flying Medical Services, leaving many Maasai with no alternative but to resettle elsewhere.

“The Maasai have shaped and taken care of the Ngorongoro Conservation Area for generations. It is their rightful home; the pastoral way of life is Maasai identity and livelihood. Knowing that Maasai representatives have, for years, submitted reports of

evictions, human rights violations, and harassment to various UN bodies, including UNESCO, and called for investigations and protection, to no avail, we stand in solidarity with the Maasai people in requesting that UNESCO delist the Ngorongoro Conservation Area due to human rights violations against Indigenous peoples taking place with no abatement.”

## **The Maasai International Solidarity Alliance (MISA)**

MISA – of which the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns is a member – is an international alliance standing in solidarity with the Maasai of Ngorongoro Conservation Area and Loliondo in northern Tanzania. It brings together faith-based organizations, human rights groups, international aid and development organizations as well as researchers. The alliance includes the Africa Europe Faith Justice Network (AEFJN), Agrecol Association for AgriCulture & Ecology, Coalition of European Lobbies for Eastern African Pastoralism (CELEP), Coopération Internationale pour le Développement et la Solidarité (CIDSE), Food First Information and Action Network (FIAN), Koordinierungsstelle der Österreichischen Bischofskonferenz (KOO, Coordinating Office of the Austrian Catholic Bishops’ Conference), Misereor, and Welthaus Graz.

MISA’s main objective is to end the human rights violations facing the Maasai of northern Tanzania. In May-June 2023, MISA organized a lobby tour in Germany, Austria, Belgium and Italy, which enabled a Maasai delegation to share their concerns with European policy-makers. In April 2024, the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns hosted a Maasai delegation in Washington, DC to share their concerns with the State Department, USAID, Office of Vice President Kamala Harris and various Congressional offices.

MISA supports the voices of grassroots organizations representing the Maasai at the local level, such as PINGOs Forum and Pastoral Women Council (PWC), which are in regular contact with affected communities and their representatives, including traditional leaders, women, youth, and councilors/village chairpersons. MISA works closely with Tanzanian lawyers representing the Maasai in several court cases that have been launched to address violations of their land rights. §

Read the MISA Newsletter at <https://mogc.info/MISA>

**Faith in action:** Sign the petition to stop of the eviction of the Maasai <https://bit.ly/MaasaiLandPetition>

# Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC): Conflict Reveals Precarity

*Violence in the eastern DRC provinces of North Kivu and Ituri highlight the precarity of the country's security due heavily armed rebel groups, foreign intervention, and battle over access to the DRC's mineral reserves.*

Serious fighting in February between the Congolese Army and rebel group, M23, resulted in over 150 civilians killed since hostilities resumed in November, 738,000 displaced people in the first three months of this year, and some 400,000 people descended on the city of Goma, causing a major cholera outbreak.

The Catholic bishops of Bukavu Province have decried: "Insecurity has become endemic, with its trail of killings even in the middle of the day, massacres and kidnappings of peaceful citizens in our towns and villages." International aid agencies state that they will need \$2.6 billion this year alone, to help some 8.7 million vulnerable people in the country. The conflict in eastern DRC has in fact been going on for thirty years, with at least ten million killed in that time.

The M23 rebel group is made up of Congolese Tutsi, most of whom left Rwanda after the 1994 genocide, and it is funded and armed by Rwanda, as it is fighting another rebel group in that area, the Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), made up of Hutus, who were the perpetrators of the genocide.

Although Rwanda denies it is aiding M23, the United Nations has stated that it has evidence that Rwandan troops have fought alongside the M23 in eastern Congo and supplied the rebels with weapons, and that members of the Congolese Army have fought with the FDLR. The United States has stated: "Rwandan forces must withdraw from Congolese territory."

The government army is also assisted by some local militia and by troops from Burundi and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), from Tanzania and South Africa. However, M23 has been supplied with extremely lethal weapons by Rwanda. UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres has stated, "The truth is that M23 is now a modern army, with heavy equipment that is more sophisticated than Monusco's equipment. These weapons have come from somewhere." Monusco is the UN force assigned to try to bring security to eastern Congo, although the conflict has been getting worse.

