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# The UN & YOU

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## AT A GLANCE

- Walking in Prayerful Solidarity with Haiti
- What Must Be Done: Plastic
- Vincentian Family at the UN and Homelessness

## From the NGO Desk



### WALKING IN PRAYERFUL SOLIDARITY WITH HAITI



**“There is nowhere safe to go in Haiti.”** These haunting words were shared by a NGO representative colleague at our monthly Religious at the UN (RUN) meeting earlier this year.

Sponsored by the Sisters of Charity of St. Elizabeth, a special Mass of Deliverance at St. Patrick’s Cathedral and a March of Solidarity were held in late April in New York. It was incredibly moving to walk with our Catholic NGO colleagues and our Haitian brothers and sisters. As we walked through the streets of

Midtown Manhattan, I wondered how many inconvenienced observers (stuck in traffic caused by us) even knew what was occurring 1500 miles south of New York and 831 miles from Florida.

Although rarely covered in mainstream media or included in our prayers in our Churches, Haiti is experiencing a security and humanitarian crisis due to the overtaking of gangs that has led to mass migration and horrific violence. Just this year, 2,500 people were killed or injured in [gang violence](#). Gang members are using rape as a tool of suppression and torture, terrorizing the population. For [example](#), during a 19-day span in early March, 53,000 people were forced to flee Port-au-Prince to escape gang violence. Many are migrating to the southern parts of Haiti that lack the infrastructure and health system to care for those seeking safety.

Politically, there is a relatively new transitional leadership council in place, and external forces, led by Kenya and approved by the UN, are preparing to arrive in Haiti by the end of the month. You can read more about the Kenyan forces [here](#).

Earlier this year, I joined a small subcommittee of our Justice Coalition of Religious (JCoR) committee that is meeting regularly to strategize engagement with sympathetic Member States and to coordinate advocacy initiatives to pressure the US Government to intercede, especially related to the [illegal transportation](#) of weapons from Florida to Haiti.

At one point during our march from St. Patrick's Cathedral to the United Nations, I found myself in a conversation with my oldest daughter, Shea. As she waved her small Haitian flag that a fellow companion handed her, I explained why we were there. I asked her to think of the children who cannot go to school because it isn't safe, or there being nowhere safe to play. I found myself thinking of the parents who want so much more for their children, the elderly who lack access to healthcare, and the religious who risk their lives each day to continue to serve those in need, often under great threats of violence and death.

At the UN, our advocacy is needed to keep the people Haiti on the radar of those with influence. It is important for all of us to continue to learn and understand about the realities of Haiti, especially related to the illegal transportation of weapons that is fueling this [violence](#). We must write to our local political leaders to advocate for stricter laws related to gun manufacturing, purchases, and transportation. We need to secure that those who migrated from Haiti are cared for and not sent home against their will. We can also work with our Haitian communities who are experiencing great suffering, by offering our prayers, support, and advocacy, and learning from their lived experience. Let us pray for our Haitian brothers and sisters, as well as all those who desire a more peaceful and safe Haiti.

# Plastic Treaty



## What Must be Done?



**Did you know: The world produces one million plastic water bottles every minute.** This is just one reason why discussions regarding ending plastic manufacturing resumed in Canada last month. The hope is for a new treaty to be signed by the end of the year to better control plastic manufacturing and to manage already existing plastic.

At the U.N. Environmental Assembly in 2022, the world's nations agreed to develop a legally binding agreement by the end of 2024 to address the world's [plastic pollution crisis](#). This is the background for these new conversations.

Edmund Rice NGO Representative, Bro. Kevin Cawley, issued his monthly Carbon Rangers newsletter that impressively captures these discussions, the complexities of the proposed treaty, and other important facts related to plastic. You can read more [here](#).

The use of plastic is a conversation we can all have with one another. Honestly and urgently looking at how we use plastic, both as individuals and as a community, are all pieces of a much larger puzzle.

# Vincentian Family



## At the United Nations

The Vincentian Family at the UN will be meeting in early June to vision our future and to discuss our impact, especially around homelessness and other social development and justice issues. With several new representatives, this is an opportunity for us to assess our strategic plan for the future. We ask for your prayers as we reflect our shared charism on the global stage.

Members of the Family represented include the Sisters of Charity Federation, Congregation of the Mission, International Society of St. Vincent de Paul, International Daughters of Charity, Institute for Global Homelessness and the International Association of Charities.

One specific area of our focus on homelessness is including the term "homelessness" in the indicators that assess the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. The goals were established in 2015, prior to when homelessness was a recognized term. Our Working Group to End Homelessness is meeting with Member States regularly to advocate and educate so homelessness is better assessed.

# Reach Out



## Let's Stay Connected

**For questions, feedback, article ideas, or story contributions, email [JWalters@sistersofcharityfederation.org](mailto:JWalters@sistersofcharityfederation.org) and we'll be in touch.**

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