

SEPTEMBER 2020

## COMBONI JPIC NETWORK NEWSLETTER

Justice and peace-related news, actions, and resources from the  
Comboni Missionaries, North American Province

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### SELECTED GLOBAL TOPICS

## Colombian Massacres "Scandalous," Bishop Says



After a number of recent massacres in Colombia, Bishop Elkin Fernando Álvarez Botero, secretary general of the Colombian bishops' conference, lamented that a "scandalously painful" point has been reached in the country. Massacres in August have claimed the lives of 42 people. Of these killings, 28 have taken place in three contiguous departments in the southwest corner of the country bordering the Pacific, and 14 in three departments in the northern half of the country.

The latest massacre occurred August 23 in the municipality of Venecia in the department of Antioquia, where three people were killed, including a minor.

"We believe that behind these massacres there is a great degradation into violence. We don't know where it's coming from and the real causes of this, but we have reached a scandalously painful point for the Colombian people," the auxiliary bishop of Medellín said in a statement to ACI Prensa.

[Read the whole story here.](#)

## Land and Environmental Laws Diluted as Asia-Pacific Nations Eye Growth

BANGKOK (Thomson Reuters)



Foundation) — Asia-Pacific nations are speeding up project approvals and removing environmental protections to spur economic growth dented by the coronavirus, moves that will hurt rural and indigenous communities, analysts say.

**Indonesia** has issued a law that makes it easier to take over community land, including those of indigenous groups, and for forests to be cleared for industry.

**India** has opened coal mining to the private sector in forest land, while a new environment impact assessment (EIA) notification allows speedier project approvals and less compliance.

**Australia** will fast-track approval for roads and other projects including the expansion of BHP Group's Olympic Dam, while the Cook Islands will grant seabed mining licenses to bolster its tourism-dependent economy. But besides addressing jobs and infrastructure issues, stimulus projects must deliver "broad, long-term community value, reduce inequality and help counter climate change," said Elizabeth Mossop, a dean at the University of Technology in Sydney.

"It is not clear that fast-tracking actually saves time in the long run, and there is little evidence that it provides us with good outcomes," she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

"The risks are that these projects benefit large corporations, rather than communities, rural areas, women and people who most need jobs," she said.

[Read more.](#)

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## Joyful Milestone in Fight Against Polio

On August 25, 2020, the Africa Regional Certification Commission certified the WHO African Region as wild polio-free after four years without a case. With this historic milestone, five of the six WHO regions — representing over 90 percent of the world's population — are now free of the wild poliovirus, moving the world closer to achieving



global polio eradication.

Only two countries worldwide continue to see wild poliovirus transmission: Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Read more [here](#).

*Photo courtesy CDC Global..*

## 44,000 people registered as missing in Africa, nearly half of them children



Nairobi (ICRC)—Nearly 44,000 people across Africa are registered as missing with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) at a time when restrictions put in place to curb COVID-19 create new challenges in searching for missing people. Forty-five percent of the

cases were children at the time they went missing.

"This caseload is a drop in the ocean to the true scale of people whose family members are searching for them," said Sophie Marsac, the regional advisor for the missing and their families in Africa for the ICRC. "Conflict, violence, migration and climate shocks have not stopped separating families in the pandemic, but our work to find missing people has become even harder."

Nigeria, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Somalia, Libya, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Cameroon make up 82 percent of ICRC's missing caseload in Africa. The highest among them is Nigeria which at nearly 23,000 people is ICRC's largest caseload of missing people in the continent, driven almost entirely by the conflict in the northeast of the country. All seven countries have seen a rise in the number of people registered with the ICRC as missing in the first half of 2020.

"My son's disappearance has left me in desperation, feeling that he is coming back. In the first two months, I locked myself in the house, emotionally depressed," said Juma Kedai Korok, 52, whose 31-year-old son was abducted four years ago by an armed group in South Sudan. He has had no word since. "Dear son Konyi, if you are still alive and listening to me, your sisters, brothers, aunties, and the whole family are waiting for you. We just want to hear your voice and see you."

[Read more.](#)

## More Topics to Explore

[Pope Francis Calls Us to Be Good Stewards of the Earth and Each Other](#)

[Two More Philippine Activists Murdered](#)

[Iraq: UN Mission condemns killings of activists in Basra](#)

## CALL TO ACTION

### Support the Free Press



Strong institutions depend on transparency or, failing that, the consistent pressure and exposure of a free and independent press. Here are 5 ways to support high-quality journalism:

1. **Subscribe to a reputable news outlet.** Accurate and timely reportage requires time, travel, and resources. Whether your preferred news sources is printed or digital, be willing to pay to support it.
2. **Get your information from diverse sources.** No one outlet has the whole story. Use a variety of sources to help inform your opinions and your actions.
3. **Support local news.** Smaller newsrooms are scraping by on shoestring budgets. Consider a subscription to your local paper, visit a news channel's website, or simply opt to get your weather and traffic from a local station.
4. **Share good stories.** Not just feel-good stories, but important and well-researched articles. Do what you can to increase the reach and audience for good journalism.
5. **Be an advocate.** Participate in your community news with op-eds, letters to the editor, or comments on a website. Tell your family and friends about the importance of a free press. If you have information to share, register as a source at [Help a Reporter](#).

