

MERCY GLOBAL ACTION NEWSLETTER

JUNE/JULY 2020 | VOLUME 4 ISSUE 7



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CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE:
ANGELA REED RSM, AMANDA
CARRIER RSM, AND COLLEEN
SWAIN



GREETINGS FROM THE MERCY GLOBAL ACTION OFFICE!

Thank You and Farewell Mandy!

“Thank you Excellencies, distinguished delegates, colleagues, and friends.”
Adrenaline rushed through me as I read the opening words to the oral statement
on mining and homelessness last February.

The moment my microphone lit up green in
the conference hall of the Commission on
Social Development felt like a climax, even
though CSocD 58 was just five months into
my internship with Mercy International
Association-Mercy Global Action.
Ministry at MGA was a whirlwind of
collaboration, meetings, and research. The
massive amount of reading and study
helped catch me up to the world existing in
and around the United Nations, but only a
little. I depended heavily on Angela and
Colleen, and the many other organizations
advocating at the UN, for constant
explanations, definitions, and histories.



When I gratefully accepted the opportunity to join the team as an intern I stepped into a world of justice ministry unlike any other I knew. After a decade of direct service in culinary arts, I had a lot of catching up to do in the unique field of advocacy. I spent many meetings jotting down acronyms to be deciphered later and leaning over to whisper a question or two. I found refuge in the support of the MGA team who guided me through every unusual day at the office.

I never felt too lost or overwhelmed in the MGA office with the picture of Catherine McAuley gazing over my shoulder. The charism of Mercy and the spirit of Catherine touched every aspect of my work. Her words guided me to the connections between far-reaching corners of the world and seemingly mysterious aspects of international law. Catherine's spirit of service spoke to me with a fresh voice through my experiences in New York.

Catherine often used her voice to encourage the gifts of her sisters and the women she serves. She helped them grow, learn, and engage in new ministries just as Colleen and Angela helped me; I learned so much with them over the past nine months. Now, I leave this ministry with a greater understanding of international advocacy, our global reality, and the slow but steady workings of the UN. I also grew through the many wonderful relationships and encounters with Mercy through MGA's connections with the Mercy World. The way Mercy now encircles the globe, through sisters and coworkers, would delight Catherine.



Meeting voices of Mercy from around the world enriched my experience of ministry. It has been an honor to be a small part of the ongoing work of Mercy at MGA. I take with me many gifts from my time here, and I know the gift of my writing voice, nurtured so carefully over the past nine months, will be a significant asset to my future ministry as I continue to serve wherever God calls me.

I am truly grateful to God for calling me to a wonderful ministry at MGA and to all who helped make these past nine months exciting and edifying. Thank you especially to Angela and Colleen, who welcomed me into their ministry. My intern experience is a true blessing that will bear fruit for years to come.

-Amanda Carrier rsm

God of our life's journeys, we celebrate the goodness of Amanda and ask your blessing as she continues on the road of life. May the warm bonds which we have forged here in the MGA Office, unite us wherever we may be. May the power of your presence bless this moment of our leave taking.



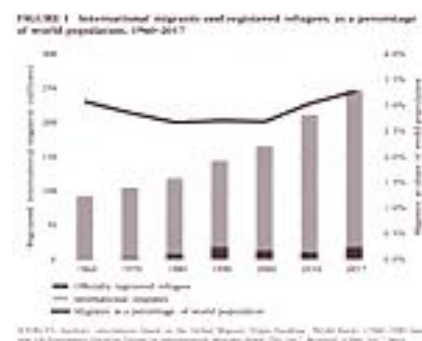
THEMATIC AREAS

DISPLACEMENT OF PERSONS

- *A Crisis within a Crisis: Understanding Migration*

Marianne Loughry rsm PhD from Boston College joined the Mercy Emerging Leadership Fellows in June to share her wisdom in a webinar on migration. Her presentation, “A Crisis within a Crisis,” framed the current circumstances of refugees and forcibly displaced people within the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. The facts surrounding migration are difficult to grasp given the highly politicized narrative concerning refugees, asylum seekers, and internally displaced people (IDPs).

Politicians and news outlets frequently sensationalize the stories of migrants and asylum seekers. Images of marching migrants, boats full of refugees, and tent cities on borders depict a crisis, but it is not a crisis of unimaginable numbers as they often lead us to believe. Migrants account for less than 3.5% of the global population, and this figure has only increased slightly over the past few decades (see graph right). Sr. Marianne attributes the increased rate of migration to improved access to transportation. Transportation by boat, train, and plane was a luxury decades ago.