So effective militarily is M23 that it was able to bomb Goma's airport with army attack drones, destroying a number of Congolese military aircraft. Compounding the fight between Congolese and Rwandan forces are the presence of over 100 smaller armed groups, some of them

vicious. Many are more like ghost gangs that meld into the civilian population when not fighting, making them difficult to track down.

Another factor fueling the conflict is the abundance of highly valuable minerals in the DRC, especially of the minerals essential for modern technology—coltan and cobalt. The DRC contains 70 percent of the world's coltan and over 60 percent of the world's cobalt. It also has large copper deposits and is set to be the world's second largest producer of copper by 2027, right behind Chile. Other minerals in the DRC include lithium, germanium, cassiterite, tungsten, zinc, rare earths, silver, gold, and diamonds. In all, it is estimated that its reserves in the ground are worth \$24 trillion, many of which are illegally mined and traded internationally. It was the mineral wealth that drew in many countries to the civil war in the 1990s after the death of long-time dictator Mobutu Sese Seko.

In February 2013, after the newly formed M23 group had been driven out of Goma by a combination of Congolese and international forces, eleven countries signed the Framework Agreement on Peace, Security and Cooperation in the DRC, which included specific commitments to promote peace. Despite this, insecurity and conflict have persisted.

In February of this year a peace initiative was begun in Nairobi. Unfortunately, it coincided with the resumption of fighting by M23, dashing hopes for peace talks. DRC President Felix Tshisekedi has stated that "he will never hold talks with the M23." His spokeswoman, Tina Salama, says: "President Tshisekedi wants dialogue only with Rwanda, but not at any price. Talks with Rwanda are possible only if Kigali withdraws its troops from Congolese soil."

Fighting has not intensified beyond the levels seen in February 2024, but observers say it seems that all sides are preparing for a deadly escalation. This could lead to the whole region being destabilized.

Bintou Keita, the UN representative to the DRC, states bluntly: "It is crucial to stress the risk of the conflict spreading to the whole region if the ongoing diplomatic efforts to reduce tensions and find lasting political solutions to the current conflict fail." §



# Risks of Green Extractivism

*As nations in the Global North rush to transition to carbon-neutral energy, extractive industries exploit countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo to meet the growing mineral demand.*

At the conclusion of the hottest year in recorded history, the world's nations gathered in Dubai at the UN COP 28 conclusively named and shamed the culprit of the madness: fossil fuels.

On the heels of this belated but vital decision to transition from fossil fuels came a global commitment to triple renewable energy. And fast. According to leading climate scientists, this needs to happen within six to seven years to avoid unleashing cataclysmic climate events.

To many in the Global North, where the burning of fossil fuels built their nation's wealth – the fix is simply a technical one, mostly involving switches, such as from a gasoline powered vehicle to an electric one. Multiplied by millions, these choices will prevent gigatons of emissions from further heating the planet. All the while new businesses and jobs are created. It certainly sounds like a win-win proposal.

That is, until we look a bit deeper and ask: where will we get the minerals needed for the massive outlay of renewable energy that will allow us to keep our lawns and lifestyles?

The answer is troublesome. The majority of these minerals will come from lands whose stewards have contributed almost nothing to climate change yet already are feeling its effects more intensely.

Such is the case of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) the DRC is one of the countries most vulnerable to the effects of climate change due to the warming of its lakes and the reliance of the population on subsistence fishing. Meanwhile, the DRC is lowest per-capita greenhouse gas emitter in the world, putting out just 0.03 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> in 2022.

Yet it is in this African nation where the key mineral in the manufacture of lithium ion rechargeable batteries is found: cobalt. The DRC is home to more cobalt reserves than the rest of our planet combined. Rather than a win-win formula the mining of cobalt seems more of a lose-lose. Hundreds of villages have been bulldozed to make room for mines, millions of trees cut down, hundreds of thousands left to breath toxic air while tens of thousands mine the cobalt in conditions compared to 21st century slavery.

