



**Franciscans International**

A voice at the United Nations




**Franciscans International**

Annual Report 2017

## *Imprint*

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Cover photo: © UNHCR/Markel Redondo

Genesis A. Cerrato, 16, with her one-year old son in the room they are renting in Tenosique, Mexico. Genesis, along with her whole family, fled Honduras escaping the increasing violence in her home country.

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## */ Letter from the President /*

As President of the International Board of Directors of Franciscans International, I am pleased to offer you the Annual Report for 2017. This publication presents the main activities of our organization. It highlights the breadth, depth and impact of our work, and provides an entry point into our advocacy work at both local and international levels.

In 2016, following an evaluation of the organization, Franciscans International developed a four-year institutional strategy; 2017 has been its first year of implementation. It sets goals for both advocacy work and organizational development.

Within this framework, Franciscans International decided to strengthen its capacity to have an impact on multiple levels. Together with the management team and in line with the Strategic Plan 2017-2020, we hired a person in New York to represent us at the United Nations, thus reinforcing our advocacy presence there.

Further, we developed an outreach program geared to the Franciscan Family, including an internship opportunity for Franciscan friars and sisters. It aims to provide the intern a better understanding of the work of Franciscans International and enables him or her to effectively communicate the close relationship between the Franciscan charism and human rights.

On behalf of the International Board of Directors of Franciscans International and of the Conference of the Franciscan Family, I want to thank all who have contributed to making our work possible. I would especially like to remember the Franciscan Orders and Congregations who continue to support this common ministry of the Franciscan Family, the funding agencies and foundations, our partners, and all those who have collaborated with Franciscans International. In particular I want to thank the staff and management for their excellent work and dedication.

May God continue to bless our important mission!

**Joseph Rozansky, OFM**

*President, Franciscans International Board of Directors*



## */ Letter from the Executive Director /*

Throughout 2017, human dignity, equality and rights have been under relentless assault in a multitude of places. From Japan to the Philippines, from the Mexican border to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, political violence and human rights abuses have persistently made headlines.



For many years, Franciscans International has been at the forefront of human and environmental rights protection advocating at the United Nations with key national and international stakeholders on behalf of affected communities.

With the addition to the team of a Representative to the United Nations in New York, Franciscans International is increasing its presence, profile, and advocacy engagement in key international policy-making processes, like the UN Global Compact for Migration and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. At the same time, thanks to the efforts of a Franciscan intern focusing on outreach, we intensified our communication to the Franciscan Family worldwide.

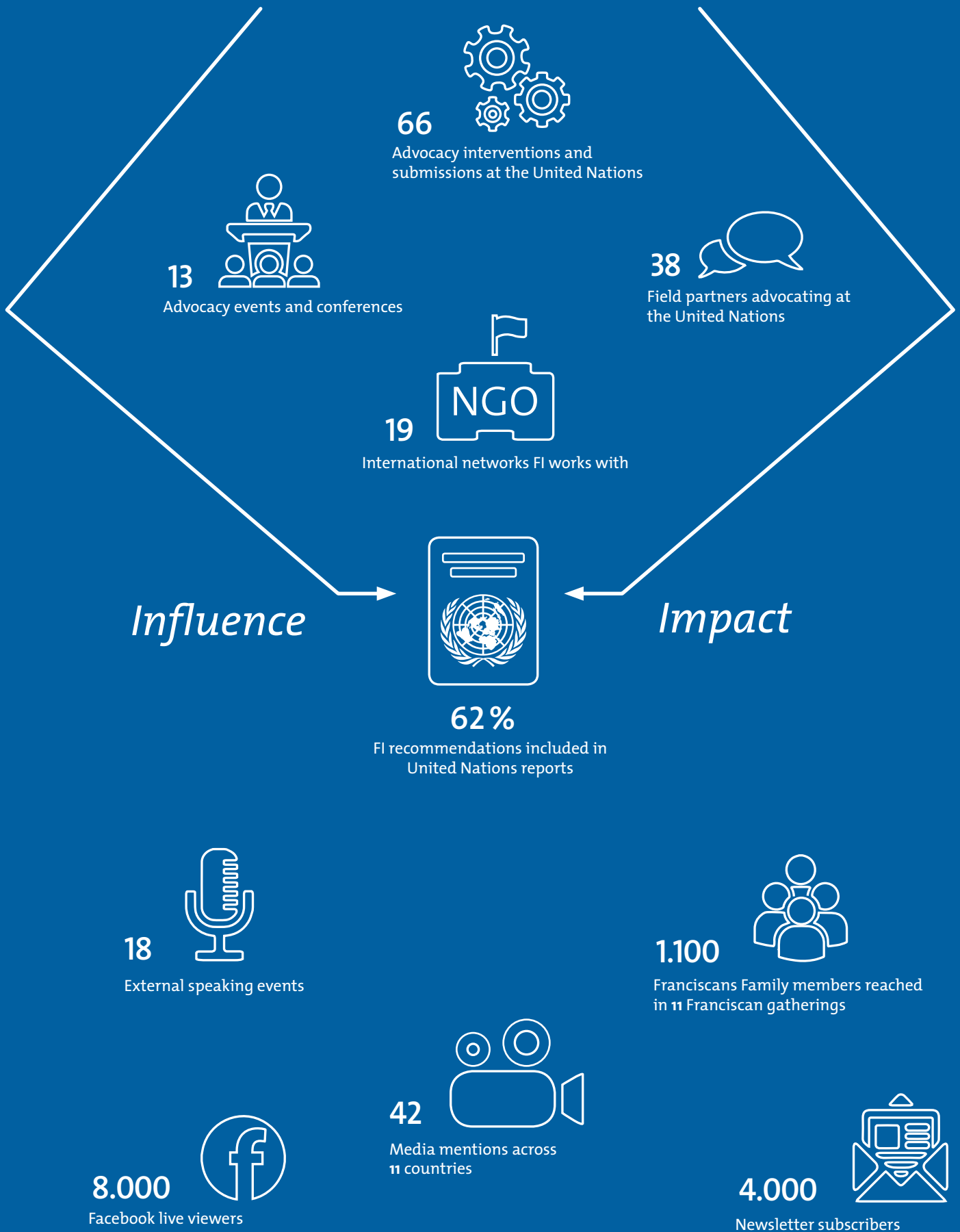
2017 has also been the year in which Franciscans International's staff travelled to Assisi to hone their understanding of the origin of the Franciscan charism. There, together with the International Board of Directors staff members had the opportunity to be inspired by the lives and actions of Francis and Clare to carry out their human rights work.

