



777 UN Plaza, East 44th Street, Suite 6F, New York, NY 10017  
 Tel. +1 646 487 0003 Email: [viny@vivatinternational.org](mailto:viny@vivatinternational.org) - [www.vivatinternational.org](http://www.vivatinternational.org)

**NEWSLETTER No. 69**  
**October - December 2016**

**DEAR READERS,**  
**WELCOME TO THE 69TH ONLINE ISSUE**  
**OF THE VIVAT NEWSLETTER!**

First of all, let us welcome our new associate member—the Claretian Missionaries into VIVAT Family. Let us also congratulate VIVAT International Kenya (VIK) on publishing the first edition of their Newsletter.

The 69th Edition of VIVAT Newsletter begins with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)'s report on Trafficking in Persons in 2016, followed by a story on VIVAT Ireland's publication Advent reflection on Multiculturalism.

We bring you VIVAT Argentina's contribution to Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the country along with two other organizations.

In response to the unprecedented flow of people as migrants and refugees across the world, especially in conflict ridden regions, VIVAT International with other organizations made written and oral statements on the rights of migrant workers and climate induced displaced persons.

Missionary sisters of Holy Rosary shared with us two stories about their activities with people on the ground. The one is about empowering children in Brazil and the other is about peace project in Nigeria.

Fr. Herman Wijtten, SVD shared with us the land grabbing issue in Democratic Republic of Congo by a Canadian company.

From Church and Mining Network of Central and South America, we have an advocacy story on the Shuar Indigenous People in Ecuador whose lands are being taken by companies and where defenders were killed with impunity.

This issue ends with two introductions: first on VIVAT Contact Persons Group in Rome which works as bridges between VIVAT Offices in New York and Geneva and the members at grassroots level; and the second, on Sustainable Development Goal No. 1: End Poverty in all its forms everywhere.

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John Converset, MCCJ

**Translators**

Olga Sanchez, CMS  
**Spanish**

**French**

Simone Petra Hanel, SSpS  
**German**

Edni Gugelmin, SSpS  
**Portuguese**

**CONTACT**

**NEW YORK      GENEVA**  
 +1 646 487 0003    +41 022 796 991  
[www.vivatinternational.org](http://www.vivatinternational.org)

# Not For Sale!

## UNODC 2016 REPORT ON TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

**On Wednesday**, December 21, 2016, I attended a High-Level Launch of 2016 Global Report on Trafficking in Persons at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. This event was initiated by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). At the Opening Session, Peter Thomson, President of the 71<sup>st</sup> UN General Assembly states that trafficking in persons is a multi-million-dollar crime; it is a criminal industry. There is a need of global action to combat trafficking in persons by tackling root-causes and focusing on victims and society empowerment. Therefore, there is an urgent need for collaboration of multi-stakeholders at global, regional, national and local levels.

Meanwhile, Yuri Fedotov, Executive Director of UNODC, states that migrants and refugees are the most vulnerable ones to be trafficked. He also acknowledges trafficking in persons as a high level organized crime. He especially mentions armed groups' engagement in trafficking in persons in countries such as South Sudan, Nigeria and some other countries torn by civil wars. He also shows data that domestic trafficking cases have increased by 20 percent during the past years with 79 percent of victims being women and 80 percent being children. A good news is that 136 countries have considered human trafficking as crime against humanity. He finally encouraged Member States, UN Agencies and civil society to have a spirit of shared responsibility putting prevention as the most important action.

In its report, UNODC points out eight (8) major issues. First, trafficking in persons exists in almost every country, with most occurring in Sub-Saharan Africa (69 cases) between the year 2012 and 2014, followed by East Asia and the Pacific (64 cases), Eastern Europe and Central Asia (56 cases), and the least is



Photo: Peter Thomson (center) and Yuri Fedotov (left). Source: VIVAT Int.

North Africa and the Middle East (29 cases). Second, trafficking in persons has changed in recent years: while most detected victims are still women, the number of child victims increased to 28 per cent and male victims to 21 percent in 2014. Third, traffickers and victims often have the same background. Fourth, people are trafficked for many exploitative purposes, such as forced labor, child soldiers, removal of organs, selling children, forced marriages, forced begging and sexual exploitation. Five, cross-border trafficking flows often resemble regular migration flows. Sixth, conflict can help drive trafficking in persons. Seventh, children are the most vulnerable among the victims. Finally, there is an increase in numbers of countries “with a statute that criminalizes most forms of trafficking in persons in line with the definition used by the UN Trafficking in Persons Protocol from 33 in 2003 to 158 in 2016.” (UNODC, Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2016, pp. 5-12).

In the Preface to the 2016 Report Fedotov states: “Perhaps the 2016 Report’s main message is that inroads have been made into this horrendous crime. We must, however, continue to generate much needed cooperation and collaboration at the international level, and the necessary law enforcement skills at the national and regional levels to detect, investigate and successfully prosecute cases of trafficking in persons. The 2016 report has done a fine job of setting out the situation, but there is more to be done” (UNODC, Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2016, p. 1).

