



Franciscans International
A voice at the United Nations



Franciscans International
Annual Report 2022

Imprint

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Cover photo: © Franciscans International; A Franciscan Missionary of Mary in a camp for internally displaced persons in Nampula, Mozambique.

Franciscans International Annual Report 2022

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/ Letter from the President /

It is with both gratitude and humility that I write to you for the first time as the President of the International Board of Directors (IBD) for an organization where I served as Africa Desk Coordinator more than a decade ago. I wish to acknowledge the work of my predecessor Br. Joseph Rozansky OFM, and the outgoing Executive Director Br. Markus Heinze OFM. Both brothers exemplified perseverance, fortitude, and inspired others to deepen their engagement with Franciscans International.

I step into this role at a time when we, as a global community, are facing multiple and profound crises. The invasion of Ukraine is another stark reminder of the fragility of the international rule-based order, despite the many advances previously achieved. The impacts of climate change and environmental degradation are increasingly evident in our daily lives. These crises, the recent pandemic, and widening social inequality have unacceptable consequences. Each of the apparently singular threats we face converge and impact most directly on people who are poor and marginalized.

At this inflection point, Franciscan-inspired solutions rooted in our shared commitment to human dignity, care for creation, and peace and dialogue are indispensable. The deep connections of our sisters and brothers at the grassroots provide a unique perspective, allowing us to discern how problems that may seem local are often global in nature. Our presence at the United Nations enables us to connect these dots and advocate for just, effective, and inclusive solutions that keep the human person at the center of our work. To help meet these challenges, the IBD has set out an ambitious agenda for the future.

Responding to a long-time demand from the Franciscan family and recognizing that human rights violations afflict all parts of the world, we will establish a European regional program in the coming months. The IBD has also initiated efforts to educate the wider Franciscan family about the integral nature of FI's mission: our new website is one of the initiatives meant to elucidate this work as an expression of our Franciscan identity and responsibility in the world today.

On behalf of the IBD and the Conference of the Franciscan Family, our sponsor, I wish to express our profound gratitude to all those who support and have placed their trust in us. Without your help, we would not be able to fulfil our – indeed your – mission. I acknowledge and thank all sisters and brothers who give testimony at the UN and who stand up for human rights in their home countries, oftentimes at grave personal risk. A special word of thanks goes to our dedicated and professional staff for their personal commitment to carry the message of the Franciscan family to the UN. It is through this collaborative effort that the voices of the poorest and most excluded are recognized and appropriate action is taken on their behalf.

May God continue to bless all our efforts,

Michael A. Perry OFM

/ Letter from the Executive Director /



After nearly 13 years, this will be the last time I write to you here. Having worked with Franciscans International first as a member of the International Board of Directors, then as transition manager, and finally as Executive Director, I will finish my mandate at the end of 2023. The FI I joined in 2010 is a very different organization than the one I leave behind. In these years, we have undergone a transformation that at times has been difficult but that, thanks to the support of many of you reading this, has also strengthened our mission and reinforced FI's position as a trusted and authoritative voice at the United Nations.

I say goodbye confident that the organization will be in good hands with my successor, Blair Matheson TSSF. Driven by his deep spirituality and the examples of Francis and Clare, he has worked with disadvantaged communities across the world for over four decades. Adding to this, Blair further brings a wealth of practical management experience to the job. To me, the appointment of an Anglican brother from New Zealand also adds a valuable ecumenical dimension that exemplifies the growth of FI and the continued appeal in the modern world of our shared Franciscan values.

My departure serves as a reminder that our advocacy is a work of patience. For example, in this Annual Report, you will read that the UN General Assembly finally recognized the human right to a healthy environment in 2022. The process leading up to this has taken the better part of a decade, with a strong and sustained engagement by FI. Yet our work continues, and it will now be up to my successor to see that this right will be implemented to the benefit of the grassroots communities we support.

Nevertheless, slow as it may be, our work is worthwhile. The most rewarding part of this job is to step outside of our offices and see the real change our sisters and brothers have achieved with the support of FI. To name just one example, the work of Franciscans at the UN and in Benin over the past decade has almost eradicated the practice of ritual infanticide in the country. Brothers and sisters working directly at the grassroots may save dozens of children from this fate, but when we successfully combine our efforts to strengthen the laws and push authorities to act, we can touch the lives of thousands. This way, the dedication, convictions, active engagement, and persistence of a small group of people can make real changes in the lives of the wider community.

I wish to express my profound gratitude to all those who make our common ministry a reality: to the generous donors, without whom our achievements would be impossible; to the staff of FI, who continue to work tirelessly to support Franciscans at the grassroots; and finally, to all my sisters and brothers for their courageous and shared commitment to build a more just and equal world, including through the UN.

With fraternal greetings,

Markus Heinze OFM

/ 2022 in numbers /

Empower

Influence

Over **1.200**



Franciscan Family members reached in 19 gatherings

6



in-country consultations

21



Franciscans and other partners advocating at the United Nations

145



Franciscans and other partners who benefitted from capacity and strategy-building efforts