Finally, as the Executive Director, and on behalf of all staff, I wish to express my sincere gratitude to all those who contributed to make this important work possible. In particular, the Franciscan Orders and Congregations, the funding agencies, our partners, and all our collaborators. Without this support, Franciscans International would not be in the position of working to create a global community where the dignity of every person is respected, resources are shared equitably, the environment is sustained, and nations and peoples live in peace.

**Markus Heinze, OFM**

*Executive Director, Franciscans International*

# Franciscans International in Numbers





© UN Photo/Cia Pak  
General Assembly at the UN in New York holding a brief special segment to mark the first anniversary of the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

## */ About Franciscans International /*

For almost 30 years, Franciscans International has worked tirelessly to bring to the attention of policymakers the human rights issues that Franciscans and our lay partners experience at the grassroots level. Working with civil society in over 30 countries across four continents, Franciscans International tackles some of the most pressing human rights issues of our times.

At the core of Franciscans International's mission is a belief in the dignity of all people, which is lived out in a commitment to protecting and preserving human rights and the environment. We use advocacy as a tool to combat and curb human rights abuses, and to reclaim the central role of human rights in the formulation and framing of national and international public policies. We believe that human rights must be at the heart of all political processes, in particular those that are related to international development, the environment, and security.

With offices in Geneva and New York, Franciscans International has a significant role to play in denouncing human rights violations and in supporting human rights defenders in an effective way. Through evidence-based advocacy, discussion and capacity building, and by providing our partners with the opportunity to address the human rights violations occurring in their communities directly at the United Nations, we are able to engage and fulfill our mission of promoting social and environmental justice, and peace.

Franciscans International operates under the sponsorship of the Conference of the Franciscan Family (CFF), composed of the Ministers General of the Conventuals (OFM Conv.), the Capuchins (OFM Cap.), the Order of Friars Minor (OFM), the Third Order Regular (TOR), the Secular Franciscans (OFS), and the President of the International Franciscan Conference of the Sisters and Brothers of the Third Order Regular (IFC-TOR). The International Board of Directors, which includes representatives from each branch of the CFF and one from the Society of Saint Francis (an Anglican Franciscan community), and the management team of Franciscans International oversee the activities of Franciscans International to ensure that the organization supports and maintains the Franciscan Family's commitment to justice and peace throughout the world.

Franciscans International is a non-profit which operates only thanks to generous donations from public, private and Franciscan sources.



© UN Photo/Manuel Elias  
A view of the United Nations flag flying in a summer day.





UNITED NATIONS  NATIONS UNIES



# Global Engagement

The 2017-2020 Strategic Plan outlines clear overarching thematic priorities and highlights the human rights issues for which global processes within the United Nations are highly relevant.

The core objectives that have been pursued by Franciscans International in these various processes are to uphold and integrate human rights in States' policies and to advocate for increased protection, especially of marginalized and disadvantaged individuals and groups.

## Human rights in global debates

To achieve these objectives, in addition to the continuous engagement in Geneva, Franciscans International has strengthened its capacity in the New York office to follow and contribute to the various global processes taking place at the UN Headquarters.

Together with partners, Franciscans International has worked to promote the integration of human rights into the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Specifically, we initiated work to document and critically assess the link between States' existing human rights obligations and their implementation of the SDGs. We have also been advocating with States and other actors in Geneva and in New York for a more active role of human rights protection mechanisms in the follow-up and monitoring of the SDGs.

In 2017, Franciscans International also pursued its engagement with international debates on the relation between climate change and human rights at both the UN Climate Change Conference COP 23, in Bonn, and at the UN Human Rights Council. Franciscans International focused its efforts within this realm specifically on the issues around displacement and migration due to the impact of climate change and the slow onset of environmental crisis.

Our engagement with global processes included questioning the repressive responses to global challenges such as migration, the criminalization of social protests and poverty.