This report is relevant to VIVAT’s work because of three things: many of VIVAT members are working in the countries where this crime against humanity often occurs. Secondly, we already received information and read some stories of advocacy work by VIVAT members in some countries such as Cameroon and Indonesia, to combat trafficking in persons. At the UN level, VIVAT International has been part of NGO Committee on Stop-Trafficking in Persons (NGOCSTIP). Lastly, since the UNODC is open for collaboration, this should be viewed as an opportunity for VIVAT members to participate in UN initiatives to bring this issue to the center of its ministry.

*By Robert Minsel, SVD*

# Ireland: Respect for People

VIVAT International Ireland's Advent Reflections Booklet

**VIVAT International Ireland** continues to publish an advent season reflections booklet. In 2014 the theme was on Water and in 2015 on Migration. This year (2016) it published another booklet with a theme "Unity in Diversity" or "the Value of Multi-culturality." The "Introduction" of the booklet states, "Living in culturally mixed communities and working among diverse peoples helps to change perspectives and develop the broader and more positive understanding of the issues that are often missing from increasingly polarized debates on refugees, migrants, cultural diversity and the challenges of making room within host cultures for other peoples" (p. 4)

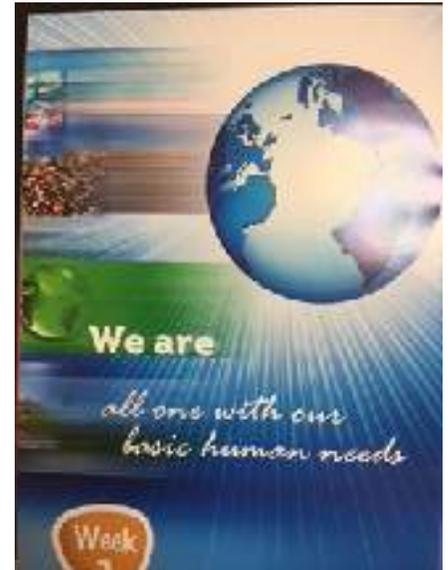
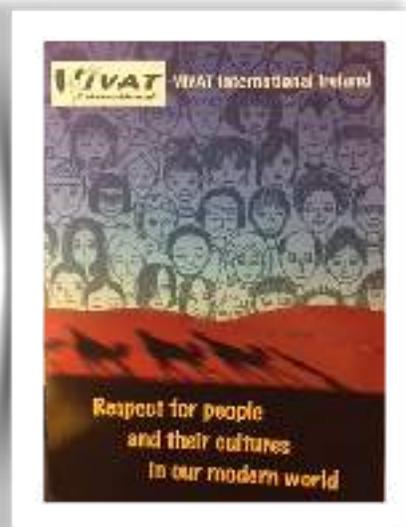
This multiculturalism has been lived by missionary congregations in doing their ministry among the peoples. In its General Chapter in 2012 The Society of the Divine Word (SVD) emphasized the importance of being aware of the multiculturalism as part of its entity and identity. The same awareness also seem to emerge among the Oblates of Mary Immaculate as observed and mentioned by their Superior General in his keynote address to their General Chapter recently and among the Little Sisters of the Assumption at their General Chapter in 2005 which states "in the context of increasing mobility of peoples, of forced displacements, we are immersed in multi-cultural and multi-religious realities. This becomes a daily call for us to grow in solidarity and urges us to bring about new relationships... To search for ways to overcome the barriers between peoples, cultures and religions in a movement of openness, dialogue and faith." (p. 4).

The booklet contains four reflections on "a shared conviction that Christians and all who believe in the dignity and value of human life have their part to play in exploring positive paths towards a fruitful interculturality which respects all that is unifying

that is unifying and life affirming in diverse cultures." (p. 4).

It is believed that "at its core the human story is one that is shared across cultures and religions. We are, all of us, daughters and sons of the God. It is a story that is best heard in culturally mixed groups, in prayer, dialogue and working together with shared symbols." (p. 5). We need dialogue in words and in actions. Dialogue in words is needed to be able to understand one another and dialogue in action to be able to unite our strength and energy to make this world a better and safer place to live together. Dialog can also be an effective way of preventing radicalism, racism, and exclusivism which some places have been growing significantly during the past years.

The first reflection for the first week of Advent was on one earth as our common home; the second on our human quest for belonging; the third on the awareness that we are all one with our basic human needs; and the last on interculturality as a sign of the Kingdom of God among us.



Every reflection ends with a call to action. The first is a call to "become more aware of interculturality by organizing and/or attending an intercultural event which celebrates diversity in your home town, school or community; the second is a call "to promote the dignity, safety and well-being of others"; the third is a call "for those who live near people of other faiths or cultures to invite someone to your home and share some food or drink together"; and the fourth is a call to "let each person inquire from a person of another culture about how they show respect to God, to an elder, to the land or to something else."