8



advocacy events and conferences

66



advocacy interventions and submissions at the United Nations

18



United Nations outcome documents influenced

56%



of FI recommendations included in United Nations reports

Calling attention

Preventing further violations

Building pressure for change

/ Our focus /



Environmental justice



Extractive industries



Human rights defenders



Indigenous peoples



Peace and conflict



Freedoms of assembly and expression



Marginalized groups

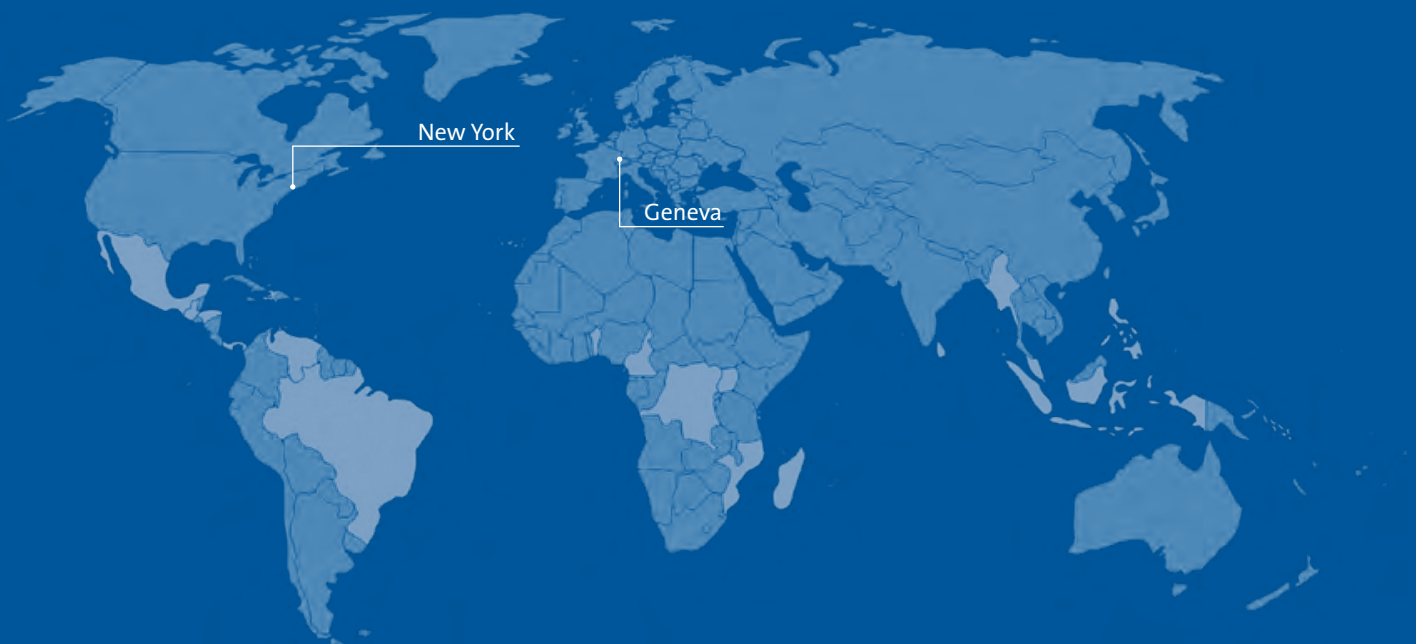


Migration and displacement



Right to water and sanitation

/ Where we work /





/ About Franciscans International /

Franciscans International is a non-governmental organization in General Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council. At the core of our mission is the belief in the dignity of all people, which is lived out in our commitment to protect and preserve human rights and the environment.

Since our establishment in 1989, we advocate together with and on behalf of Franciscans to prevent, denounce, and address human rights violations through strategic use of United Nations processes and mechanisms. We do so by bringing cases of discrimination and violence committed against individuals and groups living at the margins to the attention of international policymakers, and by influencing UN decision-making and standard-setting processes accordingly on various issues and countries.

Following their spirituality and values founded on simplicity, fraternity, peace, and care for creation, Franciscans often live and work with disadvantaged groups and individuals, have their trust and are among the closest to their concerns. In doing so, many Franciscans are human rights defenders, and FI serves as their voice at the UN.

With offices in Geneva and New York, FI operates under the sponsorship of the Conference of the Franciscan Family (CFF), which represents the various branches of the Franciscan Family. The Ministers General of the Order of Friars Minor (OFM), the Conventuals (OFMConv), the Capuchins (OFMCap), the Third Order Regular (TOR), the Secular Franciscan Order (OFS) and the President of the International Franciscan Conference of the Sisters and Brothers of the Third Order Regular (IFC-TOR), along with the International Board of Directors that also includes a representative of the Anglican Society of Saint Francis, work with FI staff to ensure that the organization supports and maintains the Franciscan family's commitment to justice and peace throughout the world.

/ Advocacy in 2022 /

Franciscans International addresses the root causes of injustices by bringing cases of discrimination, human rights violations, and violence committed against individuals and groups living on the margins to the attention of the international community. Our work at the United Nations is driven by the needs and concerns of our partners at the grassroots, and their struggle to promote human dignity, environmental justice, and peace.

In 2022, this work led us to take up a wide range of issues. Even though these human rights concerns manifested themselves in different regions and contexts, many of them intersect or share the same root causes. In our work, we seek to identify these common denominators, sharing best practices and lessons learned with our partners across continents. By doing so, we can foster linkages with the UN while offering holistic and concrete solutions.

The UN Generally Assembly votes to recognize the human right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment.

© UN Photo/Mark Garten



Care for the planet

In an historic vote on 28 July, UN Member States overwhelmingly recognized a clean, healthy and sustainable environment as a human right at the UN General Assembly (UNGA). The vote was a key victory in the struggle to counter the triple planetary crisis of pollution, climate change, and loss of biodiversity and came after years of sustained advocacy by Franciscans International as a part of a broad international civil society coalition. The decision also affirms a 2021 resolution by the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC), which first recognized the right to a healthy environment.

