



Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

# NewsNotes

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

**July-August 2021**  
**Vol. 46, No. 4**

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**Published by the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns: Peace, Social Justice & Integrity of Creation**

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## Focus on Root Causes of Migration in Guatemala

*During her visit to Guatemala in early June, Vice President Kamala Harris made comments regarding migration to the southern U.S. border that sparked controversy.*

In a June 7 news conference in Guatemala City during her first foreign trip as Vice President, Kamala Harris told those who were thinking of making the “dangerous trek” to the United States, “Do not come...[the United States] will continue to enforce our laws and secure our border...I believe you will be turned back.”

Many immigrant rights advocates in the United States bristled at these words, saying they ignored the desperation with which migrants often flee the Northern Triangle region of Central America, which is plagued by economic devastation, violence, the effects of climate change, and government repression. They also expressed concern that her words belied the fact that seeking asylum is a legally protected right and could dissuade desperate people from seeking protection.

Refugees International, an organization supporting refugees and asylum seekers, wrote in a statement, “Refugees International is concerned that the Vice President’s message to Guatemalans not to come to the United States undermines the right to seek asylum under U.S. law. We continue to urge the Biden administration to build policies that recognize that many Guatemalans will need to seek protection until the long-standing drivers of forced displacement are addressed and realign its message to the Guatemalan people to reflect America’s commitment to the right to seek protection internationally.”

Other organizations, including the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, cited similar concerns and specifically named as an injustice the Administration’s continued use of the Trump-era Title 42 health policy to rapidly expel asylum seekers without allowing due process for their asylum claims.

The Biden-Harris administration has sought to provide further context for the vice president’s words, saying that the purpose of her speech - and of her visit - was to express the United States’ commitment to addressing the root causes of migration by strengthening the economy and civil society and combatting corruption. Vice President Harris has been tasked with management of U.S.-Central America relations, including the Biden administration’s \$4 billion project to invest in the region.

Around the vice president’s trip, the Administration announced an investment of \$48 million in entrepreneurship, housing, and agricultural programs in Guatemala. At the same time, the Administration announced further investment in training for Guatemalan border security personnel and for in-country processing of asylum seekers hoping to enter the United States. The hope, the Harris

team said, was to prompt those seeking to migrate to find solutions closer to home. However, critics of this policy say such programs can be repressive of migrants’ legitimate rights to seek asylum.

Given the history of U.S. involvement and investments in Central America, some Guatemalan and U.S.-based advocacy organizations are urging careful consideration as to where exactly the U.S. investments flow and whom they benefit. The Root Causes Initiative, an advocacy partnership of a coalition of faith-based organizations in the U.S. and Northern Triangle countries, has been clear that U.S. investments to strengthen the Guatemalan economy should flow to community-led enterprises and organizations, rather than to large corporations or aid organizations which can perpetuate cycles of poverty by paying low wages and maintaining overseas management and leadership.

In a March 25 joint letter to the Biden administration, signed by the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns, the Latin America Working Group named recommendations for implementing a root causes strategy in Central America: “We counsel taking the necessary time to develop the final strategy so that the United States can transform diplomacy and aid so as not to repeat the mistakes of the past, including the ways in which U.S. policy has contributed to human rights violations and forced migration from the region.”

Likewise, in a May 9 Letter to the Editor in the Washington Post, Jean Stokan, justice coordinator for the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, wrote that the Biden administration’s root causes strategy lacked acknowledgement of U.S. complicity in structural problems driving migration to the United States, including the United States’ historic support of corrupt and repressive governments, economic policy that favors corporations and elites, and contributions to environmental pollution and destruction.

“Vice President Harris would do well to acknowledge our country’s responsibility for the furnace of violence that Central America has become and adopt a humble posture with social movements there, which are clear on needed policy changes,” Stokan wrote. “Hopes of ‘would-be migrants’ might be stirred if they could experience real change in their political realities, and ours.”§

**Faith in action:** Sign a petition to Pres. Biden asking him to address root causes for migration from Central America: <https://bit.ly/3qsu5Kr>. Read a new report from Catholic Relief Services outlining the conditions which prompt Guatemalans to remain home rather than migrating: <https://bit.ly/3gRC3to>

# Latin America: Dilemma for Solidarity Movement

*Recent arrests of Nicaraguan opposition figures are the latest example of actions by left-leaning Latin American governments creating division and consternation among international faith groups and solidarity activists.*

Since late May in Nicaragua, the government of President Daniel Ortega of the FSLN (Sandinista) party and his wife, Vice President Rosario Murillo, has arrested scores of opposition leaders and at least five potential electoral opponents. The government claims the targets were not arrested because of their candidacies, but as part of a crackdown on non-governmental organizations (NGOs) it alleges received foreign funds aimed at destabilizing the country. The arrests are the latest in a series of incidents in recent years, in Nicaragua and elsewhere in Latin America, which pose a confounding dilemma for faith groups and solidarity activists in the United States.

Faith-based organizations like the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns often follow a See-Judge-Act model to guide their work, taking stock of the signs of the times, judging them in the light of the Gospel, and organizing action to promote peace and social justice. Historically in Latin America, this has typically meant standing with poor and marginalized communities in resisting right-wing militaries, governments, and economic programs. In many cases, the U.S. government actively backed such regimes with arms, money, training, logistical and intelligence support, and the U.S. solidarity movement advocated for an end to such intervention.

Today, though, as populist and left-leaning governments in countries like Venezuela, Bolivia, and Nicaragua have held onto power for a generation, the See-Judge-Act process is complicated in new ways. Understanding what is happening on the ground, agreeing what to make of it, and deciding how to respond have all become more challenging.

## See

Observers often struggle to know what is actually happening in the region. Even eyewitnesses interpret events through partisan and ideological lenses, leading to competing narratives and accusations of “fake news” from all sides.

When violence rocked Bolivia in the wake of the 2019 elections and the ouster of President Evo Morales, MOGC consulted in real time with Maryknoll missionaries and their Bolivian contacts in the communities of Senkata and Sacaba where dozens of people were killed. Many were unsure whether the killing was being carried out by militants of Evo Morales’ Movement Toward Socialism (MAS) party, or troops under the command of right-wing interim president Jeanine Añez. Some believed both groups shared responsibility. Others attributed the violence exclusively to whichever group they personally opposed. Local news outlets repeated rumors and gave conflicting reports.