On the other side of the planet lie vast reserves of another mineral essential to batteries — lithium. It is estimate that over the next two decades the “Lithium

Triangle” of Chile, Argentina, and Bolivia, home to more than 75 percent of the world's supply, will see a 90 percent increase in demand. This area is one of Earth's driest places. Miners must drill holes in the salt flats, pump mineral-rich brine to the surface then evaporate the water some 18 months before extracting the lithium. This process requires massive amounts of water — about 500,000 gallons of water per ton of lithium, causing extreme water shortages to already arid areas.

Not surprisingly, mining companies have descended upon these salt flats scoring massively one-sided deals. The joint Canadian-Chilean venture Minera Exar struck an agreement with six Indigenous communities that would bring some \$250 million a year to the company while paying out a paltry \$9,000 to \$60,000 to each community.

At a recent hearing on Green Extractivism at the European Parliament, Valentina Vidal, a young Argentine living near a lithium mine, spoke out: “What you think of as clean energy we think of as violence, criminalization, death. We are not willing to maintain your levels of consumption. You want to keep up with your lifestyle at the cost of our lives, our communities.”

Too often, the cost of mining is that of a life. Communities that have stewarded some of the most extraordinary biodiversity on our planet for millennia find themselves defending their land and villages from the devastations of mining. In April, the Pan-Amazonian Ecclessial Network (REPAM) reported that another land defender had been murdered. They have documented over 147 cases. Meanwhile, the Amazon approaches the tipping point of turning from a rain forest to a dry savannah.

The global decision to transition away from fossil fuels is a necessary one. But a single-minded focus that ignores the underlying value of an integral ecology risks creating new tragic ecological crises as fast as it solves the last.

Pope Francis affirms that more than new expressions of extractivism are needed to save our planet:

“I consider it essential to insist that to seek only a technical remedy to each environmental problem which comes up is to separate what is in reality interconnected and to mask the true and deepest problems of the global system. To suppose that all problems in the future will be able to be solved by new technical interventions is a form of homicidal pragmatism, like pushing a snowball down a hill” (Laudate Deum 57). §

# The Plight of Refugees in 2024

*Ahead of World Refugee Day on June 20, UN agencies and NGOs note a rise in the number of refugees around the globe are on the rise and further forces of destabilization that put people more at risk.*

The UN has designated June 20 as World Refugee Day. This event “celebrates the strength and courage of people who have been forced to flee their home country to escape conflict and persecution.”

In 2023, the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) reported that 114 million people were displaced due to war, violence, persecution, and climate-induced disasters. According to the UNHCR’s Global Refugee Forum (GRF), held in Geneva in December 2023, the number is estimated to rise to 130 million by the end of 2024.

At the GRF, nations and other stakeholders gather every four years to share good practices, take stock of the challenges and opportunities and contribute finances, technical expertise, material support, and policy commitments to help attain the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) goals.

The following are GCR objectives: to ease pressure on host countries, enhance refugee self-reliance, expand access to third-country solutions, and support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity. The GRF made multi-stakeholder commitments that are cross-cutting. They concluded that “every refugee represents a failure of peace and security.” Refugees’ needs and despair impact every one of us. Governments and civil societies need to understand the migration drivers, routes, and asylum outcomes to grasp the complete picture of migration and displacement.

Challenges faced by refugees and displaced people are complex and multi-dimensional. For instance, the Rohingya refugees in Cox Bazar in Bangladesh face disease, human trafficking, insecurity, police and gang violence, fire hazards, cyclones, flooding, landslides, and hunger – living on “30 cents a day.” By December 2023, the World Food Program reported that they had a US\$60 budget gap to provide an adequate ration of food to the Rohingya refugees. The Bangladeshi government does not allow refugees to work or move freely, rendering them dependent on insufficient humanitarian aid. In December 2023, the UNHCR reported that two rickety boats carrying about 400 Rohingyas were stranded in the Andaman Sea. They were fleeing gang violence, extortion and other dehumanizing conditions in the refugee camps in Bangladesh.

In Europe, refugees are facing unfathomable hostilities and challenges. In 2015, the world was shell-shocked when photos of a drowned Syrian toddler inundated the media.

Despite global outcry for compassion, migrants continue to die in droves on the high seas while trying to seek safety.