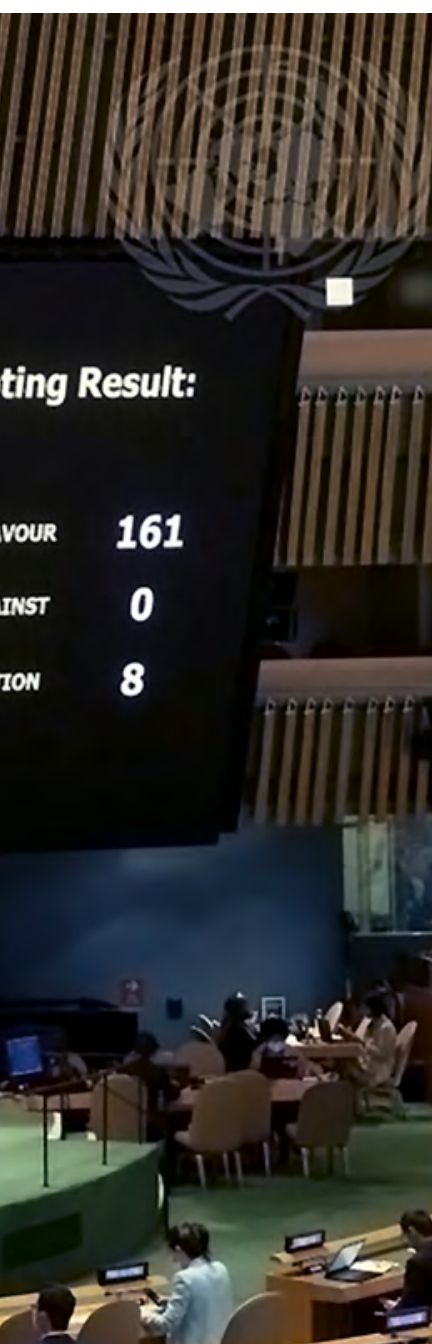
Together with our allies, we successfully worked to create momentum for the vote in New York and counter attempts to weaken or postpone the resolution. FI notably addressed an expert panel gathering about 60 states to kickstart the resolution process in April and rallied other civil society organizations to persuade States ahead of the vote. All these efforts contributed to a resolution by the UNGA that is not just a strong political signal, but also may serve to spur implementation of accountability mechanisms and human rights based environmental policies at the national level.

On a parallel track, FI continued its work to help strengthen the mandate of the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights and climate change, which was created in 2021, and for which FI had advocated for over a decade. Soon after his appointment, during a two-day in person consultation, we helped to facilitate a dialogue between the Special Rapporteur, grassroots human rights defenders from various regions of the world, and international civil society organizations. Together, we offered substantial inputs on possible future priorities for the mandate, some of which, such as climate-induced migration, were echoed in his first report to the UNHCR.

With the recognition of the right to a healthy environment, the establishment of a Special Rapporteur on climate change, and existing Special Procedures including the Special Rapporteurs on the environment and on toxic wastes, affected individuals and communities now can access a multitude of avenues to raise the full impacts of the triple planetary crisis on their lives with the UN. FI will continue its work in this area to demand that these tools are fully operationalized and utilized to help promote inclusive environmental policies that prioritize those most affected by this crisis.

The urgency of this work is evident in the lived experience of Franciscans and other partners at the grassroots. Throughout the year, we raised a number of these issues with other UN human rights mechanisms. This included submissions on the Solomon Islands, where logging is causing an alarming loss in biodiversity as one among many consequences affecting local communities; from Mozambique, where the dire situation of people displaced by conflict is exacerbated by extreme weather events; and from the Americas, where climate change is further fueling migration flows.

“The impacts of logging are very quick and hard to reverse [...] We needed to find a way forward and FI equipped us to find this way. [...] If local people understand what is going on, there is hope for change”.





Brother Worrick Morako SSF: “Everywhere, we hear the same complaints.”

Although originally from Papua New Guinea, Brother Worrick now serves as the Minister Provincial of the Society of Saint Francis in the Solomon Islands – a position he has held since 2020. The Anglican brothers first came to Guadalcanal Island fifty years ago, setting up their mission in schools, parishes, and prisons. With many brothers now coming from local communities themselves, they see first-hand how their families and friends were impacted when logging started.

“Even without asking ‘what is the situation with logging here,’ they began to tell us,” says Brother Worrick. “Not just in the places I’ve visited: there are locations and islands where I didn’t go. I still hear the same complaints.” For communities who have lived in harmony with the environment around them for generations, the deforestation caused by foreign logging companies has had devastating impacts. Livelihoods and water sources have been destroyed. Disputes over land and the influx of money are fueling conflicts.

Recognizing that the problems in their communities are part of a larger, global challenge, the Society of Saint Francis decided to bring this situation to the United Nations, hoping to push their government to take stronger measures to protect people and the environment. Meanwhile, the brothers themselves use their connections in the community to educate people about the impacts of logging and how they can take a stand against the practice.

“We continue to have that conversation and try to help by putting logging into our mission programs and encourage people to be careful and mindful of creation. When people start asking for it, we now know where to go and help them to try to understand,” says Brother Worrick. “As Franciscans, it’s part of our mission, because we love creation. So, we love addressing logging and matters like climate change.”



Indigenous Peoples, business, and human rights

The history of Indigenous Peoples is one marred by colonialism, forced assimilation, and other human rights violations; despite their continued targeting, they play an invaluable role in addressing some of the most urgent issues of our time, including the preservation of our common home. Although Indigenous Peoples only make up about six percent of the global population, the United Nations estimates that they protect almost eighty percent of the world's remaining biodiversity. Franciscans in the Americas and Asia-Pacific region work closely with Indigenous communities as they struggle to preserve their traditions, identity, and ancestral lands.

As part of this work in 2022, Franciscans International submitted several reports to UN human rights mechanisms, documenting the threats faced by Indigenous communities from both State and non-State actors. These concerns were echoed by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, which highlighted the lack of self-determination by Indigenous women and girls as a major cause of violence and human rights violations in a general comment. A second general comment by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights broadened the understanding and scope of land rights, including for Indigenous Peoples, and added new considerations on climate change.

One issue where environmental justice intersects directly with Indigenous rights is the role played by businesses. Based on reports from the grassroots, FI has consistently raised cases with the UN where business activities have negatively affected Indigenous Peoples, often depriving communities of their right to free, prior and informed consent. In 2022, these reports have included violations of the rights of Indigenous Papuans in Indonesia during the development of palm-oil plantations, and of Q'eqchi communities in Guatemala who are opposing the construction of a hydroelectric project that was approved without consent.

In this context, FI also continues to advocate for a strong legally binding instrument to regulate business activities in international human rights law. Negotiations for such a treaty have been ongoing in Geneva since 2014 in an open-ended intergovernmental working group. However, they face strong opposition and attempts to derail the process or weaken the text by both economically powerful States and business interests. Regardless, during the eighth session of the working group in October 2022, FI again played a prominent role, providing substantial inputs during the deliberations based on testimonies from the grassroots and our technical expertise in the matter. At the margins of the session, FI also facilitated a public event with the UN Special Rapporteur on the environment exploring the role of the legally binding instrument in combatting the triple planetary crisis of biodiversity loss, climate disruption, and pollution, with powerful testimonies and cases brought by four women from Myanmar, the Arctic, Colombia, and Mozambique.

