

## COMBONI JPIC NETWORK NEWS


Justice and peace-related news, actions, and resources from the Comboni Missionaries, North American Province



April 2024

### SELECTED GLOBAL TOPICS



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## Cameroon: Government Bans Opposition Coalitions

(Nairobi) – A declaration by Cameroon’s territorial administration minister to make two opposition coalitions illegal is part of a government crackdown on opposition and dissent, Human Rights Watch said today.

On March 12, 2024, the minister, Paul Atanga Nji, said in a statement that the Political Alliance for Change (Alliance politique pour le changement, APC), led by Jean-Michel Nintcheu, and the Political Alliance for Transition in Cameroon (Alliance politique pour la transition, APT), led by Olivier Bile, are “illegal,” calling them “clandestine movements.” The minister also referenced a recent meeting at a prison in Yaoundé between Nintcheu and Sisiku Julius Ayuk Tabe, a leader of the Anglophone separatist group Ambazonia Interim Government, as a factor in the decision to ban the coalition.

“The government’s move against these coalitions shows how the Cameroonian authorities are moving to close down space for the opposition and for public debate ahead of the 2025 presidential elections,” said Carine Kaneza Nantulya, deputy Africa director at Human Rights Watch. “The authorities should immediately lift the ban and allow opposition parties to continue working without harassment.”

In December 2023, a prominent opposition leader, Maurice Kamto, was reelected as

the leader of the Movement for the Renaissance of Cameroon (Mouvement pour la renaissance du Cameroun, MRC), one of the most prominent opposition groups in the country. Kamto used his reelection to announce the creation of the APC.

The current president, Paul Biya, has been in power since 1982 and is serving out his seventh term. Biya, 91, was last reelected in 2018 after a contested vote-counting process. Kamto challenged the official results and declared himself winner of the election.

Biya's 2018 election sparked a wave of political repression. After the 2018 vote, opposition-led protests occurred across the country, and the government responded with a heavy crackdown and the use of excessive force by the police, army, and gendarmes. In January 2019, Kamto and over 200 of his supporters were arrested and detained. Kamto was charged with insurrection, hostility against the homeland, criminal association, threats to public order, rebellion, and inciting insurrection, crimes that can carry the death penalty. He was freed on October 5, 2019, and the charges were dropped, though the crackdown on the opposition continued.

To read more, click [here](#).

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## Prominent Congolese Journalist Convicted on Baseless Charges



This week, a court in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo, convicted the prominent journalist Stanis Bujakera and sentenced him to six months in prison for sharing an article on social media alleging that Congolese military intelligence had killed a senior opposition official. On the basis that he had already spent six months in pretrial detention, Bujakera was released on March 19.

Bujakera, 34, Congo's most-followed journalist on social media, had been detained since September 8. The authorities had arrested and charged him with fabricating and distributing a fake intelligence memo saying that Congolese military intelligence had killed Chérubin Okende, a member of parliament and spokesman for

the opposition party Ensemble pour la République. Bujakera was not the author of the memo, *which was published in Jeune Afrique*.

Okende disappeared in Kinshasa on July 12, 2023, and was found dead in his car with gunshot wounds the next day. The government had publicly denounced Okende's murder and set up a commission of enquiry. But the public prosecutor handling the case concluded that Okende had committed suicide, and in a March 2 memo he instructed his office to question anyone "gossiping" about the investigation's conclusions.

To learn more, click [here](#).



Photo of Myeongdong Cathedral; by [Terrazzo](#)

## Korean priests ready to embark on foreign missions

Two Korean priests are all set to leave their homeland soon to serve in Guatemala and Japan as the South Korean Church continues to send missionaries around the world, says a report.

Archbishop Peter Chung Soon-taick of Seoul commissioned diocesan priests — Henry Chung Rok-soo and Maseo Ki Ho-bae — during a Holy Mass at Myeongdong Cathedral in the national capital on March 21, said a press release from Seoul Archdiocese.

The ceremony was organized by the Seoul Archdiocesan Department of Overseas Missions.

"The Lord had said to Abraham, 'Come from your land, your people and your father's house to the land that I will show you.' You two, dear priests, walk the humble path that Abraham once walked, also walk the path of God's love," Chung said in his homily.

"Never forget the love and protection of our Lord, and may you become priests who pray first for the true love that the Lord has to imprint on your hearts," he said. The prelate later placed a special wooden cross around the necks of the priests, symbolizing that they are committed to always following the path of Jesus in their lives as missionaries.

## How the UN is Holding Back the Sahara Desert



### MORE TOPICS TO EXPLORE

[In northern Mozambique, people flee new attacks while others return home.](#)

[Myanmar's rebels rail against New Zealand's ASEAN meet.](#)

[Ethiopia: Submission to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.](#)

### TAKE ACTION

#### SDG Book Club— Goal 4: Quality Education



Continue your journey with the SDG Book Club.

SDG 4 is all about quality education. Providing quality education is fundamental to creating a peaceful and prosperous world. Education gives people the knowledge and skills they need to stay healthy, get jobs, and foster tolerance. These topics are all addressed in the

SDG4 Reading List section.

Look for one of the following books to read with your family:

- "Razia's Ray of Hope" by Elizabeth Suneby
- "Rain School" by James Rumford
- "When I was Eight" by Christy Jordan-Fenton and Margaret Pokiak-Fenton Jury

Find out more about SDG book club [\*here\*](#).

