

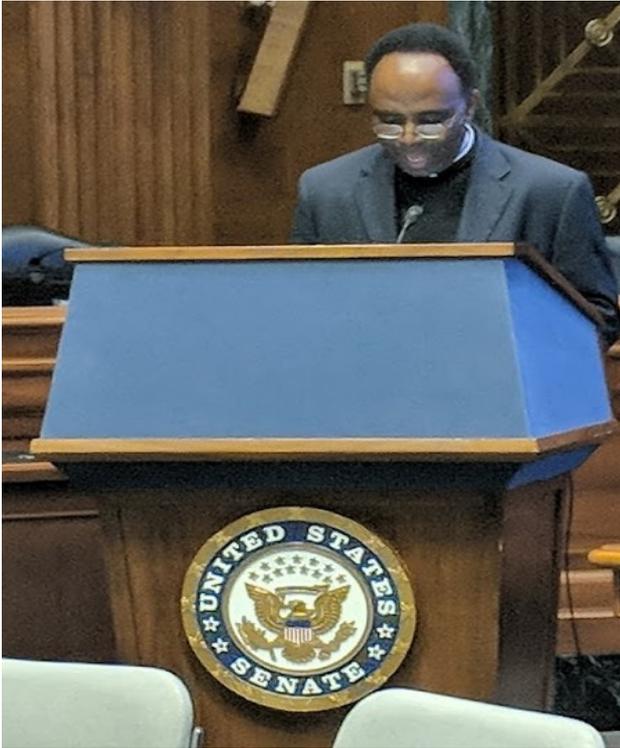
"It is you O Lord who  
have accomplished all we have done."  
Isaiah 26:12



## 2018 End of Year Report



## Activity Highlights & Updates



Dear Friends,

Thank you for your sustained commitment and support of the mission of the Africa Faith & Justice Network (AFJN). This past year was unique and special in many ways. Your support over the years made it possible for AFJN to reach a landmark - 35 years of advocacy and education for transformation. The 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration provided an opportunity to showcase AFJN's accomplishments in the US and Africa, and the coalition it has built over the years. We are most grateful.

We continue to tailor our engagement strategies to the changing contexts in the United States and in Africa. Our education programs and outreach including appearances in the media, and collaboration with our coalition partners in the US and Africa continue to grow strong. Our internship program enables many young

Americans from diverse backgrounds to learn firsthand the engagements of AFJN with the US Congress and with coalition partners in Africa. We continue to see expression of surprise, then transformation of our young interns as they learn the truth about US-Africa policy, governance issues in Africa, corporate intrusions into African local communities, and ways these corporations impact the lives of Africans, mostly negatively. The reality they come to understand, different from media sound-bites gives them a different perspective about Africa; prompting some to become advocates for Africa.

Our engagements of stakeholders in Africa on just governance continue to produce practical results. We are particularly delighted at the new found energy of women religious. They have courageously tackled the structures of injustice that deprive Africans of their dignity as God's children. Catholic sisters in Ghana, Uganda, Nigeria and Tanzania took bold steps to tackle a number of social ills: human trafficking, violence against women and children, wonton destruction of human life, and land grabbing and dislocation of families by agribusiness corporations.

We continue to highlight the implications of corporate large-scale land acquisition, toxic dumping on African soil by foreign companies, the implication of youth migration, the challenge Genetically Modified Seeds pose to food sovereignty, water sources, and biodiversity. Our firsthand experience and insights gained from African communities enrich our advocacy in the US in unique ways, and contributes to AFJN's visibility; resulting in speaker invitations and consultations.

Thank you for your commitment to support our sisters and brothers in Africa as they struggle to promote just governance and create a better society where their dignity as God's children is enhanced. What follows are just highlights of activities. We look forward with confidence to a great year of engagements and achievements.

Aniedi Okure, OP, Executive Director

## Advocacy for Social, Political, Economic Development of Africa



An African proverb has it that “When the music changes, so does the dance.” As the dynamics of international relations change, AFJN works to devise new ways of engagements in policy related issues in the US and in community empowerment in African, to stay relevant in a fast changing world. The enviable positions once occupied by the superpowers, are increasingly waning and consequently becoming less relevant as new key players have emerged on the global political and economic platforms. They are forces reckoned with in advocacy for social transformation, peace, justice, and the integrity of creation.