*It was an educative training with empowering trainers on issues such as poverty eradication and SDGs. I will make sure to transfer the training experience to my community in the Mukuru slum.*

Evans Omondi,  
Community leader  
Mukuru informal settlement  
Nairobi, Kenya

## Franciscans International offices



*FI's work at the UN is a great source of pride and encouragement for me and my brothers.*

Clark Berge, SSF,  
Member of the International  
Board of Directors

*Thank you FI for focusing on assisting us at the grassroots and facilitating our work at the UN level. Keep up the excellent work.*

Sr. Anne Celestine Achieng, FSSJ,  
Board member  
Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation  
Franciscans Africa  
Kenya

### Local voices

To make these global processes more relevant for affected communities, Franciscans International ensured the direct participation in the international fora dealing with sustainable development for people living in extreme poverty. We also ensured the participation of national partners within the international debate on business accountability.

Mr. Evans Omondi, a representative of the residents of the Mukuru informal settlement in Nairobi, Kenya, joined Franciscans International at the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in New York, in July 2017.

Mr. Omondi's engagement was the result of the work that Franciscans International's field partners have done in Kenya using the Handbook on Extreme Poverty – published by the International Movement ATD Fourth World and Franciscans International in 2015 – as an instrument of change. Communities in Mukuru developed their strategy and engaged in direct advocacy with local authorities to improve their situation in terms of access to infrastructures and security of land tenure.

As a Mukuru community member and representative, Mr. Omondi attended the High Level Political Forum and was able to observe how Kenya presented to the international community its efforts against extreme poverty. Having access to this process, he said, empowered him to advocate further with local authorities.

### Supporting partners in increasing their capacities

Franciscans International believes it is crucial to bring local voices to global processes, assisting affected people to speak for themselves, and to be directly involved in supporting the international policy-making processes that affect them. For these reasons we assist partners to develop their skills in advocacy and organizing for social change and in exchanging experiences with others. In September 2017, eleven participants from ten countries across the globe gathered at Franciscans International's office in Geneva to participate in a training focusing on human rights, SDGs, and climate change. The participants shared their experiences around extreme poverty, land grabbing, water and sanitation, and business abuses. They discussed these issues with international experts; and identified strategic ways to engage with the UN in New York and Geneva. To put theory into practice, some participants took the opportunity of being in Geneva to lobby diplomatic missions, and to meet UN special rapporteurs' teams.

Our partners left the training having honed their technical knowledge, but also having fleshed out more concrete action plans. Several of the projects discussed during the various sessions are already underway – including a follow-up regional seminar that took place in Uganda, in December 2017.

### Documenting specific human rights violations

In the past year, Franciscans International has also continued documenting and denouncing human rights violations affecting specific communities. We have recorded and spoken out against attacks on human rights defenders carried out in the context of national economic growth and development strategies – e.g. megaprojects for mining, dams, and industrial complexes.

In particular, Franciscans International, together with partners, has published two case studies focusing on mining projects in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Peru.





These case studies, which denounced human rights violations and environmental damage caused by extractive industries, were an important element of our engagement at the UN Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on Transnational Corporations and other Business Enterprises with respect to Human Rights (IGWG), which took place in Geneva, in October 2017. There, together with longstanding partners we advocated for the elaboration of future binding international rules for increased business accountability for human rights abuses.









# Regional Programs

## / Africa Program /

Franciscans International's engagement in the Africa region in the past year has focused mainly on the issues of security, environmental rights, extreme poverty and on the protection of the rights of women and children.

### *Democratic Republic of the Congo*

The political crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), where democracy is under threat and violence and human rights violations are recurrent, has been the object of close scrutiny and advocacy work.

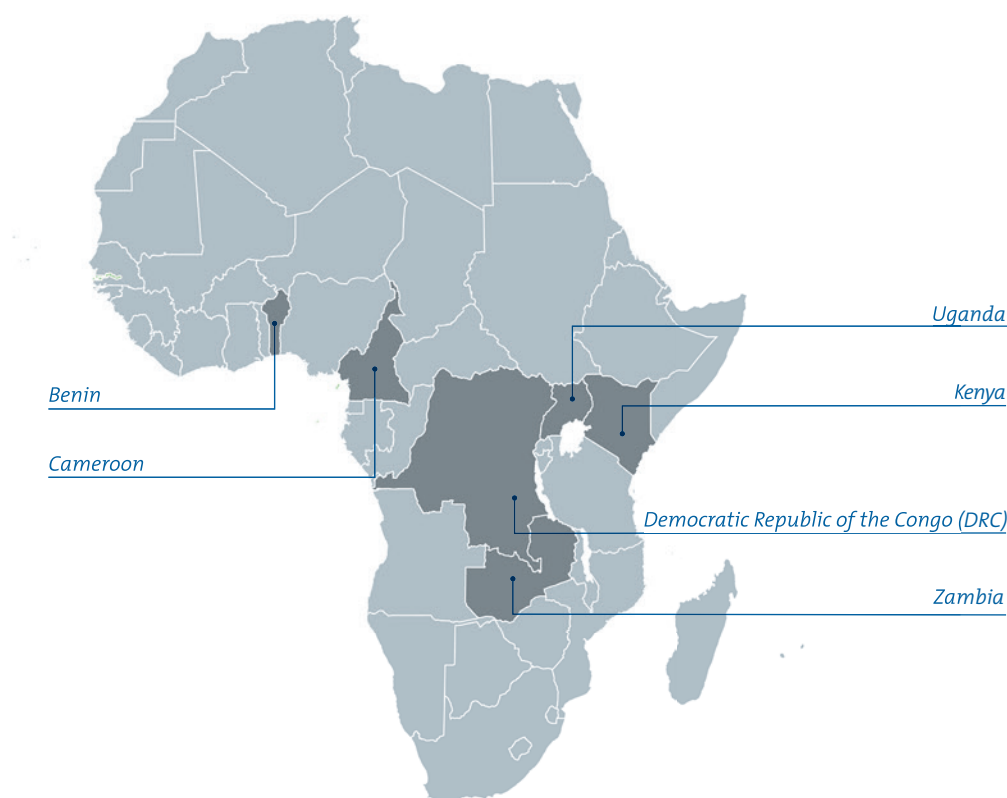
Of particular concern was the situation in the Kasai region, where people were massacred by the thousands and 1.4 million people were internally displaced. Partnering with the National Episcopal Conference of the Congo (CENCO), Franciscans International worked to bring this crisis to the forefront of the international debate.