"I see changes in discourse and debate on business and human rights. Corporate due diligence is big on the agenda now, and Franciscans International works on keeping it high."

Migration and displacement

Despite restrictions imposed during the Covid-19 pandemic, human mobility remains at an historic high: the International Organization for Migration estimates that over 281 million people now live outside the country of their birth – 128 million more than in 1990. This number does not include those displaced within national borders. However, for many the choice to leave home is not a voluntary one: rather it is necessitated by any number of factors including conflict, insecurity, extreme poverty, and increasingly climate change. Migrants, refugees, and internally displaced people (IDPs) – collectively referred to here as ‘people on the move’ – often find themselves in vulnerable positions and at heightened risk of human rights violations.

In the Americas, Franciscans International works closely with the Franciscan Network on Migration (FNM), which connects projects supporting migrants across the continent. Together with other partners, they not only provide direct support and care to people on the move but also document the human rights violations committed against those that pass through their shelters. States in the region have grown increasingly hostile against people on the move and, based on the information submitted by its national partners, FI brought various cases to the UNHRC, Treaty Bodies, and UN Special Procedures in 2022. Our inputs highlighted, among other issues, the militarization of borders, pushbacks, collective and chain expulsions, and detention of migrants. As part of a broader awareness raising campaign, much of this information was also published as a series of infographics.

Human rights defenders supporting people on the move – including Franciscan sisters and brothers – are themselves exposed to increased risks, harassment, and attacks because of their work. FI helped alert the United Nations about this worrying trend ahead of a report to the UNGA by the Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders, which echoed many of the concerns we shared. More broadly, FI continues to strengthen the capacity of the FNM to document human rights violations and ensure that this information can be effectively and safely shared with the United Nations.

“If the UN representatives only see Geneva faces it is not the same as if they see the faces of people affected by human rights violations. This is a critical component of legitimacy.”



FI's Outreach Officer Benedict Ayodi OFM Cap and former Executive Director Ignatius Harding OFM at the United States / Mexican border.

© Franciscans International

FI also reinforced its work with Franciscans in Mozambique, where nearly one million people have been displaced by fighting in the northern Cabo Delgado province. Here, Franciscan sisters continue to provide support to IDPs, even now that international humanitarian organizations have started to withdraw. In 2022, FI travelled to the country, visiting two of the camps in Nampula Province where Franciscan sisters are active and hosted a workshop to explore avenues to further document and bring these cases to the UN together. FI was one of the few organizations to raise this situation at the UNHRC and it continues its work to build an alliance of organizations willing to speak out on this issue.

In Indonesia an estimated 60.000 people – mostly women and children – have been displaced by the ongoing conflict between separatist and government forces in several provinces in West Papua. With the region closed off to journalists and humanitarian organizations, FI has been among a small number of organizations able to provide reliable and verified information about the situation thanks to the collaboration with local Franciscan and other faith-based actors. Some of these human rights defenders were hosted in Geneva by FI where they raised the situation with experts and diplomats while also calling on the Indonesian authorities to ensure that the human rights of IDPs are respected, allow access to international humanitarian organizations, and engage in an inclusive dialogue to end the conflict.

Members of the Franciscan Network on Migration during the annual "Via Crucis Para Migrantes"
© Franciscan Network on Migration



Fray René Flores OFM: “A big challenge I see is the danger of apathy”

Growing up during the civil war in El Salvador, Fray René remembers names like Oscar Romero and Corma Spessotto – clericss who were assassinated because of their unwavering commitment to speak out for those being repressed. When he started his journey as a Franciscan friar, their examples both inspired and challenged him to get involved in social justice issues. This journey took him throughout the Americas, including to Panama, where he is now active as a member of the Franciscan Network on Migration (FNM).



Recent years have continued to see a rise in the number of people displaced in the Americas, who are forced to leave home by any number of factors including violence, extreme poverty, and increasingly climate change. Despite the dire situation that forces people to leave their homes, growing hostility toward migrants, and the militarization of borders are forcing many people to take increasingly dangerous routes. The FNM, linking together support centers, shelters, parishes, and other ministries across the region, was founded in 2018 and offers protection and assistance to people on the move.

“A big challenge I see is the danger of apathy that leads to indifference,” says Fray René. “It is the risk that people don’t want to get involved or organize social transformation because the system has already exhausted them and they think that nothing can be done.”

From its inception, the FNM has worked closely with Franciscans International. Our joint projects have included capacity building efforts to strengthen the skills of members, advocacy at the United Nations, and the development of new tools to document human rights violations. The testimonies collected by the FNM also proved to be an important source of information for human rights experts at the UN, providing insight into issues that often remain invisible such as the difficult situation of Haitian migrants. With FI’s support, members of the network have spoken at the UN Human Rights Council on pushbacks, expulsions, and the detention of migrants, as well as on the threats they face themselves because of their work.

“Concerning the defense of human rights, I consider it best to talk about caring for the dignity and integrity of life,” says Fray René. “It is to seek that every human being and every living creature can exist in this common home, which is achieved through human rights work.”



Sister Theresa Balela FMM: “We talk to each person and listen to their story.”

It was a war that first brought Sister Theresa to Mozambique. As a Franciscan Missionary of Mary from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, she was no stranger to the trauma caused by conflict and in 1991 she was asked to help in the national reconciliation process at the end of Mozambique’s decades long civil war. Thirty years later, she finds herself caring for the victims of another violent conflict in her adopted country.

“We are with four sisters. Our job is to go out into the fields and talk. Because people live with a lot of hurt and suffering,” she says. “We talk to each person and listen to their story. But they don’t always tell us what they experienced: some have seen their husband or children beheaded. They have walked a long way to escape.”

