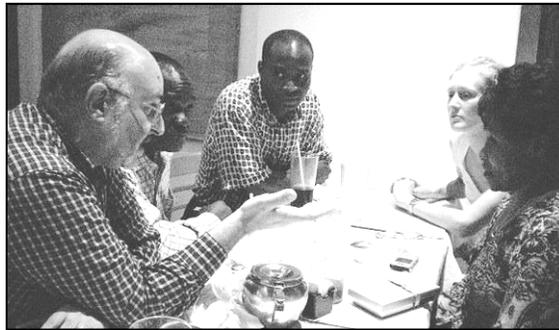


Where are Pan-African Networks Today?

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Disturbed. Greatly disturbed. That is the feeling I have as 2008 dawns. I suppose I should rather be feeling grateful, blessed and engaged, being that this year is our 25th anniversary and AFJN is preparing a wonderful conference and Advocacy Day for April. But I am disturbed. Our sister agency, the Washington Office for Africa (WOA) has closed its DC office as of December 31, 2007. WOA, like AFJN, was a Pan African faith-based education and advocacy agency. We were the only two such agencies in this



AFJN Staff with Betty Bigombe

city. The other Africa related agencies are country and issue specific or development and humanitarian in nature. WOA's closing is unfortunate and it calls the question: What is the appropriate place for an agency like WOA or AFJN? Is AFJN next? Certainly I believe AFJN has a place, otherwise I would not have been a member since 1984 nor accepted this position as its current director. Since 1983, when AFJN was formed, missionary communities have been a voice here in DC with a particular perspective and wisdom that we bring to advocacy and the formulation of fair and just policies with Africa.

While most of the voices for Africa were focused on the situation of South Africa and ending apartheid at the time, we at AFJN brought a wide awareness of the continent and its issues, proposing directions that were and are bottom up, grounded in our experience as pastors, teachers, health workers and the like.

What does it mean to be a Pan-African-faith-based network? It means stepping back from all the particular "crises" to look at the larger issues, gaining perspective, connecting the dots, being the active "memory" that helps us all discover what is at the root of the issues. **We** who have been in Africa whether long term or short, missionaries, humanitarian agents, or Diaspora **know in the sense of being deeply aware** because of being on the ground in the rural areas or city slums what impact unfair or one sided US Policy decisions have on our people. Read Bob Dowd's analysis of Kenya. Read Bahati's article on Rape in DRC. Read Beth Tuckey's article on AFRICOM.

Back in 1974 I can remember a discussion that my small local community in Sierra Leone had about impending civil unrest. It didn't actually come about until 1991, but

(Continued on page 2)

25th Anniversary

Conference

April 18-21, 2008

"Celebrating Africa:
Analysis to Action"

with

special guests

Jeffrey Sachs and

Ishmael Beah

(Continued from page 1)

we had the sense way back in the mid 1970's that something was brewing. The trends were set in place. And we know them all... corruption, poverty, unfair and unjust economic policies, a fragile young government, manipulation of youth. Very few spoke up in credible ways to address these. I recently asked one of my predecessors, Sr. Maura Browne who attended the World Social Forum in Nairobi last year, if she could foresee the present conflict there while at the Forum. After a brief pause, she said yes, the writing was on the wall.

We knew. We know. And AFJN is the voice to share that knowledge. A few months ago the staff of AFJN attended a lecture by Ms Betty Bigombe, a former Ugandan parliamentarian and presently a peace advocate for ending

"We know and we need to share that knowledge of what it takes to form a fair and just US Africa Policy."

the conflict in Northern Uganda. She challenged her listeners to invest in preventing crises, knowing full well what elements lead up to them. While post-conflict support is always helpful, many conflicts are preventable. Later that month, we as a staff took Ms Bigombe to lunch to better understand and support her challenge. This is the active "memory," the exercise of "connecting the dots" that AFJN does. We have done it for 25 years and I pray that we will continue to do it for more.

We raise these concerns through our publications, our website, our conferences and our programming which now may move well beyond the Washington Beltway. As an example, in November we had an afternoon program here at Trinity Washington University called "Congo Voices" where we engaged the Congolese Diaspora in the DC area to not only come to better understand what is happening in DRC, better listen to the divergent voices that call for change and peace, but what steps we can take together to bring peace and security to that land. The African Diaspora have great economic, social and political influence and understanding as advocates for development and peace in their home countries. And there is a trust we have established at AFJN with the few we have encountered through programs like Congo Voices that tell me we have an untapped area to engage in.