On April 10, the European Union Parliament signed the New Pact on Migration and Asylum. The pact has been in the works since 2015. The pact’s four pillars are: secure external borders, fast and efficient procedures, efficient systems of solidarity and responsibility and embedding migration in international partnerships.

The pact supposedly addresses the migration crisis within the EU bloc by speeding up the asylum process and boosting the deportation of irregular migrants. Given that a processing period of only 3 months and an undefined “low chance of asylum acceptance” coupled with expedited forceful removal, the policy is susceptible to abuse, and could lead to the denial of asylum or refugee status to deserving candidates. In fact, many NGOs, such as Amnesty International, have said that such a policy would lead to a “surge in the suffering of refugees.”

The UK parliament passed a law in April to pave the way for Britain to send asylum seekers who arrive without permission to Rwanda, which Prime Minister Rishi Sunak says will deter migrants from making the dangerous journey to Britain in small boats. The human rights group Asylum Aid said on May 3 that it had launched a legal challenge against the British government’s policy, which they described as failing to consider individual cases against removal to Rwanda, including on the grounds that they would be returned from Rwanda to the place they fled.

In recent years, there have been many social media posts promoting migration have significantly accelerated movement to the U.S. along dangerous routes such as the Darien gap, the treacherous path through the Panama jungle.

The movement has expanded to populations not seen previously. For instance, “in the first nine months of 2023, the US Border Patrol made 22,187 arrests of Chinese nationals entering the country from Mexico. A figure 13 times the number from the same period in 2022.” The US Customs and Border Control has continued to require people seeking entry to the U.S. from the southern border to use the mobile app called CBP One. Although the app has been improved to be user-friendly, many people running for their lives have not successfully used it, leaving many of them to be exploited by the cartels and criminal actors.

Addressing such challenges will require multilateral cooperation to develop sustainable solutions and humane policies that do not dehumanize refugees. §

# Latest UN Commission on the Status of Women

*Representatives of the Maryknoll family who attended the session share their takeaways.*

The 68th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW68) was held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on March 11-22. The theme: “Accelerating the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by addressing poverty and strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective.” Maryknoll Sisters Margaret Lacson and Susan Nchubiri, as well as Maryknoll Father John Sivalon and Lisa Sullivan of the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns attended the sessions and shared their observations.

The session focused on the intersection of gender inequality and poverty—often referred to as the feminization of poverty—and explored multifaceted strategies to address these issues through robust financial inclusion, gender-responsive budgeting, and acknowledging the economic violence women often face.

The conference made historical strides by agreeing to adopt a set of conclusions, aptly titled Agreed Conclusions, which prescribe operational recommendations to address these critical issues effectively. These Conclusions reflect a comprehensive approach to tackling the root causes of poverty affecting women and girls worldwide. They emphasize the necessity of integrating women and girls’ needs into broader economic and environmental policies, considering their unique vulnerabilities and capabilities.

One of the most pressing challenges highlighted was the disproportionate impact of environmental degradation and climate change on women, particularly those in impoverished regions who rely heavily on natural resources for their livelihoods. The Conclusions drew attention to the need for sustainable environmental practices that include and benefit women, ensuring their right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment.

The participation of men and boys as allies was also noted as crucial in the fight for gender equality. The conference called for their active engagement in changing societal norms and supporting the empowerment of women and girls. This collaborative approach is essential for creating lasting gender equality.

The sessions also underscored the importance of addressing economic abuse, which manifests as restrictions on women’s access to financial resources, healthcare, employment, education, and participation in financial decision-making. Such practices not only undermine women’s autonomy but also reinforce intergenerational cycles of

poverty. The Agreed Conclusions advocate for concrete measures to eradicate these forms of economic violence.

Sister Lacson shared her takeaways from the sessions: The global financial structure is not working to remedy gender imbalances. The public debt crisis in developing countries is not accidental, and more money is spent on servicing debt payments than on countries’ needs for public services such as health care, social protections, education, sanitation, and clean water. All of these public services would improve the status of women worldwide, but funds are diverted away.

In addition to setting ambitious goals, the CSW68 discussions reflected on the need for gender-responsive budgeting and adequate financing to ensure the effective implementation of national and sectoral plans for gender equality. This approach is vital for closing the resource gaps that hinder progress.

