



# Africa

April-June 2012

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Anniversary!**

**March 1-3rd, 2013  
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Cardinal Turkson,  
Keynote**

## A New Scramble for Africa: Land Grab & Dispossession of People

By Aniedi Okure, Executive Director

A new scramble for Africa akin to the frenzy that followed the Berlin conference of 1885 and the partitioning and colonization of Africa is on; farmlands and minerals are the biggest attraction. The increasing discourse of land scarcity, the rising cost of food and the growing demand for biofuel and mineral resources have enticed multinational corporations to engage in shady land deals in developing countries. The finance industry now turns to farmlands for high returns on their investments. There seem to be a systematic takeover of natural resources from developing countries as part of global restructuring to ensure continuous supply of goods and raw materials needed in the developed countries.

“We who are alive now, do not inherit the land from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children.”

### A Grim Picture

We are witnessing the biggest land grab in modern history. Report from *The Guardian* and data from Land Matrix, Global Land Project, Oakland Institute, GRAIN and several other sources paint a grim picture of tens of millions of hectares of land grabbed from the developing countries for pennies through shady deals. As of June 2012 about 227 million (876,000 square miles) of land – the equivalent land area of California, Oregon, Washington, and the eastern US States stretching from Maine to Florida, plus Wisconsin, Illinois, West Virginia and the District of Columbia – have been grabbed from developing countries through shady deals that dispossess the people of their land, their livelihood and their identity and drive them further into poverty.

Land grab in Africa stretches across the continent but mostly in the sub-Saharan region. The crops planted by investors are mostly for export rather than for local consumption. GRAIN reports that 67% of farmland in Liberia, 15% in Sierra Leone, 7% in Tanzania, 10% in Ethiopia, 6% in D.R. Congo, 8% in Gabon, 11% in Guinea, and 6% in Mozambique among others are controlled by foreigners at a cost of between \$0.50 – \$7.10 per hectare/year.

### Disparity – Grabbing for Pennies

According to a 2011 publication by *NuWire Investor*, one hectare (2.47 acres) of land costs \$32,000 in the US; whereas foreign investors grab it for less

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# AFRICOM

**U** By Melaura Homan-Smith, AFJN

**P** Whereas formerly the continent of Africa was merely a tactical jumping-off point for access to the Middle East, now it is fast becoming a battlefield in its own right. The name of the strategy? Counter terrorism. The secrecy of US militarism in Africa is no secret at all. Africans are aware of the new reality: AFRICOM has been flooding the Sahel and Central Africa with drones and other surveillance tools. These aircraft are supported by a network of small military bases across Africa.

The flying machines over Africa are a mixture. One subcategory consists of drones (a catch-all phrase for planes without human pilots, aka remotely piloted aircraft, whether weaponized or not). The other is made up of small prop planes flown by contractors. The mixture is blanketing Africa's skies to keep track of al-Shabab, al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), al-Qaeda in the Horn, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), and Boko Haram.

Pursuant to this goal additional military installations have popped up, including spots in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, Nouakchott, Mauritania, and Nzara, South Sudan. The Washington Post reports: "About a dozen air bases have been established in Africa since 2007, according to a former senior U.S. commander involved in setting up the network. Most are small operations run out of secluded hangars at African military bases or civilian airports." From these small bases AFRICOM coordinates missions to target the three "most dangerous" groups, according to AFRICOM commander General Carter Ham: Boko Haram, AQIM, and al-Shabab.

Known bases Camp Lemonnier in Djibouti and in Victoria, Seychelles Island, fly drones over Somalia to target members of al-Shabab. Drone strikes

## Militarization without Boots— or Conscience: US Drones across Africa

in Somalia are not reported, but do result in death. Al-Shabab in Somalia has quickly become in vogue as a terrorist threat, flying ahead of al-Qaeda in Iraq and Mesopotamia in terms of importance when the latter has killed hundreds of US citizens and the former zero. Information on Ahmed Abdi Aw-Mohamed, founder and commander of al-Shabab, is worth \$7 million to State Department, whereas Abu Yahya al-Libi, described as al-Qaeda's second in command, was killed by a drone strike in Pakistan with a paltry \$1 million dollar bounty on his head. This apportionment of monies, especially for a cash-strapped State Department, highlights the new importance of counter-terror measures in Somalia.



**“AFRICOM has been flooding the Sahel and Central Africa with drones and other surveillance tools.”**

Currently there is also a push to designate the group Boko Haram from Nigeria as a Foreign Terrorist Organization. Boko Haram has killed hundreds of people in church bombings, and no one denies the horror of these acts--but Boko Haram is home-grown, pursues local aims, and presents no threat to the US. Extending our official treatment of terrorists to Boko Haram would just militarize bilateral relations in the name of ending a threat that was never there. This is what happened when President Bush sent troops to Iraq.