We hope to develop a program entitled "Africa Voices" to do the same process that we did for Congo to Diaspora groups of various nations in Baltimore, New York, Chicago, Houston, Atlanta, Los Angeles, Boston, wherever

we are invited, talking *with* Diaspora about the issues and concerns and then together proposing ways forward. In the recent years we have participated and helped coordinate local Africa Summits in Chicago and Dayton. We hope that more will come.

Much has changed since 1983. AFJN is no longer composed only of religious missionary communities, but also US parishes and Dioceses involved with twinning, university students or faculty who have links with Africa, individuals who have served or studied in Africa, Africa lay and religious Diaspora who are here in the USA. **We know** and we need to share that knowledge of what it takes to form a fair and just US Africa Policy.

So do we need a Pan-African-faith-based education and advocacy Network in DC? Dare I say, DC doesn't, but Africa does. And those of us who passionately care about the people of Africa do. We wish to use our right as citizens of these United States to propose fair and just policies that will promote justice and peace in Africa. Grounded in our Faith (that keeps us sane and holy) and together, we can do it. That is what being a Network is all about.

So, I challenge you with this plea: if you are an AFJN member, find for AFJN 25 more members this year among your family or friends. It will be a concrete way to extend the network of caring, passionate advocates for Africa and will be a fitting way to celebrate our anniversary. Share with them our publications, our website, or action alerts. If you or someone you know is a Federal Employee, we are part of the Combined Federal Campaign and you can find our name on the CFC website. If your company has a matching gift program, include us in your giving. If you, the reader, are not a contributing member, step up and put your money where your heart is. We need your financial support to do the programming that we are tasked to do. Become a contributing AFJN member. The office and the Board have challenged ourselves to find new organizational members. And for all of you who are organizational and individual members, **thank you**. We deeply appreciate your support.

Much has disturbed me with WOA's closing. But my belief that AFJN as a Pan-African faith-based network, is critical to advocacy for Africa in the USA remains strong. It has actually doubled! Join us in keeping this alive. And to one and all, Happy 25th Anniversary!

Fr. Rocco Puopolo, s.x.
Executive Director

At the Root of Kenya's Crisis

Many observers have expressed at least some surprise at the post-election crisis in Kenya, a crisis that has so far left more than six hundred people dead, at least 200,000 people displaced and is affecting the economies of the entire region. Kenya has been known as one of Africa's most stable and peaceful countries. The Kenyan economy has been growing over the last several years and tourists until a few weeks ago had started to return to the country's national parks and Indian-Ocean beaches after being scared off by the 1998 U.S. embassy bombing, other terrorist activities along the coast and crime in Nairobi. How could things become so unhinged in Kenya when things were going so well? The short answer is, things were not going so well for most Kenyans.

For anyone who has spent more than five minutes off the well-worn tourist paths, who knows something of the rapid rural to urban migration born of rural poverty, and who knows about the powers concentrated in the Kenyan presidency, the post-election crisis is terribly regrettable but not totally surprising. In part this is because the economic growth over the last few years has taken place without a corresponding improvement in the quality of life or standard of living for the majority of Kenyans, regardless of the ethnic group to which they belong. Although Gross Domestic Product per capita has been on the rise in the last few years, most Kenyans have struggled to find decent work and unemployment has hovered around forty percent. Every year, tens of thousands of young people leave impoverished villages to look for education and work, particularly in Nairobi. All too often they find neither. The competition for work is intense and family connections or links to one's ethnic community are often the key to survival.

Further, connections to government are extremely important and, in Kenya, the government is practically synonymous with the presidency. Although political reforms did decrease the power of the presidency during the late 1990s, the Kenyan presidency remains extremely powerful. Whoever is president in Kenya has tremendous power over appoint-

ments and the purse strings throughout the country. The great fear, a fear that self-interested politicians have sought to intensify in their attempts to win or preserve the support of their ethnic kin or coalitions, is that ethnic groups without a connection to the presidency will suffer from discrimination when it comes to appointments and the location of government projects.