AFJN continues to adapt its advocacy strategies to empower African communities and positively impact change in an irreversible way. This approach has proven effective with measurable outcomes. Our experience and knowledge acquired from our programs in Africa continue to inform our advocacy in Washington DC. Capitol Hill staffers and the US Department of State have cited work done by our coalition partners in Africa, especially Catholic women religious on human trafficking, only to realize that AFJN is the initiator of these achievements.

## Advocacy for US-Africa-Policy Change: Support for Networking Sanctions



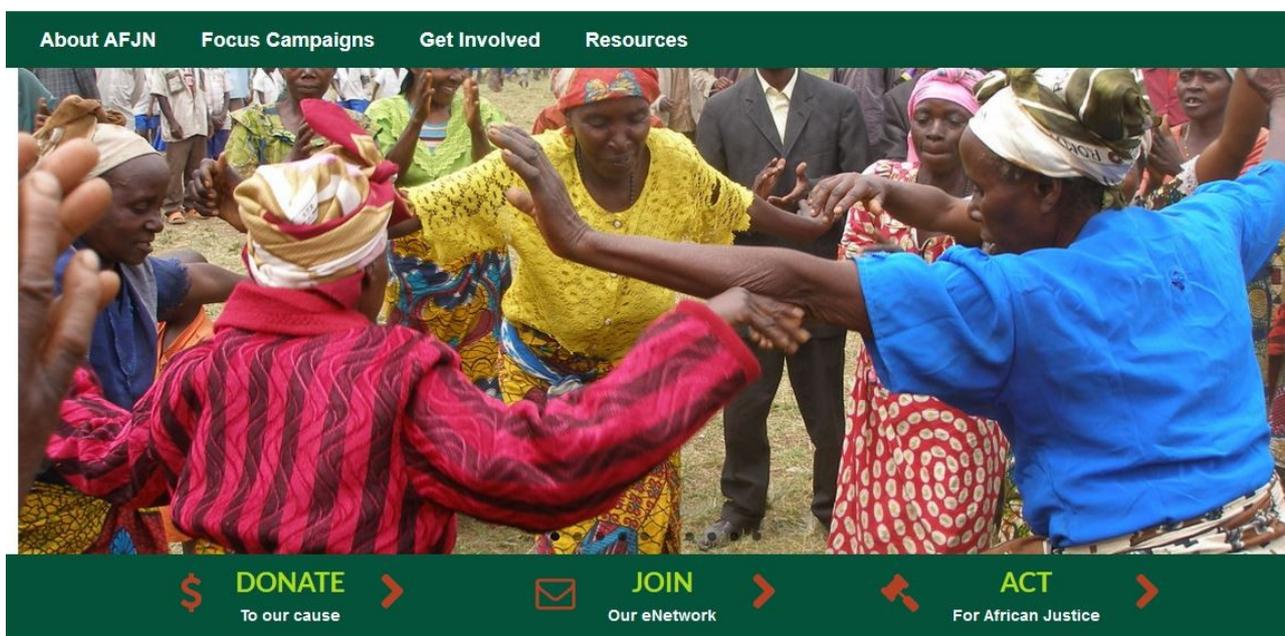
AFJN Staff Daniele Moschetti, MCCJ, Ntama Bahati and Intern Aime Culver with Congressman Chris Smith (Second from Left) at a hearing on Zimbabwe 2018

Our engagement with US government officials and lawmakers and their staff focus on, among other things, good governance, human rights issues and economic justice. We insist that the US government must take a hard look, and reexamine its relationship with some of Africa’s dictatorial regimes and kleptocrats

who are the “friends” of the US. For a long time we have argued that the traditional sanctions such as withholding direct foreign aid to corrupt and authoritarian regimes are no longer effective. These policies, designed to serve US government interests in the first place and often bring untold hardships to the common person.

***We support and advocate for network sanctions*** which puts direct financial pressure on the primary individuals, those acting on their behalf, and the entities owned or controlled by the targeted individuals. Both network sanctions and anti-money laundering measures are meant to put stronger consequences on corrupt networks and leaders while supporting civil society voices. While we have the “Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act” to deal with this reality, our ongoing advocacy is meant to create the political will for action.

