



Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

NewsNotes

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

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Ukraine: Reaching a Just and Lasting Peace

Statement by participants of the Science and Ethics of Happiness Study Group at a meeting hosted at the Casina Pio IV, Vatican City, June 6-7, 2022.

Jesus taught the world that peacemakers are blessed, for they are the children of God. As war rages in Ukraine, the world needs peacemakers to help the warring sides to choose peace over continued conflict. The U.S., European Union, Turkey, China, and other countries should help both sides to feel secure in a negotiated peace agreement. For Ukraine, security means that a peace agreement will not be followed by renewed Russian threats or incursions. For Russia, security means that withdrawing from Ukraine will not be followed by the eastward expansion of NATO and heavy armaments into Ukraine. Peace, in short, means a neutral Ukraine that is secure in its sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity.

Pope Francis has put his plea for peacemaking in plain and powerful terms: “I renew my appeal to those who govern nations: do not lead humanity to ruin. Please! Do not lead humanity to ruin!”

His All-Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew has declared: “We call upon all parties involved to pursue this path of dialogue and respect for international law, in order to bring an end to the conflict and allow all Ukrainians to live in harmony. Arms are not the solution.”

The aim of peacemaking in Ukraine is not merely a negative peace – that is, a peace without justice – but a positive peace, based firmly on the four pillars of moral relations between states recognized by Saint John XXIII in his magisterial *Pacem in Terris*: truth, justice, willing cooperation, and freedom (Paragraph 80). Such moral relations are needed not only between Russia and Ukraine, but also between Russia, the US, and the European Union.

Russia’s invasion of Ukraine is no doubt in flagrant violation of the UN Charter and international law. Russia’s differences with Ukraine should certainly have been worked out through negotiations backed by the UN Security Council, with the security interests of all countries respected. Now, the grim realities of the ongoing battle, with neither side likely to win a decisive military victory, should push both sides to the negotiating table as soon as possible to avoid the prolongation of the war and to reach a peace with justice.

The war in Ukraine is likely to evolve into a war of attrition and end as either a frozen conflict or a negotiated peace, rather than as an outright victory of one side over the other. A negotiated peace would be a superior outcome than the sacrifices of a war of attrition and a frozen conflict for both the peoples and governments of Ukraine, Russia, the U.S. and EU, and the rest of the world.

If the war ends as a frozen conflict, Russia would continue to occupy a sizable part of eastern and southern Ukraine, while Western sanctions against Russia would remain in place. Trade and investment between Russia and the West would remain blocked, turning into a general contraction of world trade and development. Arms and military personnel would also continue to flow into Ukraine from outside sources.

If the war instead ends in a negotiated peace, further heavy casualties among the civilian population of Ukraine and the militaries of both sides would be avoided and the existence and independence of the Ukrainian state could be guaranteed against outside attempts to overthrow it. Most of the regions that Russia currently occupies would return to Ukrainian sovereignty, certain regions might become subject to special regulations, the Russian military would be withdrawn, and the Western sanctions would be lifted, allowing reconstruction and the implementation of a higher level of security for all the actors in the Ukrainian society and neighboring countries.

The basic terms of a possible peace agreement were outlined in the second part of March when negotiations between the two sides were reported by both sides to be progressing well, and again more recently in Italy’s proposal of a four-part peace plan in late May. In the negotiations in the second part of March, Ukraine suggested four points for a peace settlement: neutrality; international security guarantees for Ukraine; a prolonged period to determine conclusively the status of Crimea; and negotiations over “the complex issues of Donbas.” Italy’s Peace Plan also has four points: a ceasefire; Ukraine’s neutrality; ongoing negotiations over Crimea and Donbas; and multilateral negotiations within the



OSCE and between Russia and NATO on regional security arrangements.

While relying on the practical wisdom (phronesis) of the blessed peacemakers, based on the identifiable roots of the conflict, the negotiations in March, and the peace initiatives to date, we would suggest the following benchmarks for a ceasefire and positive peace agreement:

(1) Neutrality of Ukraine, i.e., relinquishing the national ambition to join NATO while recognizing Ukraine's freedom to enter into agreements with the European Union and others;

(2) Security guarantees for sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of Ukraine provided by the P-5 members of the United Nations (China, France, Russia, United Kingdom, and United States) plus the European Union and Turkey, which might include military transparency and restrictions of military stationing and large-scale exercises in border areas under international observation connected to the lifting of economic sanctions;

(3) Russian de facto control of Crimea for a period of years, after which the parties would seek through diplomacy a permanent de jure settlement, which might include facilitated access for local communities to both Ukraine and Russia, liberal border crossing policies for persons and trade, stationing of Russia's Black Sea Fleet and financial compensations;

(4) Autonomy of the Lugansk and Donetsk regions within Ukraine, which might include economic, political, and cultural aspects, to be further detailed within a short period of time;

(5) Guaranteed commercial access of both Ukraine and Russia to the Black Sea Ports of both countries;

(6) The phased removal of Western sanctions on Russia in conjunction with the withdrawal of the Russian military according to the agreement;

(7) A Multilateral Fund for Reconstruction and Development of the war-torn regions of Ukraine – in which Russia also participates -- and immediate access for humanitarian relief;

(8) A UN Security Council Resolution to provide international monitoring mechanisms to support the peace agreement.

Towards a Positive Peace

President John F. Kennedy wisely observed that “Genuine peace must be the product of many nations, the sum of many acts. It must be dynamic, not static, changing to meet the challenge of each new generation. For peace is a process—a way of solving problems.” To solve problems, we need cooperation, and for cooperation, we need trust. Lasting peace, therefore, depends not only on formal treaties but also on the cooperation in communities, across ethnicities, religions, and nation states. The media also bears the responsibility that the drumbeats of war give way to words of peace.