A year-and-a-half later, most human rights inves-

tigators attribute all or nearly all deaths in Sacaba and Senkata to state security forces under Añez. But groups sympathetic to Morales tend to focus exclusively on those attacks, while others note violations of democratic and human rights norms by Morales leading up to elections, and violence by both sides throughout the country in the following weeks. In June 2021, the Bolivian conference of Catholic bishops released a report on the conflicts, which was immediately condemned by Bolivia’s new, MAS-appointed human rights ombudsman for referring to the violence in Sacaba and Senkata as “clashes” rather than one-sided “massacres.” Through all of these competing narratives, international observers struggle to accurately understand and describe events.

## Judge

Drawing conclusions about events is made difficult not just by conflicting information, but by divisions within justice and peace organizations themselves. Just as longtime allies within Latin American social and political movements find themselves at odds, so do friends and colleagues in the solidarity community in the United States – some criticizing governments they may once have supported, and others continuing to defend those governments with vigor.

As the arrests of opposition leaders and attacks on NGOs in Nicaragua continue unabated, stalwart defenders of Ortega and the FSLN justify these measures as necessary to stop foreign efforts to undermine the government. Organizations to which grassroots activists in the United States have historically looked for analysis are often stymied by contentious disagreement in their ranks. Some have been personally and publicly maligned and lost supporters because they have condemned the arrests. Others have declined to comment at all on what is happening, not for lack of interest, but because their members or partners have no consensus on how to proceed.

For some, the debate is mainly along ideological lines. A representative of a respected U.S.-based non-governmental organization who spoke with MOGC asked not to be named, as it makes it hard to work with groups on both sides of the divide. “Latin American governments of right, left, and center are restricting space for civil society to organize for rights--and they are learning from each other,” the representative said. “Yet we tend to speak out against undue restrictions against civil society groups in, for example, countries like Guatemala, when we don’t speak out when the same kinds of actions are taken by governments seen as on the left. This bears some serious reflection on our part.”

For organizations with an institutional presence in the region, speaking out might put local staff at risk.



The director of one NGO in Nicaragua describes teams of internet trolls employed by the Ortega-Murillo government to monitor the web for anything critical of the administration. NGOs in Nicaragua that receive any foreign funding must register as foreign agents and are subjected to constant auditing and control of their bank accounts, which can be shut down completely for perceived disloyalty to the FSLN. It is increasingly difficult to get foreign funds into accounts to pay Nicaraguan employees, the director told MOGC, and any attributable public comments on the political situation could make it impossible.

### Act

Even those who agree that abuse is taking place and publicly condemn it often disagree about what to do in response. Advocating to end U.S. intervention when U.S.-backed governments carried out violence and repression was relatively straightforward. But should activists advocate in favor of U.S. intervention to stop violence and repression carried out by governments like Nicaragua's? That is a hard pill for many in the solidarity community to swallow.

Geoff Thale, Executive Director of the Washington Office on Latin America, suggests a nuanced approach. "I'm not comfortable simply saying 'the United States shouldn't intervene in the affairs of other countries.' It ignores the reality that the United States is, as one of the biggest economic powers in the world, inevitably involved in the affairs of other countries, and that, left to its own devices, U.S. involvement is likely to support entrenched elites."

Thale suggests some minimum conditions for U.S. intervention. For example, U.S. action should be multilateral, and any sanctions should be narrowly aimed at individuals and not the civilian population. In Nicaragua, since the main thrust of the repression by the Ortega-Murillo government seems aimed at eliminating serious competition in upcoming elections, Thale argues that international pressure should seek to ensure elections are genuinely competitive, so that "political prisoners and opposition activists in exile [are] free to participate and organize to support candidates; candidates can register without fear of being arrested or harassed, and can campaign without reprisal." Neither the U.S. government nor Ortega's can finance candidates as per Nicaraguan law.

Thale suggests that the United States could work with European and Latin American countries to implement a series of "carrots and sticks" – imposing sanctions on Ortega's inner circle, but establishing a process by which those sanctions could be lifted pending prog-

ress on electoral conditions. The United States should also leave room for potentially helpful actions by other regional actors like Mexico and Argentina, who are applying pressure on Nicaragua independently of the Organization of American States, which is often perceived in the region as merely a U.S. proxy.

"To be honest, [holding these opinions] does put me at odds with some of my friends and colleagues, who don't think it's ever acceptable to urge the United States to take any action," says Thale. As the situation in Nicaragua deteriorates and the Biden administration turns to the affairs of its Latin American neighbors in an effort to address the root causes of migration, these debates take on increased urgency.

A number of Latin American countries have experienced dramatic changes in recent decades, as the solidarity community in the United States continues to wrestle with the violent legacy of U.S. interventionism in the region. Latin Americans and U.S.-Americans must discern a nonviolent path forward together. §

### Global Access to Vaccines

The Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns joined a group of over 50 Catholic religious and nonprofit organizations in sending a letter urging President Biden to address global COVID-19 vaccine access at the G7 Summit in Cornwall, England in mid-June.

Dr. Donald McCrabb, convener for the newly established Catholic Cares Coalition, delivered a letter on behalf of the group asking the president to work to promote the COVID-19 vaccine and address vaccine equity in the United States and around the world. McCrabb is executive director of the U.S. Catholic Mission Association.

The letter expressed gratitude for Biden's leadership and his support of efforts to produce and distribute vaccines, but it also stressed more needs to be done as "as sickness and death from COVID-19 continue unabated in countries around the world."

The group urged Biden and the leaders of the other G7 countries — Canada, Japan, Germany, France, Italy and the United Kingdom — to "support a robust global response to the COVID-19 pandemic" with collaborative leadership recognizing that "no one is safe unless all of us are safe."

Read the text of the letter here:

<https://bit.ly/3jbXTJU>

**Faith in action:** Visit [www.catholiccares.org](http://www.catholiccares.org) to find resources for prayer, study, and action to promote acceptance of COVID-19 vaccines among Catholics in the United States and sharing COVID-19 vaccines globally.

## Call for Bishops Across Americas to Protect Migrants

*Catholic organizations ask leaders of bishops' conferences in the Americas to work together to protect migrants as deaths at the U.S.-Mexico border triple.*

More than 160 Catholic organizations throughout the Americas are calling on Catholic bishops in the United States, Mexico, and Central America to work collaboratively to protect migrants and improve life in the communities from which so many are fleeing.

