



**Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary – NGO with special consultative status in the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations since 2013 and with the Department of Public Information since 2006.**

News from the UN # 134

RSHM at the UN

November 2022



In his opening words to the **Climate Conference COP 27 held in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, from 6 – 20 November**, UN Secretary, **Antonio Guterres**, did not mince his words. *“Greenhouse gas emissions keep growing. Global temperatures keep rising. And our planet is fast approaching tipping points that will make climate chaos irreversible. We are on a highway to climate hell with our foot still on the accelerator.”* His words certainly underline the message that climate change is not just a crisis, but a matter of moral responsibility and urgency. While we are not attempting to cover the proceedings, we are highlighting just a few issues related to it.

### COP 27 - LOSS AND DAMAGE Funding

For the first time in nearly 30 years the item **“Loss and damage”** was included on the formal agenda for discussion at a meeting of parties to the **UN Climate Change Convention**. The term refers to the catastrophic consequences of extreme weather events as well as the slower-moving long term impacts of climate change like drought and sea level rise. After 30 hours of overtime at the end of the COP 27 Conference, the inclusion of two words *“particularly vulnerable”* suggested by the Minister of the Environment of the small and climate vulnerable island nation, the **Maldives**, helped to break an impasse in the talks. A breakthrough agreement was finally reached and a dedicated fund for **“Loss and Damage”** was established to assist climate-vulnerable countries such as small island states and the least developed African states already experiencing the brunt of the climate crisis. Details of the funding mechanism are yet to be worked out.



[Read more](#)



Watch the [short video](#)

### Women Leading Reforestation Efforts in the Democratic Republic of Congo



The **Itombwe Rainforest** in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is one of the largest and most important forests in the world, second to only the Amazon in terms of size. Extractive industries caused deforestation in the Congo Basin. Women from the area decided to take the initiative and reforest the Basin. Congolese climate activist **Neema Namadamu** spoke during a panel of Indigenous Women Climate Activists at **COP27** about her group of over 500 women **“forest-guardians”** who plant



trees and vegetables to reforest the Basin and build capacity for the community as a whole. **75%** of what the women plant represent reforestation efforts. The remaining **25%** of plants are for human use as food, medicine, and other amenities.

Namadamu explained that this project is both empowering the women and strengthening the climate resilience of the area. The forest-guardian program helps women within the DRC become more educated, economically stable, and safe in a country with some of the highest rates of gender-based violence. In total, the forest-guardians are protecting **1.6 million acres** of old growth forests to ensure better air quality and access to food and resources.



Read more about the program [here](#).

Watch a video on the program [here](#).

### Climate Peace and Security.

In November, the **United Nations Security Council (UNSC)** held an open “Arria-Formula” Meeting co-sponsored by the governments of Norway and Kenya regarding the intersection of climate change and security concerns. The keynote speaker, Mr. **Miroslav Jenča**, Assistant Secretary General for Europe, Central Asia and the Americas, Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, reported increasingly worrying statistics. **By 2050**, it is estimated that **3.4 billion** people will reside in countries facing catastrophic ecological threats, **more than 1 billion** people will be displaced by climate change, and **more than 4 billion** people will live in water-scarce regions. In their statements, many member states emphasized that climate change is a **“risk multiplier”** which exacerbates crises such as food insecurity, forced displacement, and resource scarcity. Various member states present, including Ireland and France, supported establishment of a Special Envoy for Climate, Peace and Security to specifically tackle this intersectional issue. Gabon, the UAE, and the UK all supported strengthening the capacity and collaboration of member states to best address climate and security. and The Russian Federation, which vetoed climate and security legislation the last time this topic was brought up in the UN Security Council, did not speak.



Further reading [here](#)  
Watch a [short video](#).

## International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People



The United Nations observed the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on November 29th. 2022 marks the 75th year of ongoing territorial disputes between Palestine and Israel as well as the 15th year of the Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip which limits access for Palestinians to electricity and water and sanitation services. Furthermore, this year is on track to be the deadliest year within Palestine since the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) started documenting deaths in 2005. The Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, **Cheikh Niang**, emphasized that there has been an increase in the rates of violence and discrimination toward Palestinian people, the illegal settlement of Palestinian territory, and forced evictions. **Riyad Mansour**, who represented the Palestinian government, spoke about the assassination of Palestinian journalist **Shireen Abu Akleh** in May 2022 by an Israeli sniper as one atrocity that summarized the past 75 years of Israeli occupation within Palestine. Two videos were

shown documenting what it is like trying to document the terrors of the Israeli occupation. **Content warning for depictions of graphic violence.** → Watch the video on Shireen Abu Akleh [here](#).



## Strengthening Protections for Migrant Workers



The governments of the **Philippines, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka** co-organized a recent forum at the UN around the topic of wage theft against migrant workers during the **COVID-19 pandemic**. **Wage theft** is a major concern for **migrant workers** and can take many forms. Different methods include, but are not limited to, the undue release of wages, “*payment of salaries below the minimum wage, non-payment of overtime, non-payment of contractually owed benefits, the non-negotiated reduction of salaries as well as the retention of dues upon one’s contract termination.*” During the COVID-19 pandemic, migrant workers had to suddenly return home after they were fired or laid off from their jobs. Many of these workers were not given their final checks or they had money taken from their paycheck in the name of medical insurance, security deposits, training, or transportation costs. The **recommendation** to combat this form of migrant abuse was to create an international mechanism where migrant

workers can access the ability to file claims without risk of losing their jobs. For this to come to fruition, states must work together to contextualize the specific environments in which wage theft occurs to the local laws on due process and labor protection. All stakeholders must be proactive in coordinating justice mechanisms to make sure that migrants have access to justice regardless of their migration status → Read more [here](#). → Watch the short video [here](#).

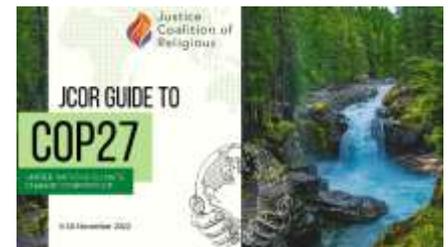
## RSHM Briefs



In November, the **RSHM Enlarged Leadership Council** met for 10 days at Cormaria, Sag Harbor. In her capacity as **NGO representative, Veronica RSHM** together with the **International JPIC Coordinator Virginia Dorgan RSHM** had the opportunity to present reports on steps taken to implement the JPIC NGO priority agreed at the 2019 General Chapter. Collaboration with others is a key way in which we have tried to address the priority issues of global inequality, migration and environmental sustainability.



In October, the **Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity** approved the application submitted by the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary for accreditation as an observer organization. This opened up the possibility of attending the **Conference of Parties (COP 15)** being held in Montreal in **December**. In Our New Year issue of News from the UN we will focus on this key dimension of the “*triple planetary crisis*” through the lens of our RSHM NGO participation in this important UN Conference.



During the month of November, a joint initiative was launched by **UISG, JCoR (the Justice Coalition of Religious)** and the religious attending the **Climate Conference COP 27** in Sharm-El Sheikh. Webinars and prayer resources were shared in different languages as a way of helping people to make a virtual pilgrimage “*Shoeless on Mount Sinai*”. The important conference was held at the venue on the Red Sea, not far from Mount Sinai. → See the [JCoR Guide to COP 27](#)

### Distribution

Institute Leadership Team; Area Leaders, JPIC Animators; Global Network of RSHM Schools; UN Interest Group  
Translation by Maria Luisa Pinho, RSHM

Prepared by Emma Schaefer  
& Veronica Brand RSHM