# GLOBAL GOALS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

## Goal 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions

### 16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



Conflict, insecurity, weak institutions and limited access to justice remain a great threat to sustainable development.

The number of people fleeing war, persecution and conflict exceeded 70 million in 2018, the highest level recorded by the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) in almost 70 years.

In 2019, the United Nations tracked 357 killings and 30 enforced disappearances of human rights defenders, journalists and trade

unionists in 47 countries.

And the births of around one in four children under age 5 worldwide are never officially recorded, depriving them of a proof of legal identity crucial for the protection of their rights and for access to justice and social services.

[Learn more.](#)

## U.N. INTERNATIONAL DAYS

2020

### September 5 International Day of Charity

In the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development adopted in September 2015, the United Nations recognizes that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. The Agenda also calls for a spirit of strengthened global solidarity, focused in particular on the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable. It also acknowledges the role of the diverse private sector, ranging from micro-enterprises to cooperatives to multinationals, and that of civil society organizations and philanthropic organizations in the implementation of the new Agenda. [Learn more.](#)

### September 7 International Day of Clean Air

Air pollution is the single greatest environmental risk to human health and one of the main avoidable causes of death and disease globally, with some estimated 6.5 million premature deaths (2016) across the world attributed to indoor and outdoor air pollution. Particularly in developing countries, air pollution disproportionately affects women, children and the elderly, especially in low-income populations as they are often exposed to high levels of ambient air pollution and indoor air pollution from cooking and heating with wood fuel and kerosene. Air pollution is a global problem

with far-reaching impacts owing to its transport over long distances. In the absence of aggressive intervention, the number of premature deaths resulting from ambient air pollution is estimated to be on track to increase by more than 50 per cent by 2050.

[Learn more.](#)

### **September 15** **International Day of Democracy**

The unprecedented COVID-19 crisis has resulted in major social, political and legal challenges globally. As states around the world adopt emergency measures to address the crisis, it is critical that they continue to uphold the rule of law, protect and respect international standards and basic principles of legality, and the right to access justice, remedies and due process. [Learn more.](#)

### **September 18** **International Equal Pay Day**

International Equal Pay Day, celebrated September 18, represents the longstanding efforts toward the achievement of equal pay for work of equal value. It further builds on the United Nations commitment to human rights and against all forms of discrimination, including discrimination against women and girls. Across all regions, women are paid less than men, with the gender pay gap estimated at 23 percent globally. Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls continues to be held back owing to the persistence of historical and structural unequal power relations between women and men, poverty, and inequalities and disadvantages in access to resources and opportunities that limit women's and girls' capabilities. Progress on narrowing that gap has been slow.

[Learn more.](#)

### **September 21** **International Day of Peace**

The International Day of Peace was established in 1981 by the United Nations General Assembly. Two decades later, in 2001, the General Assembly unanimously voted to designate the Day as a period of nonviolence and cease-fire.

The United Nations invites all nations and people to honor a cessation of hostilities during the Day, and to otherwise commemorate the Day through education and public awareness on issues related to peace. [Learn more.](#)

### **September 23** **International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons**

Achieving global nuclear disarmament is one of the oldest goals of the United Nations. It was the subject of the General Assembly's first resolution in 1946, which established the Atomic Energy Commission, which was dissolved in 1952, with a mandate to make specific proposals for the control of nuclear energy and the elimination of atomic weapons and all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction. The United Nations has been at the forefront of many major diplomatic efforts to advance nuclear disarmament since. In 1959, the General Assembly endorsed the objective of general and complete disarmament. In 1978, the first Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament further recognized that nuclear disarmament should be the priority objective in the field of disarmament. Every United Nations Secretary-General has actively promoted this goal. [Learn more.](#)

### **September 29** **International Day of Awareness on Food Loss and Waste Reduction**

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to wreak havoc globally, generating significant challenges that could result in risks to food security and nutrition in many countries.

Disruptions in supply chains resulting from blockages on transport routes, transport restrictions and quarantine measures are resulting in significant increases in food loss and waste, especially of perishable agricultural produce, such as fruits and vegetables, fish, meat and dairy products. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a shortage of seasonal migrant farm laborers and transportation laborers, who have faced difficulties in crossing borders. The closure of much of the hospitality industry and schools has also resulted in a loss of markets for producers, making the situation even more challenging. Dealing with the levels of food waste in the upstream segments of the supply chains of perishables, vegetables, and milk, in particular, has been particularly challenging. [Learn more.](#)



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