US military involvement in long-standing political situations (Nigeria, Somalia/Ethiopia, Sudan, LRA-affected states) does not tend to stop or slow down. Local involvement leads to the training and arming of local forces to carry out counter insurgency goals, as in Democratic Republic of Congo and Nigeria. It also leads to more casual military engagement in the field, like special forces which have been working with local law enforcement in the Sahara, Somalia and Yemen. Intelligence gathering extends beyond simple operations and into the realm of long-term political mapping, which requires a sustained network of observa-

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tion. Michael Brenner of the University of Pittsburgh says this mission creep delegates the State Department to "a support role that involves local public relations and serving up the diplomatic refreshments."

Further use of armed drones into the operations of AFRICOM, specifically in the hunt for Joseph Kony (the leader of the LRA) and in Somalia would be a mistake. Individual drone strikes can easily be wrong since it often relies on paid locals on the ground to provide location intelligence. And when it does go wrong there is no justice or recourse for the families or communities, because "it" never really happened. The use of drones in Africa is largely undocumented, and sets a terrible precedent while China, Russia, and Israel watch.

Moral and legal qualms aside, drones are really only useful in the fight against terrorism, and even then they're not very effective. Any organized army is not so vulnerable to individual strikes and would be able to shoot down incoming drones. The use of drones for years in Pakistan accomplishes a general sense of unease, but hasn't stopped the Taliban from physically holding territory or being in control of the area. How would drones do much better in the failed state of Somalia?

The blanket justification for the expansion of AFRICOM and use of drones is that all these different terrorist groups are plotting against the US and destabilizing African countries. Whether true or not, expanding this shadow network isn't the way to safely increase security, and it doesn't set a democratic example for burgeoning African countries.

AFRICOM and the myriad contractors it hires are encroaching on civilian territory: army special operations are replacing CIA intelligence gathering; the State Department is being edged out of developing long-term political strategy, and development work is being take away from the US Agency for International Development (USAID). All this with a classified budget, questionable use of drones, zero transparency for the American people, and zero accountability for the affected peoples across Africa who may look up and see American drones over their heads. ■



# Spotlight on:

by Rubea Stoupe,  
AFJN Intern

## AFRICAN WOMEN LEADERS



**Liberian President – Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf**—The first female president of Liberia and Africa's first female head of state, she was elected in 2005 and re-elected in 2011. She served as Minister of Finance, and is one of three women awarded the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize "for their non-violent struggle for the safety of women and for women's rights to full participation in peace-building work."

**Malawian President – Joyce Banda**—The first female president of Malawi was sworn in April 7, 2012. She served as the first female vice president, Member of Parliament and Minister of Gender, Children's Affairs & Community Services. Since inauguration, Banda has initiated sweeping reforms, including selling the presidential jet and a fleet of 60 Mercedes limousines.



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Land grabs from page 1



**DETAILS ON WHO AND WHERE:**

- The report shows that in TANZANIA, the Korean government acquired 100,000 hectares (386 sq. miles) in 2010 to grow crops for the production of vegetable oil, starch and wine. A year later, Agrisol Energy (USA) acquired 332,000 hectares (1,281 sq. miles) in 2011 to produce cereals for biofuels and livestock with backing from Pharos, Summit Group and the University of Iowa.
- In GUINEA, Farm Lands of Guinea Inc. (USA) acquired over 100,000 hectares in 2011 for export production of corn and soybeans.
- In GABON, Olam (Singapore) acquired 300,000 hectares (1,158 sq. miles) in 2011 for palm oil production, while SIAT Group (Belgium) got 100,000 hectares concession for livestock and 20,000 hectares for oil palm and rubber.
- ETHIOPIA has leased/sold 3.6 million hectares (13,899 sq. miles) to foreign companies from India, Saudi Arabia, Europe and Israel for US\$0.80/hectare/year) to produce maize, rice, palm oil and sugar for the global market; a deal that has displaced 1.5 million people from their lands.
- In SIERRA LEONE - Socfin, a subsidiary of Bolloré (France) got 12,500 hectares in 2011 for the production of palm oil and Addax (Swiss company), acquired 10,000 hectares in 2010 for the production of sugar for ethanol, to start in 2013.
- Heracles (USA) has acquired over 73,000 hectares (282 square miles) in CAMEROON for oil palm plantation.

Report from *The Guardian* and data from Land Matrix, Global Land Project, Oakland Institute, GRAIN

than the price of Starbuck coffee in Africa. The deals are sealed for 39-99 years between investors and African political leaders who discard the wisdom of their ancestors: “We who are alive now, do not inherit the land from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children” and mortgage the resources of future generations for a “bowl of soup.” Investors and their collaborators act with impunity; they violate the rights of the local people and relocate them to reservations, threaten their livelihoods and that of future generations. Some interfere with water supply sources and destroy the ecological system. Sound familiar?

