

MAY 2021

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

Indonesian Church Goes to Court for Farmers



Photo of Indonesian rice farmer Haji Imat courtesy of Chris Quintana | IRRI file photo

Legal experts in the Indonesian Church have agreed to help two farmers in East Nusa Tenggara province sue provincial officials, including the governor, for issuing permits allowing the establishment of a limestone quarry and cement factory close to their land.

Father Marthen Jenarut, chairman of Ruteng Diocese's Commission for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC), and Valens Dulmin, a lawyer with the Franciscans' JPIC, have joined three other lawyers as legal advisers to the farmers.

Isfridus Sota and Bonevasius Yudent filed a lawsuit against East Manggarai district chief Andreas Agas and governor Viktor Bungtilu Laiskodat in the State Administrative Court in Kupang, the provincial capital, on April 22.

They are protesting against the issuing of permits to two firms, PT Istindo Mitra Manggarai, a quarrying firm, and cement company PT Semen Singa Merah NTT, to set up operations near the village of Lengko Lolok, where they live.

"I joined the team because it is a case of defending people's basic rights and the integrity of the environment and ecosystem," Father Jenarut told UCA News on April 26.

He said the two farmers were speaking for about 10 percent of villagers who have consistently rejected moves to grant permits as they feel that their land rights and livelihoods would be lost.

[Read more.](#)

Comboni Bishop-Elect Shot Multiple Times



Story from Vatican News.

Unknown armed men have shot and wounded the Bishop-elect of South Sudan's Rumbek Catholic Diocese. The Italian-born Fr. Christian Carlassare, a Comboni Missionary, was attacked on Sunday night in Rumbek.

The gunmen went to his residence, shot at his bedroom door till it opened, and when Fr. Carlassare came out, they shot him on both legs.

“In the night at around 1 am, some people came at my door, and they were trying to enter. They shot at my door. When the door was open, I came out and asked what they wanted and then they started shooting low at my legs,” Fr Carlassare narrated to the local media. The Bishop-elect has since been flown to Nairobi for treatment. “You pray for me and pray and pray for the people of Rumbek. We also forgive those that commit these kinds of actions. We do not carry any grudges,” Fr Carlassare said.

No one in South Sudan seems to know exactly the real motives of the shooters. Suffice it to say, ironically, things in South Sudan have slowly been looking up. Slow, but there has been some progress.

The Director of the Vatican’s Press Office, Matteo Bruni, confirmed to Vatican News that Pope Francis was aware of the shooting and praying for Fr. Carlassare and the people of South Sudan

[Read more.](#)

Congregations Celebrate Earth Day with Ongoing Care for Creation



Story from National Catholic Reporter

A "demonstration" community garden is taking shape on congregational land of the Tertiary Sisters of St. Francis in Shisong, Cameroon. A plastics recycling effort in Ghana by the Holy Spirit Sisters is expanding into a small

business. The Congregation of the Sacred Word in South Korea uses special "mud balls" to feed fish and clean the water.

And a 25-year-old ecological center in Minnesota begun by the **School Sisters of Notre Dame** is expanding several gardening and farming projects while encouraging local groups to develop their own community growing spaces.

All of these efforts — and many others — are examples of how Catholic women congregations around the world are participating in the "Sowing Hope for the Planet" campaign by the International Union of Superiors General, or UISG.

Catholic sisters have long led the way in caring for creation and promoting environmental awareness through ecological centers, commitments to reducing their carbon footprint and pressuring corporations to address issues of climate change and pollution.

The Sowing Hope for the Planet campaign, started in June 2018, furthers that commitment, showcasing how women religious are striving to live out the underlying message of Pope Francis' milestone 2015 encyclical "Laudato Si", on Care for Our Common Home" which is marking its fifth anniversary during 2020 and 2021.

[Read more.](#)

India's COVID-19 Meltdown Exposes New Front in Digital Divide



A patient suffering from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) receives oxygen inside an ambulance after she was evacuated from the Vijay Vallabh hospital, which caught fire in Virar, on the outskirts of Mumbai, India, April 23, 2021. REUTERS/Francis Mascarenhas. Story from the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

As India's daily coronavirus cases set global records, people desperately searching for hospital beds and oxygen cylinders are finding help on social media. But for others like Ruby Yadav, who has never heard of Twitter, time and hope is running out.

Traveling by rickshaw, Yadav and her mother — who is seriously ill with COVID-19 — have been turned away by nearly a dozen public hospitals in the northern city of Lucknow this week as the country's health system crumbles.

"I'm losing hope. We know what will happen next, but I can't bear to watch my mother collapse like this," Yadav, 21, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation by phone on Thursday.

India reported more than 300,000 coronavirus cases within 24 hours on Thursday, marking the world's highest daily tally and taking the country's total cases to nearly 16 million.

Shortages of ambulances, hospital beds, drugs and oxygen supplies are crippling healthcare in much of the country of 1.3 billion, prompting people to post appeals on Twitter in a desperate bid to get help for seriously ill loved ones.

People in need and those with information or resources are sharing telephone numbers of volunteers, vendors who have oxygen cylinders or drugs, and details of which medical facility can take patients using hashtags like #COVIDSOS.

Many people are creating Twitter accounts to seek help from those in positions of power, officials manning helpline numbers said, but hundreds of millions of mainly poorer Indians do not have access to a smartphone or use social media.