The post-election crisis does not reveal that ancient tribal hatreds are at the core of Kenya's problems, as some may suggest, but that widespread poverty and an imperial presidency are at the root of Kenya's problems. Although the solutions to Kenya's troubles will not be easily achieved, they are, I propose, rather obvious. First, many more Kenyans, of every ethnic group, need to share in the benefits of economic growth. Second, and just as important, power in Kenya's political system needs to be dispersed so that the stakes are lowered and people will believe that their livelihood and that of their ethnic group does not depend so completely on who wins the presidency. Dispersion of power may mean some kind of federalism or the strengthening of the legislature vis-à-vis the president. Kenyans must decide.

Crisis means opportunity. The silver lining to these difficult days in Kenya may be that Kenya's leaders have an opportunity to tackle the developmental and political problems that have gone unaddressed for too long. The key will be to ensure that short-term solutions and politically expedient coalitions that benefit politicians personally do not prevent the necessary reforms that will benefit all Kenyans from taking place. If the United States is serious about promoting stable democracies in a region of the world that is becoming more strategically important, it will encourage Kenyans to focus on these problems and to forge their own Kenyan solutions. If authentic development truly begins to take place and political power is dispersed, I firmly believe that great days lie ahead for Kenya.

*Robert A. Dowd, C.S.C., Chair of AFJN Board
Assistant Prof. of Political Science, Notre Dame University*

Let the Conversation Begin!

One piece of our 25th Anniversary Celebration is **Round Table Discussions** scheduled for Saturday afternoon, April 20th. The ninety-minute sessions will focus on areas that AFJN has been involved in throughout our years: **Economic Justice, Conflict Resolution and Peace, and Health.**

Narratives detailing the history of our work are now up on our website and we have created a blog so that we can have an online conversation with you on these issues.

We encourage you to review these documents and provide feedback before we meet in DC in April. We are looking for comments on past successes, issues that need revisiting, and suggestions for what AFJN can do to continue effective advocacy for peace and justice in Africa.

Please find the narratives and a link to the blog at www.afjn.org! We look forward to seeing you in April!

Inform and Engage on AFRICOM

By Beth Tuckey

We've been told over and over again: the train has left the station. The new U.S. military command for Africa (AFRICOM) is already operational in Stuttgart, Germany. It has temporary funding, much of which has been transferred from other branches of the Department of Defense (DoD). It has a commander – General William “Kip” Ward. It has an agenda – counter terrorism on African soil, protect oil resources, and halt further movements by the Chinese on the continent.

At AFJN, we believe that the train may have left the station, but it can still be derailed at some point down the line. Or, if we are willing to work hard enough, it might never gather enough steam to reach its first stop. AFJN has been following US military involvement in the African continent since our publication of a document by Paul Ruytaysire in 1986 entitled *The Militarization of Sub-Saharan Africa*. We continue to commit ourselves to working for an Africa that does not suffer at the mercy of Western interests and weaponry.

AFRICOM has been pushed through by the Bush Administration without a vote from Congress and without the consent of our African partners. It is a command still seeking a headquarters and a clear mandate. Make no mistake; those elements are slowly but surely being acquired – by President Bush, by the charm of General Ward, by neoconservatives, and by private military contractors – but the American people have the capability to act. We can join voices with our brothers and sisters in Africa and say ‘no’ to AFRICOM.

“We must build a critical mass. We must tell our leaders that extending America’s arm of defense to Africa will destabilize the continent.”

In the week before the Christmas holiday, AFJN staff member Beth Tuckey met with Representative Donald Payne (D-NJ), Chair of the Africa Subcommittee in the House. What became clear that day was the need for engaged citizenship. Congress has no reason to oppose AFRICOM unless its constituents make the issue a priority. That is the beauty of American democracy and it is something upon which we ought to capitalize lest we become

complacent with the agenda of those in positions of power.

Unfortunately, AFRICOM is a difficult point of advocacy. Yes, we can lobby members of Congress, but their capabilities do not extend far beyond the power of the purse when it comes to foreign policy. Besides, DoD is asking for a comparatively miniscule amount of additional defense funding for the new command. Ultimately, AFRICOM will receive its orders from the Bush Administration and we, as American citizens, have very little influence over the executive branch, particularly in cases where Congress has a diminutive role.