Like the purported reasons paraded by the chieftains of the 19<sup>th</sup> century scramble for Africa (commerce, liberation and civilization), the chieftains of the new scramble peddle enticing noble reasons for dispossessing African people of their land: increasing food production, creating jobs and improving their standards of living. They, in their infinite wisdom, know what is good for Africa and their magnanimity in designing a better life for the African people knows no bounds. But history has repeatedly revealed the hidden agenda behind these claims.

**It has happened before**

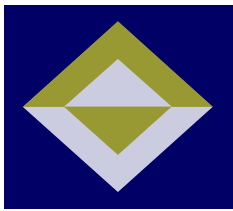
Recall the scramble for Africa following the Berlin conference of 1885, Australia and the Aborigines, and South Africa under apartheid. This is a déjà vu. This time it is more intense, with more exploiter-participants and achieved through devious “legal” contracts. Is this designing a better life for Africa or a design to ensure Africa’s continuous assistance to the developed world? ■



**AFJN Board and Staff Retreat, May 18-20th**

Thanks to the Spiritan Center, Bethel Park, Pennsylvania for so graciously hosting us. AFJN spent a weekend reflecting and planning for the future, and it provided much energy for moving forward!

*Top left: Bahati Jacques, David Suley, Mike Murphy, Jo’Ann DeQuattro, Melaura Homan-Smith, Chris Promis, John Converse, Steve Price, Second row: Elizabeth Kolmer, Clarita Hanson, Norbert Brockman, Charles Kelley, Lacey Hausamen, John Kleiderer, Third row: Rocco Puopolo, Teresa Phillips, Aniedi Okure, Tom Tureman*



# Congo Conflict Mineral Trade:

## A Shout out for Foothill School of Arts and Science in Boise

By Bahati Jacques, AFJN Policy Analyst and Jessica McGinnis, former community coordinator at the Foothills School

For more than two years students at Foothill School of Arts and Science in Boise, Idaho have been learning about the connection between the minerals in some of their favorite technological gadgets and the conflict that has been going on in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the impact it has on Congolese people and students in particular. Foothill School has a sister school in the DRC called Nkokwe primary school. The Foothill community worries about the safety of their friends at Nkokwe. Consequently, they have been advocating for peace in DRC by sending letters to the US Ambassador to the United Nations, Susan Rice and to their representatives in Congress.

This May, students and staff contacted the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and their representatives in Washington with this message:

*“Our sister school, Nkokwe Primary School, is located in the North Kivu region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We want to do everything we can to help the students and their families there to have a safe environment in which to live and learn. We feel very strongly about the problems in the DRC and we believe Section 1502 in the Dodd-Frank Act will help prevent future violence in the region. Waiting to act on these rules is only prolonging the suffering of Congolese people. **As consumers we, along with many others, are very willing to pay more for electronics and jewelry that have not been funded by rape, maiming, or murder. Please support Section 1502 and help bring prosperity and peace to the Congolese people. Thank you!**”*



Students at the Foothill school showing support for Nkokwe

They held a school picnic selling fruit and muffins to raise scholarship funds and signed their yearbooks to send to students to Nkokwe. When AFJN staff visited Nkokwe school, we brought soccer balls and over \$800 in school fees for orphaned students. Foothill has been one of key supporters of the vision of Nkokwe’s principal, Maheshe Edouard, to promote girls education. For the last two years girls enrollment has reached over 177 out of about 500 students. To sustain this trend, Mr. Maheshe hired the only female teacher out of twelve to serve as a role model and provide support for female students.

For questions about this story, please contact Emily Williams, Global Education Coordinator at [ewilliams@foothillsschool.org](mailto:ewilliams@foothillsschool.org). If you have a project in Africa we encourage you to back it up with strong advocacy at home. To find out how your school, church, city, fraternity or organization can participate in conflict mineral advocacy contact Bahati Jacques at [bahati@afjn.org](mailto:bahati@afjn.org) or 202-884-9780 ■

# Comprehensive and Inclusive Step Required to end the Crisis in Somalia

By Ashagrie Abdi, AFJN Intern

After the downfall of Zaid Barre, Somalia's President from 1969-'91, the struggle for power resulted in a civil war that claimed many lives. According to some reports, an estimated 350,000 Somalis have died as a result of conflict, drought and the failure of government since 1991. While there have been attempts to create a viable central government in Somalia, all have failed despite the involvement of the US, the United Nations (UN) and the African Union (AU). The consequences of the crisis have become far-reaching: from piracy to extremism. Piracy grabs the attention of the international community more than Somalia's political problems because it threatens one of the main ocean trade routes.



