

# MERCY INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION



## MERCY GLOBAL ACTION

Source: MIA MGA UN

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## NEWS FROM THE MIA MERCY GLOBAL ACTION OFFICE UN

### MERCY VOLUNTEER CORPS VISITS MIA: MGA AT THE UN OFFICE

On May 21st, members of the Mercy Volunteer Corps in New York visited the Mercy International Association: Mercy Global Action office at the UN. The Mercy Volunteers have been working in ministries with Catholic Migration Services, Mercy Center Bronx, MercyFirst, and Cristo Rey Brooklyn High School offering assistance ranging in after school and foster programs to immigration office services.

Connecting with the call to respond to both social and environmental justice concerns, MIA: Mercy Global Action at the UN described their role in addressing and advocating for Mercy Global Justice Priorities grounded in Mercy tradition, values, and critical thinking around the root causes of such concerns. In doing so, it is our aim to promote a just, sustainable and equitable world for peoples and the planet.

Mercy Volunteers had the opportunity to learn more about key justice areas such as the issue of displacement of persons and environmental degradation, as well as the drive towards sustainable development. This was followed by a tour of the United Nations to further connect MIA: Mercy Global Action at the UN's international advocacy.

As the Mercy Volunteers finish at their ministry sites in July, MIA: Mercy Global Action at the UN led discussions on their plan for after their volunteer year, which many plan to continue working in social justice areas and/or furthering their studies. We are confident that they too, in the spirit of Mercy will change the world and we wish them the best of luck!



Photo: MIA: MGA at the UN  
 Pictured: The Mercy Volunteer NY Team and MIA: MGA at the UN Team

*\*The Sisters of Mercy have held special consultative status within the United Nations Economic and Social Council since 1998*

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# THROUGH OUR ECOSOC\* EYES...

## UN Forum on the Question of Palestine

In accordance with UN General Assembly resolutions 72/11 and 72/13 of November 30th, 2017, the UN Forum on the Question of Palestine brought home the untenable circumstances in which today, 5.3 million Palestinian people have been rendered refugees. Palestinian, Israeli and other International experts presented on the issue in order to mark the anniversary of the 1948 war in which Palestinians were displaced. This is referred to as Al-Nakba (the Catastrophe) by the Palestinian people.



Photo: MIA: MGA at the UN

Beginning with an address from the UN Deputy Secretary-General, Ms Amina Mohammed in which she unequivocally stated that ‘the cycle of violence in Gaza must end,’ the forum provided an historical, political and legal context for the situation in Gaza. Throughout the forum excerpts from the documentary “Voices Across the Divide” were shown. This had a sobering effect on those present who witnessed the oral history of oppression and violence expressed by Palestinian Refugees.

The program was made up of a series of panels entitled; ‘What happened in 1948? Why does it Matter?’, ‘ Displacement as a Continuum: The Ongoing Nakba’, ‘Refugees and the Resolution of the Question of Palestine’ and ‘Ways Forward to Achieve a Sustainable Peace’. To learn more about this issue, a recommended reading is “The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine” by Ilan Pappé, a panelist at the event which can be viewed at the section entitled ‘Useful Resources’ on page 4. Links to this event and subsequent panels can be accessed below.



Photo: MIA: MGA at the UN  
Pictured: Sisters Theresia Tina rsm and Sally Bradley rsm of ISMAPNG who were present at the Forum



To watch the first meeting of the UN Forum on the Question of Palestine click [here!](#) Subsequent sessions and panels can be found in the side bar on the right.

