

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



## **2017 End of Year Report**



**Activity Highlights  
&  
Updates**

## 35 YEARS OF ADVOCACY

### MISSION STATEMENT

The Africa Faith and Justice Network, inspired by the Gospel and informed by Catholic Social Teaching, seeks to educate and advocate for just relations with Africa and to work in partnership with African peoples as they engage in the struggle for justice, peace, and the integrity of creation.

### A BRIEF HISTORY

Moved to action by their personal experiences in Africa, three Catholic missionary congregations namely the Missionaries of Africa, the Congregation of the Holy Spirit (Spiritains), and the Society of African Missions, founded the Africa Faith and Justice Network (AFJN) in 1983 to transform United States policy towards Africa and her people. Since that time, membership has grown and remains committed in faith to advocate in Washington, DC for U.S. relations with Africa that foster justice and peace, and to educate the public across the United States on the truth about Africa.



Dear Friends,

Your outstanding support for the Africa Faith & Justice Network propelled us to new frontiers in Africa and in the United States. Our advocacy in Washington, education programs and outreach through the media grew stronger. Many young Americans participated in our internship program and were

exposed to US-Africa policy issues and corporate intrusions into African local communities. We facilitated their research on the impact of these incursions on the lives and future of our brothers and sisters in Africa. Some of their research are published on our website.

Within Africa, we engaged Church leaders on just governance, social analysis and advocacy flowing out of the Gospel and Catholic Social Teaching, and they took well documented actions as a result of our workshops.

Women religious in Ghana, Tanzania and Nigeria took bold steps to address some social ills in their countries, especially human trafficking and violence against women and children. More communities now realize the implications of land grabbing, toxic dumping and the challenge Genetically Modified Seeds pose to their food sovereignty, water sources, land and way of life. The insights gained from our partnership with African communities have enriched our advocacy efforts in the United States.

Thank you for your continued support as we work with our African brothers and sisters to advance just governance and the common good and forge a better society where their dignity as God's children is enhance.

*Aniedi Okure, OP*  
Executive Director



## Nigeria



AFJN traveled to Nigeria several times over the past year to continue our Women Empowerment Project. AFJN-Nigeria, an independent sister organization was incorporated in the country to legally enable the sisters to work unhindered. They are using their collective moral voice to confront human trafficking, particularly in Edo State which is a hub for the crime. The sisters visited government officials, church leaders, rural communities, traditional rulers, youth groups and conducted town hall meetings and awareness programs to educate

communities on the ills of human trafficking.

The Sisters' identified and confronted a feared and "untouchable" brothel owner and sex trafficking site in the state. His case is still with the Edo state police. Further, the sisters' work with the community of Ogwa village in Esan West led the chief to issue a decisive social and economic isolation decree prohibiting buying, selling or conducting any transactions with a brothel owner and his family, forcing him to close down his brothel and flee the village.

In addition, the sisters' enlightenment campaign in Edo State prompted the state governor to create a Task Force on human trafficking headed by the state attorney general and includes one of the sisters as member, and also led to the introduction of a bill in the state assembly for stiff penalties against human traffickers. The sisters have been requested to mobilize for the passage of the bill.



## Liberia

AFJN hosted two bishops from Liberia, Bishop Andrew Karnley and Bishop Anthony Borwa, over the summer. We discussed issues facing the country and possible areas for future collaboration especially on AFJN's African Churches Together (ACT) to fight corruption project.



## Ghana



Our team traveled to GHANA three times in 2017, first in February to stand shoulder to shoulder with the people of Dorfor and Battor Traditional Areas victim of a land grab by Deepsin Implex Limited, an Indian agribusiness. To bring more awareness to the issue of land grabbing in the Volta region and Ghana in General we partnered with Ngleshie Alata Traditional Council – James Town, Accra and Mama Alorvi II, Female chief of Afaode in Dorfor area.

Two other trips by staff in May and October engaged the Sisters in Catholic Social Teaching, social analysis, and advocacy. They visited government officials and traditional leaders in Ghana's Ashanti Region and held a public event in Kumasi Central Market to bring attention to the plight of the Kayayei (female head porters).

## Tanzania



Following our 2016 workshop in Dodoma on land grabbing, Fr. Aniedi Okure was invited back to Tanzania to brief the Bishops Conference on the *"Dislocation of Tanzanians From Their Land by Corporations: Impact on Family Life and Values."* Our Women Empowerment Project brought together more than 70 major superiors to Dar es Salaam for a workshop on

justice ministry, Catholic Social Teaching and the common good. As a result the sisters submitted a letter to the President on this and other issues of concern to them.

## Ivory Coast



Following the success of the Limuru-Kenya continental conference on land grab in 2015, AFJN partnered with the Symposium of the Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM), Regional Episcopal Conference of West Africa (RECOWA), the Coalition of International

Development of Catholic Agencies (CIDSE) Africa Europe Faith and Justice Network (AEFJN) and several other partner organizations for a second conference targeting Francophone African countries, from November 20-23, 2017 in Abidjan. Over 80 people attended including nine bishops and the Apostolic Nuncio to Côte d'Ivoire.