Religious communities are at the forefront of positive peace. Religious communities bring people together in the spirit of human dignity and justice under God, and have the ability and mission to bring people together across faiths and ethnicities as well. The Catholic Church, the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Moscow Patriarchate, and the Orthodox Church of Ukraine are the pillars of a positive peace between Russia and Ukraine, and within the diverse communities within Ukraine, and can play a crucial role in the needed reconciliation process as a path to positive peace.

We commend the religious leaders of all faiths to support Russia and Ukraine to seek a positive peace, and to abide by the words of Isaiah:

They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore. Isaiah 2: 3-4. §

Addendum of further considerations along with the statement are online at <https://bit.ly/3R1hsD2>

Faith in action: A peace delegation of religious leaders from Europe and the United States visited Kyiv, Ukraine in May. Testimony is available from participant Sr. Sheila Kinsey of the International Union of Superiors General at <https://bit.ly/3ORhefV>



Responding to the Plague of U.S. Gun Violence

The Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns joined in the outcry and calls for action by Catholic organizations in response to the recent mass shootings in the United States.

On May 27, the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns released a statement in response to the two recent mass shootings in Buffalo, New York, and Uvalde, Texas.

“We join our grief and outrage to that of the communities in Uvalde and Buffalo, and millions around the country and the world who struggle to make sense of such violence and immeasurable loss,” the statement read. “We call on leaders to take concrete action to address the scourge of gun violence in the United States, and the white supremacist ideology cited by the Buffalo shooter.”

The MOGC statement highlighted the unique levels of gun violence in the United States: “Maryknoll missionaries serve those most in need around the world, often in marginalized communities where crime and violence are rampant, but, in those countries where gun possession is strongly limited by law, gun violence...is subsequently far less common than in the United States. Missioners also witness communities, tribes, and nations working together through dialogue to overcome war, ethnic clashes, and other deeply entrenched divisions.”

The statement called for governments to turn away from “national security strategies rooted in armed deterrence” and toward “human security rooted in cooperation and the common good.” It specifically named the need to root out racial hatred, a clear driver of recent mass shootings.

A similar statement by the Catholic Health Association named specific goals. “The Catholic Health Association of the United States (CHA) has long advocated for sensible firearms policies, including banning weapons that enable the slaughter of many people in a matter of seconds,” they wrote. “We also believe it is important to support research into the root causes of gun violence.”

“In recent weeks, CHA, our members, and nearly 300 national, state, and local medical, public health, and research organizations have urged Congress to provide \$35 million for the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and \$25 million for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to conduct public health research into firearm morbidity and mortality prevention... we urge Congress to act quickly and authorize funding that bolsters research into this critical public health issue.”

On June 3, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops sent a letter to Congress calling for concrete action in response to the shootings. They lamented that little has been done to address the root causes of gun violence since the Sandy Hook mass shooting 10 years ago. “We urgently call on members of Congress to work together in a bipartisan fashion to make these horrific attacks less likely to happen again,” the bishops wrote.

Gesturing to the influence of the gun lobby on the stalemate over gun control in Congress, the bishops quoted from a speech by Pope Francis to the U.S. Congress in 2015, in which he said, “Here we have to ask ourselves: Why are deadly weapons being sold to those who plan to inflict untold suffering on individuals and society? Sadly, the answer, as we all know, is simply for money: money that is drenched in blood, often innocent blood.”

The bishops expressed support for broad gun control measures, saying “It should not be the case that in the United States, a person needs character references to apply for a job but not to purchase military-style assault weapons. We support a total ban on assault weapons and limitations on civilian access to high-capacity weapons and ammunition magazines.” They go on to state support for the criminalization of gun trafficking, a higher minimum age for gun ownership, and a ban on ‘bump stocks.’

The bishops said that while gun control laws are necessary, the roots of the violence are much deeper, and they include the national mental health crisis, widespread childhood trauma, and threats to family integrity.

“Bipartisanship is never more important than when it is required to protect life and end the culture of death,” the bishops concluded. “We invite you to support these measures and to be part of building up the culture of life that is so needed in our society, not just as elected officials but as mothers and fathers, grandparents, and aunts and uncles of little children or teachers whom you expect to return home safely today.”

The bishops created an online letter that citizens could send to their members of Congress asking them to support gun control reform.

On June 24, Congress passed a landmark gun control package. The bill incentivized states to pass red flag laws, narrows the “boyfriend loophole,” and more. Pres. Biden signed it into law the next day.§

Summit of the Americas Migration Priorities

Civil society groups outlined migration policy priorities for the Summit of the Americas in Los Angeles in June.

Leaders of 23 Western Hemisphere countries attended the ninth Summit of the Americas in Los Angeles on June 6–10, with a focus on building cooperation on shared challenges, including economic recovery, climate change, health, and migration. While some in Washington said the meeting, held every three years, was unlikely to produce any substantial outcomes, religious and humanitarian organizations saw it as opportunity for neighboring countries to listen and dialogue on shared concerns.

Prior to the summit, more than 100 civil society organizations sent a letter to Pres. Joe Biden outlining their recommendations for the summit's Declaration on Migration and Protection. Their priorities include:

Protecting the Rights of Refugees and Migrants, including Ensuring Access to Asylum

Ensuring protection-sensitive border policies uphold the obligation of non-refoulement, identify needs, and ensure meaningful access to asylum procedures for those seeking protection. Border officials must be trained to identify asylum seekers and refer them for interviews and to ensure migrants and asylum seekers have access to information and support in their own language, to humanitarian organizations, and to health and legal service providers. Parallel to this, the Biden administration should continue to pursue an end to the Migration Protection Protocols (MPP) and Title 42—which deny asylum seekers access to protection and send them back to harm—by strenuously fighting court and legislative efforts to impede their termination.