### Public Engagement through our website [www.afjn.org](http://www.afjn.org)



AFJN website continues to serve as an important tools to reach people on all continents. From January 1 to December 18, 2018, 33,584 pages of our website were read. The 5 most viewed pages are related to Human Trafficking, AFJN staff and board, land grabbing and toxic dumping, US military presence and activities in Africa. There response to AFJN post denouncing President Donald Trump’s disparaging remarks about African nations and Haiti was very positive and affirming. Similarly, following CNN’s documentation of the auctioning of African migrants in Libya, there was a great engagement of the public on the issue of modern slavery suggesting that “*Collectively, we can end ongoing slave auction in Libya*”. Furthermore, when Pope Francis called for prayer and fasting for South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo on February 23, 2018 we held a prayer session in our office and live-streamed the event which enabled more people to participate.



# Happy Anniversary

## 35 YEARS OF ADVOCACY

Africa  
Faith &  
Justice  
Network

### Policy Briefing at Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington DC



Policy briefing panel II - Senate. L to R: Aniedi Okure, OP, Sasha Lezhnev, Faustine Wabire, Eric LeCompte

AFJN 35th Anniversary was marked by a two-day event in Washington DC. Day One at the US Senate, hosted by Senator Chris Van Hollen, and Day Two at The Catholic University of America (CUA). These events were sponsored by the Missionaries of Africa, & the Society of African Mission.

Institutional and individual members provided additional funding for the events. Thank you to all for your continued support to the mission of AFJN. Their participation in person further made the celebration a success.



Sr. Florence Deacon, OSF,  
AFJN Board Chair

### Day 1 at the USA Senate: Policy Briefing and AFJN 35th Anniversary



Left to Right: AFJN Executive Director with the diplomatic corps from Uganda, Rwanda and South Africa



To mark the Africa Faith & Justice Network' 35th Anniversary, we held Policy briefing on Friday September 14, 2018 at Dirksen Senate Building focusing on “Africa in Global Perspective”. The event was hosted by the office of Senator Van Hollen (D-MD). The keynote speaker, Congressman James P. McGovern (D-MA), unable to be present due to unforeseen events sent Kimberly Stanton, PhD, Senior Professional Staff with the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission of U.S. Congress to deliver a keynote. She along with Emira Woods, Associate Fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies made an outstanding presentation focused US-Africa policy, promotion of democracy, good governance, economic justice, militarism and respect of human rights. A number of African Diplomatic Corps were present at the event.

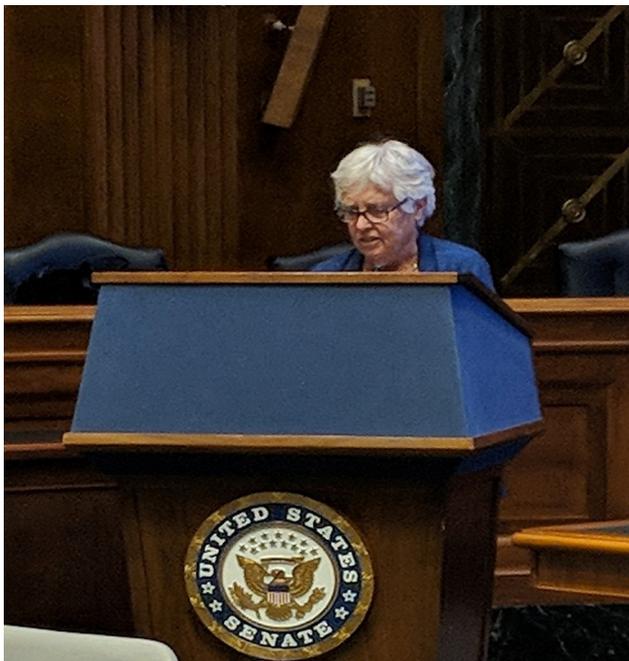
**Day 2 at The Catholic University of America: Policy Briefing on Religious Freedom Globally, AFJN's 35th Anniversary and the Missionaries of Africa's 150th Anniversary Celebration**



Left to Right: Julien Comier, MAfr. Archbishop Michael Fitzgerald, MAfr, Prof. Robert Destro

The second day, September 15, 2018 featured keynote on “*The Promotion of Religious Freedom*” globally with a focus on Africa by Archbishop Michael Fitzgerald, MAfr. He previously served as President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, Apostolic Nuncio to Egypt and Vatican Delegate to the Arab League. The event was hosted by The Catholic University of America Director of the Institute for Policy Research and Law Professor Robert Destro.