## Democratic Republic of the Congo



Our effort to promote the political agreement brokered by the Catholic Church to bring reconciliation and peace to the DRC, we hosted a delegation in Washington, DC in March, that included Information Minister H. E. Lambert Mende Omalanga, opposition member Senator Mokonda Bonza, President of the political

party Convention des Democratres Chretienes and Mr. Mulegwa Zihindula, Center for Political and Strategic Studies/DRC. We moderated two panels at AFJN office and organized events for the delegation in Congress, State Department, the National Endowment for Democracy, and Voice of America TV. We also hosted Bishop Nicholas Djomo from the Kasai region during the fall.



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## Advocacy in the United States



- Congresswoman Karen Bass (D-CA) invited AFJN Executive Director Aniedi Okure to speak on a policy panel at the Capitol titled: "Continuing the Conversation: End Famine Now." He also worked with Bass on a bill to go before the House addressing the famine crisis in Africa.
- Advocated against the repeal of sections 1502 and 1504 of Dodd-Frank (Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act) through phone calls and letters to over 40 members of Congress. We also encouraged our supporters on numerous occasions to speak out and contact their members of Congress.
- Signed onto statement on the House Resolution 128 that calls for more inclusive governance, accountability for human rights violations, and an independent investigation into the unrest and brutal crackdown in Ethiopia.
- Participated in the annual African Diaspora Day Festival in Washington, DC.
- Summer interns organized a social media enlightenment campaign for World Refugee Day.
- Sent advocacy letters to over 50 universities (most Catholic-affiliated) bringing to light the issue of land grabbing, and urge the universities to do their due diligence when investing their money.
- Revised our College Campus Advocacy Toolkit which can be found under resources on our website.
- Aniedi spoke twice at Catholic University on the subject of child migration and also on the just governance movement in Africa.

- AFJN continues to serve on the leadership team for the Ecumenical Advocacy Days conference and organizes and chairs the Africa Track Workshops of the EAD.
- Partnership and work with coalitions focused on Africa and U.S.-Africa relations remains important.

### AFJN in the Media



- Appeared on Voice of America's Straight Talk Africa program three times in 2017, discussing issues such as land tenure reform and impact on African communities, the World Bank and IMF and their financing of corporations that exploit Africa, and the socio-economic impact of Africa's elite medical tourism on Africa.
- Featured in an article in the National Catholic Reporter on corporations working in Africa.

- Interviewed by POLITICO for an article about Dodd-Frank anti corruption law.
- Two articles published in Global Sisters Report covering our Women Empowerment Project in Nigeria and Ghana.



- Bought airtime on two FM radio stations in Adidome in Volta Region of Ghana and sponsored live discussion on land grabbing in Ghana. As a result we got 11 radio interviews from across Ghana. In Accra AFJN featured on national broadcast on two television programs and two radio talk-shows.

- Sisters in Tanzania conducted several radio programs to discuss their call to justice and bring awareness to the issue of violence against women and children.
- In Nigeria we broadcasted a jingle on Edo State TV to highlight the dangers of going abroad in search of work and to encourage youth to attend an awareness campaign against human trafficking at the National Youth Center in Benin City. The jingle is now circulating on the famous social media platform WhatsApp. Channels TV featured the event and AFJN's work against human trafficking.

## Internship Program

Pictured below are our 2017 Interns. The program continues to attract students from across the nation. Summer interns organized a social media enlightenment campaign for World Refugee Day.

Left -Right: Yashi Gunawardena, Davidson College, Caroline Ayong, University of Massachusetts Amherst, Madison Stewart, Kutztown University of Pennsylvania



Left-Right: Jackie Mullen, The Catholic University of America, Kpakpo Serge Adotevi, The American University, Jamie Vieson, University of Dayton



**AFJN is supported by these Organizational members**

- ◆ *Adorers of the Blood of Christ*
- ◆ *Comboni Missionaries*
- ◆ *Archdiocese of Cincinnati Mission Office*
- ◆ *Congregation of Holy Cross Sisters*



- ◆ *Congregation of the Holy Spirit*
- ◆ *Dominican Sisters of Peace*
- ◆ *Holy Cross Fathers*
- ◆ *Jesuits*
- ◆ *Marianist Province of the United States*
- ◆ *Maryknoll Society*
- ◆ *Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate*
- ◆ *Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa*
- ◆ *Missionary Sisters Servants of the Holy Spirit*
- ◆ *Missionhurst*
- ◆ *Priests of the Sacred Heart*
- ◆ *Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary*
- ◆ *School Sisters of Notre Dame: Central Pacific Province*
- ◆ *Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati*
- ◆ *Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth*
- ◆ *Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus*
- ◆ *Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus & Mary*
- ◆ *Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur*
- ◆ *Sisters Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary*
- ◆ *Society of African Missions*
- ◆ *Society of Missionaries of Africa*
- ◆ *Society of the Divine Word*
- ◆ *Xaverian Brothers*
- ◆ *Xaverian Missionaries*

**AFJN is also supported by individual members**

*We thank each and every one for their support. Their list is not provided for privacy concern.*

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*Hilton Fund for Sisters*

*Missionaries of Africa*

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Adorers of the Blood of Christ*

*Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur Base Community*

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