*Summarized by Robert Mürsel*

## ARGENTINA: PROTECT AND RESPECT ALL GOD'S CHILDREN!

### SUMMARY OF UPR SHADOW REPORT 2017

**The coalition of organizations** that submitted its shadow report for the Third Cycle of the Universal Periodic Review of Argentina 2017 is composed of the Marist Foundation for International Solidarity (FMSI), which is advocating for children and adolescent's rights; Edmund Rice International, an organization engaged in advocacy on human rights and care for the environment; and VIVAT International.

The main problem for this shadow report is about children's rights. In Argentina, between 25% and 32% of children are multidimensionally poor, with 8.4% being extremely poor, and many of them suffer from different kinds of violence. The report therefore mainly developed two issues related to the Rights of the Children and Adolescents, based upon recommendations from the previous UPR cycles and for which the coalition understands that the State must improve:

1. Child sexual abuse and violence against children in all forms
2. The lack of an Advocate for the Rights of Children and Adolescents.

In researching these problems, the coalition carried out 11 in-depth interviews, conducted a questionnaire with open questions to different professionals working in organizations dedicated to the care of children, had access to the database of a care center PAPMAI of Cáritas Argentina, and made a jurisprudential and comparative analysis of the effects caused by the non-compliance with this prerogative, already stipulated since 2005 in the "Comprehensive Child Protection Law" in Argentina (26,061).

Regarding the first problem, child sexual abuse and violence against children in all its forms, the coalition states that the Argentine state has had an inadequate approach, with few articulations between its different institutions and lack of implementation of measures of

solution to deal with this issue.

The coalition identified during the study a total of 610 cases of children and teenagers involved in situations of abuse or violence in the province of Buenos Aires between 2012 and 2016, of which 74.3% were cases of sexual abuse and 25.7% were violent situations due to physical or verbal abuse. Unfortunately, the Argentine state has not been able to give concrete statistics on the cases of children and adolescents involved in situations of violence and abuse. This speaks of a lack or non-existence of typification of the problem. In addition, as there are few public services specialized in accompanying children and adolescent's victims of violence after the start of the judicial process or after the complaint, there is no state support for the protection and recovery of the victim.

The coalition recommended for this problem:

- to prohibit and eliminate all types of violence towards children
- to develop and implement, in an articulated way, the processes of denunciation, treatment and follow-up of cases of children who are victims of abuse, elaborating a unique process of action that simplifies the access to justice, putting the focus on their needs
- to allocate human and economic resources to address the problem of victims of abuse by designating the figure of the Ombudsman and intensifying the work of state agencies in the search for concrete action in eradication of violence against children.

In relation to the second problem, the lack of an Advocate for the Rights of Children and Adolescents, the coalition observed that the National Law on the Comprehensive Protection of the Rights of Children and Adolescents (26.061), promulgated on October 21, 2005, contemplates the appointment of

an Official Defender of Children and Adolescents. However, this is something which has not been implemented by the Argentine state. Therefore, the defense of children is almost nil. In previous UPR cycles, the specialized agencies of the United Nations have already recommended to the Argentine state to assign an Advocate for the Rights of Children and Adolescents.



Source: <https://www.google.com/search?q=map+of+argentina&biw=1651&bih=932&tdm=isch&imgil=xy5qtwcoSE6IM%253A%253BovxqMRWTuB3E-QM%253Bhttp%25253A%25252F%25252Fwww.info-please.com%25252FAtlas%25252Fcountry%25252FArgentina.html>

Therefore, the Coalition recommended the designation of the Ombudsman for Children and Adolescents with the provisions of national law, and the increase or strengthening of political and institutional coordination measures, so that the work of the Ombudsman for Children and Adolescents develops in an effective way, with territorial presence and its own budget.

*Summarized by Olga Sanchez, CMS*

## NEW YORK: The Role of Migrants for the Eradication of Poverty

Joint Statement by the International Presentation Association (IPA), Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers, Maryknoll Sisters of Saint Dominic, Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur (SNDdeN), and VIVAT International

**The global community** is witnessing demographic shifts due to environmental degradation as well as social and economic instabilities. In 2015, the number of migrants globally reached a high of 244 million. Significant numbers of these people are within the working age. We are therefore convinced that with robust policies and governance in place at all levels, the economic pillar being created by migrant workers contributes to the eradication of poverty.

We reaffirm the enormous progress made by the United Nations (UN) in addressing issues surrounding migration and the plights of migrants, especially with the recent adoption of the New York Declaration which acknowledges that “migrants can make positive and profound contributions to economic and social development in their host societies and to global wealth creation.” We also commend efforts by several Member States and civil society such as our own non-governmental organizations, the migrant diaspora, the Global Forum on Migration and Development, and the International Organization on Migration (IOM) in highlighting the immense social and economic contributions made by migrant workers and the challenges they encounter.

At the heart of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is the commitment “to leave no one behind” and the firm belief that “no goal is considered met unless all are met.” We recognize the following targets of the SDGs which explicitly refer to migrants and migration: 8.7, 8.8, 10.7, 10c, 16.2, 17.18. We congratulate the few countries that have ratified the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Their Families and other related UN, international and regional instruments.

