



UN and the Humanitarian response to the war in UKRAINE

In the last week of April, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres visited Moscow and Kyiv as he attempted to mediate a cease-fire in Ukraine and the opening of **humanitarian corridors** in conflict torn areas such as **Mariupol**. According to **OCHA, UN Office for the coordination of Humanitarian Affairs**, the grave humanitarian crisis in Ukraine is leaving millions of people in dire need. It has affected those who have fled across borders, those who are on the move within the country and those who are hunkered down in sites under attack. The United Nations and partners have been scaling up supplies and services to meet the urgent needs of civilians throughout the country protection and relief. Among the many UN agencies COORDINATING the humanitarian response to the **Ukraine Crisis** are the following:



★ **UNHCR the UN Refugee agency** estimates that 5.5 million people had fled Ukraine by the end of April making it the largest displacement crisis in the world today. More than half of this number have fled to Poland while those who have been internally displaced within Ukraine are estimated to number 7.7 million people. With the aid of UN inter-agency humanitarian convoys, life-giving assistance is being dispatched to hard hit areas.

★ The **World Food Programme (WFP)** has launched an emergency operation to provide food assistance for people fleeing the conflict, both those within the country and those fleeing to neighbouring countries. By the end of April, **2.4 million people had been reached** with emergency food support and it is hoped to reach **6 million people** in the next three months.

★ **UNICEF The UNs Agency for Children** is working with partners to reach **millions of vulnerable children** and families, providing them with life-saving supplies. As well as essential services including health, education, protection, water and sanitation, a free mobile app has been developed to help parents monitor the health and development of their children from birth to 6. [➡ Read more...](#) [➡ Read more](#) [➡ Watch the Video](#)

Right to a healthy environment

The **High Commissioner for Human Rights** has placed the triple planetary crisis of **biodiversity loss, pollution and climate change** at the top of the human rights challenges of our era. This follows the October 2021 milestone when the UN Human Rights Council adopted an important resolution (48/13) recognizing that **a clean, healthy and sustainable environment** is a **human right**. A similar resolution is likely to be passed by the UN General Assembly in the next two months. This marks an important step forward in the acknowledgement that human and environmental rights are inextricably linked, - and in the acceptance of the need for what Pope Francis calls an **“ecological conversion”**. As the window of opportunity to reduce the most severe impacts of climate change closes, there is an urgent need to heed the “code red” and read the environmental warnings of our time. Among these, scientists in different UN agencies have drawn attention to are the following:



- **Pollution** is causing **9 million deaths per year**.
- **1 billion species** are at risk of extinction
- There is massive **internal displacement** of people around the globe with more than **143 million affected**
- There could be as many as **1 billion refugees** on our planet by **2100**
- There has been a **60% decline in wildlife population 1970 – 2014**
- Without radical action, there will be **more plastic than fish** in the oceans by **2050** [➡ Watch the video](#)



*“I join you in an appeal to all the leaders of the world **to act with courage, to act with justice and to always tell people the truth**, so that people know how to protect themselves from the destruction of the planet, how to protect the planet from the destruction that we very often trigger”*

(Pope Francis: Message for Earth Day 2022).

Call for a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty

Like nuclear weapons, climate change is a major, existential global threat. Unlike nuclear weapons, no treaty exists as yet to support the unprecedented international cooperation needed to address the climate crisis and achieve the **1.5 degrees C goal of the Paris Agreement**. Bold and immediate action is needed to fast-track progress. The **Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty** is a global initiative calling on states to phase out fossil fuels and support a just energy transition. According to the latest report of the **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change**, coal, oil and gas are together responsible for 86% of all carbon dioxide emissions in the past decade. However, phasing out fossil fuel production is a highly contested and politically challenging goal to achieve. If we are to work towards a sustainable energy alternative, unprecedented international cooperation will be necessary in three main areas – non-proliferation of fossil fuels, global disarmament and a peaceful, just transition. **The campaign is growing.**



➔ [Read more.](#) ➔ [Watch the video.](#) ➔ [Endorse the call.](#)

Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. PFII

The **UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues** is a body that advises the **Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)** on indigenous issues relating to culture, economic and social development, the environment, education, health, and human rights. The Forum provides expert advice and recommendations to the Council and to the UN agencies. **Representing indigenous groups from all regions** of the globe they meet with a broader constituency for a two week session every year and engage with member states, the UN agencies and NGOs.

The **21st Session** was held from **25th April – 6th May** in a hybrid format with a focus on business and human rights. Testimonies highlighted



numerous cases of indigenous rights being violated by the failure of Governments and corporations, (both multinational and national), to implement the provisions guaranteed by the **UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**. This calls for **free prior and informed consent (FPIC)** to be given before mining

licenses are granted and mega-projects initiated on indigenous lands. In their struggle to protect, sustainably manage and safeguard their territories, indigenous peoples are often subject to direct attacks on their safety and wellbeing. At times they are displaced in the name of conservation.

Indigenous peoples from around the world also attested to the important contribution that indigenous wisdom can bring to the stewardship of the planet, helping to preserve harmony with nature and lessen the impact of climate change.



➔ [Read more...](#)
➔ [Watch the video.](#)

RSHM engagement at the Permanent Forum



As an active member of the **NGO Mining Working Group**, **Veronica RSHM** was one of the members of the small group who met with the Delegation from **REPAM (Panamazonian Ecclesial Network)** and with **CIMI (Indigenous Missionary Council of Brazil)** during the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in late April. The value of working together to bring the specific cases of violation of human and environmental rights to the UN was highlighted and priorities raised for future collaboration. Side events were prepared in collaboration with NGO MWG members at the UN. As the lead of the delegation, **Cardinal Baretto of Peru and President of REPAM** noted, the network is made up of 9 different member states with territory in the Amazon. But in ecological terms, it is a single biome and can be seen as one. The mission of the church goes beyond political borders, hence the importance of a single Amazonian Ecclesial conference, defending the peoples and the earth from exploitation.

Our **RSHM NGO** recently worked with 4 other NGO Representatives of religious congregations to prepare and submit a **'shadow report'** for the 4 year **Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Brazil** by the **Human Rights Council**. The report was based on specific information received from the members of our congregations in Brazil. The issues spotlighted were **Violence Against Women** and **violation of rights of Indigenous Peoples**.

During the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Veronica RSHM had the opportunity to meet with the **representatives of CIMI** including two indigenous women representing concerns in the states of **Mato Grosso** and **Mato Grosso do Sul**.



Distribution

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