Despite better access to transportation, most people still stay within their country of origin. Recognition as a refugee requires a person to cross an international border seeking the protection of their human rights. Today there are only 25.9 million refugees, including 5.5 million Palestinian refugees. People who are displaced within their country of origin are recognized as IDPs; currently, there are 41.3 million IDPs. People who flee their country of origin, but are not yet recognized by their host country, are asylum seekers and there are just 3.5 million.

Becoming recognized as a refugee is difficult. Host countries turn away many people or force asylum seekers to wait at the border. If States don't turn them away, they hold migrants and asylees in prison-like detention centers. Like refugees and asylum seekers, IDPs live in refugee-like settings such as camps where food, education, and health care are scarce. Other migrants live in fear as undocumented immigrants, migrant workers, or survivors of human trafficking. Waiting, constant moving, scarcity, and trauma marks the reality of all migrants regardless of status.

The plight of migrants is now worse due to the pandemic. States and politicians stopped or slowed migration citing health concerns. However, the longer people are forced to wait before they can reach safety the worse the post-pandemic migration will be, stated Sr. Maryann. Once States lift travel restrictions, all those who have waited in violent or abusive situations will need to move and host countries must be ready.

These statistics and political policies represent real people and families struggling to survive. They do not choose to move; they are forced to flee violence and poverty to save themselves. We must hold up their stories, contributions, and lives so we do not lose them amid the crisis of the Covid-19 pandemic.

• *Fleeing Like Jesus: A Theological Reflection*



Experience

Think back on your own experience. Can you recall a time when you met a refugee in your community? Have you ever ministered to refugees? Have you, or any of your ancestors, fled their home country? What would scare you so much you felt the need to flee for your life?



Word

Begin by centering yourself in prayer as you reflect on Mathew 2:13-18.

As you read about Jesus' refugee experience and the Slaughter of the Innocents what touches you? What might Mary and Joseph thought or felt as they fled? In Egypt, what might life have been like for Jesus and his family?



Analyze

Research current concerns about refugees.

Consider what the refugee process is like: what documents are needed, what can families carry when fleeing, will refugees be detained in camps or detention center, what will happen to children? What other concerns can you research?

We have prepared the infographic (right) to help you get started. Each data point is a link that will lead you to more information.



Action

As a result of this reflection, what can you change in your own community concerning refugees? What can you address in your country?

Do any of the advocacy suggestions listed on the [infographic](#) inspire you to action? Share the [infographic](#) and what you have learned through research and prayer.

MERCY INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION



Mercy Global Action affirms the rights of **REFUGEES**



The United Nations 1951 Refugee Convention defines a refugee as someone crossing international borders to flee "a well-founded fear of persecution because of his/her race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion."

The main principle of the convention is **non-refoulement**, which means that a refugee should not be returned to an unsafe environment.



EVERY MINUTE

25 people flee their homes. They are escaping terror, war, and persecution.



70.8 M

By the end of 2018 there were about **70.8 Million** refugees around the world.



80% OF REFUGEES

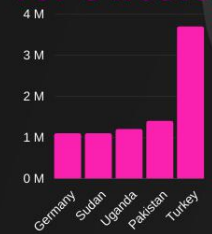
When people must flee, about **80%** of refugees stay in countries neighboring their own.

67% OF REFUGEES

67% of refugees come from just **5 countries**: Syria, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Myanmar, & Somalia



TOP 5 HOSTS



RIGHTS OF REFUGEES

- The right not to be expelled, except under certain, strictly defined conditions;
- The right not to be punished for illegal entry into the territory of a contracting State;
- The right to work;
- The right to housing;
- The right to education;
- The right to public relief and assistance;
- The right to freedom of religion;
- The right to access the courts;
- The right to freedom of movement within the territory;
- The right to be issued identity and travel documents.



Advocate:

- Review recommendations the **Special Rapporteur** has made to your country.
- Learn about refugees contributing to your community.
- Share this [infographic](#) across your social media!