Fighting in the northern Cabo Delgado province has displaced nearly one million people since 2017. Ostensibly sparked by an Islamic insurgence, the roots of the conflict run deeper and touch on profound inequalities in a province that is rich in natural resources but remains one of the poorest in Mozambique. The Franciscan Missionaries of Mary have taken it upon themselves to do what they can to help the people fleeing the violence.

Their work includes pastoral care and material support, especially now that many humanitarian organizations have started to withdraw. Despite the presence of an international military taskforce in the country, the conflict has remained largely invisible to the world. In an attempt to change this, the sisters have started a collaboration with Franciscans International, not only to raise the human rights violations they witness but also to ensure that refugees have a future to look forward to.

“At some point we’ll have to stop remembering and start to recover. Let’s forget what is in past and let’s resume life. It is not our job to tell one story too many,” says Sister Theresa. “I would love for people to have new experiences so they can heal. The kids should go to school. We try to get microcredits so people can start a business, because when you have no work, you are just left wondering.”



“Maybe we will get pressure or threats from the military and the government. But on the bright side, we can provide the right information to the public.”

Sri Lankan Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith meets with UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet.

© Franciscans International

An end to impunity

While Franciscans International works to stop ongoing human rights violations and advocates for policies that would prevent them from occurring in the first place, this is not enough: accountability is critical to ensure justice for victims and end situations in which impunity fuels further violations. Across continents, Franciscan brothers and sisters – who have often supported and protected victims during human rights crises – also work toward ensuring accountability.

In the Philippines, more than 27,000 people have become victims of extra-judicial killings since 2016 in the so-called ‘war on drugs’ waged by the administration of former President Rodrigo Duterte. Despite claims of the government to the contrary, a 2020 report by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights noted the almost insurmountable domestic barriers to accessing justice. Although a new administration was elected in May 2022, it has done little to address this legacy. Working closely with Franciscans in the Philippines, FI facilitated the local exchange of information between allies, diplomats, and the first-ever national-level United Nations joint program on human rights, which itself stems from previous advocacy efforts in 2020. By inviting partners to share key information at the UN, we were able to have some of our primary concerns echoed by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and UN experts on civil and political rights.



In Sri Lanka, the events that led up to the 2019 Sunday Easter Bombings remain unclear, although there is strong evidence that political infighting among top officials led to security lapses allowing the attacks to take place. Franciscans, as part of a broader Catholic and civil society coalition, have been pushing for a transparent investigation and compensation for the victims and their families. In March 2022, FI hosted Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith, who has become an outspoken advocate on this issue, in Geneva. During his visit, he called on the UNHRC to support an independent investigation and met with the High Commissioner for Human Rights to discuss possible avenues toward accountability.

In West Papua, Indonesia, a lack of accountability allows extra-judicial killings, torture, excessive use of force, and arbitrary arrests of Indigenous Papuans to continue with impunity. In 2022, FI raised this issue as part of broader submissions to the Expert Mechanism on Indigenous Peoples and the Commission on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, as well as ahead of Indonesia's Universal Periodic Review. We also continued to build the capacity of human rights defenders working toward a peaceful and inclusive dialogue that would ensure accountability for all human rights violations, whether committed by State or non-State actors.

In Colombia, deep social inequalities sparked nationwide protests in April and May 2021, to which authorities responded with excessive use of force and the harassment of human rights organizations and activists. In March 2022, the president of the Franciscan Family in Colombia addressed the UNHRC to express their concern about the ongoing criminalization of protestors and the lack of progress in investigating members of security forces alleged to have committed human rights violations during the demonstrations.

In Brazil, Franciscans continue to support the victims of the Brumadinho mining disaster, where the collapse of a tailings dam in 2019 killed over 270 people. FI continued raising this case in 2022 through various UN human rights mechanisms, highlighting among other issues that, although the company owning the dam has committed to pay compensation, the agreement does not provide for an independent assessment of the damages to determine reparations. Through their advocacy, Franciscans are also trying to address the underlying causes – including corruption, lax oversight, and weak regulations – that created the context in which the Brumadinho disaster could happen and that continue to put people at risk elsewhere.

Our work in this area is underpinned by a recognition that when domestic institutions fail to deliver justice, the role of the UN can be invaluable. Through FI, victims can bring their testimonies to the international community, demanding independent and impartial investigations as an avenue toward accountability.



/ Africa Program /



Uganda

The Franciscan family in Uganda approached FI in 2020 to help enhance the impact of their work at the grassroots and enable them to better prevent gender-based violence and promote children's education by confronting the government with these persistent issues at the United Nations. Following a human rights workshop in 2021, they conducted a series of community visits that formed the basis of two submissions ahead of Uganda's examination under the Universal Periodic Review and by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. In November 2022, FI visited Kampala again to evaluate the outcomes of these submissions, meet with local authorities to discuss the implementation of some of the recommendations made, and explore avenues for further engagement.



Mozambique

Over 4.000 people have been killed by fighting since 2017 in Cabo Delgado, a northern province that has generally not benefitted from the wealth generated by its natural resources. Nearly a million others have fled the violence, with the majority seeking refuge in the neighboring Nampula Province. In May, FI visited two camps where the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary are providing support to internally displaced persons (IDPs). As part of this mission, we conducted two workshops in the north and in the capital to map the different challenges faced by local Franciscans and their partners in order to help identify their needs to continue their work with IDPs now that international humanitarian organizations have started to withdraw. As a second step, the participants explored with us possible avenues to bring these challenges to the different human rights mechanisms of the United Nations, where FI currently is one of the few organizations raising this situation.