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# THEMATIC AREAS

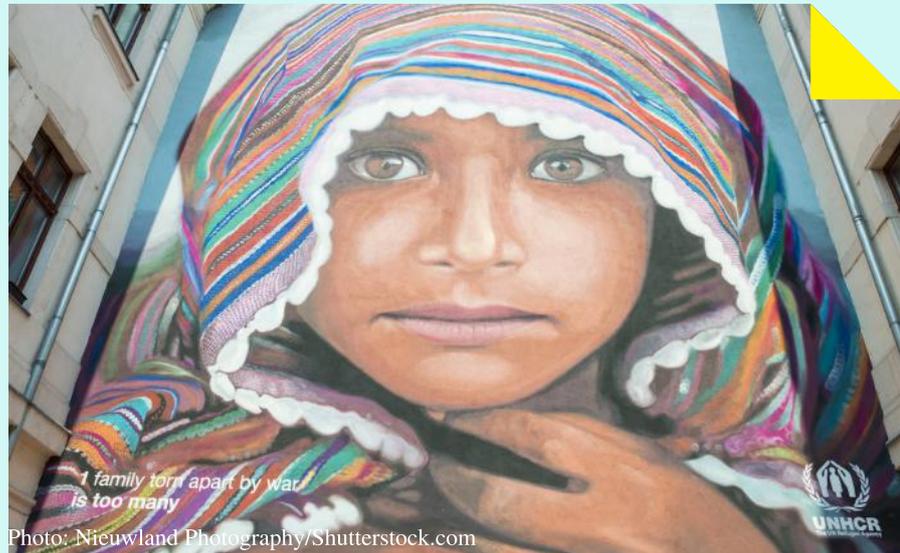
## DISPLACED PERSONS



- ***MIA: Mercy Global Action at the UN--Updates on the Intergovernmental Negotiations Towards a Global Compact on Migration***

Since the last newsletter was released in early May, there have been two rounds of intergovernmental negotiations towards a Global Compact on Migration. The fourth round in May began with completing a read through of the **Draft Rev 1** followed by an opportunity to have a practical discussion surrounding some migration policy areas that had still been left unsettled such as "international cooperation and capacity building", "pathways for regular migration/regularization", "natural disasters, climate change and migration", and "fundamental human rights and spectrum of services" to name a few. With these areas debated, the Co-facilitators were able to prepare a revised version of the text to be negotiated during the fifth round of negotiations which took place last week.

The **Draft Rev 2** was presented and sent to UN Member States for a read through discussion; Co-Facilitators were confident that this is the best version of the text so far. This draft outlined better commitments and a clear delineation with categories. The text presents language to appease all Member States; there is a 23rd objective on international cooperation, distinction between refugees and migrants, clarity with documents that can be used for legal identity, describes human rights in the spectrum of basic services and provisions, and looks at migration with all of its dimensions, especially with voluntary return and reintegration.



As of now, there is one remaining round of negotiations towards a Global Compact on Migration with which afterwards is succeeded with the final draft of the text. The Global Compact on Migration will be adopted this December in Morocco. To read more about this process **click here!**

### • RECOMMENDED UN EVENTS RELATING TO MIGRATION



***Watch NGO Committee on Migration and International Organization on Migration's event "Countering Xenophobia and Discrimination: Voices from the Regions"***

This event featured a series of short films highlighting good practices in social inclusion from around the world. The featured projects were all collected by our Subcommittee on Xenophobia and Social Inclusion in a survey last summer and autumn. Click **here** to access the short films!



- ***Watch Holy See event entitled "Indispensable Role of Faith Based Organizations In Protecting Migrants and Refugees"***

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# THEMATIC AREAS

*Continued*



## DEGRADATION OF THE EARTH

- ***Steps towards a binding treaty on transnational corporations, business and human rights***

Before the fourth meeting of the Open-Ended Intergovernmental Working Group this October in Geneva, there have been proceedings of informal consultations as nation states work towards a "Zero Draft" of the treaty (read more about this process [here](#)). This "Zero Draft" is scheduled to be released in the next few weeks; however, has encountered some setback as some UN Member States have threatened to pull out of the process.

Civil Society Organizations have sent out a Sign-On Letter calling on “all UN Member States to engage without delay in this stage of the process in active and constructive negotiations of the substance of the treaty to improve the human rights of communities and people affected by the operations of TNCs and OBEs and their access to effective remedy, and to put an end to corporate impunity for human rights abuses.” **Attached**, you can access the Sign-On letter to stand in solidarity with other Civil Society Organizations.

- **INTERNATIONAL DAY CELEBRATIONS**

### ***World Environment Day- June 5th***

World Environment Day was hosted in New Delhi, India this year with a theme entitled "Beat Plastic Pollution". To mark the day, Antonio Guterres, UN Secretary-General, encouraged everyone to stop using single use plastic as micro-plastic particles in the ocean "now outnumber stars in our galaxy". This is just a simple way to help "chart a path to a cleaner, greener world". Read his full message [here](#).