Sister Nchubiri observed the disproportionate impact on women and children among the civilian population in times of conflict and war. A quick review of this issue of NewsNotes is all that is necessary to see both the scope of conflict flaring internationally and the effects of those conflicts on girls and women. An irony in this is that women are demographically least responsible for erupting violence. She writes, “There is a need for targeted solutions. This requires the inclusion of women at the decision-making tables, programming, implementation, and evaluation of programs and policies that affect society’s lives.”

Father Sivalon highlighted “the special rapporteur for the rights of woman’s presentation on how the last few years have led to a denigration of the rights of women and girls because of situations of conflict around the world. Most specifically she mentioned, Gaza, South Sudan, the DRC and the war in Ukraine. She warned how things could get even worse because of the financial constraints that the UN is now facing. [Member] States are not living up to their commitments to the UN.”

As nations look to build on the momentum from CSW68, the focus will increasingly shift towards translating these Agreed Conclusions into actionable policies that can be implemented at national and international levels. This ongoing commitment to gender equality and the empowerment of women is not only a moral and social imperative but also a foundational element of global development and peace. §

# New UN Special Envoy on Myanmar

*The UN Security Council held its first open meeting on Myanmar since 2019 in New York on April 4, 2024.*

More than three years have passed since the military overturned the democratically elected government in Myanmar and detained its leaders, including President Win Myint and Aung San Suu Kyi, a 1991 Nobel Peace Prize laureate who served as State Counsellor. Over that time, Myanmar's humanitarian situation and human rights conditions have deteriorated, as the military government has ramped up attacks on civilians, including airstrikes, and increasingly blocked humanitarian aid – actions that have been reported as likely amounting to war crimes and crimes against humanity according to key UN bodies and experts.

“Children are bearing the brunt of this crisis,” Lisa Doughten of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, told the UN Security Council during a rare open meeting on Myanmar on April 4, its first since February 2019. She reported that interruptions to education have affected 12 million students. Children and pregnant women are also at risk of malnutrition as hunger rises, especially among the estimated 2.8 million displaced persons, 90 per cent of them since the military takeover, according to Doughten.

In 2024, 18.6 million people out of a population of 55 million will need humanitarian assistance, a 19-fold increase from 2021, she said, noting that the 2023 humanitarian response plan for Myanmar was funded at only 44 percent and the 2024 plan is only 4 percent funded.

UN officials expressed concern about the military's intention to move ahead with elections without implementing resolution 2669, which the Council passed in 2022, calling for a ceasefire and efforts for a peaceful resolution to the crisis. UN officials and state representatives also noted the new terror brought by the military government's announcement in February that it would enforce the conscription law, forcing young men and women into military service for two years, something the representative of Malta described as a “new low in the junta's campaign against the very people it is supposed to protect.”

The country's crisis continues to spill over borders into neighboring countries. Refugees are fleeing to Bangladesh, China, India, and Thailand. In Rakhine State, in the western part of the country facing the Bay of Bengal, fighting between the military and the Arakan Army has reached an unprecedented level of violence, trapping Muslim Rohingya people in the crossfire, a UN official said.

The official expressed concern about the surge in the number of desperate Rohingya refugees reportedly

dying or going missing while fleeing by boat. Bangladesh already hosts more than a million Rohingya refugees and the UN has described the Rohingya as “the most persecuted minority in the world.”

Myanmar also has become a global epicenter of methamphetamine and opium production, and seen a rapid expansion of global cyber-scam operations, particularly in border areas. “What began as a regional crime threat in Southeast Asia is now a rampant human trafficking and illicit trade crisis with global implications,” a UN official said, adding “There is a clear case for greater international unity and support to the region.”

Despite the testimony by UN officials, some member states disagreed that the Myanmar crisis merits greater attention by the Security Council. Russia and China described it as an internal matter and Japan emphasized the centrality of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in facilitating a regional solution.