In a letter dated June 17, the Catholic organizations, including the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns, urged the leaders of the Catholic bishops' conferences in the United States, Mexico, and Central America to "hear the cries of our brothers and sisters on the move and respond with bold leadership." Noting the promise of a new U.S. Administration to address the root causes of migration the group highlighted three key areas for collective action by the Catholic Church: responding humanely to migration; putting immigrants in the U.S. on a pathway to citizenship; and addressing the underlying conditions that force people to migrate.

The call to action to Catholic bishops comes as deaths of migrants have tripled at the U.S.-Mexico border.

Heat stroke and dehydration are the main causes of death for migrants attempting to cross the U.S.-Mexico border undetected by U.S. Customs and Border Patrol. While the number of migrants attempting to cross the border dropped in 2020, a new report from The Marshall Project says the number of deaths increased drastically.

"While the number of encounters at the border fell by half in fiscal year 2020 compared to the previous year, the number of encounters that required a rescue operation doubled to the highest rate in at least a decade. The death rate also nearly doubled during the same period, from 35 to 62 migrants found dead for every 100,000 migrants encountered."

Now, in 2021, the number of deaths of migrants along twelve south Texas counties that border Mexico are much higher than in recent years. "Typically our busiest months are July and August," says Dr. Corrine Stern, Medical Examiner in Webb County, Texas, "and we're not even there yet."

Last year, by this time, 45 migrants had died on the border. This year, that number has tripled to 128. According to Dr. Stern, 30% tested positive for COVID-19, which may have contributed to their deaths.

"The continuation of Title 42, which has made it virtually impossible to cross the border via ports of entry, has pushed migrants into more danger," Kino Border Institute, a Jesuit-affiliated migrant center in Nogales, Arizona, posted on social media on June 10. "The ever-

increasing militarization of the border has made many migrants more reticent and ill-equipped to call for help in a crisis. It's time to end Title 42. Lives quite literally hang in the balance."

To mark the longest day of the year on June 20, in one of the hottest summers ever in the borderlands, the Tuscan, Arizona-based humanitarian organization No More Deaths, posted on social media, "We mourn the thousands who have lost their lives for simply trying to seek a better life by migrating."

"These deaths are totally unnecessary and preventable," No More Deaths declared, "and they are a result of U.S. government policies and actions that purposely use suffering and death in the desert as a weapon." They ask people to read and share their report on these policies and actions at <http://www.thedisappearedreport.org/> §

**Faith in action:** Tell Pres. Biden to end Title 42: <https://bit.ly/3gUojyd>

### #FastForFreedom: Citizenship Campaign

This June, the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns joined Faith in Action and a coalition of faith-based partners in promoting the Fast for Freedom campaign, an interfaith fasting campaign to highlight the need for undocumented essential workers to be given a pathway to citizenship in the upcoming jobs and infrastructure bills in Congress.

Essential workers have put themselves at great risk while working jobs that keep our nation fed and safe during the pandemic. Of the 11 million undocumented U.S. residents, many work in essential industries. Many are our neighbors and friends, members of our faith communities, and the parents of U.S. citizen children who have deep roots here in the United States. Due to the structure of our broken immigration system, they lack pathways to legal residency and citizenship to relieve them of the fear of deportation and family separation.

**Faith in action:** In support of the campaign, click here to take action by contacting your Members of Congress to urge them to provide pathways to citizenship for undocumented essential workers:

<https://bit.ly/2SRkkJB>

## Child Labor and Girls' Education in Tanzania

*In honor of World Day Against Child Labor, Sr. Mary Vertucci, MM, describes her work at the Emusoi Centre in Tanzania as lifechanging for indigenous girls vulnerable to child marriage and exploitation.*

On a June 9 webinar jointly hosted by the Maryknoll Sisters, Fathers and Brothers, Lay Missioners, and the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns, Sr. Mary Vertucci, MM, spoke about her work as the director of the Emusoi Centre in Tanzania, an educational center in rural Tanzania that provides pathways out of poverty for indigenous Tanzanian girls.

The webinar was held in honor of the World Day Against Child Labor on June 12 and the United Nations' decision to declare 2021 as the Year for the Elimination of Child Labor. While at the programs at the Emusoi Centre do not explicitly focus on combating child labor, Sr. Mary highlighted the ways in which rural girls' education allows them opportunities beyond child marriage and grueling pastoral labor.

Sr. Mary founded the Emusoi Center in 1991 after 20 years of teaching in schools in Tanzania. In the early 1990s, she moved to the northeastern city of Arusha, an area heavily populated by people of the Maasai ethnic group. As she visited rural villages, Sr. Mary could see the challenges facing the Maasai people and especially young Maasai girls.

Sr. Mary explained that education is not prized among the pastoralist Maasai people, and it is particularly undervalued for young girls, who are most often married soon after puberty to older men who may already have several wives. Their lives after marriage are often difficult, what with early pregnancy and the expected domestic labor.

While access to education is growing in Tanzania, with public school fees abolished in the last decade, there are still numerous financial, structural, and cultural barriers to girls' education. Primary school students must pass a national exam to attend secondary school, and often only those with high marks are able to attend. Uniforms and other gear must be purchased, placing financial obstacles to matriculation. Cultural obstacles, such as the Maasai traditions, present challenges as well.

The Emusoi Centre seeks to empower rural girls by addressing some of those barriers to education and opportunity outside the traditional child marriage. While it is not a formal school, it offers a year of remedial edu-

cation between primary and secondary school that prepares the girls academically and socially for education in more modern settings. It also supports girls during secondary education and for two years following, guiding them as they pursue further educational and work opportunities.

"When you educate a girl, you change a community's future," says Sr. Mary. She explained that over time, the girls' mothers, and even some of the fathers, have grown in appreciation for what the Emusoi Centre

offers young women. Several of the Centre's young women have gone on to excel in their careers, becoming, for example, the first female doctors of the Maasai community. Approximately 2000 girls have now been educated by the Centre.

Following Sr. Mary's presentation, Susan Gunn and Kathleen Kollman Birch of the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns gave a short overview of the rates of child labor around the world today, the close connections between child labor and child mar-

riage, and the specific nature of child labor in Tanzania. They explained that rates of child labor around the world are expected to rise dramatically as a result of the economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic.

