

APRIL 2025

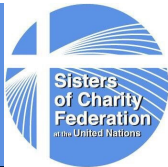
# The UN & YOU

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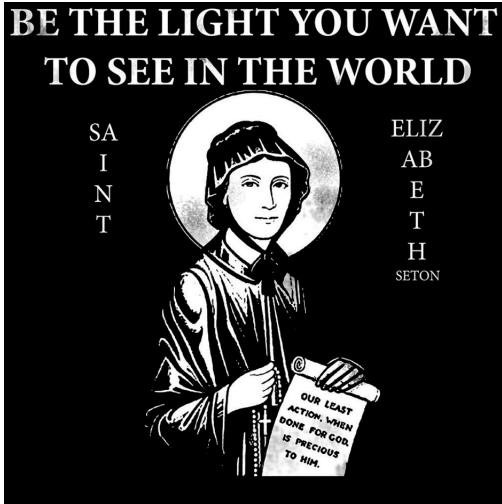
AT A GLANCE

- State of the UN
- Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
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- Further Reading

## From the NGO Desk



### STATE OF THE UN



St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Image courtesy of Libertas Press

I wish there were better news to share.

The spirit at the United Nations reflects that of the country and world.

With cuts to [USAID](#), threats of a reduction of the [United States' contributions to the UN](#) and its life-saving agencies, [unprecedented tariffs](#) causing economic turmoil, [the termination of federal employees, scientists, researchers, and educators](#), and mounting pressure to end all [DEI initiatives](#) in the US, one can sense worry and doom in the hallowed halls of the United Nations Headquarters and in civil society spaces.

Factor in the continued violence in over 100 countries, especially in Middle East, Ukraine, Haiti, Sudan, and the multitude of related human rights violations, it is difficult to find hope within this darkness. And let's not forget the aggressive rhetoric of the US Administration regarding Canada and Greenland that adds unnecessary stress in yet another unpredictable situation.

Just last week, there was additional confusion from Washington as the US State Department acknowledged that it had rolled back an undisclosed number of sweeping funding [cuts to U.N. World Food Program emergency projects](#) in 14 impoverished countries, saying it had terminated some of the contracts for life-saving aid by mistake. We simply do not know what

other “mistakes” will be corrected or what other decisions/mistakes will be made in the future.

Stories of the impact of all these executive actions are already being felt. The Society of St. Vincent de Paul USA issued a [statement](#) on the impact of the federal funding freeze. The US Catholic Bishops [ended their relationship](#) with the US government, citing funding cuts to their care for immigrants and refugees- leading to great disappointment and frustration toward both the leadership of the US Administration and US Church. In addition, many who committed their life to charity and service have now lost their jobs and their ability to help those most in need. Those who remain in advocacy and charity work are cautious in how and where they communicate their concerns, especially for those in the United States.

At a recent R.U.N. (Religious at the UN) meeting, heartbreaking stories were shared from representatives of various Catholic religious congregations. These reflections focused on the end of critical grassroot and local ministries that can no longer provide life-saving care in all parts of the world. “People are dying,” one colleague said, noting that their Sisters would continue to serve as long as possible, even without the essential medicine required.

Sadly, this is just the tip of the iceberg. I imagine you are not short of stories of heartbreak, terminated jobs, the closing of ministries, and the loss of lives. We can also reflect on the mental and emotional toll this has taken on so many of us who care deeply about local and global injustices.

In my own prayer, I yearn for hope and courage. I desire the inner strength to be on the right side of history, and together, with you, the Sisters of Charity Federation, the larger Vincentian family, faith-based communities, and human-rights centered NGOs, we will continue to stand up, show up, and act.

I am again, reminded of the words posed to St. Vincent de Paul, when he too, was overwhelmed by the physical, material, and spiritual poverty of his time. Madame de Gondi posed that familiar “Vincentian” question, “[What must be done?](#)” These four words would inspire Vincent’s next steps, leading to charity and advocacy in collaboration with lay and religious partners.