Reviewing all border and protection-related law, policy, practice, and processes to determine whether they disproportionately impact BIPOC communities adversely, consistent with President Biden's executive order on advancing racial equity.

Working domestically and with countries in the hemisphere to promote access to justice for migrants by investigating and prosecuting crimes against people on the move, searching for disappeared migrants, and identifying migrant remains.

Increasing funding and capacity to provide for humanitarian needs all along the migratory route including sustained efforts to keep migrants, asylum seekers and refugees safe from sexual and gender-based violence.

Protecting Immigrants in the U.S.

Designating Guatemala and redesignating El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua and Venezuela for Temporary Protected Status.

Requesting a significant increase in funding for the provision of legal counsel to all indigent adults, children whether unaccompanied or part of a family unit, as well as other vulnerable individuals subject to removal.

Expanding Legal Pathways, Uniting Families

Creating new resettlement programs that supplement, not supplant, access to asylum, that are equitable and implemented quickly. Beyond expanding access to the Central American Minors Program and the Protection Transfer Arrangement, the administration should create new pathways and resettlement programs to assume its fair share of diverse refugees in the region including Haitians, Venezuelans, Nicaraguans and others.

The U.S. should restart the U.S. Refugees Admission Program in Cuba.

Ensuring that parole programs are available to more nationalities and populations, including those experiencing cross border displacement in the context of climate change, disasters and environmental degradation. Parole programs designed to reunify families should define family with a culturally-sanctioned understandings that go beyond the nuclear family.

Promoting and preserving family unity through the establishment of family reunification parole programs including for Central America, resumption of the Haitian Family Reunification Parole Program by issuing invitations to eligible Haitians, and expedited restaffing of the U.S. embassy in Havana so as to fully implement the Cuban Family Reunification parole program.

Implementation and Consultation

Avoiding bilateral arrangements that limit eligibility for asylum and “stabilization” programs or other efforts that prevent people from leaving countries where they feel unsafe or cannot firmly settle.

Ensuring decent work and respecting labor rights across the administration's regional migration strategy. Poor regulation and gaps in protection that have led to extensive exploitation require immediate resolution.

Building on regional frameworks like the Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework, including supporting countries to strengthen and adhere to commitments laid out in national action plans that could lead to better cooperation and coordination.

Developing a process of reporting on progress of states towards implementing the principles in the Declaration and providing protection and pathways through national policies announced at the Summit. The process should include engagement of affected individuals. §

Guatemala: Petition for U.S. Sanctions on Corrupt Leaders

An international campaign for alleviating poverty and suffering in Guatemala has launched a petition calling for new targeted sanctions by the United States.

The Root Causes Initiative is a network of faith-based and grassroots organizations in Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Mexico, and the United States working to change the underlying conditions that cause poverty and suffering in Central America and force people to leave their homes.

The Initiative offer the following invitation to the public:

“Join us in demanding that the United States end its support for Guatemalan President Alejandro Giammattei, impose tough financial sanctions on top officials and oligarchs responsible for forcing more than two dozen independent judges, prosecutors, and civil society leaders into exile, and use U.S. influence with the IMF and other international lenders to block new loans, which only fuel corruption and electoral manipulation.

Statements and visa sanctions are not sufficient.

President Giammattei and his Attorney General Consuelo Porras have systematically persecuted judges, prosecutors, and civil society leaders for having the courage to hold officials and business elites accountable for corruption and human rights abuses.

Guatemalan indigenous and civil society leaders are leading a broad movement to restore democracy in Guatemala. Their efforts are critical to addressing the root causes of migration and improving living conditions for the most vulnerable people in Guatemala. They need our support!”

The petition reads as follows:

To President Biden, Vice President Harris and Secretary of State Blinken,

We urge you to stand with Guatemalans who are struggling to restore democracy and the rule of law in their country by ending U.S. support for the Giammattei regime, imposing tough Global Magnitsky Act financial sanctions on high-level officials and oligarchs who have conspired to force more than two dozen independent judges, prosecutors and civil society leaders into exile, and use U.S. influence with the IMF and other international lenders to block new loans, which only fuel corruption and electoral manipulation.

The decision by President Giammattei to reappoint Attorney General Consuelo Porras to a second term is an outrage to the people of Guatemala. Visa sanctions and public statements are insufficient to reverse the destruction of rule of law in Guatemala.

The U.S. must take the next step by imposing

Magnitsky sanctions on Guatemalan Attorney General Consuelo Porras, top officials in the Giammattei government, and the oligarchs who have conspired to gut the Guatemalan judicial system. Doing so will send a clear message that the U.S. recognizes that rule of law is a prerequisite for addressing the root causes of migration and improving living conditions in Central America.

For more than two decades, Guatemalan indigenous and civil society organizations have courageously led a broad movement to defend the rule of law and human rights in their country. The unwillingness of the former U.S. Administration to speak out against the closing of the International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG) was a terrible blow to the struggle for democracy in Guatemala, which has been followed by further abuses under President Giammattei.

Today, at this pivotal moment, the Biden-Harris Administration must show the world that it consistently supports democracy and human rights by standing with the Guatemalan people in their struggle against impunity.§

Faith in Action: Sign the petition at <https://bit.ly/3I8DJdT>

Guatemala Human Rights Commission/USA will host an emergency human rights delegation to Guatemala, July 23-30. For more information, visit <https://bit.ly/3y7xKlc>



Clean Energy's Mining Problem

The growing demand for minerals used in renewable energy raises the urgency to address human rights and environmental abuses common in mining.