The Missionaries of Africa, a founding member of the AFJN have served the peoples of Africa in various capacities over the past one hundred and fifty years. We are grateful for their sustained support of AFJN and pray that their ministry continue to strive in the years to come. **Photo gallery on page 9 (Senate), 10 (CUA)**



AFJN'S 35th and Missionaries of Africa's 150th Anniversary Celebration  
at The Catholic University of America



Public Protest at the Nigerian Embassy in Washington DC May 22<sup>nd</sup>

Peaceful demonstration at the Nigerian Embassy in Washington DC



Following the killings of two priests and 17 parishioners during morning Mass at Saint Ignatius Catholic Church, Mbalom, Benue State, the bishops called for a national public event on April 24, 2018 with the theme “Enough is Enough”. The event was to draw attention to the wanton killings of innocent people and the deteriorating security

situation in Nigeria. In solidarity with the Church in Nigeria, AFJN held on the same day, a public event at the Nigerian Embassy. People came as far as Philadelphia. The question remains: “How many solidarity prayers and how many dead do we have to bury for the government of Nigeria to take the matter of security seriously? The Nigerian army has a record of keeping peace abroad. Why is it that it cannot keep peace at home?” The two priests and seventeen parishioners were the latest victims of violence against innocent citizens in that country.

## Liberia: A Briefing on Just Governance and Citizens Participation

On August 7, AFJN, The Catholic University of America's Institute for Policy Research and the Liberian apostolate PCMRT-Secretariat of Cultural Diversity in the Church co-sponsored a briefing on Liberian with a focus of Just Governance and Citizenship participation.



**James Butty**, Journalist, Managing Editor & Host, Daybreak Africa at the Voice of America (VOA), **Emira Woods** Foreign Policy-Africa Expert, Associate Fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies (IPS), and Chair, Board of Africa Action

## Cameroon:



From Left to Right: Adotei Akwei, Deputy, Advocacy and Government Relations for Amnesty International USA , Jocelyn Nana, Cameroonian Diaspora, Mireille Tushiminina, Executive Director of the Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Africa

The crisis accounts for over 1,000 deaths, 200,000 internally displaced people, 50,000 refugees, 800 arrests. The briefing took place on August 21, 2018 in the Cannon House Office Building, Room 121 and provided up to date information on the situation and called on the US Congress, media, and the public to act before it is too late. The briefing was co-sponsored by Africa Faith & Justice Network, the Congressional African Staff Association and Africans Rising.

## Activities in Africa

### Nigeria: Workshop with Major Superiors of Women. Sisters Invoke the Holy Spirit for Guidance

From January 19-21 2018, AFJN held a workshop for 50 Major Superiors of women—the Nigerian Conference of Women Religious (NCWR). The theme was “Religious Vocation, Leadership and Justice Ministry in Relation to Governance”. We looked at social



issues in Nigeria from the Catholic Social Teachings (CST) perspective and the role of women religious in advancing this teaching. At the end of the workshop, the sisters pledged to take action. AFJN worked with the major superiors to plan and mobilize nuns and other women groups nationwide for public action.



On Ash Wednesday April 14, the nuns held a national day of prayer. Women of different creeds joined the sisters in public squares throughout the country to uphold the sacredness of every life and to called attention to violence, the killings of innocent people, ethnic

divisions, kidnappings, and other social ills in the country. The event brought together Catholic women religious, Catholic women organization, members of Muslim women association and others to the public square across Nigeria. The sisters’ action drew attention of the public and many media channels within and outside the country.

In April 2018, following two years of sustained advocacy campaign against human trafficking alongside Africa Faith & Justice Network -Nigeria (AFJN-N), Nigeria's Edo State passed a law that criminalizes the



practice and created a government task force on this matter. The task force includes one of the sisters. Prior to our campaign, we were told by influential people, it was dangerous for anyone to talk about this issue in Edo State because the traffickers were allegedly connected to very powerful



people and consequently were feared in the community, allowing them to operate in daylight and with impunity.