The role and contribution of migrant workers in poverty eradication has been

acknowledged for long in the process of development, especially in the eradication of poverty through financial remittances. Data released in 2016 by IOM shows that the sum of remittances sent by international migrants to the families in origin countries amounted to \$581.6 billion in 2015. It also noted that in some cases, earnings remitted by international migrants constitute a significant portion of some country’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Examples are countries like Liberia and Moldova with 25 percent, Nepal and the Kyrgyz Republic with 33 percent, and Tajikistan with almost 37 percent.

Despite the economic and social contributions being made by migrants in both origin and host countries, violations of the human rights of migrant workers continue to occur on a regular basis. Migrants are often exploited as cheap and forced labor. Data released early in 2016 by ILO indicates that 11.4 million women and girls and 9.5 million men and boys are victims of forced labor. It also reports that 19 million of these victims are exploited by individuals or businesses, 4.5 million of whom are victims of sexual exploitation, and over 2 million by the state or criminal organizations. Furthermore, migrants suffer from discrimination, social exclusion, and xenophobia.

The fundamental principle of the United Nations as enshrined in the Charter is to ensure the wellbeing, security and protection of the human rights and dignity of all the citizens of the world. The Universal Declaration on Human Rights maintains that the human rights of every individual is inalienable. This too includes the human rights of migrants, their migration status notwithstanding.

Recommendations for Member States and relevant institutions:

- ★ Ratify the Conventions and International Agreements that would enhance migrants’ rights and protection, and improve their legislation to ensure that it is aligned with international principles
- ★ Adopt and apply the ILO 2016 “Check Points on *Eliminating and Preventing Forced Labour*”
- ★ Enhance recruitment regulations to ensure that employers comply with fair recruitment practices
- ★ Educate workers on their employment and residency rights, as well as provide current information on how to access help in case of exploitation
- ★ Monitor employers and recruitment agencies for deceptive recruitment practices; investigate, prosecute, and if necessary, withdraw practicing licenses of recruitment agencies that exploit or abuse migrant workers’ rights
- ★ Conduct widespread, systematic education campaigns to counter xenophobic attitudes towards migrant



Source: <http://VIVATinternational.org>

workers and promote diversity

- ★ Provide wider availability of reasonable money transfer operators and easy access to information to compare costs and services to send remittances

The submitting non-governmental organizations pledge to continue to collaborate with the United Nations in the efforts to realize the Sustainable Development Goals for all people.

## BRAZIL: EMPOWERING WOMEN AND CHILDREN

### Missionary Sisters of the Holy Rosary Sao Paulo and Feira de Santana, Brazil

**Sapopemba** is a neighbourhood in Sao Paulo, Brazil. I started here by visiting poor families, asking the women what they would like to do to earn some money to maintain their families. Later I participated in the soup kitchen organised by the parish for poor people (men, women and their children) in the area. I helped in serving them and would sit down to drink the soup with them. This provided a great opportunity to chat with the women especially, asking them what other opportunity they could avail to help themselves rather than depending solely on the soup kitchen. They listed the following: fashion designing, painting on cloths (famous here in Brazil) hand crafts, cookery, candle making, toilet soaps etc. With the help of a group of women in the parish we formed a team to start skill training for these women. The challenges were enormous! Most of these women want nothing but "hand outs" but despite this, we continued with the few numbers that appeared. We did not allow discouragement to take over! We called on God to bless His work and these women.

God answered our prayers! Before I left São Paulo seven years ago for the state of Bahia in the North East of Brazil, we succeeded in forming a co-operative which is still functioning today, and many women are gaining from it.

Now, I am in Bahia, the poorest of the 27 States of Brazil. It has a high concentration of Afro-Brazilians as a result of the Slave Trade. The internalised oppressions as a result of slavery still affect the people. Here MSHR are involved in different ministries: caring for street people, women at risk (prostitution) prison and pastoral ministries.

I work in an area in Feira de Santana called Chacara São Cosme. Part of this area where I work is marked with high unemployment, drugs, stealing, violence,

children abandoned, high rate of school dropout among children and young adults.

Here again, I initiated fashion designing, cookery, painting on cloths, making of soaps, crafts etc. to offer economic opportunities for the women so that they are able to help their families. The challenges here are more than I experienced in

São Paulo. One is always looking for what the people want. The children you see in the pictures come from some of these women who are not ready to do any work. Some of the boys came and begged me to initiate a football team for them. Brazil is known for football. Every little boy has a dream of being an international footballer!

The football team is really going very well. Juraci from my basic Christian community trains them. Now they have entered into competition with groups of boys from other neighborhoods.

For adults, the cookery courses once a week are still going well. I give a private course to the few who come. The same for hand craft.

Candle making is in vogue! Many people are coming for courses in candle making. We make decorative candles which are not found here in Feira; this is why many people are rushing for it!

In the area of alternative health, we offer courses in massage, Reiki, Capacitar Brazil. Fr.