THEMATIC AREAS

DEGRADATION OF EARTH

• *Bringing Grassroots Voices to the United Nations*

Getting data is fundamental for guiding advocacy and policy at the United Nations. Often statistical and scientific data is used, but these sources do not show the whole story. Grassroots voices are a key source of information since the people on the ground are experts in their own lives. As advocates we must work to bring the expertise of people experiencing violations of their human rights to the UN. The work of grassroots engagement is more important than ever in the Amazon region, which is experiencing intersecting human rights violations due to Covid-19, discrimination against indigenous peoples, and extractive industries. Recently, the Mining Working Group gathered several expert voices to inform our work advocating for the Pan-Amazonian region.



REPAM, a Catholic Church movement promoting human rights and dignity in the Pan-Amazonia region, reported on the issues of each State's Covid-19 response. The report, "REPAM Calls for Urgent and Unified Action to Avoid a Humanitarian and Environmental Tragedy," highlighted the lack of transparency, concern for our common home, and the governments' response to the indigenous communities.

Motivated by Quierda Amazonia and Pope Francis' call for unified action, REPAM urged all people of good will, from politicians to artists, to work together for the good of the Pan-Amazonian region.



The Mining Working Group at the UN submitted a report at the request of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous people. Based on the reports from grassroots partners the MWG explained that the indigenous peoples of the Amazon are being disproportionately affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. The indigenous peoples are far from hospitals resulting in poor health care and a lack of access to lifesaving equipment. As a result, several tribes have reported high numbers of apparent Covid-19 cases as well as deaths among their elders and shaman.



Reaching out to grassroots contacts throughout the Amazon, MWG shared the stories of the indigenous peoples hard hit by Covid-19. Ana Jeaneth Andino Granja, from the congregation of Hermanas Dominican Missionaries of

• *Bringing Grassroots Voices to the United Nations, Continued*

Rosario, shared her story of the degradation caused by extractive industries in the Peruvian Amazon. Citing the greed of corporations exploiting the area she described the destruction of the land, the pollution of the water, and the violence against the indigenous peoples resulting from mining in the region. Granja writes, “Companies go deeper into the jungle polluting everything in their path and human groups are forced to go deeper, which brings danger to their lives due to the danger and the great distance to the populated center for emergency cases. In fact, many natives die before they can reach a health center.”

Granja and REPAM’s call to action both name a second viral pandemic, the virus of violence. Consumerism, alcoholism, conflict, and murders increased in areas affected by extractive industries as the indigenous people try to survive. As Quierda Amazonia stated, “The care of people and the care of ecosystems are inseparable... To abuse nature is to abuse our ancestors, our brothers and sisters, creation and the Creator, and to mortgage the future.” (QA 42) We must respond with Mercy to the overlapping crisis of Covid-19, the cry of indigenous peoples, and the cry of Earth.



At the United Nations

THROUGH OUR

ECOSOC EYES...

- *MIA-MGA Signs on to World Refugee Statement*

The United Nations annually commemorates World Refugee Day on the 20th of June. This year we are called to focus on knowing the people who undertake dangerous journeys, fleeing their homes in search of safety. In “To Know in Order to Understand,” a joint statement from Faith-Based Organizations (FBO’s) across the world, Mercy International Association-Mercy Global Action joins the voices of many others advocating for refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs).

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, FBOs at the UN choose to respond to Pope Francis’ call to “know in order to understand.”[1] We must come to know the people who have become displaced within their own countries (IDPs) as well as refugees who crossed international borders to reach safety. An already perilous journey became even more difficult and dangerous during the pandemic as it forced people to travel and live in camps or detention centers despite the need to quarantine, wear personal protective equipment, and access sanitation. The ongoing refugee crisis is now less visible to the world as individuals and States focus on the health and economic impact of COVID-19.

In response to the invisible reality IDPs and Refugees face, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of IDPs called on States to honor the protections named in the Guiding Principles presented to the Commission of Human Rights in 1998. The statement from FBOs at the UN further calls for renewing international attention to the situation of IDPs and refugees, to whom we have become blind during the competing concerns of the global pandemic.

To that end, Pope Francis calls for the transformation of our hearts by opening our eyes and seeing, contemplating, and sharing the lives of people experiencing displacement. In a video message, the Pope reminds us that refugees and IDPs are fleeing their homes just as Jesus and his family did. As faith-filled followers, we must look beyond statistics and reports to see the real faces of people asking for our help. Like Catherine, we can see the face of Jesus in everyone we minister to or meet. To commemorate World Refugee Day, get to know the stories of refugees and IDPs through the articles offered below, or by meeting refugees living in your own community. See the face of Jesus in the faces of people who, like Jesus, had to flee to save their lives.