So where does that leave us? It puts us in a position to take our cues from the peace movement, from the women’s rights and civil rights movements, and from all those who have fought to make a better world despite improbable odds. We must build a critical mass. We must tell our leaders that extending America’s arm of defense to Africa will destabilize the continent and will set the US on a path of self-destruction. The State Department and Ambassadors must remain at the head of US foreign policy in Africa and the legislative branch must maintain some level of oversight to ensure accountability. Ultimately, Congress needs to know that if it allocates funding for education, jobs, debt relief, and microcredit, Africa will be far more secure than it ever could at the mercy of some hundreds of soldiers.

So today, **we ask you to engage. Read** about AFRICOM on the AFJN website, **sign** our petitions to Congress and to the Bush Administration, and **inform** others about what is happening to US-Africa policy. If you disagree with the direction of AFRICOM, **tell** your Senators and Representatives. **Write** letters to the Presidential candidates, informing them that AFRICOM will be a central element of their foreign policy and that if they do not like it, now is the time to **resist**.

Watch the AFJN website for information on a **national Call-In Day, an AFRICOM campaign website**, and for other ways you can be involved in the peace movement for Africa. The train may have left the station, but that does not mean our job is done. We can still steer AFRICOM down the right track. We can shape it in a way that respects the dignity and capacity of our African partners. We can put security in the hands of African governments and African civil society in collaboration with US civilian agencies, not the Defense Department. It is their development strategies that will bring peace and prosperity to the African continent, not the machinery or tactics of war.

The Process of Restorative Justice in Sierra Leone

Q&A with Emmanuel Roberts

The government of Sierra Leone requested that UN Security Council establish an international tribunal to prosecute individuals responsible for committing atrocities in the country's brutal civil war, which broke out in 1991 and remains unresolved despite the Lomé Peace Accord of July 1999. This request was made in hopes that such prosecutions would help to break the ongoing cycle of violence and promote reconciliation.

On March 30, 2001, the Security Council adopted a Resolution which encouraged the Government of Sierra Leone, together with the Secretary General of the UN, the High Commissioner for Human Rights and other relevant international actors, to expedite the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). On 22nd November 2000, the Parliament of Sierra Leone unanimously passed into law the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. It was meant to work alongside the international criminal tribunal, the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL).

Have these institutions contributed to Restorative Justice in Sierra Leone?

So far, the TRC has compiled stories, reports and recommendations that have yet to be implemented. Restorative justice faces many obstacles because many offenders have never been caught, prosecuted or convicted and those who have been convicted are often poorly monitored. The TRC has been criticized for being punitive rather than serving as alternatives to incarceration which affirms the offender's self-worth, giving him/her the opportunity to "make things right."

The mandate of the SCSL required that credible justice be brought to those members of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), the Civil Defense Forces (CDF) and their accomplices responsible for committing crimes against the people of Sierra Leone. The SCSL has incarcerated high profile people including (Charles Taylor, the former President of the Republic of Liberia and late Chief Sam Hinga Norman both of whom were responsible for crimes against humanity. The TRC is also charged with addressing impunity, responding to the needs of victims, promoting healing and reconciliation and stopping human rights violations and abuses in addition to investigating and report on the "antecedents" of the conflict.

How confident are the people in the process?

Some Sierra Leoneans believe that the mandate of the SCSL did not target those who actually perpetrated the crimes against the civil population. These include the commanding

officers or heads of military operations, some of whom are presently roaming free in the streets of Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone. Also, as set out in the Agreement that was signed between the United Nations and the Government of Sierra Leone, the mission of the SCSL is essentially punitive. This does not ensure restorative justice in a country that has experienced a decade of civil war and is in need of healing. Restorative justice includes accountability, truth-telling, reconciliation and reparations. Accountability requires that the perpetrator acknowledge the harm done to the victims, apologize and take action to repair the harm done to all who were affected by the offender's action. For example, a former child soldier called Kamara (actual name with-



Public Hearings of the TRC.
Photo courtesy Rosalind Shaw, Tufts University.

held) was identified by victims who suffered amputation during an attack in their village called Tongo Field; a diamond mining town in the eastern province of Sierra Leone. Kamara was banned from entering this village and elders of the community isolated his family and did not allow them to participate in communal activities. Kamara, having regretted his actions, requested mediation with religious leaders and community animators to reconcile his actions with the community. After a traditional ceremony, he was granted forgiveness by the victims and required to do community service. However, while the victim may voluntarily choose to forgive, the TRC is of the opinion that forgiveness by a victim and remorse by the perpetrator is not a necessary element in the process of justice. This is where we find tension between restorative justice and criminal justice.