### **What must be done?**

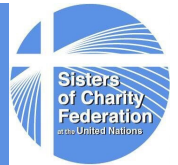
We must individually and collectively respond to this same question today. Here are a few suggestions:

1. Connect with local, national, and global advocacy groups to strategically act by signing letters, calling our federal leaders, and lean into being the moral voice for others to follow.
2. Be in communication with your NGO Liaisons to stay informed and to share what is occurring on the ground. These stories and data will be shared at the UN as we are committed to representing those on the margins of society and facing injustice.
3. Tell the stories of injustice- (e.g., what ministries have ended because of the cuts in funding; who is no longer receiving essential care, supplies and resources; who in your networks, lost their jobs as they were simply responding with their personal yes to God’s call to serve).
4. Tell stories of hope- now more than ever, lift up examples of communities coming together to protest, to pray, to advocate with local politicians and community leaders.

Let us not forget- religious sisters continue to be a credible voice in a society where religion and institutions are often no longer trusted. The authenticity of the lives you live is what draws your associates, employees, and lay and religious partners to join you in this life of love

as it accurately reflects “the way of Jesus.” Lean into this truth, and together, we, the Sisters of Charity Federation, will continue to be a light on a hill (Matthew 5:14-16) that leads us closer to a just society where human rights and human dignity are respected and fulfilled.

# Indigenous Issues



Permanent Forum begins April 21st



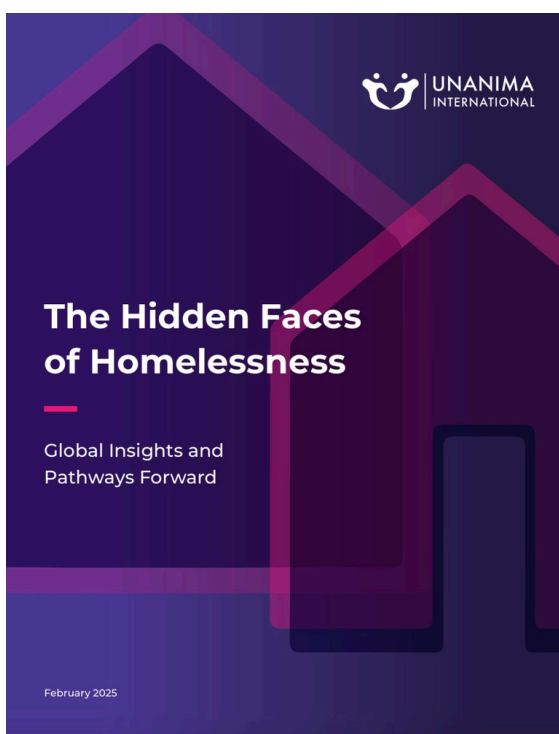
The [Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues](#) begins on April 21<sup>st</sup> and ends on May 2<sup>nd</sup>. The theme for this year’s Forum is "Implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples within United Nations Member States and the United Nations system, including identifying good practices and addressing challenges."

Justice Coalition of Religious (JCoR) provides this [helpful guide](#) to prepare you for the Forum. There are many side events that you can attend virtually. Visit [here](#) for more information.

# Hidden Faces of Homelessness



New Publication



You can download your copy [here](#).

UNANIMA International recently produced a powerful resource exploring the hidden faces of homelessness. It provides context to our advocacy at the UN as well as focusing on both the United States and Canada. The publication also captures the realities of specific marginalized communities, such as Women and Girls, Children and Youth, LGBTQIA+, Indigenous Communities, plus exploring the intersection of homelessness with mental health and trauma, and with climate change.

The Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati’s Justice Circle, that focuses on UN NGO Impact, is spending time with this publication throughout this upcoming year. All are welcome to join us as we meet virtually. If you would like to join our Justice Circles email Justice Promoter, Mackenzie Doyle at [mackenzie.doyle@srcharitycinti.org](mailto:mackenzie.doyle@srcharitycinti.org).

# Further Reading



## Justice-Related Articles



These articles are recommended reading to learn more about specific issues and our continued advocacy.

[Global Sisters Report](#): recapping Commission on the Status of Women. This article includes quotes from Sr. Michelle Loisel, DC, the International DOC NGO representative in New York, and several R.U.N. colleagues.

[Carbon Rangers](#): a wonderful monthly resource on climate from my colleague, Brother Kevin Cawley, Edmund Rice International.

[Vincentian Family at the UN](#): visit monthly for updates from various UN reps who share our charism.

[UN News](#) and [OXFAM](#) to further explore the impact of cuts to US Aid.

# 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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