The scale of the Myanmar crisis requires more than domestic, bilateral or regional efforts, the representative of Korea said, underscoring the need for UN Secretary-General António Guterres to appoint a UN Special Envoy. The Bangladesh representative supported this, saying the absence of a UN Special Envoy and humanitarian coordinator limits the UN's and international community's engagement. With military attacks on civilians increasing five-fold in the last five months, the U.S. representative said he supported the role of a special envoy, asserting the situation requires senior UN leadership.

The day after the meeting, UN Secretary-General António Guterres announced the appointment of Julie Bishop of Australia as the new Special Envoy on Myanmar, to engage with ASEAN and relevant stakeholders “to advance toward a Myanmar-led political solution to the crisis.” On April 9, Thailand announced that it is preparing to accept 100,000 refugees from Myanmar. Their new commitment was put the test on April 12 when hundreds of refugees crossed into Thailand after rebels captured control of Myawaddy, a border town of 200,000, raising fears of airstrikes by the Myanmar military. §

**Faith in action:** Maryknoll Fr. John Barth is in Thailand, assisting the local church to provide humanitarian aid for refugees from Myanmar who are unable to access healthcare easily or get legal identification if they enter Thailand through informal means. Sign the Amnesty International petition for the Rohingya's rights.

<https://mogc.info/Rohingya>

# Victory in Digital Trade Negotiations

*As international negotiators work out the details of the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework, key victories in the Digital Trade sphere of negotiations have already been achieved.*

Out of the limelight of public awareness, a deal is being forged right now between the United States and thirteen other major economies in the Indo-Pacific that would cover 28% of all global goods and services trade and 40% of global gross production.

The Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) was launched on May 23, 2022, by the Biden Administration. The “framework” sets up the basis for trade negotiations in the Indo-Pacific region, covering such topics as digital trade and e-commerce, mineral supply chains, carbon removal and methane regulations, and tax enforcement information sharing and anticorruption enforcement. It is an ambitious and comprehensive deal that will shape the future of the Indo-Pacific region.

While negotiations have been conducted in secret, one revelation to the public so far has been very encouraging.

In April of 2023, Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns and over twenty other faith groups wrote to the U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai requesting that in negotiations on digital trade, “IPEF and other future trade deals must not include secrecy guarantees that restrict pre-screening or general review of algorithms or source code for racial biases, gender biases, labor law violations, and other potential abuses.” Specifically, the letter pointed to the growing research and implementation of artificial intelligence, which is susceptible to racism, exploitation of personal data, and other abuses.

Faith leaders want to see the ownership of data not placed solely in the hands of (increasingly monopolistic) corporations, which might be used to train algorithms or be used against the customer’s best interests. Likewise, faith groups do not want to see the use of data to train artificial intelligence in ways that reify existing structural racism. The letter points to various instances when artificial intelligence, trained on existing racist data, resulted in racist end products. Furthermore, faith groups want to see transparency in the often-opaque tech sphere, allowing for governmental oversight of the algorithms and technological decisions that affect the population.

The latest news coming from the negotiations tells of a rejection of some key trade provisions that would have put corporations over people. A follow-up “thank you” letter explains:

USTR’s recent action to withdraw U.S. support for the four extreme “digital trade” provisions that the previous administration proposed at the World

Trade Organization (WTO) is an important first step to ensuring that Big Tech interests cannot commandeer trade negotiations to undermine the important platform accountability policies being developed by Congress and your administration.... These harmful, but now thankfully withdrawn, provisions include:

- **Two provisions that guarantee tech firms nearly absolute control of our personal data. They ban government policies to protect our privacy and ensure data security, such as proposals to prevent Americans’ data going to bad actors overseas.** Other WTO members support a more balanced version of “Data Flows” and “Location of Computing Facilities” rules that preserves governments’ rights to regulate;
- **A provision that provides tech firms special secrecy guarantees that would thwart government review of algorithms and Artificial Intelligence to curb racial discrimination, gender discrimination, labor violations, and more, while also undermining the “Right to Repair” your administration has acknowledged as vital.** The WTO already requires countries to provide trade secrets protection for business confidential information. This “Source Code” rule would forbid meaningful government oversight altogether. Our trade agreements should not provide special secrecy rights to digital firms to evade government oversight; and
- **A provision that undermines antitrust and competition policy and enforcement of labor, health, or other laws in the digital sphere that may affect larger firms more.** This rule twists a trade principle called non-discrimination to make facially neutral laws that may have a disparate impact on foreign firms an illegal trade barrier.