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# Global Goals for Sustainable Development

## Goal 4: Quality Education



## ENSURE INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE QUALITY EDUCATION AND PROMOTE LIFELONG LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

DESPITE SLOW PROGRESS,

### THE WORLD IS FALLING FAR BEHIND IN ACHIEVING QUALITY EDUCATION

WITHOUT ADDITIONAL MEASURES, BY 2030:



THE PANDEMIC

CAUSED  
LEARNING  
LOSSES  
IN **4 IN 5** OF  
104 COUNTRIES  
STUDIED

### PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL COMPLETION RATES ARE **RIISING**, BUT THE PACE IS SLOW AND UNEVEN



LOW- AND LOWER-  
MIDDLE-INCOME COUNTRIES  
FACE A NEARLY

**\$100 BILLION**  
ANNUAL  
FINANCING GAP  
TO REACH THEIR  
EDUCATION TARGETS

Progress towards quality education was already slower than required before the pandemic, but COVID-19 has had devastating impacts on education, causing learning losses in four out of five of the 104 countries studied. Without additional measures, an estimated 84 million children and young people will stay out of school by 2030 and approximately 300 million students will lack the basic numeracy and literacy skills necessary for success in life.

In addition to free primary and secondary schooling for all boys and girls by 2030, the aim is to provide equal access to affordable vocational training, eliminate gender and wealth disparities, and achieve universal access to quality higher education. Education is the key that will allow many other Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be achieved. When people are able to get quality education they can break from the cycle of poverty.

## U.N. International Days

2024

**April 2**

### **World Autism Awareness Day**

Ever since the United Nations General Assembly designated 2 April as World Autism Awareness Day (WAAD) in 2007, the United Nations has observed the day as a means to affirm and promote the full realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for autistic people on an equal basis with others. [Learn more.](#)

**April 4**

### **International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action**

Mines, explosive remnants of war, and improvised explosive devices continue to cause death and injury, especially in situations of armed conflict. The use of improvised explosive devices has expanded, terrorizing civilians and threatening humanitarian actors and United Nations missions and personnel. [Learn more.](#)

**April 5**

### **International Day of Conscience**

Conscious of the need for the creation of conditions of stability and well-being and peaceful and friendly relations based on respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion, the General Assembly *declared* 5 April the International Day of Conscience. [Learn more.](#)

**April 6**

### **International Day of Sport for Development and Peace**

The International Day of Sport for Development and Peace (IDSDP), which takes place annually on 6 April, presents an opportunity to recognize the positive role sport and physical activity play in communities and in people's lives across the globe. The global theme for 2024 is "Sport for the Promotion of Peaceful and Inclusive Societies." [Learn more.](#)

**April 7**

### **International Day of Reflection on the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda**

The United Nations General Assembly adopts resolution [A/RES/58/234](#) designating 7 April as the International Day of Reflection on the Genocide in Rwanda and encourages "all Member States, organizations of the United Nations system and other relevant international organizations, as well as civil society organizations, to observe the International Day, including special observances and activities in memory of the victims of the genocide in Rwanda." [Learn more.](#)

**April 12**

### **International Day of Human Space Flight**

The General Assembly expressed its deep conviction of the common interest of mankind in promoting and expanding the exploration and use of outer space, as the province of all mankind, for peaceful purposes and in continuing efforts to extend to all States the benefits derived therefrom. [Learn more.](#)

**April 14**

### **World Chagas Disease Day**

Chagas disease, also known as "silent or silenced disease", affects mainly poor people without access to health care or people without a political voice. The disease

progresses slowly and often shows an asymptomatic clinical course. Without treatment, Chagas disease can lead to severe cardiac and digestive alterations and become fatal. Raising awareness of the disease is essential to improve the rates of early treatment and cure, together with the interruption of its transmission. [Learn more.](#)

**April 20**

**Chinese Language Day**

Since the first celebration was held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on November 12, 2010, United Nations Chinese Language Day has become a window for people to understand Chinese culture. Every year before and after Chinese Language Day, the United Nations Headquarters in New York launches a series of colorful activities, covering art exhibitions, Chinese learning forums, special lectures, fashion and traditional opera exhibitions, etc. [Learn more.](#)

**April 21**

**World Creativity and Innovation Day**

There may be no universal understanding of creativity. The concept is open to interpretation from artistic expression to problem-solving in the context of economic, social, and sustainable development. Therefore, the United Nations designated 21 April as World Creativity and Innovation Day to raise awareness of the role of creativity and innovation in all aspects of human development. [Learn more.](#)

**April 22**

**International Mother Earth Day**

Mother Earth is clearly urging a call to action. Nature is suffering. Oceans filling with plastic and turning more acidic. Extreme heat, wildfires, and floods, have affected millions of people. Even these days, we are still trying to get back on track from COVID-19, a worldwide health pandemic linked to the health of our ecosystem. [Learn more.](#)

**April 23**

**Spanish Language Day**

On April 23, "Spanish Language Day at the United Nations" is celebrated to raise awareness among the Organization's staff, and the world in general, about the history, culture, and use of Spanish as an official language. [Learn more.](#)

**April 26**

**International Chernobyl Disaster Remembrance Day**

An explosion at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant in 1986 spread a radioactive cloud over large parts of the Soviet Union, now the territories of Belarus, Ukraine, and the Russian Federation. Nearly 8.4 million people in the three countries were exposed to the radiation. In 2002 the United Nations announced a shift in the Chernobyl strategy, with a new focus on a long-term developmental approach. [Learn more.](#)



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