



People wait for the arrival of the Greenlandic delegation after they agreed on a security deal with the U.S. and Denmark at Nuuk Airport in Nuuk, Greenland, Sept. 23, 2026. (OSV News/Reuters/Tim Barsoe)

Gina Christian

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Catholics in Greenland are regarding a new security agreement with a mixture of relief and concern, while remaining committed to the call of the Gospel, said the island's only Catholic parish priest.

On Sept. 22, the U.S., Denmark and Greenland signed an agreement amending the 1951 document that authorized the U.S. to create military bases in semiautonomous Greenland, which along with the Faroe Islands and the European nation of Denmark forms the Kingdom of Denmark.

The deal allows for modernization and expansion of the existing U.S. Pituffik Space base, as well as the creation of two other installations at Narsarsuaq and Mestersvig. Other military facilities may also be established, with the U.S. also confirming free overflight, overland and undersea access across Greenland. The agreement additionally restricts foreign investment to NATO, NATO-aligned nations and the EU.

The trilateral agreement followed months of President Donald Trump's calls to acquire Greenland for U.S. national security interests, with military force noted as a possible option.

For the island's 56,000 residents — a majority of whom are Inuit, and about 500 of whom are Catholic — the deal assuages, at least in part, recent anxieties.

"I think there is some relief whenever there is dialogue instead of confrontation," said Fr. Tomaž Majcen, a Conventual Franciscan who serves at Christ the King Church in the capital city of Nuuk.

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The Slovenian-born Fr. Majcen and two other Franciscan friars make up the Conventual Franciscan Mission in Denmark, part of the order's Province of St. Jerome in Croatia.

In 2023, the three Franciscans took over pastoral care in Greenland at the request of Bishop Czeslaw Kozon of Copenhagen, Denmark, where the mission also serves two parishes.

In a Sept. 26 email, Father Majcen told OSV News that although the agreement offsets some fears, "people naturally remain attentive and somewhat concerned when their homeland and future are being discussed at the international level."

"Greenland is not simply a piece of land or a strategic location. It is the home of people, families, communities and a unique culture," said Father Majcen, writing from Copenhagen ahead of his late October return to Nuuk.

He added, "This human dimension should never be forgotten."

Father Majcen said that the faithful in Greenland are prioritizing the Gospel over the headlines.

"For us as a Catholic community, the most important thing is to continue doing what we have always tried to do: to be present, to pray, to celebrate the sacraments and to offer a place where people can find peace and community," he said.

The priest stressed that "geopolitical situations may change, but people's everyday needs remain very simple. People need someone who listens to them, a community where they feel welcome, and hope when the world around them feels uncertain."

The task of providing that presence is "also part of evangelization," said Father Majcen. "Sometimes evangelization is not about having the perfect words, but simply about being there for people."