To avoid raising global temperatures more than 1.5 degrees Celsius many millions of batteries, solar cells, and wind turbines will need to be made, all of which depend on six key metals known as “transition minerals”: copper, cobalt, lithium, manganese nickel and zinc. The International Energy Agency predicts that a mid-century zero-carbon world will require a more than sixfold increase in the production of these minerals by 2030.

To do this, existing mines will need to be enlarged and many new mines opened. Historically, mining operations have been the source of the worst human rights and environmental abuses on record and have generated much conflict. If the mining industry is to grow as predicted, companies will need to reform their practices and include impacted communities in decision making before and during the mining process.

The average electric vehicle (EV) battery with a 60 kWh capacity, such as the Chevy Bolt, contains almost 185 kilograms of minerals: 52kg of graphite, 29kg of nickel, 20 kg of copper, 6 kg lithium, etc. Considering that concentrations of these minerals in ore range from 0.03% to 10%, considerable amounts of Earth must be displaced to mine these minerals. One estimate is that 500 kilos of Earth are extracted and processed for every kilo of useable mineral, meaning that a single EV car battery would destroy close to one ton of Earth.

On a positive note, most transition minerals in batteries are relatively easy to remove and recycle. Eventually, most batteries will be made from recycled materials, but scientists say that technology is at least one to two decades away. In the meantime, there will be a marked increase in mining around the world.

Many of the new mines will impact indigenous communities as those communities control an estimated 25 percent of land in the world and a much larger portion of the world's preserved lands. The United States plans to increase domestic production of transition minerals and the vast majority of untapped areas containing these minerals lies within 35 miles of an indigenous reserve. Similar numbers are seen around the world.

Mining companies have a long history of ignoring the concerns of local communities as documented by Maryknoll missionaries around the world and by the

Business & Human Rights Resource Center's Transition Minerals Tracker. Even though several international treaties and institutions require upholding the principle of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) of affected communities for large infrastructure projects, many mining companies continue to force unwanted projects on communities without consultation.

To inform local communities and gain their consent for a project implies costs that some companies may consider excessive. Yet studies of mines around the world have shown that FPIC is not only a good thing to do and important for maintaining a company's reputation but also necessary to guarantee the success of the project overall. Projects that are opposed by local communities face numerous added difficulties from reduced access to financing, increased construction costs and delays, operational delays, and increased production costs.

There are many cases where the lack of FPIC and resulting protests led to the closing of the entire project. For example, in 2003, Meridian Gold, a mining company based in Reno, Nevada, purchased land in Esquel, Argentina to create an open pit gold mine. Yet due to their lack of transparency and no involvement of the local community in decision making, protests against the project grew until the community was able to reject the proposal in a referendum. As a result, Meridian Gold lost the \$379 million spent to purchase the land as well as access to the estimated \$1.33 billion in gold reserves located there.

Governments, investors and civil society will need to remain vigilant in coming years and monitor mining companies to assure that they involve affected communities in all steps of the process. If not, we run the risk of creating new environmental and social destruction while addressing climate change.

As Atsa koodakuh wyh Nuwu (the People of Red Mountain) wrote in a statement of opposition to an open pit lithium mine in Nevada: “We understand that all of us must be committed to fighting climate change. Fighting climate change, however, cannot be used as yet another excuse to destroy native land. We cannot protect the environment by destroying it.”



UN Report Says Forests are Fundamental

The State of the World's Forest Report 2022 offers a three-pronged approach to unlock the economic potential of trees and forests while preserving their status as the greatest carbon capture technology in the world.

Forests originated about 380 million years ago. Twelve thousand years ago, forests made up 50% of Earth's surface area but today they comprise only 31%, since much of forested land has been changed to cropland. Despite forests' many benefits, including mitigation of climate change, the world has lost another 420 million hectares of forest since 1990.

The Secretary General and Assistant Secretary of the World Forestry Congress held in Seoul, South Korea, in May, Eun-Sik Park of Korea and Peter Csoka of Hungary, wrote an essay describing the value of forests:

“Restoring millions of hectares of degraded lands with trees and other forest plants will provide more habitat for wildlife, protect water catchments, boost agricultural productivity, and capture and store carbon. When sustainably produced, wood (and many other forest products) is renewable, recyclable, climate friendly and incredibly versatile. It has the potential to transform the building sector, provide sustainable renewable energy, and help us move towards a more circular bioeconomy. Healthy, well-managed forests also decrease the risk of outbreaks of infectious diseases and have measurable psychological benefits. Achieving such positive outcomes and rebalancing our relationship with nature will require fundamental changes in thinking, attitudes, and economic systems.”

The State of the World's Forests Report 2022, released at the Congress in Seoul, states that there will be no healthy economy on an unhealthy planet. “Environmental degradation is contributing to climate change, biodiversity loss and emergence of new diseases,” it explains. “Forests and trees can play crucial roles in addressing these crises and moving towards sustainable economies.”

The report also describes the role forests can play in meeting the rising demand for renewable materials. Demand for forest-based biomass (organic matter used as a fuel) is expected to rise further, driven mainly by construction and packaging. Forests can drive a transition to a more efficient and circular use of biomaterials.

But forest and farm producers need more incentive to scale up green recovery, the report notes. “They must derive substantial tangible benefits from restoring and sustainably managing forest and tree resources.” Greater private investments are needed as well as policy shifts that maximize the interconnection between agriculture

and forestry across agrifood systems.

The report offered the following three inter-related pathways to preserve forests while expanding their potential to drive the economy and heal the world.

Halting deforestation and maintaining forest ecosystems would benefit climate, biodiversity, health and long-term food security.

Restoring degraded lands and expanding agroforestry would help diversify livelihoods and landscapes and increase land productivity.