In May, AFJN-N, responding to the media report that one hundred school girls from Edo state were trafficked to Libya, visited several government girls' secondary schools in the State. They organized awareness meetings with students, the potential trafficking victims, the staff including the head teachers, the security agents, and some traditional rulers, sensitizing them on trafficking issues as well as

educating them on the newly enacted anti-trafficking law in the state. On September 4, AFJN-N were invited by Edo state governor, H. E. Godwin Obaseki to a briefing meeting. At the meeting with the governor's special adviser on religious matters in Edo state, the sisters articulated further their advocacy activities and their anti-trafficking campaign in the state since 2017 and suggested in writing other ways of partnership with the state to reduce human trafficking and other forms of violence against women and children.

## Tanzania: Catholic Social Teaching, Social Analysis and Advocacy Training



From November 7-13, AFJN conducted advocacy training for Catholic nuns in Tanzania. Using the acquired skills, the nuns conducted town hall meetings in several villages, including Muwimbi village in Iringa district to listen and mobilize the people whose

water source had been confiscated by a large scale investor for irrigation of a farm which used to belong to the village.

They also visited district officials to discuss how “the ongoing conflicts between investors and citizens living in large-scale investment areas ranging from Ruvuma, Njombe, Iringa, Mbarali to Sumbawanga provide a bad picture of investment.” They argued that “investment looks like a crisis rather than a blessing to the people of Tanzania”. Iringa District is one of the worst hit areas by land grabbing in Tanzania.

After witnessing firsthand the negative impact of land grabbing in the Southern Highlands of Tanzania, especially on the people of Muwimbi village, AFJN Executive Director, Aniedi Okure, OP, in addition to the



*Sisters advocacy visit to the District Commissioner, Iringa, Tanzania*



*Sisters Advocacy visit to the District Commissioner of Mafinga, Tanzania*

letter by the sisters sent an appeal letter to His Excellency the President of Tanzania, Dr. John Magufuli leading that he intervenes and protect the people of Muwimbi Village from land grabbers who also confiscated their water source. National radio and television channels aired the story to educate Tanzanians and put pressure on the official to take action. It worked. The District

Commissioner of Iringa called one of the TV stations to stop airing the program and with the assurance that he was working to restore water confiscated by the investor in Muwimbi. The water was released to the community within days. The pressured to review the contract still on.

**Ghana:—Anti-trafficking campaign: education, raising awareness and motivating the community to action**



*Sisters on advocacy, interact with female head porters at Kumasi Central Market. Including one with a child*

AFJN advocacy in Ghana for the rights of the girl-child has been ongoing since 2017, with a particular focus on the rights of the *Kayayei* (female head porters). In 2018, as a follow up to this issue, AFJN accompanied women religious in Ghana and their local partners for a four day advocacy and awareness campaign against the *Kayayei* phenomenon and other forms of human trafficking. The local partners included the Kumasi based Center for Street Children, Centre for Initiative Against Human Trafficking (CIAHT-Ghana), Africa Development Organization for Migration,. They were joined by male religious in their advocacy efforts—the Missionaries of Africa, the Spiritan priests and the Presentation brothers.

The *Kayayei* (female head porter) concerns disadvantaged and poor young Ghanaian women, age 7 years and above who migrate to larger cities to transport traders and shoppers' wares and purchases on top of their heads for little money and end up being abused and trafficked. Majority of the young girls trafficked in Ghana come from the northern part of the country. The four-day event included advocacy in three districts, meeting with elected officials, traditional and religious leaders (including the Chief Imam of Tamale and local Imams of the district), and town hall meetings in several villages, to educate, raise awareness and highlight the ills of trafficking and motivate the community to act to stop this exploitation. We crowned our activities by addressing the Catholic faithful at the Catholic Cathedral in Tamale on Pentecost Sunday.