Get to know refugees contributing to their new communities:

[In the Time of Covid-19 WRD Video](#)

["Restoring Sudan's Forest Cover, One Tree at a Time."](#)

["Syrian Electrician Gets Back on Track at German Rail Network."](#)

[1] “New Pope Video towards WDMR2020: “To know in order to understand.” Migrants and Refugees, The Vatican. May 15, 2020.
<https://migrants-refugees.va/2020/05/15/new-pope-video-towards-wdmr2020/>

Reflections on the Mercy Global Action Emerging Leaders Fellowship (MELF)

by Carmen Rosa Ccallomamani rsm

Hello, I am Carmen from Peru, and I want to share with you about a wonderful program that Mercy Global Action is developing with 10 women; emerging leaders from different countries, cultures, ages and languages. This program has five areas: a) Experience of being accompanied by a Mentor throughout the year; b) Immersion experience that allows us to meet face-to-face on three occasions; c) Virtual classroom available to interact with other Fellows and program facilitators; d) Resources for reading and videos with very valuable content on various topics that have broadened and deepened our commitment to the defense of Mother Earth, the topic of non-violence, the topic of reconciliation, leadership, anti-racism, etc. and e) Finally, the presentation of a research project, which has the purpose of making a valuable contribution to the actions of MGA. This program throughout this year has allowed us to strengthen our leadership skills.

In this program something that touched me deeply is THE EXPERIENCE OF IMMERSION IN CAMBODIA, I consider it as one of the foundational experiences. Because it led us to a deep coexistence, full of learning and challenges. Experiences that allowed us to recognize the value of team leadership. That Sr. Denise with her team from the Spirituality and Reconciliation center; who as a team have been recognized and awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. The recognition is not to a person, the recognition went TO THE TEAM for promoting reconciliation and developing a culture of peace. We have celebrated life and deep connection with nature, from its circular dances, dances for peace, community celebrations, tasting delicious food full of fresh vegetables and fruits.

Cambodia led us to revere stories of pain, sadness, and death. But at the same time stories of struggle, perseverance, hope, organization and reconciliation. Above all, learning so that so much violence and genocide that this country experienced is not repeated.

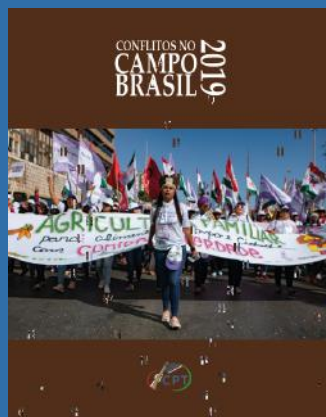
Here I want to revere the capacity of RESILIENCE that Cambodians have, many had lost an arm, a leg or both legs, but they are "happy", their faces radiate a lot of light, a lot of peace and dignity. They are proud of who they are, such as Mr. Ret, leader and member of the spirituality center team, who had lost both legs in the minefields. I remember very well the day we went to a town to build toilets for some families and he had no difficulty building. On the other hand, once again we revere Catherine McAuley, founder of the Sisters of Mercy, who left us as a legacy the ability to create bridges between rich and poor, to turn difficult situations into learning opportunities to promote a dignified life.



Today, Cambodia holds a special place in my heart. And this program is like having a comforting cup of tea, my Sisters of Mercy would say, or it is like sharing sacred stories around the well or around a campfire as the women of our indigenous peoples do... THANK YOU, ANGELA AND COLLEEN FOR MAKING IT REAL. DREAM THAT ONE DAY THEY STARTED TO DREAM.

“USEFUL RESOURCES

Conflicts no Camp Brasil (English)



UNHCR Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2018 Report



2020 World Refugee Day Emojis Designed by Award-winning Ivorian artist (Article and Video)



UPCOMING EVENTS AND INTERNATIONAL DAYS

- 11 July World Population Day
- 18 July Nelson Mandela International Day
- 28 July World Hepatitis Day
- 30 July World Day against Trafficking in Persons
- 9 August International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples
- 19 August World Humanitarian Day
- 21 August International Day of Remembrance and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism
- 22 August International Day Commemorating the Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief
- 23 August International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and Its Abolition
- 29 August International Day against Nuclear Tests
- 30 August International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances

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

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