[Learn more.](#)

More Topics to Explore

[Daniel Berrigan and His Fearless Nonviolence, at 100](#)

[The Verdict Is in, But the Jury Is Still Out](#)

[No Peace Without Justice Submits Advisory Report to ICC](#)

[US Bishops Welcome Calls to Reduce Carbon Emissions](#)

CALL TO ACTION

Our Suffering Seas

From the Great Pacific Garbage Patch to the dying coral reefs, our oceans are suffering catastrophic changes due to shifts in climate and human activity. A 2021 documentary, *Seaspiracy*, outlines the impact pollution and overfishing have had on our ocean environments. View the trailer here:



GLOBAL GOALS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Goal 14: Life Below Water

The Second World Ocean Assessment (WOA II) is the major output of the second cycle of the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the States of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects. It is the newest outcome of the only integrated assessment of the world's ocean at the global level covering environmental, economic and social aspects.

WOA II is a collective effort of interdisciplinary writing teams made up of more than 300 experts, drawn from a pool of over 780 experts from around the world. It provides scientific information on the state of the marine environment in a comprehensive and integrated manner to support decisions and actions for the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals, in particular goal 14, as well as the implementation of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development.



Read the WOA report [here](#).

Learn more about Sustainable Development Goal 14 [here](#).

U.N. INTERNATIONAL DAYS

2021

May 3

World Press Freedom Day

This year's World Press Freedom Day theme "Information as a Public Good" serves as a call to affirm the importance of cherishing information as a public good, and exploring what can be done in the production, distribution and reception of content to strengthen journalism, and to advance transparency and empowerment while leaving no one behind. The theme is of urgent relevance to all countries across the world. It recognizes the changing communications system that is impacting on our health, our human rights, democracies and sustainable development.

To underline the importance of information within our online media environment, World Press Freedom Day 2021 will highlight three key topics:

- Steps to ensure the economic viability of news media;
- Mechanisms for ensuring transparency of Internet companies;
- Enhanced Media and Information Literacy (MIL) capacities that enable people to recognize and value, as well as defend and demand, journalism as a vital part of information as a public good.

[Learn more.](#)

May 15

International Day of Families

This year's 25th anniversary of Copenhagen Declaration and Beijing Platform for Action comes at a time of one of the most challenging global health and social crises. The 2020 COVID-19 pandemic brings into sharp focus the importance of investing in social policies protecting the most vulnerable individuals and families. It is the families who bear the brunt of the crisis, sheltering their members from harm, caring for out-of-school children and, at the same time, continuing their work responsibilities.

Families have become the hub of intergenerational interactions that support us in this crisis. Under economic duress poverty deepens. In times of uncertainty stress increases - often resulting in growing violence against women and children. That is why the support for vulnerable families - those who have lost their income, those in inadequate housing, those with young children, older persons and persons with disabilities - is imperative now more than ever.

Worldwide, women are increasingly taking part in the formal and informal labour force, while continuing to assume a disproportionate burden of the household work in comparison with men, and work-family balance is more difficult to achieve. The imperative of ensuring gender equality in the family is, therefore, gaining more attention.

[Learn more.](#)

May 21

World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development

Cultural events cancelled, cultural institutions closed, community cultural practices suspended, empty UNESCO World Heritage sites, heightened risk of looting of cultural sites and poaching at natural sites, artists unable to make ends meet and the cultural tourism sector greatly affected... The impact of COVID-19 on the cultural sector is being felt around the world. This impact is social, economic and political – it affects the fundamental right of access to culture, the social rights of artists and creative professionals, and the protection of a diversity of cultural expressions.

The unfolding crisis risks deepening inequalities and rendering communities vulnerable. In addition, the creative and cultural industries (CCI) contribute US\$2,250bn to the global economy (3% of GDP) and account for 29.5 million jobs worldwide. The economic fall-out of not addressing the cultural sector — and all auxiliary services, particularly in the tourism sector — could also be disastrous.

[Learn more.](#)

May 22

International Day for Biological Diversity

Biological diversity is often understood in terms of the wide variety of plants, animals and microorganisms, but it also includes genetic differences within each species — for example, between varieties of crops and breeds of livestock — and the variety of ecosystems (lakes, forest, deserts, agricultural landscapes) that host multiple kind of interactions among their members (humans, plants, animals).

Biological diversity resources are the pillars upon which we build civilizations. Fish provide 20 percent of animal protein to about 3 billion people. Over 80 percent of the human diet is provided by plants. As many as 80 per cent of people living in rural areas in developing countries rely on traditional plant-based medicines for basic healthcare.

But loss of biodiversity threatens all, including our health. It has been proven that biodiversity loss could expand zoonoses - diseases transmitted from animals to humans- while, on the other hand, if we keep biodiversity intact, it offers excellent tools to fight against pandemics like those caused by coronaviruses.

While there is a growing recognition that biological diversity is a global asset of tremendous value to future generations, the number of species is being significantly reduced by certain human activities. Given the importance of public education and awareness about this issue, the UN decided to celebrate the International Day for Biological Diversity annually.

[Learn more.](#)

May 29

International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers

The International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers offers a chance to pay tribute to the uniformed and civilian personnel's invaluable contribution to the work of the Organization and to honor more than 3,900 peacekeepers who have lost their lives serving under the UN flag since 1948, including 102 in 2019.

This year, the challenges and threats faced by our peacekeepers are even greater than ever, as they, like people around the world, are not only having to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic, but also support and protect the people in the countries

they are based in. They are continuing their operations to the best of their abilities and supporting the governments and the local populations, despite the risk of COVID-19.

[Learn more.](#)



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