Image by National Geographic

In any case, when it comes to both piracy and Somalia's political problems, understanding and finding solutions is a continuing challenge for the international community. Theresa Whelan, US Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, said: "the root causes of Somali piracy lie in the poverty and instability that continue to plague that troubled country and addressing these causes will be a lengthy, complicated and difficult process." The question is not whether the process is lengthy and complicated, but rather: why is the international community complaining about the process and the nature of the problem when they have no concrete plan on which action can be taken?

On December 7, 2006, the UN unanimously passed a resolution [Re 1725/2006] authorizing the Inter-Governmental Development Authority (IGAD) and the AU to establish a protection and training mission in Somalia. In 2007, the AU established the African Union Mission in Somalia (AUMISOM), which is ongoing today.

In the same month that the UN Security Council authorized the regional forces mandate in Somalia, the Ethiopian government unilaterally sent its own troops into Somalia to fight the Islamic

Courts Union (ICU), a group that promotes Sharia law and fought to form a rival administration to the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) of Somalia. Within a short period of time, the ICU lost its control of the capital Mogadishu and other areas and finally dispersed. In 2008, the Ethiopian government decided to withdraw its forces from Somalia, declaring its mission fulfilled. After Ethiopia's withdrawal, Al-Shabab, a militant group that became powerful after the dispersal of the ICU, managed to control a large part of the southern part of Somalia. Al-Shabab has confined the TFG to Mogadishu where it is under the protection of

the AU Forces, thus limiting its ability to spread governance outside the capital. Neighboring countries Ethiopia and Kenya see Al-Shabab as a threat to their national security. Kenya accused Al Shabab of cross-border raids and the kidnapping of aid workers. In October 2011, the Kenyan government sent around 2000 troops into Somalia to fight Al-Shabab. Soon after, Kenyan troops drove Al-Shabab out from some of the territories it occupied. A month later, it was reported that Ethiopian troops crossed the border to join the Kenyan troops.

This year, the UN Security Council unanimously passed a resolution requesting the AU to increase its troop levels for AMISOM (Resolution 2036/2012). In the meantime, AMISOM, Kenyan and Ethiopian troops are gaining the upper hand over Al-Shabab.

What remains to be seen is a real peace plan for Somalia. So far all attempts have not yielded significant results. Previous and present governments are accused of nepotism, corruption and ineffectiveness. In addition, it has been stated that the TFG has become overly centralized. Thus, it does not fit the social structure and de-

*Continued on page 7*

mands of the Somali people.

Protracted war will further destroy Somalia and might create more extremists. Furthermore, it may eventually destabilize the relatively peaceful and self-declared "Republic of Somaliland". The recent clash between forces from Puntland (an autonomous region of Somalia) and Al-Shabab militants could send a signal.

Lasting solutions will come from within. It is time for a dialogue between different Somali stakeholders, including moderate extremists, for a sustainable peace. Military solutions might bring short-term stability, but not a lasting peace. For example, negotiation put an end to the extremist militant Irish Republican Army (IRA) in Northern Ireland, and now there are even efforts being made by the US and the Afghan government to talk to the Taliban, proving that military might alone is not enough.

Finally, the international community should not get carried away by the military's successes of 2012. Military action, though it has not immediately brought the desired solution, has diffused the power of the militants and lessened the threat that the neighboring countries and the international community have been complaining about.

With the current delicate military upper hand against the militants, unless the international community takes a decisive and comprehensive step, any sudden withdrawal of Kenyan and Ethiopian troops would leave a void that AMISOM, limited in number and mandate, cannot fill. AMISOM is in Somalia based on a periodic extension of the mandate. The question is: how long will the international community remain in Somalia? That is uncertain. What is certain, however, is that if the international troops were to leave Somalia before a stable government based on consensus is created, there would be more suffering, violence and extremism. Moreover, any effort after that would start from zero. ■



## AFRICAN WOMEN LEADERS

*UN Deputy Secretary General – Dr. Asha-Rose Migiro*—Dr. Asha-Rose Migiro was born, raised, and educated in Tanzania. As the current second in command at the UN, Dr. Migiro is now not only the highest ranking woman from a developing country in the UN system, but in fact the highest ranking woman in UN history. She is a leader in the causes of maternal health, HIV/AIDS, and educational development; her work benefits women, girls, and vulnerable populations across the globe.



*Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Nigeria to the United Nations—H.E. Professor U. Joy Ogwu*, served as Minister of Foreign Affairs of Nigeria, Director General of Nigeria's Institute of International Affairs before becoming the permanent representative in 2008. The author of several academic works, she specializes in International Relations, Political Science and Diplomatic History. Her focus on the dynamics of South-South relationships especially between Africa and Latin America has won major academic awards and distinctions.

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

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