



Africa

January-March 2013

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March 1-3, 2013, the Africa Faith and Justice Network gathered at the University of Notre Dame, Indiana to celebrate 30 years of education and advocacy. The conference attracted about one hundred and seventy participants from across the United States, Europe and Africa. The theme of the conference was *Justice for Africa Justice for the world* and featured keynote address of Cardinal Peter Turkson, President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace present by Fr. Richard Baawobr, Superior General of the Missionaries of Africa.

Other speakers included Emira Woods, Co-director of Institute for Policy Studies and Sr. Veronica Openibo, General Leader of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus. Cardinal Turkson's address emphasize the pursuit of justice as an integral part of Gospel proclamation and evangelization. Several workshops addressed foreign aid and impact on Africa, militarism, land grabs, models of restorative justice, human trafficking, the future of Catholic peace building and climate change and impact on Africa. Details of the conference can be found at AFJN website at www.afjn.org.



Fr. Aniedi Okure, OP, AFJN Executive Director (left)
Fr. Christopher Promise, CSSp, Board Chair (right)

Lessons from Pope Benedict XVI and the Papal Election

By Aniedi Okure, OP. Executive Director

On February 10, 2013 Pope Benedict XVI stunned the world by announcing that he would relinquish the office of Bishop of Rome effective February 28, 2013, citing among other reasons, the need for one who is strong enough to meet the challenges of the “Petrine” Ministry. Along with the announcement, he also summoned the Cardinals to initiate a process of electing a new Pope so the work can continue. We recall that he was elected to the office for life, that there was no opposition planning a coup d’état, no “Vatican Spring”, no “Occupy Vatican”. Yet he decided to step aside for the good of the people. Pope Benedict XVI’s action is not only a courageous and selfless act but demonstrates a deep love for the people and an understanding that leadership is for service.



Pope Francis meets his predecessor Pope emeritus Benedict XVI in Castel Gandolfo (AP) March 23, 2013: Photo by L'Osservatore Romano

The Process of Choosing a Successor

Following the Pope’s renunciation, the cardinals gathered from all over the world, from a variety of cultures, languages, nationalities and races to deliberate and select a new leader. There were no TV ads, no negative campaigning, no rallies to flex political muscle before the electorate, and no name callings. Within two days, they had chosen a new “Bishop of Rome from a distant land” as Pope Francis put it. The Cardinals understood that the ministry of the church and service to the people outweighs any national, cultural, racial or ideological affiliations.

Once elected by a 2/3 majority, there were no challengers in the court of the election outcome, no accusations of rigging or foul play. As a show of solidarity the cardinals rallied behind the one they had chosen and accompanied him to present him to the people. Ironically, the church which is not generally associated with democracy, in this instant, is the great teacher in democratic process and it does so at the highest level of church leadership.

A Lesson for African Leaders

What happened at the Vatican within a month is a great lesson for lifelong African presidents, losers of elections and challengers of winners. Today Africa has five presidents who have been in office for decades: Uganda (27), Cameroon (29), Zimbabwe (31), Angola (32), and Equatorial Guinea (32). Others have used the advantage of the presidency to suppress opponents. The courage of Pope Benedict XVI to relinquish the office for which he was elected for life should be a great lesson for African leaders.

Equally, the process of electing a new Pope should serve as a guide to Africa’s electoral process. If the cardinals could select someone “from far away” to serve as Bishop of Rome, Africa’s electorate should not find it difficult to elect one from within to serve as leader.

Another important lesson from the Papal election is the show of allegiance. Once elected, the cardinals lined up behind the Pope to present him to the world. No one challenged the elected, no one cried foul, no one shouted “it was rigged”, “unfair”, or “I demand a recount.” What a lesson for politicians especially Africa’s political leaders and Africa’s self-declared life-long presidents.

ICC Justice is for Bosco Ntaganda not for the Victims

By Jacques Bahati, Policy Analyst

On March 18, General Bosco Ntaganda, one of the notorious rebel leaders in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) surrendered himself to the US Embassy in Kigali and specifically requested his transfer to the International Criminal Court (ICC) in the Netherlands. The ICC had issued two arrest warrants against Bosco, one in 2006 and another in 2012.