*Town Hall meeting, education and awareness creation on the Kayayei issue in one of the districts in Northern Ghana*

The response within the community has been very positive. Besides the media (TV, Radio and Newspaper) publicity of the event, actions have been taken by the Chief Executive of Tamale, the Regional Minister and the Paramount Chief of Talon. We have also learned that for weeks following the educational and advocacy activities, the regional minister (state governor) sent out security agents in the night in Tamale to pick up young people on the street and contact their families and “educate” them on the matters of human trafficking. The Regent of Tolon District of the Northern Region, Major (Retired) Sulemana Abubakari spoke to Ghana’s Opera News and made public his pledge to help end child trafficking in the Northern Region.

### **Kenya: Catholic Social Teaching, Missionaries Then and Now, Social Analysis, and Advocacy**

AFJN was invited by Tangaza College, Nairobi Kenya to hold a full-day workshop on November 14, for 35 leaders of various women religious communities who are enrolled in Tangaza college’s “Leadership for Transformation” program. The workshop focused on Africa in the context of globalization, the context of 19th century that missionaries served, and their impact on Africa, Catholic Social Teaching and social analysis. At the end of the workshop, the sisters were so energizing and

requested that AFJN return for additional workshop to include practical techniques for advocacy and work them through advocacy visits. They pledged to mobilize other sisters to come for the workshop, and to form advocacy club in the college.

### Uganda: Sisters at Ugandan Parliament advocating against Unchecked Labor Export Policy and Human Trafficking



From November 18-24, 2018 in Uganda's Capital City Kampala, AFJN held a training workshop on Catholic Social Teaching, social analysis and advocacy for 35 Catholic nuns, members of the Association of Religious in Uganda (ARU). The social analysis focused on issues surrounding contract labor and human trafficking. As part of the program, the sisters took their message to several Ugandan ministries followed by a press conference. The sisters called on the government



*In Uganda Sisters take their concerns to several government ministries and the Ugandan Parliament*

to take a very hard look at the legal export of labor abroad because it has become a lucrative and legal human trafficking scheme.

At their meeting on December 3, 2018 with the Speaker of Ugandan Parliament, Her Excellency the Honorable Rebecca Kadaga, noted that "Last year, we had stopped

government from allowing what they call domestic workers to go out. We thought we can allow those who want jobs as drivers and bankers,” and “Unfortunately, a number of people in government own labor export companies and I am told it is very lucrative so they continued.” Within three weeks of the sisters’ advocacy visits, the Minister of Gender, Labor and Social Development initiated a review of contract labor policy and invited two of the sisters to take part in the review of the policy which took place December 11-12, 2018.

The Speaker of Ugandan Parliament, referring to the sisters as agents of change, pledged to reach out to the sisters, through their association, to listen to this and other advocacy concerns they have.

Several media channels (online, print and television) covered the training, the advocacy visits and the press conference to inform the public and potential victims. In the meantime, the sisters have taken the issue of human trafficking to their faith communities, parents, institutions of education and the nation using the media, conferences and word of mouth.

### **Africa Project Grants Provided by:**

- ◆ *The Raskob Foundation for Catholic Activities*
- ◆ *Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur Base Community*
  - ◆ *Conrad Hilton Foundation*
  - ◆ *Missionaries of Africa*

**AFJN in the Media**

AFJN appeared on, and was interviewed by several media channels in 2018, including Al Jazeera English TV, Voice of America (VOA) TV, and Channels TV



Eucharia Madueke SNDdeN, Nigerian Province and the Coordinator of Women Empowerment Project at the Africa Faith & Justice Network (AFJN). She appeared on CHANNELS TV

AFJN Executive Director, Aniedi Okure, OP, (L) with host Dr. Shaka Ssali (R) on Voice of America TV Straight Talk Africa



AFJN Policy Analyst, Ntama Bahati Jacques on Al Jazeera's Inside Story

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**We thank everyone for his or her commitment and dedication to AFJN**

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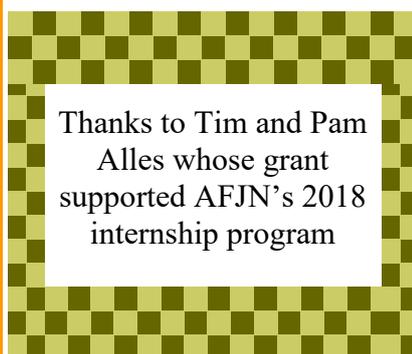
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Thanks to Tim and Pam  
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