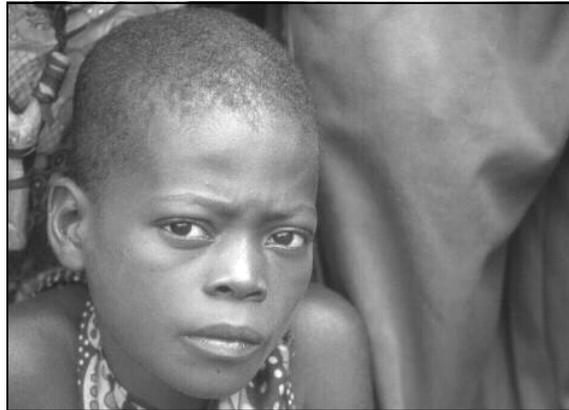
How much is the community involved in the process?

As aforementioned, the community is often very involved in the process of restorative justice. However, it is not the case in many rural areas. It is important to note that the approval and support of the community in such a reconciliation process is necessary in order to make peace sustainable.

Rape as a Weapon of War

By Bahati Ntama Jacques

In wartime, the crime of rape is not a new phenomenon; but the situation in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo has no comparison. Many reports have been written calling with urgency for national and international action to end the rape pandemic in eastern Congo, but the fact is that the situation continues to worsen. Jeffery Gettleman in his article *Rape Epidemic Raises Trauma of Congo War* in New York Times October 7, 2007 reports that “Every day, 10 new women and girls who have been raped show up at his hospital (referring to Panzi hospital in Bukavu). Many have been sadistically attacked from the inside out, butchered by bayonets and assaulted with chunks of woods, that their reproductive and genital systems are beyond repair.” Pretending to listen is not listening at all. How much evidence does the world need for immediate, imperative and unconditional action?



Rape has become a pandemic in Eastern DRC's war.
Photo courtesy CRS.

The victims are many.

Since the war began in 1996, no one knows the exact number of rape cases in the DRC. Often, they are underreported either for lack of accurate reporting or for embarrassment of the victims who do not wish to have their story known. Because of the worsening situation in eastern DRC, we are now hearing the stories of some survivors who have come forward, but we do not know the stories of those who were killed after being raped, those who are silent because they have no one to turn to, those who are afraid of rejection or retaliation by their victimizers, those who are silenced for reasons that they only know, or those who are still being held hostage. In the DRC, the United Nations reported 27,000 cases of rape in 2006 and UNICEF reported 12,867 between May 2006-May 2007. Many of the victims test positive for sexually transmitted diseases, among them HIV/AIDS.

Who are the offenders?

The offenders are the Congolese army, internal militia groups (which, as of today are about 47 in the north and south Kivu provinces) and foreign rebel groups operating on Congolese territory. For the residents of Rugari, Ruman-gabo Ntamugenga, and the surrounding areas it is not the first time women have had to face the Congolese army on rape issues. In 1985, the former president Mobutu Sesse-Seko sent many soldiers to the Rumangabo military base

who had just came from the war in Chad. Women were not safe anywhere until the men and women, young and old, rose as one in different communities and took justice into their hands to resist an army that had become a gang of bandits. While this solution tends to perpetuate the cycle of violence, it was all the community could do at the time to stop the offenders.

Among the foreign rebel groups, let's take the example of the Hutu of the Democratic Liberation Forces of Rwanda (FDLR). They kidnap women not only for their sexual desires, but also because they want to have children who will continue the long war against the Tutsi regime of Rwanda – to whom they lost military and political power in 1994. Children are often used as spies or sent to markets in addition to teaching them the methods of war. This is the reason why, even if a woman with their child escapes, the Rwandan Hutu rebels want at least the child back. Consequently, the woman

and the child have to live in hiding which sometimes results in retaliation against the families or the village where the woman was kidnapped.

A social challenge.