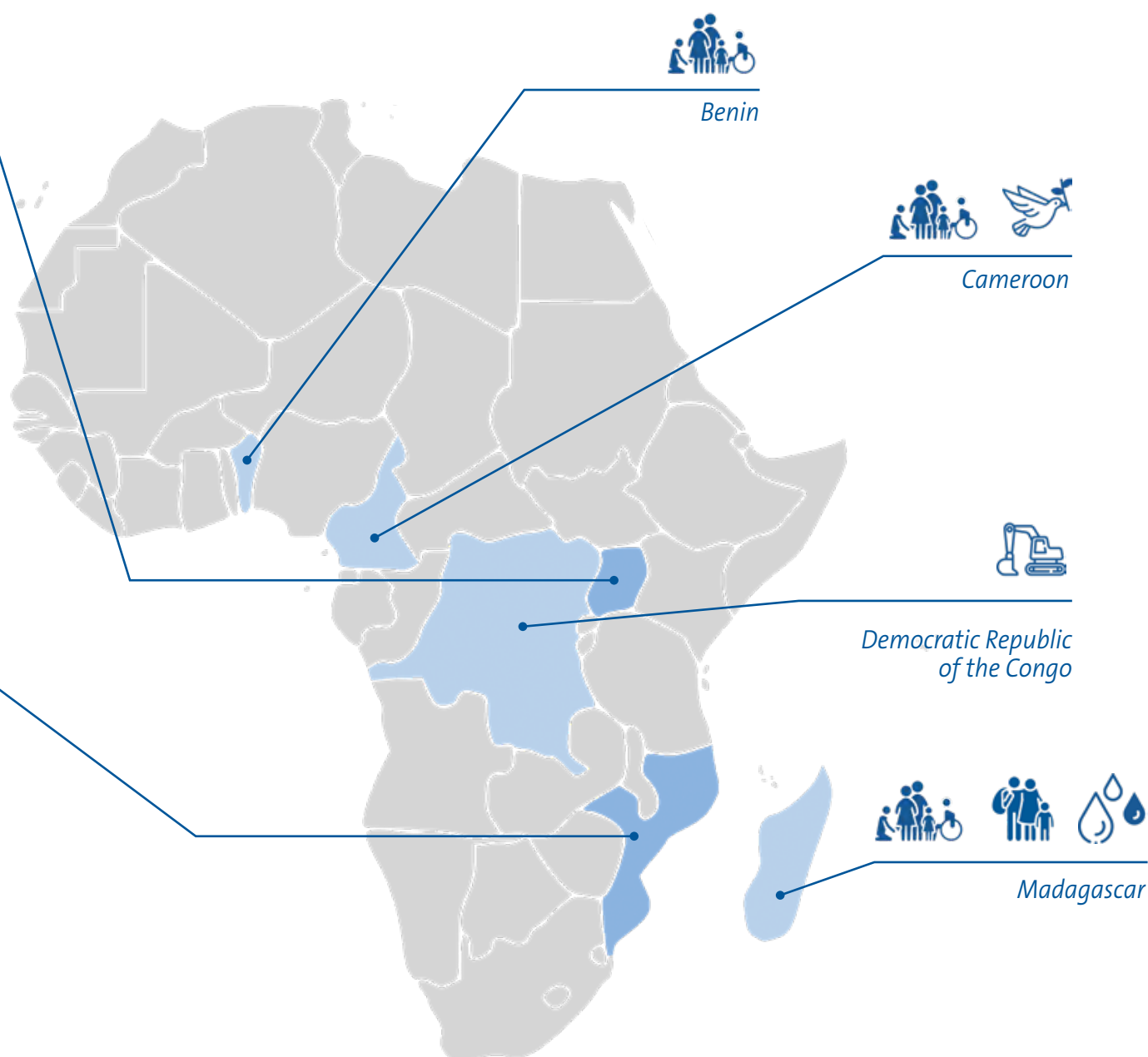


Uganda
© Franciscans International
Participants during a
workshop in Kampala.

Mozambique
© Franciscans International
Franciscan sisters check in with a
young mother in an IDP camp.

the Africa program in a nutshell

- Supported 10 Franciscan and other local groups in 6 different countries.
- Facilitated the online interventions of 3 partners from Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and Uganda.
- Conducted 3 country missions to Uganda, Mozambique, and Madagascar, meeting with national authorities, partners, and representatives of various Franciscan branches.
- Organized 5 workshops on UN human rights mechanisms and international advocacy during country visits in Madagascar, Mozambique, and Uganda.
- Submitted 5 reports to the UN including on gender-based violence in Uganda, the Anglophone crisis in Cameroon, and on mining issues in the DRC.
- Delivered 6 statements during relevant UN sessions on these issues.
- Organized 1 diplomatic briefing on the crisis in Cabo Delgado with speakers from Mozambique.



/ Americas Program /



Mexico



Guatemala



Existing trends of high-level corruption, the co-opting of judicial institutions, and criminalization of human rights defenders continue to grow in Guatemala. In 2022, Franciscans International hosted three partners, including two Indigenous human rights defenders, in Geneva where they were able to raise the deteriorating human rights situation in the country through both public and private interventions. In April, FI also invited environmental human rights defender Bernardo Caal Xol, shortly after his release from prison on charges stemming from his opposition to the development of hydroelectric projects without consultation of affected communities, to participate in an online event on the margins of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.