Increasing sustainable forest use and building green value chains would help meet future demand for materials and underpin sustainable economies.

The report recommends the need for greater finance to implement these pathways. Funding needs to triple to \$200 billion a year by 2030 for forest establishment and management in order to meet climate, biodiversity and land degradation neutrality targets. REDD+ frameworks and other related results-based payment schemes could play a key role in supporting developing countries to move along the three pathways. REDD+ refers to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation.

It is important to note that smallholders, local communities and Indigenous Peoples own or manage nearly half of the world's forest and farm landscapes, and, along with women and youth, they need to be empowered to take a leading role in the forest pathways.

The report concludes by saying that there is no time to lose.

“The Earth is astonishingly rich in biodiversity and natural resources, but current trends indicate an imminent danger of squandering this natural wealth, thereby endangering the world's diverse peoples and many other species. More immediately, there is a need to recover from the hardship caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and to strive to ensure that all people are free from hunger and poverty.

“Humanity has the power to change environmental conditions at a planetary scale and an accompanying imperative to take action to maintain environmental conditions within boundaries that enable all life forms to flourish. Using nature-based approaches such as those involving trees and forests is a logical place to start in repairing the damage that has already been done to natural systems and in developing truly sustainable solutions to the problems and challenges articulated in this report.”§

Philippine Elections Raise Human Rights Concerns

The May 9 elections in the Philippines brought to power two leaders with family ties to human rights abusers.

In the wake of the May 9 presidential elections, Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns has joined other organizations in urging the United States to prioritize human rights in its relations with the Philippines.

Despite reports of widespread abuses and irregularities, Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos, Jr. and his running mate, Sara Duterte, daughter of outgoing president Rodrigo Duterte, were declared the election’s winners and will be inaugurated as President and Vice President, respectively, on June 30th. Bongbong’s presidency will mark the return of the Marcos family to power thirty-six years after his father, dictator Fernando Marcos, Sr., fled the country in the wake of the 1986 “People Power Revolution.” The fathers of both Marcos and Duterte presided over governments accused of rampant human rights abuses.

Bongbong Marcos has waged a campaign to recast martial law under his father as a “golden age” for the Philippines, promising to restore the country to its former splendor, and using social media to whitewash the dictatorship responsible for the death of over 3,200 Filipinos, the torture of over 35,000, and the detention of over 70,000. Sara Duterte will oversee the Department of Education, allowing her to oversee the further rewriting of history and teaching curriculum in the Philippines.

Meanwhile, Rodrigo Duterte’s government has made wide use of the tactic of “red-tagging” – falsely accusing human rights activists, faith leaders, and opposition figures of belonging to terrorist groups – as a way of intimidating and undermining them. Opposition candidates were red-tagged and even physically attacked in the weeks leading up to the election. It is estimated that over 30,000 extrajudicial killings have occurred as part of the “war on drugs” under President Duterte. The Catholic Bishops of the Philippines have described this as a “reign of terror” for the country’s poorest communities.

An interim report from the Philippine Election 2022 International Observer Mission (IOM) describes a number of irregularities, from faulty voting machines to vote buying, and “details human rights violations that occurred in the context of the elections such as killings, abductions, threats, harassment, red-tagging, and more.” Observers will remain on the ground through the June 30 inauguration, when they will release a final report.

Despite the abuses outlined by the IOM, the Biden Administration was quick to recognize the elections and

congratulate Marcos on his victory, seeing him as a potential ally in its regional efforts to contain China.

Catholics in the Philippines have been part of protests against the incoming government and the reports of election fraud. The New York Times spoke to one priest, Fr. Robert Reyes, who said he spent 11 weeks outside the elections commission building calling for fair elections.

“Hopefully this will wake up the church,” Father Reyes told the New York Times. “Because what moral authority does the son of a dictator who has not returned what his father has stolen have? What authority does he have to govern a country whose people were plundered by his father?”

Faith in action: Now, more than ever, it is urgent that the United States stand with the Filipino people and refuse to fund institutions responsible for human rights abuses in the country. Call on your representative in Congress to support the Philippines Human Rights Act today. Introduced by Rep. Susan Wild, this important piece of legislation would deny security assistance to the Philippines until the government demonstrates commitment to respecting the human rights of its citizens. Go to <https://bit.ly/3acsbK9>



Tanzania Land Conflict with Maasai

A potentially dangerous stand-off has erupted in north-central Tanzania after the government decided to evict up to 167,000 pastoral Maasai from their land in favor of a wealthy hunting firm owned by the United Arab Republic's ruling family.

The Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA) is one of the premiere wildlife preservation and tourist areas in the world, located in the eastern part of the Serengeti ecosystem that annually experiences the migration of wildebeest and other animals following the rainy seasons and search for forage. The Maasai nomadic cattle-herders inhabited that area going back centuries but when the government set up wildlife reserves (popularly known as game parks) the Maasai were removed from the park areas. Some twenty or thirty years ago small numbers were allowed to return to live within park boundaries, as they harmoniously co-exist with wild animals.

In 2013 the government tried to evict the Maasai from the NCA, claiming their presence detracted from tourists' wildlife experience, but this was prevented by international pressure. In 2018 the East African Court of Justice (EACJ) ruled in favor of the Maasai's right to live in their ancestral areas in and just outside the conservation area. Furthermore, Tanzania is a signatory to the United Nations Declaration for the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP), which insists on the principle of free, prior and informed consent. A Maasai spokesman has said: "We want the Tanzania government to immediately stop the plan of evicting us from our ancestral land and wait for the court case to be determined." The Maasai have again appealed to the EACJ, which is expected to issue a ruling at the end of June.