### ***World Oceans Day- June 8th***

While last year, the United Nations celebrated its first Oceans Conference, this year's commemoration began with a briefing from UN Special Envoy on Oceans, Peter Thomson. His remarks were grave as he described how it is evident the world is in "a battle for the survival of the ocean, and we are losing the battle on every front". Despite the battle, he declared that there is a plan with Sustainable Development Goal 14 and if implemented and tackled from every front we will get to where we need to be. To read more about UN Special Envoy Peter Thomson's purposeful steps for ocean action, click [here](#).

This year's World Oceans Day theme was "Preventing plastic pollution and encouraging solutions for a healthy ocean". Follow this [link](#) for further information on how the world celebrated!

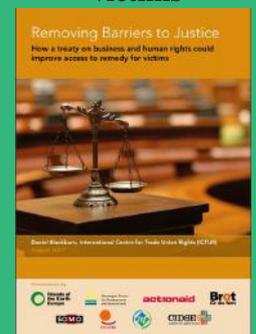
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## USEFUL RESOURCES

### UNICEF Children Uprooted: What Local Governments Can Do



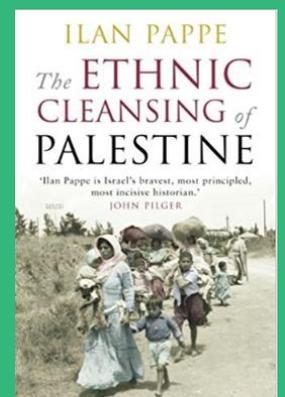
### Removing Barriers to Justice: How a treaty on business and human rights could improve access to remedy for victims



### Surfrider's Rise Above Plastics Activist Toolkit



### The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine by Ilan Pappé



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# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



## • UN Secretary-General Releases Advance Version of 2018 SDG Progress Report

On May 10th, Secretary General Antonio Guterres issued an advance version of the 2018 SDG Progress Report entitled "Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals". This report is produced on a yearly basis to inform the UN High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) which will take place from July 9th-18th.

Detailed within the report is the progress for each of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals in a format which includes an overview paragraph and bullet points describing statistical trends for the targets under each Goal. With closer review of the report you will notice that some of the SDG's 169 targets are not reflected as a result of inadequate data.

With further review of the document, you will note, for example, that under Goal 2 "End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture" Antonio Guterres reports that "world hunger appears to be on the rise again. Conflict, drought and disasters linked to climate change are among the key factors causing the reversal in the long-term progress in fighting global hunger, making the prospect of ending hunger and malnutrition by 2030 more difficult". This document is key for advocacy and demonstrates the need for more focus and international cooperation. Members of MIA: MGA at the UN will take this document into consideration during HLPF next month and the Voluntary National Reviews of Goals 6, 7, 11, 12, 15, and 17.

For further information see <http://sdg.iisd.org/news/un-secretary-general-releases-advance-version-of-2018-sdg-progress-report/>



## USEFUL RESOURCES

*The Ocean Project, a collaborative organization in partnership with hundreds of organizations, has compiled educational resources for outreach to all sectors to increase action and awareness of caring for our shared oceans! In addition to finding local ocean action events on their website, they have created a lesson plan to designed with both youth and adults in mind in hope that these resources will be used to teach peers and community members about plastic pollution, inspire them with solutions, and empower them by doing an activity. To access these lesson plans sign up here!*

*For more resources including videos, advocacy info sheets, activities and more, click this link!*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

*Some events MIA at the UN will be attending*

- 8th June- World Oceans Day
- 4th June- 8th June- Intergovernmental Negotiations for the Global Compact on Migration
- 20th June- Visit with MercyFirst Ministry in Syossett
- 9th July- 18th July -High Level Political Forum
- 9th July- 13th July- Intergovernmental Negotiations for the Global Compact on Migration

## NEWS UPDATE

Greetings from Dublin! News is light this month, in terms of activities as we prioritised reading and research, in preparation for several short articles we are writing. That said, we participated in a number of important meetings as shared below. And we were very pleased to receive news about the successful outcome of the Permanent People's Tribunal (PPT) on 'Human Rights, Fracking and Climate Change' that we highlighted last month.