Tony Sheridan (Cssp) is an excellent teacher in Capacitar in Brazil. I invited him to Feira de Santana from Rio de Janeiro. He has come to us three times teaching different stages. Next year he is coming back for the fourth and last stage. Capacitar is using the energy of the hands for healing traumas, pains etc. Each time he came many people from different areas of health care would come to participate.

I have a very good team from those who participated and we have started giving the course ourselves. I also have a group that deals with herbs. For counselling services many people come to me.

In the basic Christian community the group goes to families once a week to share the word of God with them. It is a kind of family missionary work.

*Sr. Therese Odumukwe, MSHR  
VIVAT International, Brazil*



## NEW YORK: WHEN MOTHER NATURE IS GETTING WILD

NGO Committee on Migration's Statement On Climate-Induced Displacement Delivered at Dhaka Conference on GFMD, 12-14 December 2016

Climate Induced Displacement Subcommittee as part of NGO SocD made an oral intervention at the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) Conference which took place in Dhaka, Bangladesh, 12-14 December 2017. Following is its statement:

Over the last eight years, an average of 21.5 million people have been displaced each year by weather-related and geophysical hazards. In the year 2014 alone, 19.2 million were displaced by these acute and slow-onset natural hazards, more than twice the number that were newly displaced by conflict that year (8.65 million). Sea level rise alone, which has already necessitated the creation of mass relocation plans for citizens of several small islands, is expected to displace 72-187 million people by the end of the century, depending on the degree of climate change mitigation and adaptation measures taken by the global community. Climate change and disaster strips these masses of their human rights to food, safe drinking water, sanitation, and shelter; increases their vulnerability to violence; and obstructs their access to education, labor markets, healthcare, and the personal liberties that typically accompany residence in one's country of citizenship. No member of the international community can purport to harbor sincere concern for the plight of the world's 65 million displaced persons without addressing, responsibly, immediately, persistently, and earnestly, the case of the growing population of persons displaced by the environmental factors.



Source: <https://www.google.com/imgres?imgurl=https%3A%2F%2F0.wp.com%2Ffairhd.net%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2F2015%2F02%2FClimatic-Change-Induced-Migration.jpg%3Ffit%3D1024%252C768&imgrefurl=http%3A%2F%2Ffairhd.net%2Fclimate-change-induced-migration>

In accordance with our mission to stand for the rights of migrants and refugees in the United Nations arena, and in the spirit of Sustainable Development Goal 13 and Target 10.7, the NGO Committee on Migration is committed to shedding light on climate change and large-scale environmental degradation as mechanisms for the mass denial of human rights and major drivers of displacement. We call upon governments to act in the interest of

the masses of climate-displaced and climate-vulnerable people of the world by taking the following steps:

- Recognize climate-displaced persons as refugees and secure for them the rights to all provisions and protections to which political refugees are entitled under existing and emerging conventions, protocols, and compacts relating to the status of refugees;
- Include national contributions to environmental degradation factors in the determination of national responsibility for the support of refugees (per capita carbon emissions, fossil fuel consumption, water consumption, profit from non-fuel extractive industries/non-fuel extractive material consumption, waste production/waste exports);
- Prioritize collection of data capturing scope of displacement due to various

types of environmental hazards (e.g. sea level rise, drought, geologic disaster, soil depletion/degradation; air and water pollution), proximity of hazards to environmentally taxing industrial activity, and the frequency with which severe environmental strain in a region immediately precedes the outbreak of violent conflict;



Source: <https://www.google.com/imgres?imgurl=climate%20induced%20migration%20in%20bangladesh&ved=0ahUKew1y6z206HSAhVK64MKHWdFAMU4yAEQMwhMKEgwSA&iact=mr&uact=8>

- Consult climate-affected people at every stage of migration policy creation and implementation, especially the recently approved Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework; upcoming negotiations of the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration; and negotiations of a global responsibility-sharing mechanism for refugees;
- Promote and develop bilateral and multilateral regional collaboration and cooperation among Member States to protect the basic human rights of the climate-displaced persons;
- Examine and take genuine political action to reduce national contributions to climate change and environmental degradation, including the establishment of a national mechanism for holding transnational corporations based in your respective countries accountable for their environmentally caustic activities abroad.

## Ecuador: In the Name of Humanity

### Churches and Mining Network demands to defend life and human rights of indigenous Shuar people in Ecuador



Churches and Mining Network, an ecumenical organization comprised of more than 70 Latin American entities, Christian communities, pastoral teams, religious congregations, theologians, and leaders of communities affected by mining, demands to defend life and human rights of the indigenous Shuar people in Ecuador.

Churches and Mining Network has been working for a long time with the Shuar people through their pastoral work, in the framework of nonviolence, denouncing the assassinations of Jose Tendentza and Freddy Taish, leaders who defended the environment, whose deaths are still with impunity.

In August 2016, the violent eviction of the Nankints community of the Shuar people to give way to mining activities without any previous consultation adds to a series of violations of human rights and aggression against the Shuar people. The eviction is a result of the pro-extractive policy of the Ecuadorian Government, which in alliance with the consortium Chino Ecuacorrientes S.A. that intends to develop the Panantza-San Carlos mining project in the Province of Morona Santiago.