Four Hundred and eighteen people surveyed the day after General Bosco Ntaganda surrendered strongly believe that his absence on the battle field will neither speed up the peace process (9%) nor prevent other militia from committing crime (13%). Instead the majority believe that his surrender is not sufficient to restore peace in the region (78%). (Okapi Radio, March 19, 2013)



One of the hundreds displaced in Rutshuru by CNDP troops in 2008

Now that Bosco is in custody of ICC since March 22, we believe that finally justice will be served. This simply means that proper administration of international law will be applied for Bosco and the victims. It is important, however, to ask ourselves what will the victims, the dead, their families, the affected communities and the Congolese nation, get out of this process.

Choosing to surrender was a winning scenario for Bosco. Prison sentence in the Netherlands is a great deal for him and sounds like vacation to his victims. At the ICC Bosco's rights include a nice clean jail, good food every day and clean clothes, just to name a few. If convicted and sentenced to life in prison which is the maximum the ICC can do, Bosco will spend his life in these great conditions

except for the isolation. He refused to surrender to the Congolese government because he would have been tortured, humiliated, starved and made to live in very bad conditions which are characteristic of prisons in DRC.

This is what happened to Bosco's former collaborators in Inturi who went through the ICC justice.

Matheux Ngudjolo was acquitted. Thomas Lubanga was sentenced to 14 years in prison some of which will be deducted for the years he spent waiting trial. Germain Katanga is appealing the court's decision.

Trying Bosco outside the DRC will have little if any impact on his victims. He should be tried in DRC, but

will not because of an incompetent and corrupt government that maintains an awful judiciary system.

On October 1, 2010, a UN group of experts released the Mapping Report, one of the most comprehensive reports on DRC which covered a significant number of crimes that happened in DRC from 1993-2003.

The experts recommended, among other things, the creation of a mixed court in DRC which would include criminal justice and restorative justice. This suggestion would achieve several goals including the makeover of the Congolese judicial system, bringing to justice those who committed serious crimes, and starting healing and reconciliation in communities where some of these crimes were com-

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Kenya: A Democratic Victory with Mixed Feelings

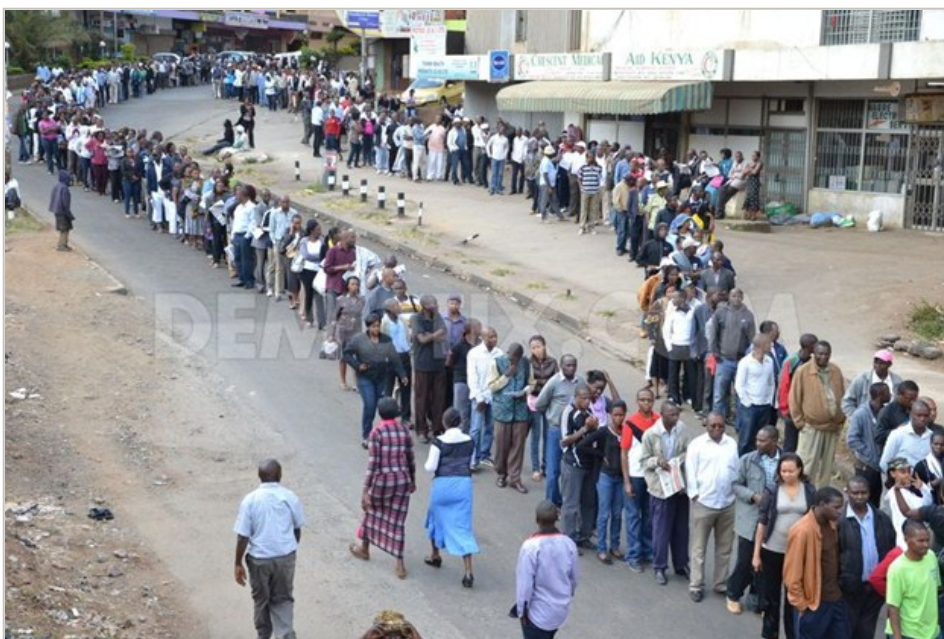
By Bazemo Barthelemy, M.Afr

Since the time the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) made public the official date for the general elections in Kenya late last year, local and international mainstream media commented on the event and interest groups stated their stakes in the presidential contest. Regional and international partners crystalized their hopes on the elections as a possible milestone for justice, a referendum on integrity and a pathway to reconciliation and peace.