During the 35th Session of the UN Human Rights Council (HRC), Franciscans International organized a conference with the participation of Msgr. Fridolin Ambongo Besungu, the vice-president of CENCO. He gave his perspective on the political situation in the country and advocated for an independent international investigation on the atrocities committed in the Kasai region. At the end of the 35th session, the HRC decided to send a team of international experts to the DRC to conduct an investigation into the allegations of human rights violations and abuses committed in the Kasai region.



© FI/Christian Seno  
Msgr. Fridolin Ambongo Besungu, the vice-president of National Episcopal Conference of the Congo (CENCO).

### *Focus countries*



*FI has the ability to put us in contact with relevant bodies at the United Nations and to support us in the drafting of our advocacy material. Thanks to this, our advocacy is now echoed at the UN.*

Cyrille Ebotoko Longomo,  
Justice and Peace Commission for  
the National Episcopal Conference  
of Congo, DRC (CENCO)

*The collaboration with FI made a positive difference by ensuring that, during the CEDAW Committee in Geneva, I could draw attention to the sexual and gender-based violence that my community is facing in the informal settlement of Mukuru.*

Anastasia Wakonyo,  
Representative  
Wangukanja Foundation  
Mukuru informal settlement  
Nairobi, Kenya

## Zambia

Franciscans International is also engaged in Zambia, where it has partnered with the Rural Women's Assembly to advocate for the respect of basic human rights for the population affected by mining.

Zambia is a country rich in natural resources, historically their economy has relied heavily on mining. However, the wealth produced by this sector has not been redistributed equitably amongst the population. Zambia, in fact, is a country where a large part of the population lives in extreme poverty and where inequality levels are high.

Evidence gathered at the grassroots level demonstrates how, in the past decades, communities have been forcibly displaced from their ancestral lands to pave the way for mining projects. The displaced communities, some evicted from their houses as early as 2005, have not received proper compensation and are still struggling to secure their basic rights.

Mining also has a negative impact on the environment in the areas of current and past operations. In the majority of affected communities, the waste from large-scale mining has polluted local aquifers making water unsafe to drink and the irrigation of fields almost impossible. The pollution from extractive industries in Zambia has severe repercussions on the right to health, water and adequate food of the local population, in particular, small-scale farmers and women.

Franciscans International and its partners have advocated for policy change and for the introduction of environmental safeguards at the international level. This effort culminated in the submission of a report to the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Zambia highlighting the issues relating to mining. As a result of this advocacy action States recommended Zambia ensure effective participation of affected communities in decision making processes having an impact on them.

## Benin

Children's rights are another issue Franciscans International has been heavily engaged in throughout 2017. In particular, we continued working with the issue of ritual infanticide in Northern Benin, the killing of so-called 'witch children'. These are infants who experienced an 'abnormal' birth, which includes among others: physical defects, the death of the mother following birthing, or a nonstandard position of the infant while being delivered.

To draw the attention of the international community to this practice, Franciscans International focused its advocacy efforts on the UPR of Benin. Within this framework, it provided technical assistance to field partners for the organization of the first UPR pre-session at the national level in Cotonou, Benin, which gathered civil society actors and diplomatic representatives. Similarly, Franciscans International facilitated the participation of Franciscans-Bénin in lobbying activities prior to the review as well as their participation to the UPR session at the United Nations in Geneva. These efforts contributed to the commitment from the Government of Benin to take action, ensuring effective implementation of the new Child Code, including the protection of all children from harm.





© UNHCR/John Wessels  
Sister Godelieve is one of many religious who help serve food to internally displaced children from Kasai in Kananga, Kasai Central Province.

## *Mukuru, Nairobi, Kenya*

Many women and girls face gender-based violence on a daily basis, especially if they live in contexts of extreme poverty where basic services are lacking. Mukuru is an example of this: an informal settlement in Nairobi, Kenya, where access to sanitation, clean water, and health facilities is a daily struggle.