The letter concludes, “We are eager to work with your administration to create new digital trade rules that promote worker rights, consumer privacy, civil rights, and data security goals. We know that good rules for the global economy allow governments to retain policy space to regulate, while in the digital sphere also promoting data flows and disciplining actual discrimination.” §

## Faith in action:

Read the full letter by faith groups to Ambassador Tai on hopes for the IPEF: <https://mogc.info/IPEF>

Read the “thank you” letter from faith groups on the news of digital trade victories: <https://mogc.info/IPEF-DT>

## Next Steps for Human Rights in the Philippines

*A UN expert visited the Philippines and called on Pres. Marcos Jr. to speak out against red-tagging and disband an anti-communist task force.*

Irene Khan, the UN expert on freedom of expression, concluded her 10-day visit to the Philippines in February by urging President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to denounce the practice of “red-tagging” and disband the National Task Force on Local Communist Armed Conflict.

Khan and other UN special rapporteurs have named the task force, which sits under the Office of the President, as the source of the terrifying and sometimes deadly harassment known as “red-tagging.” Over the years, numerous “red-tagged” activists, journalists, and others have been physically attacked or killed, often by the armed forces or the national police, for being labeled as sympathizers, recruiters, or members of the communist New People’s Army.

When Susan Gunn, director of the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns, joined a faith leaders delegation to the Philippines in March 2023, red-tagging was a serious concern. “Church workers and human rights lawyers were afraid to be seen meeting with us,” she said. “Some members of the delegation were ‘red-tagged’ in flyers posted on public street posts describing the National Council of Churches of the Philippines and them as communist sympathizers.”

President Marcos Jr., who took office in June 2022, is more measured in his rhetoric than Pres. Duterte,

inviting UN human rights experts to the country. But human rights violations continue to be dire. Human Rights Watch has compiled details of extrajudicial killings, including four journalists; red-tagging; and enforced disappearances under Marcos.

The Philippines receives international support despite ongoing serious abuses and the lack of accountability. The EU offers the Philippines favorable tariff preferences. The United States has signed an ‘enhanced cooperation agreement’ with the Philippines to fund and support responses to humanitarian, climate, and “other shared challenges.”

While the human rights situation may be improving in some ways, major shortcomings continue and there is an urgent need for a process to save lives and build peace in the Philippines. The Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns is working with the National Council of Churches in the Philippines and the International Coalition for Human Rights in the Philippines to ask the U.S. House of Representatives Tom Lantos Committee on Human Rights to hold a hearing about the Philippines. We also are cosponsors of the Brandon Lee Speaking Tour, to raise awareness about attacks on journalists in the Philippines.

**Faith in action:** Learn more about the Brandon Lee Speaking Tour at <https://www.justice4brandonlee.org/>

## Ecumenical Advocacy Days Spring Summit

*The theme is “Faith in Action: Advancing Human Rights and Peace for All,” May 17-19 in Washington, DC.*

Ecumenical Advocacy Days (EAD), an annual gathering of the ecumenical Christian community in Washington, DC to mobilize for advocacy on a wide variety of U.S. domestic and international policy issues, will host a special spring summit May 17-19, “Faith in Action: Advancing Human Rights and Peace for All.”



Traditionally, EAD includes workshops, worship, advocacy training, and a day of lobby visits to congressional offices. Sponsor organizations, including MOGC, are undertaking a strategic planning process in 2024 to envision EAD’s bold future, after several years of holding the gathering virtually due to the COVID 19 pandemic. In the interest of keeping the ecumenical community engaged, we will gather for this shorter summit, with opportunities for prayer, activism, dynamic workshops, and national speakers on peace, justice, and care for creation. §

**Faith in Action:** Join us in Washington May 17-19. Read more about the Summit here: <https://advocacydays.org/2024-spring-summit/>