In Tanzania, roughly a third of the country's children are engaged in child labor. The government has worked to counter the lure of work for children in the gold and gemstone mines in Tanzania, as well as the cultural disincentives for education, but lasting solutions are elusive. Educational initiatives like those of the Emusoi Centre help provide pathways for children out of poverty and developmentally inappropriate work.

You can watch the recording of the webinar and find resources for taking action against child labor here: <https://bit.ly/3xPSgFb>

Also in honor of the World Day Against Child Labor, Sr. Marvie Misolas, MM, organized a virtual side event at the United Nations sponsored by the NGO Mining Working Group on June 18, "Unraveling Child Labor in the Mining Industry in the Congo Basin." §

**Faith in action:** Learn more about child labor in the chocolate industry and learn what you can do to support fair trade labor: <https://bit.ly/3xPSgFb>





# Impacts of COVID-19 in East Africa

*The International Organization for Migration reports on the challenges faced by migrants and forcibly displaced populations in the East and Horn of Africa due to COVID-19. The following summary and link to the full report are available at ReliefWeb: <https://bit.ly/2U0Nk1o>*

Already home to some of the most vulnerable populations globally, the East and Horn of Africa (EHOA) has seen additional displacement and challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic, with nearly 9 million people internally displaced by the end of 2020 alongside an estimated 5 million refugees and asylum-seekers. The pandemic has further challenged the situation for the populations on the move in the EHOA, a region that is already weakened by conflict, insecurity, extreme weather conditions, climate change and pests.

## Changes in mobility

The control measures put in place since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic have had an unprecedented impact on human mobility, affecting the lives of societies at large and, in particular, of those communities depending on mobility for their livelihoods. While COVID-19 started spreading globally since the beginning of 2020, the outbreak became concerning in the EHOA region around mid-March.

Although the pandemic has reshaped the regional migration landscape and significantly disrupted cross-border mobility, migration did not cease. The overall movements in 2020 decreased by over a quarter compared to 2019, and were mainly concentrated within the Horn of Africa and less along the Eastern Route via Yemen towards the Arabian Peninsula. COVID-19-related restrictions led to an increase in the use of more risky smuggling services and to a change in migration routes, but also pushed thousands of migrants to be stranded across the region, unable to continue their journey or return home. Additionally, the region witnessed a surge in spontaneous returns of migrants from Yemen to Djibouti and Somalia by sea using the same network of brokers used to travel to Yemen.

## Economy and livelihoods

Millions of people, particularly those living in urban areas, have lost their livelihood and income opportunities due to COVID-19, while the closure of schools has affected school feeding programs in several countries. Similarly, global lockdowns and restrictions led to regional supply and demand shocks, affecting market functionality as well as food availability and access, which in combination with a decline in global remittances and high food prices, have eroded households' purchasing power.

An increase in return migration has been observed, as jobs and income opportunities shrank in destination countries. Many returning migrant workers were headed home empty-handed and required extensive support for their re-

integration, placing significant pressure on home communities. COVID-19 has also severely challenged the flow of remittances across the region owing to migrants' job loss, bank closures, border closures, but also because of friends and relatives losing their jobs abroad and not being able to send money as they used to.

## Food security

The food security situation in the EHOA deteriorated significantly during the year. Sudan, Ethiopia and South Sudan were among the 10 countries with the worst food crises globally. Especially dire was the situation in South Sudan where 108,000 people in Pibor were found to be facing catastrophe food security outcomes. The escalating conflict in Tigray in Ethiopia remains of greatest concern as the crisis has made more than 350,000 people food insecure. Additionally, there were concerning levels of acute malnutrition in the region, while Burundi had one of the highest levels of chronic malnutrition globally. In total, some 54 million people were estimated to be acutely food insecure in the region in 2020, and given the continued impact of COVID-19 on the economy and livelihoods, this number is projected to remain at high levels in 2021.

The level of vulnerability of displaced populations has further increased during the pandemic on account of reduced funding for humanitarian operations leading to food ration cuts for refugee populations in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan and Uganda, negatively affecting their food security, nutrition and protection situation.

## Protection and gender concerns

As elsewhere in the world, gender-based violence as well as tensions with host communities and instances of marginalization and discrimination have increased across the region. The safety and well-being of children has also been exacerbated by the widespread closure of schools, especially affecting those from vulnerable communities for whom schools offer a safe space. Millions of children have been unable to access any form of formal education, and many have been forced into child labor, sexual slavery, trafficking, or recruited into armed forces.

The existing risks of irregular migration worsened with the pandemic. The Eastern Route was already risky, as migrants' travel conditions in the Horn of Africa and while crossing the Gulf of Aden are fraught with danger and hardship, with reports of smugglers throwing migrants overboard to reduce the risk of capsizing when seas are rough. §



## G7 Summit: Recovery Progress Falls Short

*At the G7 Summit in Cornwall, England, June 11-13, the leaders of the seven largest so-called advanced economies – France, the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Japan, and Germany – met for the first time in two years.*

Among the top agenda items at the G7 Summit in mid-June were the COVID-19 and economic crises and the threat of climate change. While some progress was made on global collaboration to address these challenges, further commitments by the world's wealthiest nations will be necessary to ensure a just global recovery from the pandemic and a sustainable future.

Several world leaders at the G7 Summit remarked that, in contrast to the past four years of contentious U.S. engagement in global gatherings, the United States returned to the table with a spirit of collaboration and a more ambitious agenda. "The United States is back," President Emmanuel Macron reportedly said, regarding the Biden administration's participation in the Summit.

Regarding the pandemic, the leaders agreed to donate 870 million doses of vaccines in the next year to countries struggling to access vaccines. While this is an important step, it is not enough to meet global demand. WHO Director General, Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, said, "We are in the race of our lives, but it's not a fair race... We need more, and we need them faster."

The Biden administration came to the Summit having already backed a temporary waiver on intellectual property rights for COVID-19 vaccines. This "TRIPS" waiver at the WTO would allow other countries to produce COVID-19 vaccines. Prior to the summit, the Catholic Cares Coalition, a group dedicated to promoting and sharing COVID-19 vaccines, of which the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns is a member, sent a letter to Pres. Biden asking him to prioritize the G7 supporting the waiver and donating vaccines to poorer countries.