Panama



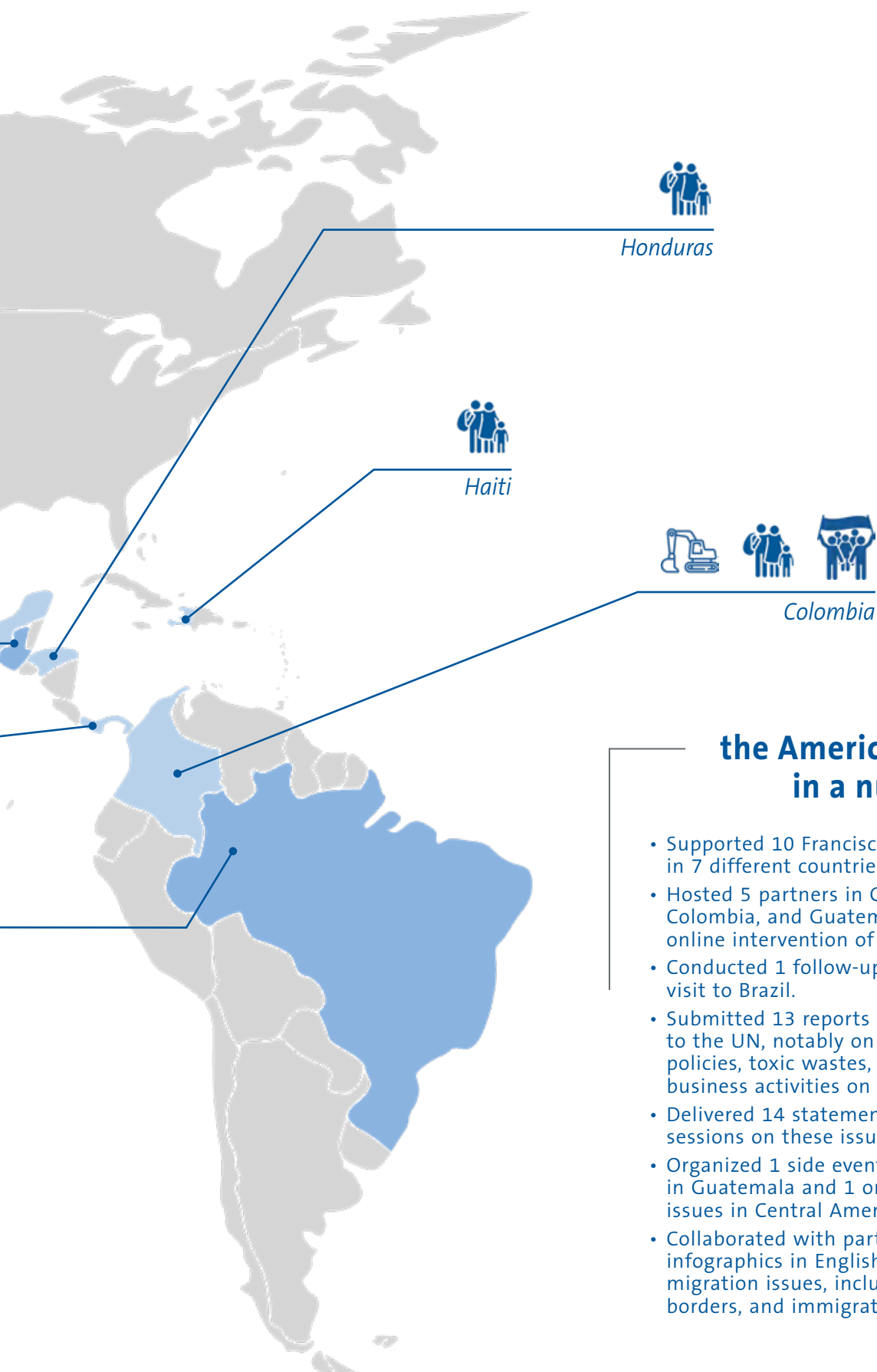
Brazil



Brazil has seen an alarming decline in its human rights situation under the presidency of Jair Bolsonaro. As existing social inequalities were exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, his administration has also weakened environmental laws, allowing extractive industries to operate on Indigenous lands without their consent. In August, Franciscans International visited the country ahead of its examination under Universal Periodic Review (UPR) to meet with Franciscans supporting marginalized communities. Following the visit, Brother Rodrigo Péret OFM travelled to Geneva to participate in the pre-sessions for Brazil's Universal Periodic Review. He met with diplomats and human rights experts at the United Nations, raising issues related to the lack of business accountability in Brazil and the marginalized position of Indigenous Peoples, who have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic, mining, toxic wastes, and the use of pesticides.

Guatemala
© Franciscans International
Human rights defenders present an Indigenous flag during a visit to FI's office in Geneva.

Brazil
© Franciscans International
The Indigenist Missionary Council (CIMI) presents a report on violence against Indigenous Peoples in Brazil.



the Americas program in a nutshell

- Supported 10 Franciscan and other local groups in 7 different countries.
- Hosted 5 partners in Geneva from Brazil, Colombia, and Guatemala, and facilitated the online intervention of 1 partner.
- Conducted 1 follow-up and coordination visit to Brazil.
- Submitted 13 reports and 1 letter of allegation to the UN, notably on harmful migration policies, toxic wastes, and the impact of business activities on Indigenous Peoples.
- Delivered 14 statements during relevant UN sessions on these issues.
- Organized 1 side event on Indigenous Peoples in Guatemala and 1 online event on migration issues in Central America.
- Collaborated with partners to publish 7 infographics in English and Spanish on migration issues, including the militarization of borders, and immigration detention.

/ Asia-Pacific Program /



Sri Lanka



Solomon Islands



Industrial logging has upset nearly all aspects of life for communities near or downstream of the harvesting sites: rivers are polluted, new invasive species destroy livelihoods, and women and young girls have fallen victims to trafficking. Working closely with the Society of Saint Francis, Franciscans International first raised this issue at the United Nations in 2021 during the Universal Periodic Review of the Solomon Islands, after which the government committed to improving the situation. In October 2022, we visited Guadalcanal Island to conduct a series of focus group discussions to see if these promises have been kept. The findings, combined with an extensive workshop conducted simultaneously, will be the basis for our continued engagement, which combines building grassroots resilience with UN advocacy.

the Asia-Pacific program in a nutshell

- Supported 13 Franciscan and other local groups in 5 different countries.
- Hosted 10 partners from Indonesia, Myanmar, the Philippines, and Sri Lanka in Geneva and facilitated the online intervention of 1 partner from the Solomon Islands during a side event.
- Conducted 2 in-country missions to follow up on Universal Periodic Review recommendations with partners in the Philippines, and to gather further evidence on the impact of logging in the Solomon Islands.
- Organized 2 capacity-building workshops on the lack of consultations with Indigenous Peoples in Indonesia and a series of trainings to prepare community consultations in the Solomon Islands.
- Submitted 8 reports to the UN, including on the rights of Indigenous women and girls, the protection of human rights defenders, extra-judicial killings, and the impacts of logging.
- Delivered 8 statements during relevant UN sessions on these issues.
- Organized 3 side events on the implementation of the last UPR cycle of Indonesia and the Philippines, and on Indigenous Peoples' rights in the Solomon Islands.