Ms. Anastasia Wakonyo, a paralegal for the Wangukanja Foundation, an organization based in Mukuru that focuses on supporting survivors of sexual violence and a partner of Franciscans International, explains: “In Mukuru, if you need to use the bathroom at night there is no light and there are no services nearby, so you have to go to a private place in the dark. That’s where many of the sexual violence occur”.

Despite the high incidence of gender-based violence in informal settlements, the Government of Kenya has not yet responded effectively to this problem. The weight of legally, psychologically and medically supporting the survivors of sexual violence rests on the shoulders of community-run shelters like the one where Ms. Wakonyo works.

Franciscans International has worked to bring the voice of affected communities to the centre of the international debate to advocate for policy change at the national level. It is within this context that Ms. Wakonyo travelled to Geneva to attend the review of Kenya by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

As a result of the advocacy work from Franciscans International and others, CEDAW recommended the Government of Kenya adopt measures ensuring that the forms necessary to denounce the violence are available free of charge. In addition, the Committee recommended that Kenya provide adequate training on women’s rights to law enforcement officials and increase the number of shelters providing assistance to survivors of sexual violence.

“I am so proud to have represented my community as a woman human rights defender, and I am especially happy to see the violence that women face in informal settlements being part of the [CEDAW] report. I hope the government will take measures and ensure that what has been put down by CEDAW will be respected,” said Ms. Wakonyo.







## / Americas Program /

Franciscans International's engagement in the Americas has focused on some of the most pressing human rights issues occurring in the continent. In the past year, the Americas desk worked predominantly on the protection of populations at risk, including migrants, refugees, indigenous peoples and communities affected by extractive industries, as well as on issues related to environmental rights.

### Haiti

Longstanding human rights issues affect the lives of Haitians on daily basis. These include the failure to recognize economic, social and cultural rights, as well as the important degradation of the environment and the country's vulnerability to climate change and natural disasters.

Within this context, Franciscans International has worked in 2017 to strengthen its partnership with Haiti's National Episcopal Commission for Justice and Peace (CE-JILAP) and with the Franciscan Family of Haiti. This work took place through a concerted effort to protect the rights of populations at risk, specifically persons deprived of liberty and persons affected by natural disasters. The advocacy effort in this direction has been divided in two work streams: a first one on the ground and a second one within international human rights organizations.

Franciscans International visited Haiti, where there was the opportunity to collect evidence and to meet directly with affected people and with partners. The dramatic situation of the National Penitentiary (Pénitencier National) in Port-au-Prince, where 42 people died while in detention in the weeks leading to the visit, epitomized the gravity of the issue and the necessity of immediate action.

*Franciscans International,  
as part of our allies,  
accompanies us in all the  
steps we take to achieve a  
just world where the right to  
migrate and not to migrate  
in conditions of dignity is  
respected.*

Tomás González Castillo, OFM,  
Founder  
La 72 Hogar Refugio Para Personas Migrantes  
Tenosique, Mexico

## Focus countries



*The invitation to participate to an event at the UN in Geneva focusing on Venezuelan migration [to Brazil] allowed us to give visibility to what is happening in Roraima and made us understand the need to register, with more care, all the work that had been done. [...] With [Franciscans International's] help, it was possible to organize ourselves better. [...] Thanks to the visibility [FI] gave us, we also developed a partnership with the IOM, with the UNHCR and with the Brazilian Labour Ministry.*

Sr. Telma Lage,  
Missionárias de Nossa Senhora das Dores  
Coordinator  
Center for Migration and Human Rights  
Diocese of Roraima, Brazil

Franciscans International also denounced the situation to international human rights organizations, including the United Nations. In particular, we delivered oral statements at the 34th Session of the UN Human Rights Council and submitted reports based on the violence witnessed in the National Penitentiary to various UN Special Rapporteurs. Finally, taking the opportunity of his visit to Haiti, the Regional Coordinator contributed to a capacity training where more than 20 people from all over Haiti participated.

### **Mexico**

The rights of migrants and refugees is another issue that has been one of the main areas of concern of Franciscans International in the Americas.

Franciscans International has continued to work to secure the right of the hundreds of thousands fleeing violence and poverty in Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala to migrate and seek refuge in Mexico. Within that context, we supported the advocacy conducted by La 72 Hogar Refugio Para Personas Migrantes (La 72), a Franciscan project based in Tenosique, Mexico. La 72 is one of the biggest shelters for migrants and refugees in Mexico and provides legal, health and psychological support to people on the move.

The information gathered in their daily activities has been key in advocating for the rights of migrants and refugees at the UN level in Geneva. Together with La 72, Franciscans International organized a side-event to the 35th Session of the UN Human Rights Council to raise awareness of the situation of migrants and refugees in the Northern Triangle of Central America. Further, Franciscans International submitted a request for an urgent appeal to the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing and on internally displaced people. With La 72 and other Geneva-based partners, we submitted a report focusing on Human Rights Defenders working with migrants to the UN Committee on Migrant Workers in the context of Mexico's review.

### **El Salvador**

The Americas have also experienced the violation of human rights related to the environment, such as the right to water and the right to a healthy environment. Among other cases that Franciscans International brought to the attention of the international community the one of El Salvador stands out.