While France recently reversed its position and announced a commitment to the waiver, the European Union remains opposed. Germany strongly opposes the waiver, perhaps due to upcoming elections in September and the government's support for BioNtech, the German company which partnered with Pfizer to produce a COVID-19 vaccine. Since the G7 meeting, Australia has backed the waiver, as has the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). No other financial commitment was made to ramp up global vaccine production.

On climate change, the G7 countries announced a commitment of up \$2.8 billion to support ending overseas coal production in developing countries. While leaders reiterated support for the overdue commitment of \$100 billion a year in climate finance to help impoverished countries mitigate and adapt to climate change,

they released no details on how this target would be achieved.

Many climate activists were disappointed in the lack of progress. Tasneem Essop, Executive Director of Climate Action Network International, said in a statement on the Summit, "The outcomes from the G7 Summit simply do not measure up to the scale of the twin crises [of the pandemic and climate change] the world is facing."

While world leaders were meeting in-person in Cornwall, climate negotiators met virtually to discuss the Paris climate agreement ahead of the UN climate talks in Scotland in November. Little additional climate finance and no new initiatives were announced to bring the G7 countries' own domestic policies in line with the global goal of keeping average global temperature rise to 1.5°C by 2100, the ambitious target of the Paris agreement to avoid the worst effects of climate change. However, the Biden administration did launch a \$3 trillion infrastructure plan this Spring that, if passed by Congress, would make progress towards putting the United States on a pathway toward significant emissions reductions.

G7 countries reiterated their support for \$650 billion in what are known as "Special Drawing Rights," a special allocation of financial assets from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Struggling countries can use SDRs as foreign exchange to purchase much-needed COVID-19 vaccines and PPE as well as meet the needs of their people brought on by the economic impacts of the pandemic.

Since SDRs are disbursed proportionately to the size of a country's economy, G7 countries receive the largest amounts and are encouraged to donate them to lower income countries. But the G7 countries provided no details on how donations will happen, leaving the possibility that they will be given as loans to already indebted low- and middle- income countries. The G7 leaders made no new announcements on debt cancellation, to the dismay of many who are deeply concerned about the debt crisis facing the world's most impoverished nations.

In total, the G7 leaders fell far short of UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson's call to "seize the opportunity to fight and build back better from coronavirus, uniting to make the future fairer, greener and more prosperous."§

# Transforming U.S. Cold War Mentality with China

*The Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns joined 65 other organizations in signing the following statement expressing opposition to a Cold War mentality that is increasingly driving U.S.-China policy.*

We, the undersigned organizations that represent millions of people across the United States, are deeply concerned about the growing Cold War mentality driving the U.S. approach to China. Although our organizations may have different mandates or ideological persuasions, we know that the new Cold War with China currently being pushed in Washington does not serve the millions of people demanding change across this country nor the billions of people affected by U.S. foreign policy abroad, and will instead lead to further insecurity and division.

Worryingly, both political parties are increasingly latching onto a dangerously short-sighted worldview that presents China as the pivotal existential threat to U.S. prosperity and security and counsels zero-sum competition as the primary response. This narrative is not only growing in our foreign policy discourse, but also is increasingly being used to justify widely popular domestic policies, like those in the Endless Frontier Act, that provide broad social and industrial investments. Anti-China framing for such initiatives is not only politically unnecessary; it is harmful, as it inevitably feeds racism, violence, xenophobia, and white nationalism.

The true global security challenges of today — like economic inequality and lack of opportunity, climate change, nuclear proliferation, pandemics, financial crises and supply chain disruption, and ethnonationalism — will require joint, non-military solutions with China and other countries. While the administration and many in Congress acknowledge the need for cooperation on issues of global concern such as climate change, presenting the U.S.-China relationship as a zero-sum economic and military struggle between democracy and authoritarianism, as the Strategic Competition Act does, creates a political environment that leaves little room for such cooperation.

Instead, the level of demonization and outdated Cold War thinking driving such efforts threatens to fuel destabilizing arms-racing and risks escalation towards a predictably devastating conflict. It also undermines the human rights agenda, providing ammunition for the Chinese government's claim that criticism of abuses — including from rights advocates within China — is aimed at weakening China. Moreover, such approaches pave the way for U.S. policy to undermine human rights and good governance in pursuit of short-sighted security partnerships with rights-abusing, authoritarian governments simply to compete with Beijing.

President Biden and Congress should focus on innovation, cooperation, and multilateral approaches, not

hostility and confrontation, to address shared challenges and areas of concern. What everyday Americans need to secure their futures is not the suppression of the Chinese economy — one that is intimately intertwined with our own — but a fundamental restructuring of our own economy through investments in innovation and green jobs; strengthening labor and raising wages; rooting out systemic racism, sexism and inequality; and ensuring affordable health care, housing, education, and a livable planet. More broadly, the prosperity of working people in the United States and China alike demands building a more equitable global economy that maximizes human wellbeing overall rather than corporate profits. Wasting more money on the Pentagon and inflaming ethnonationalism and racism will not serve these goals.

This moment presents a once in a lifetime opportunity to fundamentally change how the U.S. government builds the security of its people — and more militarization and demonization of China is a distracting and self-defeating strategy toward this goal. If the U.S. government doesn't change course quickly, this dangerous bipartisan push for a new Cold War with China risks empowering hardliners in both countries, fueling more violence against Asian American and Pacific Islander communities, and failing to confront the truly existential shared threats we face this century. §

**Faith in action:** Tell the State Department to restore the Fulbright and Peace Corps programs in China. Copy and paste the following comment into the State Department comment form at

<https://register.state.gov/contactus/ContactUsForm>

“The one relatively simple change in U.S. policy towards China that can help address the root issues of racism and discrimination in the United States is the restoration of the Fulbright and Peace Corps programs in China. Both programs provide U.S.-government-funded opportunities for Americans to live abroad, with the aim of promoting increased understanding of the United States internationally and enabling Americans to better understand other countries. The Fulbright exchange with China and the Peace Corps programs in China, in operation since 1979 and 1993, respectively, were both abruptly cut last year by the Trump administration as part of the overall fallout from the increasing tensions in the U.S.-China relationship. These avenues for Americans to live, study and work abroad will contribute to making the United States a more open, tolerant, and inclusive society.”