Myanmar



The Philippines

With the election of President Ferdinand Marcos in May 2022, the Philippines entered a new chapter in its troubled human rights history. The new administration, which took office after a controversial process marred by allegations of widespread disinformation, has failed to address the legacy of President Duterte's 'war on drugs, in which tens of thousands of Filipinos became victims of extra-judicial killings. Brother Angel Cortez OFM, who together with fellow Franciscans and other Catholic partners provides support to victims and their families, attended the 50th Session of the Human Rights Council to provide diplomats with updates on the situation on the ground and reiterate our calls for an international investigation into the violations. These concerns were further reflected in our joint stakeholders' submission and successfully taken up by States during the Philippines' examination under the Universal Periodic Review in November.



Indonesia

Solomon Islands
© Franciscans International
A brother of the Society of
Saint Francis during community
consultations in Guadalcanal.

The Philippines
© Franciscans International
Brother Angel Cortez OFM during
the 50th Session of the UN
Human Rights Council.

Financial Report 2022

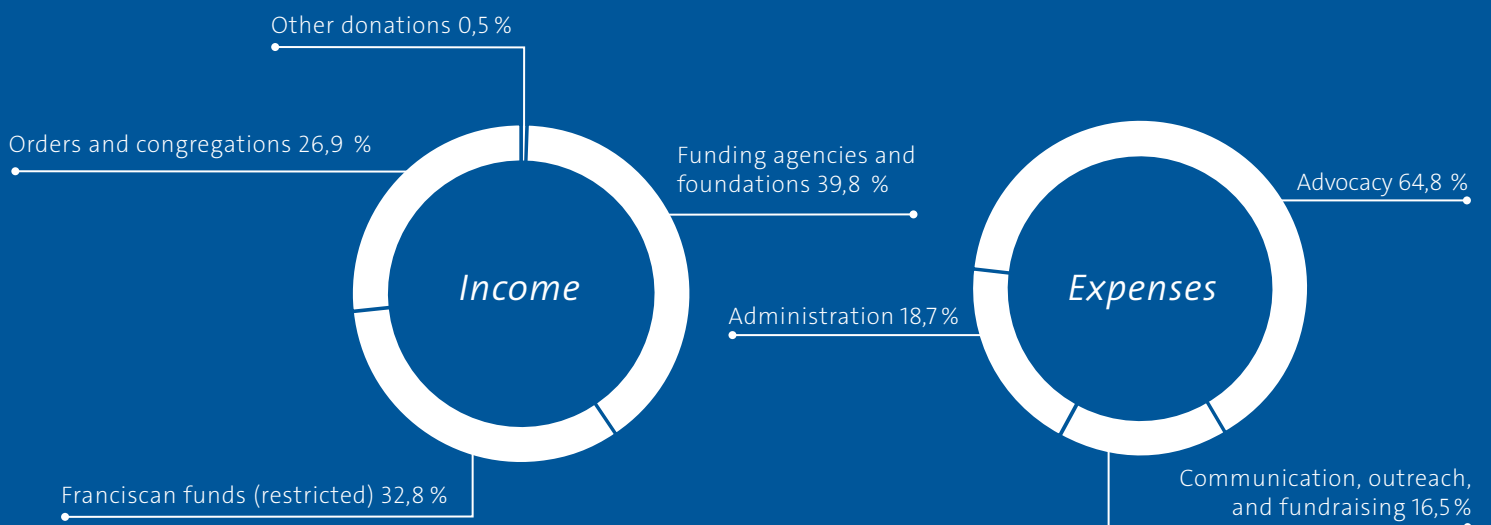
Reviewed by PricewaterhouseCoopers SA

<i>Income</i>	<i>CHF</i>
Franciscan Orders and Congregations (unrestricted)	325'322
Franciscan Funds (restricted)	396'094
Funding Agencies and Foundations	480'970
Other Donations	6'777
<i>Total income</i>	<i>1'209'163</i>

<i>Expenses</i>	<i>CHF</i>
Advocacy	760'594
Communications, Animation and Fundraising	194'325
Administration	219'126
<i>Total operating expenses</i>	<i>1'174'045</i>

Total non-operating income and expenses -41'815

Result of the year -6'697



Help us protect human dignity and the environment

Franciscans International is entirely dependent on donations from Franciscan orders and congregations, funding agencies and institutions, parishes, and people sensitive to Franciscan values of solidarity, peace, social justice, and respect for the environment. Make a difference with your donation and help us protect human dignity and the environment.

To donate, you can

- Go to www.franciscansinternational.org/donate

- Send a bank transfer:

Name of account holder: Franciscans International
Address of account holder: Rue de Vermont 37–39, CH 1202 Geneva

Bank Name: UBS SA
Address: Route de Florissant 59, CH 1206 Geneva
SWIFT/BIC: UBSWCHZH80A
IBAN: CH69 0024 0240 3573 8401 F

- If you're in the United States, you can also make a check payable to:

Franciscans International
246 East 46th Street #1F
NY 10017-2937, New York
United States



Franciscans International is a registered non-profit organization. Donations are tax deductible in Switzerland, the United States, and Germany. For more information on how you can support our work, please contact donations@franciscansinternational.org



Donor acknowledgement

Franciscans International wishes to express its sincere gratitude to the Franciscan Orders, Congregations, and all individual donors for their invaluable support of this Common Ministry.

We are also grateful to the following funding entities for their generous funding in 2022: Brot für die Welt (Germany), Dreikönigsaktion (Austria), Fastenaktion (Switzerland), Franciscan Foundation (United States), Franciscan Missions (United States), Franziskaner Helfen (Germany), Franziskaner Mission (Germany), Miseen Cara (Ireland), Misereor (Germany), Rose Marie Khoo Foundation (Singapore/Switzerland), Trócaire (Ireland).

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Our Vision

A global community in which the dignity of every person is respected, resources are shared equitably, the environment is sustained, and nations and peoples live in peace.

Our Mission

Using a rights-based approach, Franciscans International advocates at the United Nations for the protection of human dignity and environmental justice.



Franciscans International
A voice at the United Nations

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