News



Advocates from sister congregations and peace groups concerned about arms trafficking into Haiti gather outside U.S. Senate office buildings Sept. 27. (Courtesy of the Quixote Center)



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***Editor's note**: Global Sisters Report's Monday Starter is a feature from GSR staff writers that rounds up news from or about women religious that you may otherwise have missed.*

Monday Starter

More than 20 sister congregations and sister-led coalitions have joined efforts seeking federal action to curb U.S. gun and ammunition trafficking into Haiti.

The congregations are part of a coalition of 40 U.S. peace and justice groups and networks calling for action they say is needed to stem violence in the Caribbean nation — violence that has worsened in recent years due to gang rule and domination.

Representatives of congregations and other groups met on Capitol Hill Sept. 27 for public prayer and a call to action, hearing testimony from Haitian Americans, faith leaders and those whose ministries have taken them to Haiti.

They then lobbied with 25 congressional offices and presented a statement for calls to action and concern to additional congressional offices.

In a statement, the coalition said that, since 2021, "the tightening grip of heavily armed gangs produced an atmosphere of unrelenting terror that has made all forms of work, worship, education, play, and daily activities life-threatening and nearly impossible for the Haitian people."

Gang activity, the statement said, has "also choked key travel and supply routes, impeding or erasing the people's access to food and healthcare." The groups said that this tragedy has "been made possible by the illegal import of arms from neighboring countries, with an estimated 70% originating in the United States."

The coalition of congregations and peace groups said they are calling on both houses of Congress to pass pending legislation seeking to reduce the flow of arms and ammunition to Haiti. A description of the legislation and actions for which they are advocating is available on the website of one of the group's co-organizers, the U.N.-based Justice Coalition of Religious*. The coalition is providing phone-call scripts and letter templates that US constituents can use to join the ongoing outreach to congressional representatives and to the White House.

The initiative's co-organizers said that decisive legislative and executive action stemming arms into Haiti is a "moral imperative in the name of human dignity and our fundamental responsibilities to act justly toward one another. "

Helping cut the arms pipeline, which the organizers described as "the lifeblood" of Haiti's gang violence, "is the most politically just, nonviolent, and cost-effective measure that the US can take to support our neighbor's transition to a democracy with free, fair elections. Such a transition would, in turn, increase political stability and reduce forced migration and the need to seek asylum throughout the region," the statement said.

In addition to the Sept. 27 lobbying on Capitol Hill, the co-organizers said the coalition helped mobilize the submission of more than 5,000 letters to Congress and the White House.

On Sept. 30, the United Nations Security Council reauthorized the deployment of a Kenya-led multinational security mission for another year.

That U.N. mission, which began in October 2024, is intended to assist Haitian police forces, U.N. News reported. The force is expected to grow to about 2,500 from its current 410 members. For now, the U.N. news agency said, "the country remains mired in crisis."

Advertisement

Nonpartisan Catholic social justice voter education resources available

Network social justice lobby's Vote Our Future nonpartisan voter education resources are now available in English and Spanish for anyone interested in how policy issues relate to Catholic values and affect people's freedom and ability to flourish. The materials include a checklist on how to be a multi-issue voter, a presidential candidate comparison, voter action plan checklist, a series on the freedoms people enjoy living in a democracy), and a document contrasting Project 2025 with Catholic social justice.

The Vote Our Future campaign will also include the Sept. 30-Oct. 18 nationwide tour by Nuns on the Bus & Friends, which will visit 20 cities in 11 states. For more information on the "Vote Our Future" campaign, click here.

SNDdN: 175 years in New England

The Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur are marking 175 years of ministry in New England.

In 1849, amidst anti-Catholic sentiment, three pioneering sisters from Belgium made the courageous journey to Boston via Ohio. Despite facing hostility and hardship, they remained dedicated to spreading God's goodness through education and social justice, and established schools and throughout New England. By 1900, they had grown to 32 schools, which continued to increase throughout the 20th century.

Today, the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur are deeply woven into the fabric of New England, with their work extending beyond education to address broader social needs, including services for seniors, children and families. They are the longest-serving religious congregation of women in the Archdiocese of Boston.

The sisters are hosting a gala celebration to honor 175 years of service at the Boston Marriott in Burlington, Massachusetts, at 6 p.m., Oct. 16. For more information about the gala and to purchase tickets, click here.

**An earlier version of this story mischaracterized the Justice Coalition of Religious as an umbrella organization.*