We note that before the eviction, the Nankints community was in dialogue with governmental bodies to reach an agreement on the possibility of carrying out a previous, free, and informed consultation in accordance with the law. However, these attempts of dialogue were interrupted by the violent occupation of ancestral territories by the mining company. The crisis has intensified because of the declaration of state of emergency and the militarization in the area, which is a totally disproportionate response.

On the other hand, Acción Ecológica, an organization for the defense of human and environmental rights with local communities for more than thirty years, received a notification from the Ministry of the Environment of Ecuador, on December 20, reporting an administrative procedure for the closure of the organization, apparently for "diverting from the purposes and goals for which it was constituted". This situation is an open act of harassment and aggression against an organization that has denounced the negative impacts of the mining project Ecuacorrientes S.A. against the environment and the indigenous Shuar people's rights.

For these reasons, Churches and Mining Network demands not only the defense of the Shuar people, but also the all indigenous peoples in Ecuador, and all human rights defenders who work in the country.

We call on the government and the leaders of the armed forces to suspend aggression and violence, in order to find democratic, dignified and respectful solutions to the rights of the indigenous peoples, and all indigenous nationalities of Ecuador, in accordance with the Ecuadorian legal framework.

We reject the attacks against the organizations defending *Buen Vivir* (living well) such as Acción Ecológica with whom we stand. Even in the midst of the aggressions and harassment Acción Ecológica has asked the government to establish a "Commission of Peace and Harmony with Nature" to investigate what is happening in the case of the Shuar people and find peaceful ways of solving this serious conflict.

We call on churches and international civil society to join in solidarity with this appeal, in defense of life, and to be attentive to this critical situation.

From Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Bolivia, Peru, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Mexico, United States, Canada, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, and Belgium.

*Churches and Mining Network*  
[iglesiasymineria@gmail.com](mailto:iglesiasymineria@gmail.com)

## NIGERIA: EMBRACING PEACE

### PEACE PROJECT REPORT FROM NORTH EAST NIGERIA

**From Yola** (North East Nigeria) I am very happy to share with you an aspect of a three week intensive program ‘EMBRACING PEACE FOR THE NE’ that took place between October 25 and November 2016 in which I have been engaged. This program was co-led with a colleague of mine, Duke Duchscher, who has years of experience working internationally in conflict areas. Our work included a Trauma Healing program for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), Restorative Dialogue for Herdsmen and Farmers, Conflict and workshops on Non Violent communication (NVC) with various groups. In this article, I share about our work with the IDPs.

#### *Work with Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)*

We worked with 35 most traumatized of the 700 in a camp managed by the Catholic Diocese of Yola. This camp opened its arms to both Christian and Muslim IDPs. As we sat under the trees in a shaded open area in the middle of their camp, we listened to stories of pain which were at times shocking, horrifying, heart breaking, and awe-inspiring. For instance, one of the women still does not know the fate of 3 of her children taken by Boko Haram. All of them face this kind of pain in one way or another; and yet all still have room for great gratitude as well.

We focused on body-based activities to help them to reconnect with their physical being. Over the first few days most of the IDPs showed limited emotional expression. Although they said what we were doing was helpful, it was difficult to discern any impact. It was not until the third day that one woman who had lost about 50 in her family reported that the night before was the first night she



slept all the way through the night without waking. After this, others began to report improved sleeping and feeling lighter in their bodies: one woman stating “it’s as if my shoulders are not carrying so much weight.”

Many were carrying the heavy weight of watching their loved ones die in front of them, and not being able to do anything to help save them, or even to be able to offer the dead the dignity of burying the body. So on the last day we had a ceremony where they were able to symbolically bury their dead and/or hand their loved one who had disappeared over to God. During the ritual ceremony participants brought symbols of their deceased or missing loved ones. I was shocked to see that not less than four different people brought a tree branch with many, many leaves as a symbol for the more than 50 people they lost in their families. To imagine that this woman or this man in front of me has endured this level of loss and still has the resilience to be functioning... was a strength I was not sure I possessed. The ritual was a solemn and powerful experience for the IDPs. One of them expressed her huge relief in these words: “ With this ‘burial’ ceremony, I see my loved ones in their full humanity and beauty and I am relieved.” The pain of loss was there, but so too was the deep love that those

who had passed away had brought into their lives. At the close of the four days many reported that they felt a huge



amount of relief having finally buried their dead with the care, love and dignity befitting a loved one.



For me, it was a huge privilege to be part of this sweet, painful, sacred journey in the lives of so many.....which I continue to hold with profound gratitude and awe.

*Sr Franca Onyibor, MSHR  
VIVAT International, Nigeria*

## DRC: STOP GRABBING OUR LANDS!

DR Congo Communities Pressured to Cede Land Rights by Plantation Company Controlled by Development Banks

**Over the past few days, Feronia Inc**, a Canadian-based company majority owned by European and US development banks, has been pressuring local communities to sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that would endorse the company's continued operation and expansion of oil palm plantations within their territories.