# Myanmar: Pope Joins Pleas for Aid

UCANews reported on June 21 that Pope Francis echoes calls by Myanmar bishops to respect religious sites as places of sanctuary: <https://bit.ly/3qzvL57>

Pope Francis has appealed for aid for thousands of displaced people who are facing starvation in Myanmar after fleeing from their homes as fighting escalates in the beleaguered country.

During his Sunday Angelus on June 20, the pope joined bishops in Myanmar who have appealed for humanitarian corridors to allow safe passage for those fleeing.

He said Myanmar bishops last week launched an appeal “calling to the attention of the entire world, the heart-wrenching experience of thousands of persons in that country who are displaced and are dying of hunger.”

Echoing the bishops, the pope pleaded for respecting religious sites as places of sanctuary. “Churches, pagodas, monasteries, mosques, temples, just as schools and hospitals, are respected as neutral places of refuge.”

The pope also prayed for peace in the conflict-torn nation which has been in turmoil following the military seizure of power on Feb. 1 after overthrowing elected civilian leaders including Aung San Suu Kyi.

Daily protests and a peaceful civil disobedience movement have challenged the junta, which is struggling to control the country nearly five months after the power grab.

The junta is trying to repress the people with a reign of terror which has sparked resistance from local resistance groups known as the People’s Defense Forces (PDF).

Pope Francis has spoken several times about the crisis in Myanmar, which he regards with much affection after visiting the country in 2017.

He has repeatedly called for military leaders to stop the violence, release all detained people and pursue dialogue to seek peace.

The pope’s comments came on World Refugee Day, designated by the United Nations with the theme “Together we heal, learn and shine.”

“Let us open our hearts to refugees and share in

their sorrows and joys, and learn from their courageous resilience to become a more humane community, one big family,” the pope said.

Cardinal Charles Bo of Yangon has asked for a period of intense prayer, to “enter the battlefield of prayer, become prayer warriors.”

“We are like the disciples, tossed in the stormy seas of man-made disaster: of unending war, anguished displacement, inflicted starvation, death, detention and despair,” Cardinal Bo said in a homily on June 20.

“Let us pray for all those who perished in this crisis, those in prison, those who disappeared, those who lost everything, those displaced, those homeless. We need to support each other with prayer, with food, with visits.”

On June 18, the United Nations General Assembly called for a stop to the flow of arms to Myanmar and urged the military to release political detainees including deposed leader Suu Kyi and to respect the results of the November 2020 elections.

Myanmar’s junta rejected the UN’s resolution, which is not legally binding, as being “based on one-sided sweeping

allegations and false assumptions.”

More than 175,000 people have been displaced in Kachin, Karen, Chin, Kayah and Shan states — predominantly Christian areas — due to the escalation of hostilities between the military and ethnic armed groups and the PDF since the coup.

At least 872 people have been killed by security forces since the coup, mostly anti-coup protesters. §

**Faith in action:** Sign a petition to ask governments and companies across the globe to join together and end the oppression by the military in Myanmar:

<https://bit.ly/3wYEiRi>

Follow updates from Amnesty International on the passage on June 18 of a UN resolution to impose a global arms embargo on Myanmar to bring an end to the violence on peaceful protestors by Myanmar security forces: <https://bit.ly/3zXtwMX>



Photo: Protesters in Myanmar on June 19.

Credit: Dawei Watch/AFP.



# Sustainable Transportation for the 21st Century

*Shifting toward sustainable transportation will be necessary for combating global climate change. Climate scientists have ideas for making it happen.*

Reliable transportation is essential for modern life, connecting people to jobs and services, access to markets, and promoting social and economic development. However, the transportation sector plays a significant role in driving climate change.

According to the World Bank, the global transportation sector accounts for 64 percent of global oil consumption, 27 percent of all energy use, and 23 percent of the world's energy-related carbon emissions. Creating options for sustainable, carbon negligible transportation will be key for building a green global economy.

The UN Advisory Group on Sustainable Transport defines sustainable transport as “the provision of services and infrastructure for the mobility of people and goods in a manner that is safe, affordable, accessible, efficient and resilient, while minimizing carbon and other emissions and environmental impacts.”

The need to transition the transportation sector away from fossil fuel consumption has been on the international agenda for almost 50 years but is only recently starting to gain some momentum. In a new paper on sustainable transportation for the International Institute for Sustainable Development, American climate researcher Leila Mead traces the first international discussion of the need to mitigate the transportation sector's role in global warming back to the 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment. At that time, the global population was only 3.8 billion and global leaders were just starting to recognize the threats caused by climate change.

In the fifty years since, the topic has picked up momentum on the international stage, culminating in the Sustainable Development Goals for 2030, which include numerous targets for sustainable and inclusive transportation. Within the SDGs, sustainable transport is not only a climate-related goal but a means to gaining ground on a variety of development goals, especially poverty reduction. Poverty reduction, improved health outcomes, and social development are all related to sustainable, accessible transportation.

Mead highlights what she considers the most promising solutions for sustainable transportation around the world. For one, she explains the promise of what are called Bus Rapid Transport (BRT) systems, such as the new system in Jakarta, Indonesia. The Jakarta bus system is the largest in the world, carrying one million people per day in a city of ten million. The BRT buses run in designated lanes unimpeded by vehicular traffic and connect to smaller systems of transport that serve neighborhoods located along

narrow roads. They are highly reliable and efficient – ideal for urban areas. Given that the global urban population is expected to grow from 55 percent to 68 percent by 2050, she predicts other cities will want to learn from the Jakarta model.

Mead also highlights initiatives that invest in non-motorized transport in urban areas, such as walking infrastructures and bike share programs. Some cities, like Buenos Aires, Argentina, have restructured their roads to promote both rapid bus transportation and pedestrian access with great success. In Lviv, Ukraine, a complete street redesign improved cycle lanes, making it possible for public transit users to commute to bus stations by bicycle rather than by car.

Mead names improving vehicle efficiency as another necessary step. She highlights a successful initiative in Egypt, where a vehicle recycling program allowed taxi drivers to exchange their old vehicles for new, efficient ones at a significant discount. About 45,000 taxies were recycled and reissued as of 2018, resulting in 350,000 tons of emissions reductions.