As Kenya braced for unprecedented electioneering, the world held its breath and hoped for peaceful, free and fair elections. All watched with a keen interest the process and the possible outcome, and Kenyans kept the promise. The General elections were indeed held on 4 March 2013, electing the President, 47 Senators, 47 County Governors, Members of Parliament for the 290 electoral constituencies and Civic Wards and Women County Representatives. They were the first elections held under the new constitution, which was passed during the 2010 referendum.

Kenyans sent a clear and strong message to the international community that they are able and willing to move forward. Over 70% of the registered voters cast their ballot to elect the one who will lead Kenya for the coming four years. Uhuru Kenyatta, son of Kenya's first President Jomo Kenyatta, leader of The National Alliance (TNA), which together with

three other parties formed the Jubilee Coalition, was credited with a total of 50,07% against 43,28% for his closest challenger, the former Prime Minister Raila Odinga, leader of the Coalition for Reform and Democracy (CORD).



Thousands of Kenyans line up to vote at the March 4, 2013 Elections (Courtesy Demotix.com)

The electorate has spoken. Simple arithmetic confirms it and by all standards it is a historic and comfortable win with untold consequences both for Uhuru Kenyatta and Kenya. Raila Odinga, Kenya's defeated presidential contender

lodged a legal challenge to his election defeat accusing the president-elect of orchestrating massive vote rigging and fraud. The country awaits the court's final decision.

As in most African democracies, Kenya politics storyline unfortunately brings to the fore protracted political struggles punctuated with unprecedented ethnic clashes which polarized the national debate into ethnic alliances for economic survival and political leverage. Though unanimously hailed to be a peaceful process, Kenya organized its general elections amidst extremely complex and highly volatile circumstances. Uhuru Kenyatta is accused of crimes against humanity and has a case to answer at the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague over the organized killings during the December 2007 elections. However, he claims the Prosecutor has acted in bad faith against

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President Thomas Sankara's Leadership on Arms trade to Africa

By Barwende Sane, s.j

On March 18-28, 2013 representatives of more than a 100 nations gathered in New York for what was believed to be the final UN conference for concluding an arms trade treaty. This treaty is critical to peace and security for Africa given the many ongoing and previous armed conflicts on the African continent in the past decades. However, no matter the content of this treaty, African leaders must understand that fewer arms, or knowing the origin of the weapons killing African people, is not the answer to the most pressing needs of Africans. The greatest challenge to Africa's peace and prosperity is poor governance by power hungry and blood thirsty constitutional dictators. It is not the first time the issues of small arms trade has been raised, but those who benefit, including African leaders, have refused to listen.

President Thomas Sankara's Testament to Africa

Thomas Sankara, former President of Burkina Faso (1983-1987), warned Africans to abandon their fruitless conflicts and move toward genuine freedom and unity. He opposed the arms race in Africa and called on Africans to avoid going into debt by buying arms. "Because an African country that buys arms can only be doing so to use them against an African country." (Michel Prairie, *Thomas Sankara Speaks, The Burkina Faso Revolution 1983-1987*, Pathfinder, Second edition 2007, 380). In fact, armed conflict is one of the causes of many African nations' underdevelopment. Conflicts in Africa maintain arms manufacturers in business and the latter put money in their own government treasuries through tax.

The arms industry is just one of many industries supported by money from Africa, which does not benefit Africa. Thus, Sankara argued: "let's make sure that the African market is a market for Africans. Let's produce in Africa, transform in Africa, consume in Africa. Produce what we need and consume what we produce, in place of importing it." (Michel Prairie, *Thomas Sankara Speaks*, 380).



President Thomas Sankara (1983-1987)

photo from www.redpepper.org.uk

Africa, a Good Market for Weapons Suppliers

During the years 2004-2011, the value of arms transfer agreements with developing nations comprised 68.6% of all such agreements worldwide. More recently, arms transfer agreements with developing nations constituted 79.2% of all such agreements globally from 2008-2011, and 83.9% of these agreements in 2011. (Conventional Arms Transfers to Developing Nation 2004-2011 by, Congressional Research Service, August 2012.)

The United States and Russia are the main weapons suppliers. From 2008 to 2011, the United States made nearly \$113 billion in such agreements, 54.5% of all these agreements (expressed in current dollars). Russia made \$31.1 billion, 15% of these agreements. (Conventional Arms Transfers to Developing Nations, 2004-2011).

