



## Greetings from the FI Office!

We thank you for your involvement and interest in FI's work to influence key policy makers to promote human rights for marginalised and disadvantaged groups. Here are some of FI's recent activities.

For questions or more information, please contact [communication@fiop.org](mailto:communication@fiop.org).

## FI at the 3rd Annual UN Forum on Business and Human Rights: "We want to address all Human Rights violations and abuses generated by business activities"

The rights of people and communities are being persistently violated by the private sector. This is exacerbated by the current development model which puts business and profit ahead of human beings and their rights. Entire communities are being displaced, water and soil are being contaminated, and people's rights to have a say in policies that affect them is being squashed; furthermore, access to remedy for victims is often non-existent.

After joining a successful joint campaign that resulted in the creation of a UN working group to elaborate an international legally binding instrument on business and human rights, FI continues to advocate for the rights of individuals and communities affected by unjust business practices.

At the Business and Human Rights Forum, FI provided space for human rights defenders and land & environment rights defenders from Columbia, Honduras, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Indonesia, Guatemala, and the Philippines to intervene at side events and sessions, to make sure that their voice - the voices of local communities, of victims, of indigenous peoples - could be heard and shared with not only governments and UN experts, but also with the business sector itself.

These grassroots advocates had the opportunity to share their experiences and concerns, and address their need for a legally-binding instrument in the field of business and human rights, in order to prevent the further perpetration of violations and abuses.

Watch a video about the Forum, including an interview with our Advocacy Director [here](#).



*Jaybee Garganera, Coordinator of the Alliance Against Mining in the Philippines, speaking at the 3rd UN Business and Human Rights Forum*

## Australia: Government makes hard to believe decision to strip public services and necessities from at least 150 Aboriginal communities. FI responds with urgent appeal.

In mid-November, Western Australia's government decided to close down between 100 to 150 of its least populated indigenous communities, wanting to gradually close down basic public services (health, education, security) and basic necessities (water, electricity).

The decision was made without prior consultation with these communities, which represents a significant breach of the right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) stipulated by the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. FPIC refers to the rights of local communities, particularly indigenous peoples, to participate in decision making about issues impacting them.

Seriously concerned by this violation, FI submitted, in partnership with Edmund Rice International, an urgent appeal requesting that Ms. Victoria Lucia Tauli-Corpuz, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, urge the Government of Western Australia to review its policy.

At the date of writing, the issue is still relevant, as the Government has started auditing remote communities to decide which ones they would close.

Read the Urgent Appeal [here](#).



## Sustainable Development in Latin America: Bishops and Civil Society Organisations pledge to defend a human rights based approach to extractive mining

In Latin America, activities by multinational mining companies are increasing substantially. Poorer communities are usually those that suffer the greatest consequences, having to deal mainly with contaminated groundwater, rivers, and lakes that will stay contaminated for centuries. These communities are often unable to uphold their rights.

FI co-convoked the conference "Church and Mining: An Option in Defense of Communities and Territories," that gathered activists and advocates from various levels of society who are committed to the situation of mining. Participants were both from lay and religious backgrounds, bringing together a wide array of perspectives and experiences.

In the final document released after the conference, the entities - including bishops and CSO activists- pledged to defend legislative changes to restrict mining activities and demand the protection of communities affected by the exploration.

FI's ongoing connection to this group and other grassroots experts has shaped its understanding of the problem of extractivism in the region from the perspective of the most affected communities and allowed it to provide urgent and ongoing advocacy support to several groups.

See the participants' final statement [here](#).



*Participants at the Church & Mining Conference*

## Live Streaming in Kenya: Bringing UN mechanisms to local audiences

Kenya's Universal Periodic Review (UPR) session was webcast live in Nairobi for civil society and faith-based organisations to watch, an event coordinated by FI and Justice, Peace, and Integration of Creation, Africa (JPIC Africa), among others.

Over 300 people attended, including members of Parliament, members of the National Commission on Human Rights, students, members of civil society, both lay and religious. The webcast was followed by a panel discussion on emerging themes, moderated by JPIC and featuring high-level speakers from the Kenyan National Commission on Human Rights, the Government, and academia.

For many participating grassroots CBOs, the screening was an important learning experience: they now have a concrete idea of how the UPR process works, where it begins and ends, and how to best contribute to evaluating their State's performance on issues of human rights. They can now be more efficient in both their advocacy and the analysis of their situations.

Safe drinking water and the basic human rights of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are but a few of the issues Kenya was being reviewed on during its January UPR session. These were of particular interest to FI since they had been the issues flagged by its local partners since Kenya's previous review.



*The UPR process at the UN, © United Nations*

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