In the United States, transforming domestic infrastructure to allow for a shift towards sustainable transportation has proven to be both a logistical and political challenge. According to the Rhodium Group, an independent research center specializing in climate policy, transportation accounts for one third of total U.S. greenhouse gas emissions. Many U.S. cities are heavily reliant on car transportation, and in many places, the COVID-19 pandemic has served to make public transportation even less popular.

However, the Biden administration has declared its intent to invest heavily in sustainable infrastructure and has also said it will strengthen vehicle efficiency standards. Climate analysts writing for The New York Times say that the biggest changes need to come from Congress, which has an opportunity to make headway on sustainability reforms when the current round of federal highway spending expires this year.

Former UN Secretary General Ban-Ki Moon notably said that the answer to our modern transportation challenges is not less transport but rather sustainable transport: “[...] we need more systems that are environmentally friendly, affordable and accessible,” he said in 2016, noting that it has to meet the needs of those who have the least. “When it does, we can bridge more than physical distances; we can come closer as one human family.” As the world pursues a just recovery from COVID-19, sustainable transport must remain high up on the agenda. §



# Transforming the Fossil Fuel Industry

*Climate advocates are finding success through shareholder advocacy and lawsuits to hold the fossil fuel industry accountable for its impact on the climate.*

In May, the Maryknoll Sisters joined a majority of shareholders of ExxonMobil in approving resolutions requiring disclosure of the oil giant's lobbying activities and whether and how its lobbying aligns with goals of the Paris climate agreement. Shareholders also approved two alternative board candidates with backgrounds in energy transitions. At the same time, at Chevron's annual meeting, shareholders passed a resolution calling on the U.S. oil company to make deeper cuts to its greenhouse gas emissions.

The Maryknoll Sisters and other faith-based and environmental organizations hold shares in these companies to practice what they call "shareholder advocacy," to redirect the work and actions of companies toward justice and peace. These changes at ExxonMobil and Chevron are seen as a big win for climate activists.

"It was a wild day," said Dominican Sr. Pat Daly to a reporter from the National Catholic Reporter. Sr. Daly is a longtime shareholder advocate, whose community, the Dominican Sisters of Caldwell, New Jersey, is a member of the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility, as are the Maryknoll Sisters. "Corporate America has shifted," she said.

Besides finding success through shareholder advocacy, climate advocates are using lawsuits to get fossil fuel companies and even governments to take climate action. In the United States, in what has been called the climate "trial of the century," 21 youth sued the U.S. government on the grounds that it was not taking sufficient action to provide them with a livable future.

Although the case was initially dismissed by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, on May 13, U.S. District Judge Ann Aiken ordered attorneys on both sides to participate in a settlement conference to be held June 23. Concerned that the Biden administration could use this conference to create bold new policies, 17 Republican attorneys general from states with significant fossil fuel industries have asked to join the lawsuit to prevent a settlement.

Another notable climate case is a crowdfunding lawsuit filed in the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) in September 2020 by four Portuguese children and two young adults. "This case is unique for several reasons," explains political analyst Simantini Dey in India. "For starters, it is one of the few cases to be fast-tracked by the ECHR, and if the court rules in favor of the Portugal youths, 33 European countries will

be legally bound to make deep emission cuts. Secondly, it is one of the few cases that address the cross-border impact of emissions of different countries and can therefore pave the way for international climate laws in the future."

The UN Environment Program published a review of climate-related litigation around the world detailing at least 1550 climate change cases filed in 38 countries. The report points out that "[to] date, the majority of cases have been brought against governments, but the number of lawsuits against corporate entities – particularly [major emitting firms] – is on the rise."

The District Court in The Hague recently decided one such case against Royal Dutch Shell, the Netherlands' largest oil company, determining that the corporation must reduce its global carbon emissions by 45 percent by the end of 2030 compared to 2019. Though it is unclear how this decision will be enforced, one of the lawyers that brought the case, Roger Cox, said "this ruling will change the world," predicting that others will now be "ready to sue the oil companies in their own countries based on our example."

A number of U.S. state, county, and municipal governments are also suing corporations, including Chevron, BP and Exxon Mobil, demanding compensation for expenses they are incurring in order to adapt to climate change. Their arguments are being aided by advances in climate science that make it easier to prove causation and culpability for emissions. Texas and Louisiana, both with large fossil fuel sectors, recently rescinded multi-billion-dollar subsidy programs for those industries.

Finally, the International Energy Agency (IEA) published a report in May drawing a roadmap for the global energy sector to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050. The agency writes, "There is no need for investment in new fossil fuel supply in our net zero pathway. Beyond projects already committed as of 2021, there are no new oil and gas fields approved for development in our pathway, and no new coal mines or mine extensions are required."

The IEA's strong statement signals that unless fossil fuel corporations carry out significant reforms to reduce their carbon emissions, their days of economic viability are numbered. Changes are ahead for the fossil fuel industry, and the momentum is building through these new initiatives. §

## Updates on Israel-Palestine

*The Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns, as a member of Churches for Middle East Peace, joined 100 national organizations in sending the following letter, excerpted here, to President Biden on June 8, 2021, asking him to halt new weapons sales to Israel: <https://bit.ly/3wT81uX>*

Dear President Biden,

We, the undersigned non-governmental organizations focused variously on human rights, peacebuilding, and the protection of civilians, write in opposition to the United States government's plans to sell \$735 million in advanced weapons systems and munitions to Israel. The planned arms sales to Israel would send a signal of support for Israel's recent conduct in occupied Gaza and East Jerusalem, which includes likely violations of international humanitarian law.

Over the past several weeks, Americans have watched in horror as the Israeli government used U.S.-manufactured weapons in a devastating assault on civilians in Gaza, killing over 220 Palestinians, including at least 67 children, while Hamas and other Palestinian groups in Gaza launched thousands of rockets against Israeli population centers. While most of the rockets from Gaza either missed their targets or were intercepted by Israel's missile-defense system, Iron Dome, Israeli airstrikes destroyed schools, refugee camps, international media outlets, hospitals, and Gaza's only COVID-19 testing lab. Over 52,000 Palestinians have been displaced, which has exacerbated an already desperate humanitarian situation for Palestinians on the Gaza Strip, during a pandemic.