Metal mining in El Salvador, has very serious implications for the country. Although not practiced on an industrial scale for decades, more than 90% of the surface waters are heavily polluted and deforestation is the most widespread in the Americas, after Haiti. Since 2004, popular movements – including the Franciscan Family – are active in El Salvador to prohibit metal mining. In early 2017, after a long advocacy work at the grassroots level, a law prohibiting metal mining was adopted by the national congress.

Franciscans International, together with its Franciscan Salvadorian partners, has advocated at the UN level to pressure the Government of El Salvador to implement this law. With this aim, Franciscans International has also organized a side-event to the 36th Session of the UN Human Rights Council focusing on the impact of mining in terms of environmental, water and human rights, sustainability, and cross-border waters resources.





© MSF/Anna Surinyach  
Central American migrants traveling by train in Mexico.

## *Roraima, Brazil*

The Americas desk has worked hard to raise awareness about migrants from Venezuela going into northern Brazil and protect their human rights. With the help of partners on the ground, many issues related to the protection of migrants and the rights of indigenous people have been addressed.

The migration crisis in Roraima, Brazil, is a direct consequence of the political and economic crisis of Venezuela. The largest majority of the people leaving Venezuela for Brazil are looking to secure their basic rights and a future for themselves and their children.

Franciscans International together with Sister Telma Lage of the Centre for Migration and Human Rights of the Diocese of Roraima, one of our Brazilian partners, advocated for the rights and protections of migrants at the UN in Geneva. This included a side-event to the 35th Session of the UN Human Rights Council, a submission to the Special Rapporteurs on the human rights

of migrants and on the rights of indigenous peoples, and targeted communication with representatives of UN Member States in Geneva. The national and international pressure resulted in the Brazilian Federal Minister of Health announcing that the federal government would transfer 12 million Reais (3.7 million USD) to help the State of Roraima cope with the influx of migrants from Venezuela. As well, the Brazilian Minister of Justice announced that the Federal Police would increase its presence near the border with Venezuela to improve the services it provides to migrants.

Finally, as a result of its advocacy work with Franciscans International, the Centre for Migration and Human Rights of the diocese of Roraima received 40,000 USD from the International Organization for Migration (IOM), which will be used to provide direct services to migrants. It also signed an agreement with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and a partnership with the Brazilian Labor Ministry.





**BAWAL**

**MAGSAKAY AT MAGBABA**

**NG PASAHERO DITO**



DIED



## / Asia-Pacific Program /

In the past year, Franciscans International has engaged with long-standing, as well as newly emerging, issues in the Asia-Pacific region. These include extrajudicial killings, transitional justice, freedom of expression, the rights of indigenous peoples, and the rights of asylum seekers and refugees.

### *Philippines*

The Philippines is living in a period of intense Government-sanctioned violence against its own people. Shortly after taking power in 2016, President Duterte initiated a so-called “war on drugs”, a set of draconian policies aimed at freeing the country from drugs, drug dealers, and drug users. So far, this violence has claimed thousands of lives, a large part of which is caused by extrajudicial killings performed in the context of institutionalized impunity. The victims of these executions are largely poor urban dwellers, drug addicts, small dealers, and innocent bystanders caught in the crossfire – including children.

Franciscans International has worked with local and international partners to bring the issue of the extrajudicial killings to international attention, especially to the United Nations (UN), and to advocate for international pressure on the Government of the Philippines to halt this massacre.

These efforts resulted in a joint statement at the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) by 39 UN Member States calling for the respect of human rights and in over 50 recommendations on extrajudicial killings during the UN Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the Philippines. Additionally, Franciscans International supported the appeal from the Conference of the Catholic Bishops of the Philippines that joined the call for an immediate stop to the killings and the restoration of human rights in the country.