Despite the 2018 injunction against removal of Maasai from this area, the Tanzania government has apparently decided that the enormous amounts of revenue from wealthy Arab oil barons to serve their desire to hunt animals in Tanzania take precedence over the rights of indigenous people to live peacefully in their ancestral lands. The new plan envisions the NCA being divided into four zones, with 82% of the land for conservation use only. Multiple human/wildlife use will be restricted to only the remaining 18%. This would force the removal of 97,000 people living within the NCA and another 70,000 living in Loliondo Division outside the NCA. Ironically, at the same time that the government calls for expulsion of Maasai from these areas, it issued a report stating that indigenous people protect wildlife from poachers.

In early June many Maasai gathered in several places in Loliondo to protest the government decision and were confronted by armed members of the para-

military Field Force Unit (FFU), who are known to be quick to use their weapons to put down protests. On June 10 the FFU fired on Maasai protesters with live ammunition and tear gas, injuring 30 and killing one policeman. Observers fear more violence.

Anuradha Mittal, Executive Director of the Oakland Institute, which follows land alienation issues in Africa, said: "Despite earlier pauses, the Tanzania government is blindly moving ahead with plans to remove Maasai pastoralists out of their land to clear the way for trophy hunting. International mobilization on these developments is imperative to help stop this disastrous and illegal move."

Expropriating the lands in Africa from the indigenous people for economic purposes is nothing new and can be dated back to the Dutch settlement in South Africa in 1652, which eventually led to White (Afrikaner and British) settlers owning 85% of the land, followed by similar dispossession of indigenous lands in many countries of sub-Saharan Africa for European settlers, large plantations, or industrial enterprises.

It is not only loss of land that is a matter of concern. The expropriated land is almost universally used for mono-cropping versus the indigenous system of multi-crop sustainable farming, export of agricultural crops rather than producing nutritious, organic food high in grain fibers, and profit accruing to only a few executives or share-holders of the companies which engage in the international trade of these commodities, while the local African people are paid extremely low wages. Furthermore, massive removal of indigenous trees replaced by plantation trees or crops has led to invasion by harmful vectors and spread of diseases.

The United Nations Human Rights Council has expressed alarm at the June 10th incident and stated: "We call on the Tanzanian Government to immediately halt plans for relocation of the people living in Loliondo and the Ngorongoro Conservation Area and begin consultations with the Maasai Indigenous Peoples, including direct contact with the Ngorongoro Pastoral Council, to jointly define current challenges to environmental conservation and best avenues to resolve them, while maintaining a human rights-based approach to conservation."

The time has come for African governments to put the rights of their own indigenous people over any financial gain coming from wealthy foreigners. §

South Sudan and DRC: Letter to Pope Francis

The Africa Faith and Justice Network organized an open sign on letter to the pope about ongoing challenges on the African continent prior to the papal visit to DCR and South Sudan in July.

Dozens of religious and humanitarian organizations with experience in the DRC and South Sudan sent a letter to Pope Francis detailing challenges there that they say have led to “endless political instability and much suffering, poverty, war, and death.” Organized by the Africa Faith and Justice Network, the signers asked the pope to raise their concerns when meeting with government and communities leaders in the DRC and South Sudan in July.

Sidelined by knee pain, Pope Francis has decided to send Cardinal Secretary of State Pietro Parolin to Kinshasa and Juba in his place.

The letter outlines four concerns.

First, the ongoing deterioration of security makes peace very fragile. “Nations are fighting against one another. Many wars are secessionist, separatist, civil, and religious. People are rioting against violent, tyrannical, and kleptocratic regimes. Decades after fighting for independence, Africans are fighting neo-colonization wars involving non-Africans. Multinationals have emerged as the new colonial masters, using the soft power of corruption and financing wars to get access to natural resources.” Violent conflicts are ongoing in more than a dozen countries across the continent.

Second, the letter names corruption as one of the reasons poverty persists in Africa. “Prioritizing the fight against corruption and adopting systems of accountability are critical for building the Africa that Africans desire,” the authors say.

“Corruption is not just financial,” they say. It can take the form of sexual harassment in the work place, nepotism and favoritism. Quoting the 2013 Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar, the letter defines corruption as “a cancer that stands in the way of Africa’s development.”

Their third concern is social divisions due to tribalism, xenophobia, and racism. “Tribalism has led to countless deaths in Africa,” the authors tell the Holy Father, “including most recently the two countries you are visiting — the DRC and South Sudan.” At the same time, xenophobic violence against African immigrants in South Africa and racism against sub-Saharan African migrants journeying to Europe for a better life is on the

increase. Declaring all forms of xenophobia and racism to be without merit, the letter calls on politicians and church leaders to be “models of tolerance in order to build nations and communities of peace and prosperity.”

Fourth, the letter describes land grabbing as a “new scramble for the partition of Africa.”

“The acquisition of Africa’s land on a large scale by multinational agribusinesses amounts to an organized land-grabbing scheme with potential consequences worse than colonization. It threatens lives, livelihoods, the environment, the peace and the sovereignty of the affected countries. Populations are being displaced and landowners are becoming landless. Prohibited toxic fertilizers and pesticides are being used on these lands, causing serious damage to rivers, lakes and even underground water sources. The current rate at which Africa is losing much of its arable land, threatens the continent’s food security and sovereignty. This must stop.”

The authors acknowledge that there are many other important issues in Africa calling for the Holy Father’s attention, including human trafficking, women’s economic empowerment, arms trade, illicit financial flows, drug abuse by youth, and widespread unemployment, but they say the pope’s voice on the four issues they raised will have “significant impact.”