Register here: <https://mogc.info/EAD>

# Resources

1. **Webinar: Navigating the U.S.-Mexico Border**, offered by the Jesuit Refugee Services USA on **May 9 at 2pm ET** <https://mogc.info/JRSUSA-CBP>
2. **Ecumenical Advocacy Days Spring Summit, May 17–May 18** In-person at the Crowne Plaza in Arlington, VA, with an optional off-site worship service on Sunday, **May 19**. Register here: <https://mogc.info/EAD>
3. **Webinar: Haiti - Paths to Building Democracy** by Pax Christi International, featuring Dan Moriarty and Sr. Susan Nchubiri, MM, on **May 17 at 5pm ET** Register: <https://mogc.info/Haiti-PBD>
4. **Webinar: Practicing Civic Discipleship - an Online Conversation with Walter Kim and Adam Taylor** hosted by Sojourners and the Trinity Forum held virtually on **May 17 at 1:30pm ET** Register: <https://mogc.info/CivicDiscipleship>
5. **Webinar recording: “A Normal Life in Palestine – The Vital Role of Civil Society and Faith Leaders in Healing Trauma in Palestine, Championing Women’s Values”** event held by Pax Christi International on Thursday, May 2. <https://mogc.info/PaxChristiIntl-Palestine>
6. **Webinar recording: Zoom Presentation with Honduran Mercy Associate Nelly Del Cid** on Climate Activism in Honduras. Watch the recording here: <https://mogc.info/MS-NdC>
7. **Webinar recording: Voices from the Amazon** presentation by delegation from the Pan-Amazonian Ecclesial Network (REPAM) hosted by NETWORK Lobby and Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns. <https://mogc.info/VoicesfromtheAmazon>
8. **Webinar recording: Humanitarian and Health Realities in Gaza & the West Bank - A Report** from Catholic Development Agencies hosted by Churches for Middle East Peace, featuring Shireen Khamis of Caritas Baby Hospital and Bill O’Keefe of Catholic Relief Services on **April 30** <https://mogc.info/CMEPwebinar4-30>
9. **Webinar recording: A Conversation with Deacon Francis** – held by Friends in Solidarity from South Sudan on April 17: <https://mogc.info/FiS-Dc-Francis>
10. **Report: Human Rights Situation in Guatemala** by GHRC-USA <https://ghrcusa.wordpress.com/>
11. **Two-pager: on Climate Change and Creation** by Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns <https://mogc.info/CC-PB>
12. **Policy Brief: Environmental Priorities** of the Washington Interfaith Staff Community (WISC) <https://mogc.info/WISC-EEWG>
13. **Article: “As El Niño bites, Zimbabwe takes aim at climate change with new law”** by Lungelo Ndhlovu published by Devex <https://mogc.info/ElNino>
14. **Guide: The UN Secretary-General’s Panel on Critical Energy Transition Minerals** – video and explainer resource. <https://mogc.info/UN-critical-minerals>
15. **Guide: Laudato Si’ Week Celebration 2024** by the Laudato Si’ Movement <https://laudatosiweek.org/>
16. **Movie guide: CABRINI discussion guide** by Justice for Immigrants Campaign of US Conference of Catholic Bishops <https://mogc.info/Cabrini>
17. **Resources on the Middle East Conflict** compiled from a variety of sources by Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns <https://mogc.info/ME-resources>
18. **Maryknoll Lay Missioners Webinars: Join us on May 15, 3PM ET** to learn about Maryknoll Lay Missioners and discern if mission is right for you. <https://mogc.info/MKLM-Webinars>
19. **Maryknoll Sisters Mission Institute:** offering educational ministry programs including classes “Religion in Revolt: Deepening your Faith and Changing The World” with Dwayne David Paul, MA on **June 9-14**, and “Mindful Practices for Self Care and Mindful Living,” with Patricia Mathes Cane, PhD on **June 23–29**. Read more and register at <https://www.maryknollsisters.org/mission-institute/>
20. **Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers Webinars:** See upcoming and past webinars. In the most recent recorded webinar, Fr. Stephen Judd, MM, shares of his years at the Language Institute in Cochabamba, Bolivia and recalls his experience of sharing life with the indigenous peoples of Peru, Bolivia, and other places in Latin America <https://www.maryknoll.us/Resources/webinars>