Reports of rape in eastern Congo have raised questions as to why some victims are abandoned by their families, isolated in the village, or neglected after they are raped. In a society where a child out of wedlock is a disgrace, it is difficult to face the reality of women bearing children of their enemies. What has not been mentioned in reports is that the whole society is an indirect victim of rape and needs also to recover, heal and most importantly find ways to address this new challenge. The presence of a child of the enemy is a constant reminder to the women of the long hours, days, weeks or months of being gang raped and it is a reminder to the whole society of the many people their enemies killed, the things they looted and the continuous struggle to defeat them. The Congolese people have tried to protect their mothers, wives, sons and daughters, but those who rape them have circumvented that protection. Many have been martyrs, believing that no one should rape their loved ones. We rarely take ‘no’ as an answer in fighting for the things we believe in, but when it happens, we are hurt, enraged and ready to fight back. But at the local, provincial and national government levels, the issue of rape has not been effectively

(Continued on page 7)



Spring for Justice in DC!

Africa Faith and Justice Network 25th Anniversary Conference “Celebrating Africa: Analysis to Action”

April 18th-21st, 2008 Rosslyn, VA

This year, AFJN celebrates its 25th year of policy analysis and advocacy for peace and justice in Africa. Workshops on health, trade, and conflict transformation will inform participants of the issues currently affecting Africa and what can be done to ensure a more just US-Africa policy. This four-day event also includes keynote addresses by Ishmael Beah and Jeffrey Sachs, a celebratory meal and award ceremony on Saturday evening honoring Catholic Relief Services, a silent auction, an outdoor music concert, and a day of lobby visits on Capitol Hill.

Visit www.afjn.org for a detailed conference schedule and for online registration. Sign up now!



2008 Northern Uganda Symposium and Lobby Day: Be a Piece of the Peace

Presented by RESOLVE Uganda
 February 24th-26th, 2008

1,000 people. 3 days. 1 shot at peace. The 2008 Lobby Day for

Northern Uganda is going to be the best opportunity for people concerned about the ongoing crisis in northern Uganda to help achieve a long overdue end to this horrific war. Visit www.ugandalobbyday.com for details. Sign up today!

communions. Experts will train participants how to do advocacy and inform them of U.S. domestic and international policies that focus on a movement toward a new vision of true human security - one which seeks not only the absence of tension, but the presence of justice (Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.). Visit www.advocacydays.org for conference details and registration.



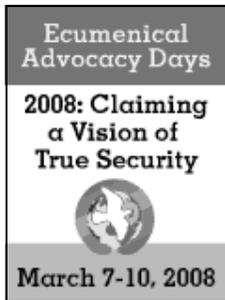
Congo Conference: Connect for Congo:

Working for Hope and Peace in the DRC

Presented by Congo Global Action Coalition

March 30th-April 1st, 2008

We have come together to advocate with one voice for people of the Democratic Republic of Congo and urge increased local and international response for the post-war and post-election situation in the Congo. CGA's 2008 Conference and Lobby Day will be an opportunity for all concerned about the violence in DRC to have their voices heard. Check www.congoglobalaction.org for conference details and registration.



2008 Ecumenical Advocacy Days: Claiming a Vision of True Security

Presented by the Christian faith community

March 7th-10th, 2008

'2008: Claiming A Vision of True Security' promises to inspire an expected gathering of over 1,000 religious advocates from a wide array of Christian

(Continued from page 6)

addressed. There is neither a plan for healthcare nor a justice system to prosecute, protect, and pave the way for social reconciliation.

Rape no more.

Rape is never acceptable, but in times of war it is a particularly vicious act, used as a weapon by the perpetrators. We learn about women who delivered sex services to Japanese soldiers in World War II, wartime rape in Berlin in 1945, in

Yugoslavia in 1992-1993, in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1994, in the Balkans in 1993, in Rwanda in 1994, in Sudan/Darfur and Congo to this day, and the list continues. We must stand up and say: rape no more, at any time. AFJN believes it is time to come together to take action for an immediate solution. Please visit the AFJN website and sign our petition to the US government to do more for the peace process in the D.R. Congo. Peace will not only mitigate the instances of rape in Congo, but will also allow the recovery and healing process from all war trauma to begin.

We hope you will join us for our 25th Anniversary Conference and Celebration, April 18-21, 2008 in Rosslyn, Virginia! Check the AFJN website for details and conference registration.

The **Africa Faith and Justice Network**, inspired by the Gospel and informed by Catholic Social Teaching, educates and advocates for just relations with Africa.

Staff:
Rocco Puopolo, s.x.
Bahati Ntama Jacques
Beth Tuckey

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Advocacy for justice and peace in Africa doesn't just happen. AFJN needs your help and participation! Thank you for your financial support.