Cardinal Parolin was scheduled to land in Kinshasa on July 2 where he will meet with President Félix Tshisekedi and members of the diplomatic corps, followed by meetings with local clergy. After that, he was scheduled to travel to the far-east part of the country, to meet people displaced by clashes between the armed forces and militant groups. Then he was scheduled to fly to Juba, the capita city of South Sudan, to meet with President Salva Kiir, whom he last met in Rome in 2019 during retreat designed to foster peace among the battling political factions in the young country. Once again, he planned to meet with people displaced by war. There were to be numerous moments to pray for peace and call for renewed commitments to cooperation and peace-building by community and political leaders.

Pope Francis planned to celebrate Mass with the Congolese community in Rome on the same day he had been scheduled to be in Kinshasa. §



Brazil: Deaths and Degradation in the Amazon

REPAM-Brazil demands a government response to the deaths of two leading defenders of indigenous peoples and nature in the Amazon territory.

The Pan-Amazonian Ecclesial Network (REPAM-Brazil), released a statement on June 15 after the bodies of veteran British journalist Dom Phillips and Brazilian indigenous expert Bruno Pereira, who had been missing for more than a week, were found in Brazil's Amazon rainforest. The two men were on a reporting trip in a remote jungle area near the border with Peru and Colombia that is known for lawlessness by a mix of illegal loggers, miners and hunters.

Signed by the three bishops who lead the network in Brazil – Bishop Evaristo Pascoal Spengler of Marajo, Archbishop Pedro Brito Guimarães of Pálmós, and Bishop José Ionilton Lisboa de Oliveira of Itacoatiara – the title of statement, “NO to deaths and degradation in the Amazon” conveys the pain and outrage many in Brazil and globally feel about the continuing human rights and environmental violations in the Amazon region. demands urgent action from the government in the face of deaths and degradation in the Amazon territory.

The statement is translated here from the original Portuguese:

“The Pan-Amazonian Ecclesial Network (REPAM-Brazil) expresses its concern and indignation about the disappearance of indigenist Bruno Araújo Pereira and journalist Dominic Philips. This situation makes explicit the reality of insecurity and threats in which people who defend others live in the Amazon, people who defend the rights of indigenous peoples and their territories and are committed to caring for and preserving the Amazon biome.

We also express, in this moment of apprehension and pain, our solidarity with the family and friends, organizations and journalists, committed to human rights and the rights and the causes of the Amazon. We express our gratitude to the indigenous peoples of Vale do Javari, through their organizations, for their solidarity, human sensitivity and recognition by those who support their struggles.

We are outraged by the constant threats and assassinations of indigenous leaders, quilombolas and riverbank dwellers, as well as the violation of the fundamental rights of people of good will, who have placed themselves at the service of human life and the environment.

REPAM-Brazil, committed to the defense of human life and Nature, vehemently requests the energetic

action of the authorities to stop the illegality and exploitation of Nature in the Amazon, which has caused constant deaths.

We claim that all those who occupy positions of responsibility and power of intervention, whether in the political, social and economic, local, national and international scope, become guardians of Creation, of God's plan inscribed in Nature, guardians of the other and the Environment. Let us not allow the signs of destruction and death to guide the path our society must take for the beloved Amazon, an indispensable part of our Common Home.

Amazonia is like a member of our body. If it bleeds, we also bleed, if it suffers, so do we. It forms a living whole with all those who live in it. If it dies, we will be held responsible for the consequences that future generations will suffer.”

Two weeks later, bishops from Brazil, including the leaders of REPAM, met with Pope Francis for their ad limina visit at the Vatican, in which they reported on the systematic violations of human rights in the Amazon. “We can say that he has the Amazon at heart,” Bishop Bernardo Bahlmann of Óbidos said of Pope Francis, according to an article in the Brazil news agency Urua Taperá.

Bishop Spengler, president of the REPAM-Brazil is quoted as saying, “We had to report to the pope the increasingly systematic attacks of destruction that the Amazon, its peoples, territories and leaderships have been suffering. The Amazon bleeds and dies before our eyes: invasions of indigenous, quilombola and riverine lands by mining companies, farmers, cattle ranchers, loggers and agribusiness. We ask the Pope, with his undisputed authority, to support a truce for the Amazon, a true sabbatical time of reflection to rethink the presence and coexistence in the Amazon.”

Bishop Spengler said, after telling Pope Francis about the deaths in the Amazon, he closed his eyes in an expression of pain and suffering and then asked, “What can we do?”

“He is very sensitive to this reality of destruction,” Bishop Spengler commented. “Pope Francis is the hope of the peoples of the Amazon. Our people deserve a time of peace, of security, a real time of grace from the Lord.”§

UN: Stockholm+50 Environment Conference

To commemorate the 50th anniversary of the groundbreaking UN Conference on the Environment in Stockholm in 1972, national delegations returned to Stockholm on June 2-3, 2022, to take measure of progress.

There has been progress since the UN Conference on the Environment in Stockholm in 1972, in the form of treaties and conventions. Some examples in the 1970s and 1980s, known as Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), are on Trade in Endangered Species and Protection of the Ozone Layer.

Then, in 1992, the famous Rio Summit took place, which ushered in three conventions: on Climate Change (often referred to as the COP climate conferences), on Biological Diversity and to Combat Desertification.

In the 2000s, two conventions were approved: on Persistent Organic Pollutants, and on Mercury.

The Stockholm Conference of 1972 also led to the establishment of the UN Environment Program, which in turn has created two important scientific bodies researching and advising on environmental issues. This year, the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA) has established a third body, a science-policy panel on chemicals.

Three important environmental principles arose from the original Stockholm Conference: the “precautionary principle” which states that action should be taken even without full scientific consensus; the “additionality principle” which recognizes that developing

nations need additional technical and financial resources; and the “polluter-pays principle” which is now included in numerous international agreements.