Despite severe pressure and intimidation, the communities have rejected the MOU and are appealing for international support to demand that Feronia respect their decision.

They are calling especially on the development banks or funds, which have a combined control of over 80% of Feronia's shares, to respect their own internal guidelines regarding the free, prior and informed consent of communities. The development institutions with investments in Feronia include the CDC of the UK, the AFD and Proparco of France, the AECID of Spain, OPIC of the US, BIO1 of Belgium, DEG of Germany, FMO of the Netherlands, and SECO of Switzerland.

### The order of events

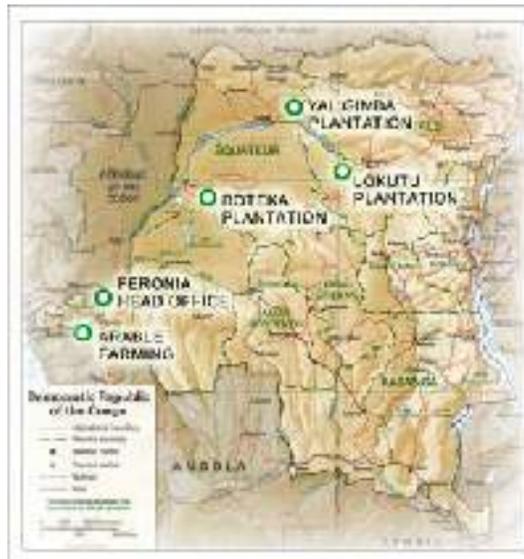
On March 8, 2015, over 60 customary chiefs and other community leaders from across the district of Yahuma, where 90 percent of Feronia's Lokutu plantations are located, gathered in the town of Mozité to call for the resolution of their grievances. In a declaration they stated that Feronia had never consulted them about the use of their lands and had no right to be there.

"We demand, first and foremost, the start of negotiations to reclaim our rights over the lands that have been illegally taken from us over the past 104 years," they stated in the declaration. "We want to be compensated, and only afterwards can we proceed to discussions."

Since then, several conflicts with Feronia have occurred, as the company has tried to send surveyors into the territories of the communities without their consent.

On July 18, 2016 a delegation of high level provincial authorities and elected officials was dispatched to Mozité to get the communities to agree to a MOU. One of the elected officials participating in this delegation was present during the March 8, 2015 meeting in Mozité and received a copy of the community's declaration.

Sources within the delegation confirm that the objective of the delegation was to secure community consent to allow Feronia to resume with its land surveying activities. The sources also confirmed that the mission was paid for by Feronia and that the



delegation was sent on orders from Kinshasa.

At the initial meetings with the delegation in the village of Mozité, the communities categorically rejected the proposed MOU. The delegation continued to pressure the communities to sign a MOU over the next days until July 21, 2016, when the communities once again refused to sign a MOU and the delegation finally abandoned its mission.

### DFIs violate their guidelines

The development finance institutions (DFIs) that effectively own Feronia have guidelines that the companies they invest in must follow in their negotiations with local communities over lands. The current efforts to pressure the communities in Lokutu to sign a MOU are in direct violation of these guidelines.

The development finance institutions should therefore take immediate measures to force Feronia to respect the rights and demands of the local communities and to stop pressuring the communities to sign a MOU. The DFIs must also take measures to ensure the security of community leaders who have been intimidated because of their opposition to the signature of a MOU with Feronia.

Feronia has yet to respect the community's clear demand that the company provides them with evidence of the legal rights that it claims to have to operate on their lands.

### International support

RIAO-RDC and its international partners support the demands of the communities for the return of their lands.

RIAO-RDC and its international partners call on the Government of the DRC to fulfill its responsibilities and ensure the security of the affected communities and their leaders who are now under threat of disappearance and other acts of intimidation and call on the provincial assembly in Kisangani to leave the communities to freely and peacefully seek their rights and to refrain from pressuring communities to sign agreements with companies that affect their control over their lands.

RIAO-RDC and its international partners are calling for an international fact finding mission to investigate and report on the situation of the communities living within the areas affected by the operations of Feronia Inc in the DRC.

*Jean-Francois Mombia Atuku, RIAO-RDC,  
and Ange David Baimey, GRAIN  
Republished from GRAIN and RIAO-RDC, June 2015*

## Introducing VIVAT Contact Person's Group



Contact persons are responsible to promote the work of VIVAT within their congregations. So they distribute news and information then animate their members to work through advocacy on the issues related to human rights.

One of the important events which animates membership is VIVAT workshop. Whenever there is a VIVAT workshop or organized, at least one from the VIVAT Contact Person's Group participate to learn together, then try to follow up the process of strengthening the national level VIVAT advocacy network.

To plan such activities, the Contact Persons gather together three times a year. Each congregation has its unique strength on particular issues in particular areas, so it is very enriching to share experience and ideas.