We welcome the recent ceasefire and appreciate your administration's support for it, but we are concerned

that the situation remains extremely fragile. Even since the ceasefire has been in effect, there has been escalating violence in Al-Aqsa mosque. Moreover, the forced expulsions of Palestinian families in Sheikh Jarrah, which precipitated the latest outbreak of conflict, has also not been settled, but merely delayed by Israeli courts.

Blocking this weapons sale will not change the reality of daily life for Palestinians living under Israeli occupation. Those living in Gaza will continue to suffer from severe shortages of life-saving medicines, food, electricity, and clean water, because of Israel's illegal military blockade, which makes life unsafe and unbearable. But halting delivery of the weapons would send a clear message that your administration is unwilling to fuel further attacks on civilians in Gaza.

Given the likely continuing violations of international humanitarian and human rights law by the Israeli government, delivery of these weapons would greatly undermine your administration's goal of pursuing a foreign policy centered on human rights. Moving forward with this sale would also hurt the U.S. ability to play a constructive role in the peace process, which could have lasting implications for the likelihood of resolving the conflict...§

**Faith in action:** Tell Pres. Biden to oppose violence and evictions in Israel-Palestine:

<https://bit.ly/3jnoGD9>

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## Israel-Palestine Recommended News Articles

**“It's apartheid, say Israeli ambassadors to South Africa”**  
<https://bit.ly/3gQL2Li>

Ilan Baruch and Alon Liel, who both served as Israel's ambassador to South Africa, write in Ground Up on June 8, on the occasion of the fifty-fifth year since the occupation of the West Bank began, that “It is time for the world to recognize that what we saw in South Africa decades ago is happening in the occupied Palestinian territories too. And just as the world joined the struggle against apartheid in South Africa, it is time for the world to take decisive diplomatic action.”

**“We have failed': Journalists unite and demand truthful coverage of Israeli occupation”**

<https://bit.ly/3wTlbYF>

The Middle East Eye reports on June 9 that 250 journalists working for some of the world's top media

outlets, including The Washington Post, Wall Street Journal and Los Angeles Times, signed an open letter calling on the news industry to stop “obscuring Israeli occupation and the systemic oppression of Palestinians” in the media.

**“The Nakba is Now”** <https://bit.ly/3xQoO1S>

Saree Makdisi writes in The Nation on May 17 that, “with the explosion of Israeli violence this last week, Palestinians are experiencing a level of terror that is both new and painfully reminiscent of the terror of 1948.”

**“Israel's likely new government, explained”**

<https://bit.ly/3wZKLVu>

Haggai Matar writes in 972 Magazine on June 1 that “Netanyahu may be heading out, but his former allies and right-wing policies are still very much in.”§

## Resources

1. In honor of the #FastforFreedom national campaign to seek a **pathway to citizenship** for undocumented essential workers happening this June and early July, take action by contacting your Members of Congress: <https://bit.ly/2SRkkJB>
2. Take action to help **strengthen the refugee resettlement program** by contacting your Members of Congress to urge them to robustly support refugee resettlement funding in the federal budget: <https://bit.ly/3qmbBeC>
3. Watch a webinar recording on child labor and girls' education in Tanzania, featuring **Sr. Mary Vertucci, MM**, of the Emusoi Centre in Tanzania. This webinar was a collaborative effort of the Maryknoll Sisters, Fathers and Brothers, Lay Missioners, and MOGC: <https://bit.ly/2T3dlwW>
4. Leading up to Pride month, the Maryknoll Sisters, Lay Missioners, and Fathers & Brothers endorsed this statement by some Catholic Bishops on **protecting LGBT youth**: <https://bit.ly/3AwLUg6>
5. Read this article from TIME Magazine, "How COVID-19 Vaccination Became a Climate Metaphor," about the interconnections between our response to COVID-19 and the **climate emergency**: <https://time.com/6073884/covid-19-climate-g7/>
6. From Amnesty International, read this report on the Biden administration's **immigration policy**: "A Progress Report on the Biden Administration's Record on Making the United States a Safe Refuge:" <https://bit.ly/3gQfMvZ>
7. Listen to a six-episode podcast series on the intersections of **immigration policy and racism**, called "The Other Side of the Water: Immigration and the Promise of Racial Justice:" <https://www.jeanvnelson35.org/podcast>
8. Read this new study from Catholic Relief Services on factors that motivate people to **stay in Guatemala rather than migrate** to the United States: <https://bit.ly/3gRC3to>
9. Watch a new 2-minute video from the Catholic Mobilizing Network on the **Catholic faith and the restorative justice movement**: <https://bit.ly/3hL1Eng>
10. Read this new report from the Marshall Project on the increase in **migrant deaths at the border** in the last year and what we can do about it: <https://bit.ly/3xKZydh>
11. Read this new report from the International Campaign for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), "**Complicit: 2020 Global Nuclear Weapons Spending**:" <https://bit.ly/2TXQMdg>
12. Read this new report from the Migration Policy Institute, "**Strengthening Services for Unaccompanied Children in U.S. Communities**:" <https://bit.ly/3xE5xR8>
13. Learn about the **South Sudan Council of Churches Action Plan for Peace Initiative** at <https://bit.ly/2Ssb5iM> and read their latest newsletter at <https://bit.ly/2SZxy6X>
14. Join the 3-day virtual counter event to the Pre-Summit of the **UN Food Systems Summit** in Rome to be held July 25-27: <https://bit.ly/3qjKLnt>. Learn more about CSM's positions on the UN Food Systems Summit <http://www.csm4cfs.org/14024/>
15. Sign a **petition to Pres. Biden** asking him to address root causes for migration from Central America: <https://bit.ly/3qsu5Kr>.
16. Explore this new report by the International Center on Nonviolent Conflict, "**Sudan's 2019 Revolution: The Power of Civil Resistance**:" <https://bit.ly/36dUHpe>
17. Register for a **virtual UN side event on July 8 at 1pm EST**, co-sponsored by the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns at the UN, "Addressing the tensions between extreme poverty and environmental conservation: grassroots voices and solutions:" <https://bit.ly/3ABPBkO>
18. Check out this new book, "**Beneath the Cicadas' Song**" a contemporary fiction drama thriller by Lindsey Doyle, a climate policy advocate at InterAction. A compelling story about a fictional community under threat in Central America, as told through eyes of children. A portion of all proceeds of the book sales go to two small nonprofits in the region serving women and girls: <https://bit.ly/3h2spD2>