The 2012 Stockholm Conference, also known as the Earth Summit, officially recognized the need to include Indigenous Peoples and Women, added Water and Sanitation as concerns, and called for the establishment of the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015.

The connection between development, eradication of poverty and protection of the environment was already acknowledged in 1972 but the Earth Summit gave full impetus to the link between these three goals.

The Conference this June came up with ten key recommendations, including placing human well-being at the center of a healthy planet, recognizing the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment (this is also a resolution for the General Assembly to adopt this year), promoting a circular economy, accelerating the transformation through global cooperation.

This conference also recognized the importance of youth participation and noted new environmental challenges, such as the need for a new plastics convention and for an agreement on protecting marine biodiversity. §

Final Communiqué of the Holy Land Coordination 2022

The Bishops of the Holy Land Coordination uphold the rightful place of the Christian community in Jerusalem's identity in their communique for 2022.

Jerusalem is a Jewish city, a Christian city, a Muslim city. It must remain a common patrimony and never become the exclusive monopoly of any one religion. We came to meet and pray with our sisters and brothers, mindful of Patriarch Pizzaballa's message that it is our right and duty as Christians to uphold the city's openness and universality.

The Christian community is essential to Jerusalem's identity, both now and for the future. Yet its continued presence is threatened by occupation and injustice. Many of those we encountered are facing violence and intimidation by settler groups, restrictions on their freedom of movement, or separation from their families because of the status they are assigned.

We share the concerns expressed by the Christian community about unilateral restrictions on freedom of worship during Easter, imposed by the Israeli police. We experienced the deep sorrow and anger felt by local Christians at the killing of Palestinian Catholic journalist

Shireen Abu Akleh and the shameful attack on mourners at her funeral.

We witnessed how many people of all backgrounds are living in poverty, which has been compounded by the pandemic. The absence of pilgrims during the past two years has devastated livelihoods, including among Jerusalem's Christian community, leaving some families struggling to afford housing, food, or other essentials.

Amid these challenges, there are nevertheless signs of hope. We visited Christian organizations taking responsibility for the wellbeing of their community and wider society. They are working tirelessly to alleviate hardship and improve lives. We met young people who, despite facing daily violations of their fundamental human rights, refuse to be the last generation of Christians in the city.

As pilgrims return once more, we call upon them to support Christians in Jerusalem and throughout the Holy Land. [Read it in full at <https://bit.ly/3R2mYFh>] §

Resources

- 1) Watch a **webinar** to hear from **Haitian asylum-seekers**, and the people of faith who welcome them, about their experience at the U.S.-Mexico border **July 12 at 4pm ET**. Hosted by St. Columban Mission for Justice, Peace and Ecology. <https://bit.ly/3ui9jjL>
- 2) The federal **climate fight** has been exhausting and often demoralizing. While we keep working to pass a bill through the Senate, state groups are fighting tirelessly for victories that should prove to everyone that we can act on climate. <https://bit.ly/3ntZo6O>
- 3) **Women Building Peace** is a new podcast hosted by the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security that explores how women are trying to bring peace to communities around the world. Listen at <https://bit.ly/3nyEe7P>
- 4) **“Beyond the U.S.-Mexico Border: Migration Trends in the Americas, Explained”** published by WOLA before the Summit of the Americas in June. <https://bit.ly/3i8T7a8>
- 5) Read testimony from an **Eyewitness Palestine** delegation participant who recently visited Wadi Foquin <https://bit.ly/3QZk1W9>
- 6) From Refugees International, watch the recording of a panel discussing the experiences of **Haitian migrants in Mexico** and at the U.S.-Mexico border. <https://bit.ly/3R2odEr>
- 7) **Refugee Oral History Project**, a new project the USCCB/MRS has helped to launch with Princeton University’s Office of Religious Life. <https://www.rfmi.princeton.edu/>
- 8) Guatemala Human Rights Commission/USA will host an **emergency human rights delegation to Guatemala**, July 23-30. For more information, visit <https://bit.ly/3y7xKlc>
- 9) CIDSE 40-minute documentary **"The future lies with youth"** is available in many languages. Watch youth from around the world open up about their engagement for climate justice, concretely showing activism in all its facets. <https://bit.ly/3ORripd>
- 10) June 15 marks ten years since the **Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)** program was created to protect Dreamers from deportation. But the program is still temporary and it is no longer accepting new applicants. Tell Congress to create a permanent solution for Dreamers. <https://bit.ly/3QUWBkG>
- 11) Learn about the key priorities named by the new **UN Special Rapporteur on climate change and human rights**, Ian Fry. <https://bit.ly/3ORryob>
- 12) The International Observer Mission of the International Coalition for Human Rights in the Philippines (ICHRP) released its **final report on the Philippine presidential elections** that took place May 9. The report documents cases of violence, vote-buying, intimidation, faulty voting machines, and other grave irregularities in the election in which “Bongbong” Marcos, son of dictator Ferdinand Marcos, was declared the winner, with Sara Duterte, daughter of outgoing president Rodrigo Duterte, as his vice president. <https://bit.ly/3R4b65Z>
- 13) MOGC co-sponsored a **global conference of the Catholic Peacebuilding Network (CPN)**, Catholic Peacebuilding in Times of Crisis: Hope for a Wounded World. Videos of all conference panels and sessions are available on CPN’s YouTube channel: <https://bit.ly/3bHflyL>
- 14) LAWG cosponsored a side event at the Summit of the Americas in Los Angeles. The panel, **'From Deterrence To Integration: Civil Society Voices On Migration Policy In The Americas'** is recorded here <https://youtu.be/wFOMbRxAuOY>
- 15) Sign up to receive action alerts and Scripture Reflections from the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns: <https://bit.ly/MOGCSignup>