VIVAT International works in network with so many likeminded NGOs in New York, Geneva and some parts of the world. At the same time, VIVAT itself is an association of 12 Catholic religious congregations which have membership in all continents and work in network with each other.

They are:

- Congregation of the Missionary Sisters Servants of the Holy Spirit (SSpS)
- Society of the Divine Word (SVD)
- Congregation of the Holy Spirit (CSSp)
- Congregation of the Adorers of the Blood of Christ (ASC)
- Comboni Missionaries of the Heart of Jesus (MCCJ)
- Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI)

- Missionary Sisters of the Holy Rosary (MSHR)
- Comboni Missionary Sisters (CMS) Little Sisters of the Assumption (LSA)
- Missionary Sisters of the Holy Spirit (Cssp)
- Priests of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (SCJ)
- Religious of the Assumption (RA)

Each congregation assigns one "contact person" to represent their congregation, and those contact persons form a group for better collaboration between the congregations as members of VIVAT.



*Daisuke Narui*  
VIVAT Contact Person for SVD

## INTRODUCING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

### PART 2

**In Part I** of “Introducing Sustainable Development Goals” we already learned the 17 goals in general. This part is an introduction to Goal No. 1 of the SDGs.

#### Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere



#### Targets:

1.1 By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than \$1.25 a day

##### Indicator:

1.1.1 Proportion of population below the international poverty line, by sex, age, employment status and geographical location (urban/rural)

1.2 By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions.

##### Indicators:

1.2.1 Proportion of population living below the national poverty line, by sex and age

1.2.2 Proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions

1.3 Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable

##### Indicator:

1.3.1 Proportion of population covered by social protection floors/systems, by sex, distinguishing children, unemployed persons, older persons, persons with disabilities, pregnant women, newborns, work injury victims and the poor and the vulnerable

1.4 By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control

over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including micro-finance.

##### Indicators:

1.4.1 Proportion of population living in households with access to basic services

1.4.2 Proportion of total adult population with secure tenure rights to land, with legally recognized documentation and who perceive their rights to land as secure, by sex and by type of tenure

1.5 By 2030, build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters

##### Indicators:

1.5.1 Number of deaths, missing persons and persons affected by disaster per 100,000 people

1.5.2 Direct disaster economic loss in relation to global gross domestic product (GDP)

1.5.3 Number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies.

1.a Ensure significant mobilization of resources from a variety of sources, including through enhanced development cooperation, in order to provide adequate and predictable means for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, to implement programmes and policies to end poverty in all its dimensions

##### Indicators:

1.a.1 Proportion of resources allocated by the government directly to poverty reduction programmes

1.a.2 Proportion of total government spending on essential services (education, health and social protection)

1.b Create sound policy frameworks at the national, regional and international levels, based on pro-poor and gender-sensitive development strategies, to support accelerated investment in poverty eradication actions

##### Indicator:

1.b.1 Proportion of government recurrent and capital spending to sectors that disproportionately benefit women, the poor and vulnerable groups

Through common awareness, good will, collaboration and serious commitment, it is believed that the global community will be able to eradicate poverty in all its forms everywhere by 2030.

Source: UNDO

### UPCOMING EVENTS

- 1 - 10 February 2017: CSocD 55th Session. Venue: New York.
- 6 - 10 February 2017: Commission on the Rights of the Child, 77th Session. Venue: Geneva
- 7 - 10 February 2017: CEDAW, 37th Session. Venue: Geneva
- 13-17 February 2017: HRC: Working Group on Issues of Human Rights, TNCs, Business Enterprises, 16th Session. Venue: Geneva
- 21 February 2017: Committee on NGOs. Venue: New York.
- 13-24 March 2017: CSW61. Venue: New York.
- 13-20: Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 7th Session. Venue: Geneva

#### UN Calendar of International Days:

##### January 2017:

- 1 : New Year's Day
- 7 : Orthodox Christmas
- 27: International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust

##### February 2017:

- 1-7: 1World Interfaith Harmony Week - Day
- 2 : World Wetlands Day
- 4 : World Cancer Day[WHO]
- 6 : International Day of Zero Tolerance to Female Genital Mutilation[WHO]
- 11 : International Day of Women and Girls in Science
- 13 : World Radio Day[UNESCO]
- 20 : World Day of Social Justice; Presidents' Day
- 21 : International Mother Language Day [UNESCO]

##### March 2017:

- 1 : Zero Discrimination Day [UNAIDS]
- 3 : World Wildlife Day
- 8 : International Women's Day
- 20 : International Day of Happiness
- 21 : International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination; World Poetry Day[UNESCO]; International Day of Forests;
- 21 - 27: Week of Solidarity with the Peoples Struggling against Racism and Racial Discrimination.
- 22 : World Water Day
- 23 : World Meteorological Day[WMO]
- 24 : World Tuberculosis Day[WHO]International Day for the Right to the Truth concerning Gross Human Rights Violations and for the Dignity of Victims
- 25 : International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade; International Day of Solidarity with Detained and Missing Staff