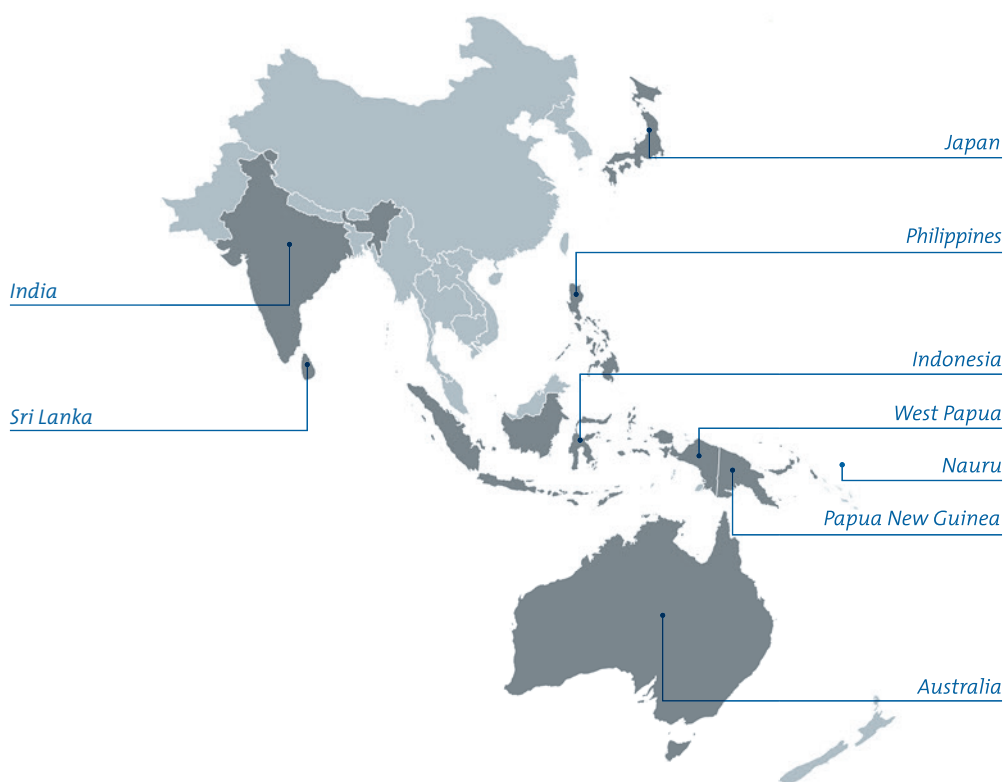


© Paolo Cravero  
Woman in Indonesia.

*[Franciscans International]  
provided me with a voice  
to speak on the behalf of  
refugees and for them to  
also have a voice.*

Carol Hucker,  
former Mental Health Worker  
Manus Island Processing Center  
Papua New Guinea

### *Focus countries*



*[Working with FI] gave me a kind of self-confidence. Before I always felt rather 'minor' when dealing with out advocacy network here in Papua, and felt I was looked at as a negligible thing. Feeling backed by an international network, I started speaking up and creating ways for our partners to reach out internationally.*

Yuliana Langowuyo,  
Director

Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation  
Franciscans Papua

Despite some cosmetic policy changes by the Government of the Philippines – result of the international pressure regarding extrajudicial killings – the overall human rights situation in the country is still dire.

### *Australia*

In 2017, Franciscans International was actively engaged in advocacy activities to ensure the rights of asylum seekers and refugees intending to reach Australia.

For the past five years, Australia has avoided its international obligations by refusing to protect refugees and asylum seekers coming by boat to its shores. Under a controversial policy, Australia has detained asylum seekers arriving by boat in centers on Manus Island, in Papua New Guinea and in Nauru. The rationale behind this policy is to discourage human trafficking and deaths at sea.

The Manus Island Offshore Processing Centre, which holds only men, has been at the center of the discussion on this policy. Human rights abuses, such as arbitrary detention, have been repeatedly reported. Furthermore, the right to food; water and sanitation; and health, both physical and psychological, appear to be inadequate. The process for refugee claims has shown to be unclear and confusing.

After Papua New Guinea's Supreme Court held, in 2016, that the Manus Island Offshore Processing Centre was unconstitutional, Australia closed the camp by late October 2017. During this process further abuses and human rights violations – in particular the right to health and wellbeing of refugees and asylum seekers – were reported by local and international media.

Together with its partners, Franciscans International has engaged in advocacy activities at the UN in Geneva to pressure the Government of Australia to respect and uphold the human rights of asylum seekers and refugees. The concluding observations of the sixth periodic report of Australia by the Human Rights Committee included proposals put forward by Franciscans International regarding the principle of non-refoulement and protection.

### *Sri Lanka*

The status of transitional justice in Sri Lanka is another theme that the Asia-Pacific desk focused on in the past year.

Despite the commitments of the Government of Sri Lanka to the UN since 2015, there are serious concerns regarding the inadequacy of the implementation of these obligations on the promotion of reconciliation, accountability, and human rights.

Partners on the ground have highlighted how victims' grievances have not been addressed by the Government, and how the widespread protests by families of disappeared, landless, unemployed, workers, etc. have not been heard.

Franciscans International focused its advocacy engagement both nationally and internationally. In Sri Lanka, we supported a national consultation of ecumenical organizations to prepare a submission to the UPR of Sri Lanka. At the UN in Geneva, we engaged with the UPR process – emphasizing the impact of the heavy presence of the military in the northern part of the county on transitional justice – and with the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Furthermore, Franciscans International and its partners organized a side-event to the 34th session of the Human Rights Council, focusing on issues such as extrajudicial executions; enforced disappearances; land return; ethnic, linguistic and religious discrimination; and sexual violence against women and girls.





© FI/Paolo Cravero  
Side-event to the Human Rights Council focusing on  
the issue of Religious Freedom in Sri Lanka.

## Okinawa, Japan

Okinawa is one of the southernmost islands of Japan. The population has a distinctive language which is different from Japanese. The island is inhabited mainly by the Ryukyuan indigenous peoples and Japanese settlers. Almost 30 percent of its land is used for US military bases and it hosts more than half of the US military personnel in Japan. Okinawa has faced several human rights challenges, mainly concentrating around the presence of US military facilities, and particularly in relation to indigenous peoples' rights and freedom of expression.

Informed by the testimony of local partners and reinforced by the report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, Franciscans International worked intensely to bring the situation of Okinawa to international attention.

With this aim and together with our partners, we documented the incidents involving journalists, peaceful protesters, and the systematic discrimination against the people of Ryukyu. In particular, Franciscans International closely followed the case

of the human rights defender and activist, Mr. Hiroji Yamashiro, a leader of the non-violent protest movement against a US military base. Arrested in October 2016, Mr. Yamashiro spent five months in detention and was released due to national and international pressure.