Peace,  
Denise Boyle fmdm  
Team Leader Mercy Global Action

### 1. Meeting with Archbishop Diarmuid Martin of Dublin May 17th

John Weaklim CEO and Ciara Feehely, Communications and Fundraising both of VITA accompanied by Srs. Kathleen Glennon and Margaret Tiernan rsm from the Western Province of the Congregation and Denise Boyle had a most productive meeting with the Archbishop of Dublin. We met to share with him the excellent development work VITA is doing in Africa, influenced by 'Laudato Si – On Care for Our Common Home'. VITA has initiated a development project at grassroots level, which empowers those engaged in it and facilitates peer learning. This is a creative and effective response to the 'Cry of the Poor and Cry of Earth.'

For VITA as an NGO or not for profit organisation, networking is vital. Archbishop Diarmuid has many links in Africa so our hope was that he could facilitate the expansion of the VITA programme into other African countries. On learning about VITA's work Archbishop Diarmuid said that he would take the opportunity to speak about their development initiatives with some of the people he meets at different gatherings, social events and church events. As we finished the Archbishop asked to be kept informed about future developments within VITA.

### 2. Meeting with Lorna Gold on Laudato Si and the World Meeting of Families

Members of the 'Future We Need' (FWN) group met with Lorna Gold, the Project Coordinator- Laudato Si, of Trocaire and a board member of Global Catholic Climate Movement (GCCM). Trocaire is the Irish development organisation with a global programme. The purpose of our meeting was to explore together how FWN could approach our advocacy campaigns through the lens of Laudato Si. Good creative ideas emerged during the wide ranging discussion that we hope to incorporate into our campaigning.

Lorna was accompanied by her colleague Jane Mellet. She is coordinating the activities and learning opportunities of the 'Education Pod on Laudato Si' during the World Meeting of Families. Pope Francis is coming to Ireland to participate in this meeting in late August, making it a very special event! In response to a request from Lorna and Jane, some members of FWN are volunteering to spend time in the Education Pod.



## 3. Brisbane Mercy - Leadership Pilgrimage Program 2018

Denise ran interactive sessions with the 33 participants, on the two key justice issues of 'Degradation of Earth' and 'Displacement of Peoples'. The group were most responsive, engaging fully with the topics and acknowledging the 'darkness' associated with the reality of human trafficking. Hearing how this group of Leaders are involved with different justice issues in Australia, facilitated valuable, mutual learning.

## 4. Conference Call to Discuss 'Displacement of Peoples' Justice Issue

The group named 'Opposing Human Trafficking' is exploring ways to broaden and encompass other justice issues under the umbrella 'Displacement of Peoples'. This concept emerged from the Mercy International Reflection Process (MIRP) conducted in 2016 throughout the Mercy World. On Wednesday 30th May, members living in New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, Ireland, Newfoundland through to the mid west of the USA 'met' via a conference call. They discussed how to incorporate the six justice strands under the heading of Displacement of Peoples' e.g. refugees/asylum seekers, those living in poverty and the homeless.



Photo: Alexandros Michailidis/Shutterstock.com

Looking at common elements underpinning these issues, one participant noted that the concept of 'home' in the broadest sense of the word is central to all the topics. We then discussed the reasons or root causes that give rise to these specific injustices, which we agreed needs more study within each country represented. To focus their research each member use the same three or four questions, to facilitate a valid comparison between countries. The findings will then be discussed during our next conference call.

## 5. Permanent People's Tribunal (PPT) on 'Human Rights, Fracking and Climate Change' May 14-18th

The day after the PPT ended, Shay Dougall who coordinated the component from Australia, shared the following information. The link to the closing ceremony, with comments of Gianni Tognoni MD, Secretary General of 'The Permanent Peoples' Tribunal are available: [https://youtu.be/4t0g1\\_otN9k](https://youtu.be/4t0g1_otN9k)

Shay also wrote that Mr. Tognoni's powerful comments summing up this session of the PPT: '... is validation and acknowledgement of the wrongs and traumas that people expected to host the industry are exposed to, wherever there is unconventional mining. This is a validation that has been absent from our government and the industry. I believe the outcome from the Judges of the PPT will be a true turning point in this battle and will have a long term and profound effect on the tools at our disposal to fight this injustice.'

**Mercy International Association (MIA) maintains a comprehensive and up to date website and produces an informative weekly e-newsletter (MercyNews).**

**Visit our website to discover more about MIA and our global activities: [www.mercyworld.org](http://www.mercyworld.org)**

**Subscribe to our e-newsletter to learn about our vision in action and the ministries carried out by our member congregations: [www.mercyworld.org/subscribe](http://www.mercyworld.org/subscribe)**