Franciscans International
Strategy 2017-2020
Reclaiming the Central Role of Human Rights
Who We Are.
Franciscans International is an international non-governmental organisation advocating at the United Nations for the promotion, protection, and respect of all human rights, and for environmental justice.

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: being a Franciscan voice at the United Nations protecting the vulnerable, the forgotten, and the wounded earth through advocacy.

OUR VALUES:
Humility: we strive for a simple way of life, recognising our interdependence with all creation.
Reconciliation: we want to be in harmony with the world around us and promote peace.
Fraternity: we have a profound concern for the marginalised and the oppressed, and maintain a radical openness to “the other”.
Justice: we respect the dignity of every person and all creation, and work for equality.

What We Do.
FI works with grassroots and civil society movements to address the root causes of injustice, seeking to increase the respect and protection of human rights for the most marginalised people and communities around the globe.

FI uses advocacy - a process that aims to influence political decisions - as a tool to combat and curb human rights abuses. It understands advocacy as a means to amplify the voices of the marginalised.

From its offices in Geneva and New York, FI advocates for structural changes addressing the root causes of injustice. FI relies on the expertise and first-hand information gathered from a large network of partners working with the most disadvantaged and marginalised communities worldwide, to ensure that their voices are heard at the international level. FI has general consultative status at the United Nations, and therefore harnesses the UN system to achieve change at international, national and local levels.

FI’s main partners are the Franciscans, especially Justice Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) groups, and Franciscans working at the grassroots level.

FI’s main beneficiaries are the marginalised and the disadvantaged; those who are the most discriminated against. FI considers them to be agents of change, and strives to give them opportunities to participate directly in advocacy on issues that affect them.
The Context We Work In.

Human rights are at a crossroads.

There has been unprecedented progress both in the adoption of universal and robust standards in international human rights law, and in the concrete implementation of these standards (ex: the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights, and on Economic Social and Cultural Rights).

But human rights are not being prioritised by governments and they are constantly threatened by competing interests, like security and counter-terrorism policies, that unduly limit the enjoyment of human rights and freedoms, and business operations carried out in the name of development, that still put profit ahead of human rights.

Governments and powerful business actors who support unsustainable economic and development models have great influence on global policies related to development, the environment, climate action, and migration. These policies have a great impact on the enjoyment of human rights - especially for those who are already marginalised or living in extreme poverty - yet they are designed without any participation from the communities they affect.

There is a great need, therefore, to reclaim the central role of human rights in the formulation and framing of international and national public policies.

2013-2016 Achievements We Are Building On.

- FI built a solid global advocacy agenda, positioning itself as an important actor in key global processes taking place in Geneva and New York.


- As part of a network of civil society organisations, FI wielded significant influence over the United Nations' process on business accountability, contributing to the start of negotiations for a future treaty that strengthens the accountability of companies for the human rights abuses that they are responsible for. FI also drew the United Nations' attention to the violation of rights resulting from mining for local communities, documenting situations worldwide.

- FI has been a leading actor in advocating for the adoption of the United Nations' Guiding Principles on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights. It has also played an important role in the implementation of these Principles by contributing to the elaboration of the Handbook "Making human rights work for people living in extreme poverty".
Peace, sustainable development, the environment, and human rights are inextricably linked: conflicts and unequal development are likely to continue in situations where human rights continue to be violated regularly. Without respect for human rights, progress towards peace and sustainable development will be hindered. **Human rights standards, therefore, must be central in all political processes, in particular those related to development, poverty reduction, the environment, peace, and conflict prevention.**

Over the years, FI has built recognised expertise for human rights advocacy. It has developed a wide range of partnerships and links with key people and networks, both locally and globally, who have made it possible for FI to draw on first-hand information and testimony from the grassroots.

**With this 2017-2020 Strategy, FI will focus on its continued engagement in major global policy processes.** This will require close collaboration between our New York and Geneva offices, as well as the integration of global advocacy themes into FI's regional programmes. Our regional programs will focus on specific target countries, where our advocacy will have the most impact. For the next four years, FI will work relentlessly to place human rights at the heart of political processes, especially where the three pillars of its mission are concerned: human dignity, environmental justice, and peace.
Our Strategic Approach for 2017-2020.

In order for FI's vision to come to pass, human rights must be at the heart of development, environmental, and security policies. To this end we will work towards 4 specific outcomes that reflect the pillars of our mission: human dignity, environmental justice, and peace. To achieve these outcomes, we will carry out our advocacy at the United Nations, where we will denounce, influence, and mobilise. In support of this, we will also reach out to the Franciscan network and continue strengthening the organisation.

**IMPACT**

Human Rights at the heart of international development, environmental, and security policies

**EXPECTED OUTCOMES**

- The implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and of climate actions includes solid human rights standards.
- Instruments developed for the global regulation of and responsibility-sharing for refugees and migration include effective human rights norms.
- Demonstrable progress towards the adoption of an international treaty effectively addressing human rights abuses by businesses is made.
- Violations of human rights in the context of security policies and conflict management are documented and denounced.