Franciscans International advocated for freedom of expression and the rights of indigenous peoples during the pre-UPR and UPR sessions. We presented two follow-up reports to the UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression and delivered statements on these issues at the UN Human Rights Council. Together with representatives of the Okinawan civil society, we also organized a side-event to the 35th Human Rights Council in June, where field partners, including Mr. Yamashiro, reflected on the challenges faced by the people of Okinawa. As result, several proposals from Franciscans International were reflected in the UPR recommendations to Japan, especially those on freedom of expression and the rights of Ryukyuan/Okinawan indigenous people.

# Financial Report 2017

Reviewed by PricewaterhouseCoopers SA

CHF

## Income

Franciscan Orders and Congregations (unrestricted)	275'912
Franciscan Funds (restricted)	217'474
Funding Agencies and Foundations	430'098
Other Donations	130
<b>Total income</b>	<b>923'614</b>

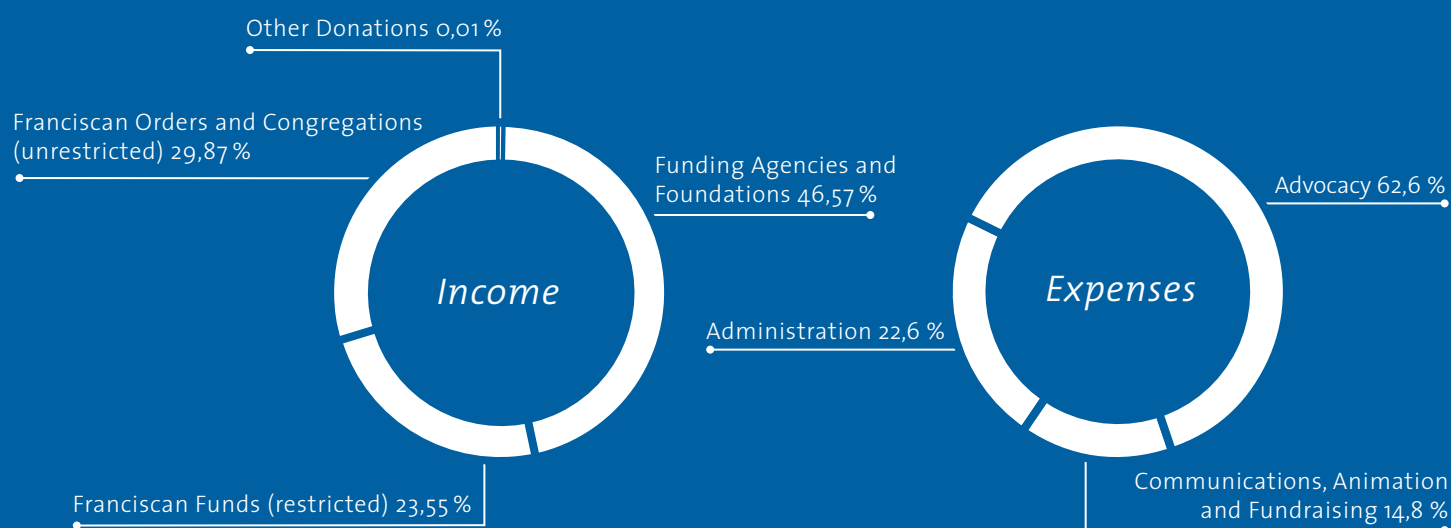
## Expenses

Advocacy	661'080
Communications, Animation and Fundraising	156'782
Administration	238'771
<b>Total operating expenses</b>	<b>1'056'633</b>

Non-operating income 27'222

**Result of the year** -105'797\*

\*In 2017 Franciscans International could not cover all expenses with the year's income alone.  
The 105'797 CHF deficit was covered by the contingency fund built in previous years for this purpose.





## Help us protect human rights

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 rights.

### Switzerland

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 / Clearing No. 240 / [CHF Account No:](#) 240-357384.01F / IBAN: CH69 0024 0240 3573 8401 F / [EUR Account No:](#) 240-357384.61W / IBAN: CH85 0024 0240 3573 8461 W

### USA

Name of account holder: Franciscans International / Address of account holder: 246 E. 46th St., / Apt. 1F, New York, NY 10017-2937 / Bank Name: JPMorgan Chase Bank / Address of Bank: 1 United Nations Plaza, / New York NY 10017 USA / [Account Number:](#) 292500458265 / ABA Number: 021000021 / [Currency of Account:](#) USD



© FI/Etienne Chénier-Lafèche  
Street art calling for hope, justice and hospitality in Brazil.

## / Donor Acknowledgement /

Franciscans International wishes to express its sincere gratitude to the Franciscan orders and congregations, individual donors as well as the following funding entities for their generous funding in 2017:

Adoff (Netherlands), Adveniat (Germany), Brot für die Welt (Germany), Fastenopfer (Switzerland), Franciscan Foundation (USA), Franziskaner Mission (Germany), Miseen Cara (Ireland), Misereor (Germany), Missionszentrale der Franziskaner (Germany), Rose Marie Khoo Foundation (Singapore- Switzerland), Trócaire (Ireland).

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Franciscans International)





## *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*

We are a Franciscan voice at the UN protecting the vulnerable,  
the forgotten, and the wounded earth.



**Franciscans International**  
A voice at the United Nations

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