**ACTIVITIES**

**DENOUNCE** human rights abuses and raise awareness about them.
- documenting abuses linked to mining and the extractive industry
- reporting violations towards migrants
- warning about repression in response to social unrest

**INFLUENCE** policy makers at the United Nations towards greater human rights protection.
- facilitating the participation of marginalised groups in policy-making processes
- amplifying the voice of the marginalised (indigenous peoples, migrants, those living in extreme poverty, those affected by climate change, those affected by corporate abuses) at the United Nations

**MOBILISE** partners to advocate at local level towards concrete change.
- empowering partners to monitor human rights for accountability and advocacy, and to achieve legislative and policy changes
- growing and diversifying collaborations with key partners and influential networks

**REACH OUT** to the Franciscan network about human rights.
- making connections between Franciscan values and human rights
- training Franciscans on promoting the importance of human rights work throughout Franciscan networks
- building a community of Franciscans who value human rights

**STRENGTHEN** FI to maximise support for efficient advocacy.
- strengthening and diversifying FI’s donor-base
- producing strong and effective communication material
- providing supportive and responsive management structures

3 PILLARS OF FI's MISSION

- Human Rights in Development
- Human Rights in Environment
- Human Rights in Security
OUTCOME #1.
The implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and of climate actions includes solid human rights principles and norms.

Problem:
Hundreds of thousands of people suffer from the negative effects of economic projects carried out in the name of development. This includes human rights violations as well as increasing inequalities in wealth distribution. The limited participation of marginalised groups in development policy-making processes that affect them usually generates more poverty, injustice, and inequalities.

The 2030 Agenda, with its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change represent a step forward in linking development and climate action to human rights. But many non-governmental organisations, including FI, are concerned that they do not critique the current development model, and still give too much space to the private sector, thus prioritising profit over the respect of human rights. Many of the indicators being considered to measure progress in the implementation of the SDGs miss key human rights principles such as empowerment, meaningful participation and accountability.

OUTCOME #2.
Negotiations and instruments developed for the global regulation of and responsibility-sharing for refugees and migration include effective human rights norms.

Problem:
The global refugee crisis is reaching unprecedented severity, with hundreds of thousands of people being displaced because of violence and conflict. In addition, massive human rights violations are affecting migrants at borders, in transit, and in destination countries. Many of the migrant crises have been treated as emergencies, with a mostly humanitarian approach. However, humanitarian help is not enough: migrants and refugees do not stop having human rights because they are on the move. Millions of undocumented migrants are working and living worldwide outside of established systems, afraid to complain, denied fundamental rights and freedoms such as health and education. Many of them are marginalised and subject to discrimination. They are vulnerable to all sorts of crime, extortion, and violence perpetrated in complete impunity. Protection mechanisms are not accessible to most migrants, and the authorities that are supposed to protect them are showing increased violence and/or repression towards them.

FI will:
- Monitor the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the way they impact human rights.
- Promote and support national efforts to help those living in extreme poverty participate in the promotion and protection of their rights.
- Denounce human rights abuses perpetrated by business actors operating in the context of national economic growth and development strategies.

FI will:
- Focus on the protection of migrants and their rights, advocating for these to be at the center of migration policies and governance.
- Denounce the human rights violations suffered by migrants in their transit and host countries, and bring these to international attention.
- Ensure that migrants themselves participate in processes and negotiations that concern them, as well as seek to amplify their voice in key forums, especially at the United Nations.
OUTCOME #3.
An international treaty effectively addressing human rights abuses by businesses is moving towards being adopted.

Problem:
Transnational corporations continue to perpetrate human rights and environmental abuses through their activities in the countries where they operate, and too often benefit from complete impunity. Affected communities see their land and sources of water grabbed and their environment polluted, suffering from the impact of projects designed and implemented without their meaningful consultation and engagement. These communities suffer from poor access to healthcare, violence, or the worst forms of child labour, among other human rights violations. Their struggle to claim their rights, including those to obtain justice and reparation, too often proves fruitless.

FI will:
- Promote the respect of human rights in all business operations, especially in the mining sector.
- Advocate for greater accountability for business abuses, including access to justice for victims by continuing to call for an effective international legally binding instrument for business accountability.
- Denounce human rights abuses by business actors in the context of national economic growth and development strategies such as megaprojects for mining, dams, and industrial complexes.
- Ensure that the voices of those most affected are heard at the United Nations and other levels.

OUTCOME #4.
Violations of human rights in the context of security policies and conflict management are documented and denounced.

Problem:
The attacks on human rights defenders are massively on the rise with a space for civil society that is dramatically shrinking; the presence of military personnel in rural areas is increasing, emergency laws are being expanded and repressive security policies are multiplying. In this context, the increasing criminalisation of social protest and poverty is becoming worse. Marginalised communities, who face blatant inequalities and violations of their rights, are turning to protests to catch their government’s attention. These kinds of protests, even if overwhelmingly peaceful, have increasingly been repressed, often violently, with disproportionate use of force.

FI will:
- Advocate for the respect of human rights in the context of heightened security policies.
- Denounce attacks on social activists and human rights and environmental defenders, and the militarisation of rural areas.
- Denounce the prevalence of repressive security policies in response to social unrest, and the human rights violations in the implementation of crime prevention strategies.
We wish to thank FI’s staff, International Board of Directors, and field partners for their contribution in developing this 2017-2020 strategy.

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Summarised and designed by Thaïs Ruegg, Communications Officer at FI.
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FI Offices
Franciscans International
37-39 rue de Vermont
P.O. Box 104
CH-1211 Geneva 20
Switzerland
T: +41 22 779 4010
F: +41 22 779 4012
geneva@fiop.org

Franciscans International
246 East 46th Street #1
New York
NY 10017-2937
United States
T: +1 (917) 675 1075
newyork@fiop.org