Development, a Solution to Armed Conflict

According to President Sankara, when medical industries are neglected to the advantage of arms industries, humanity is on the wrong side. When developed countries are more comfortable in selling weapons to developing countries instead of helping them build democratic institutions, humanity

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A highlight of the celebration was the presentation of Faith and Justice Award to The Transformation Resource Centre of Lesotho, a vibrant NGO that works to empower people and promote the ethics of democracy.



From left to right : Fr. Aniedi Okure, O. P, Veronica Openibo SHCJ, Jo'Ann De Quattro snjm, Bathilda Heqoa snjm, Emma Bezaire snjm, Fr. Richard Kuuia Baawobr, MAfr

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is on a flaming field. When scientists dismiss their prior vocation of using their intelligence to prevent humanity from distress, there is a problem. When physicians who pledged through sermons to take care of life transform themselves into death givers, something is very wrong.

To the heads of states who gathered in Addis Ababa in 1987, Sankara explained: “We can also use Africa’s immense latent resources to develop the continent, because our soil and subsoil are rich. We have the means to do that and we have an immense market, a vast market from north to south, east to west. We have sufficient intellectual capacities to create technology and science, or at least to adopt it wherever we find it.” (Michel Prairie, Thomas Sankara Speaks, 380).

About Thomas Sankara

On August 4, 1983, Thomas Sankara, a thirty-three-year-old captain in the army of the Republic of Upper Volta came to power in a coup. His revolution replaced the French legacy of using people as cheap labor with a new vision of self-reliance that promoted and encouraged his people to capitalize on the virtues of honesty, courage, and work to recover their dignity and pride. He changed the nation’s name from Upper Volta to Burkina Faso, translated as the “country of honest people”. Little by little, Sankara worked to take his country out of misery, but he clashed with France and its allies who wanted to prevent him from spreading his revolutionary ideas throughout West Africa. President Sankara was killed on October 15, 1987

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mitted through restorative justice. The mixed court would include foreign and Congolese lawyers.

In 2011 the Justice, Administrative and Political Commission of the Congolese Senate started working on legislation that would enable the creation of this court, but it has not been finished partly because some people in power were involved in some of the crimes.

Unless sweeping governance reforms happen in DRC, internal and external security threats will remain. In other words, Bosco, other armed groups and Rwanda's proxy wars in DRC are a symptom of



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him on the basis of fraudulent evidence. All along, the ethnic card has been played to rally ethnic support or to rekindle a sense of ethno-nationalistic belonging.

National sovereignty and the partiality of ICC trying only African leaders further complicates the whole equation. It is no longer a case against an individual but against the Kikuyu and Kalenjin. Kenyatta and Ruto strengthened their regional allegiances and ethnic bases to mount their campaign. Their strategy took an anti-imperialist outlook as a way of boosting their credibility and advocating for national sovereignty, self-determination, a reminiscence of the MAU-MAU liberation war. All the ingredients were tossed in to win the elections against the international community agenda to redesign a new political architecture.

What lessons does the electoral process of Kenya teach Africa and its multilateral partners? It is no doubt that this electoral victory is of paramount significance within Kenya and beyond its borders. The popular and anti-imperialist overtones of the campaign succeeded in marshaling a united front against the ICC case. Uhuru and Ruto, "the coalition of the

bad governance. Had the DRC had better institutions Rwanda and Uganda would not have dared to invade the DRC in 1996, an invasion which started the ongoing crisis in eastern DRC.



Bosco Ntaganda first hearing at the ICC

accused" are now portrayed as national heroes against foreign powers. This spin to the Kenyan case gives enough clout to countries of the global South to challenge Western intervention on the continent, in its various forms of foreign diplomatic pressure, foreign aid, foreign rights monitors or even foreign reporters. The fact that ICC predominantly indicts African citizens leaves a bitter taste in the relations between Africa and Western countries. Justice must speak the same language to all and for all.

As an African facing the crucial problem of impunity and injustice on the continent, I dare ask the existential question: how do we render justice to the victims of the 2007-2008 elections, to hundreds of thousands of displaced children, men and women still suffering in the camps ravaged and plummeted by severe weather conditions and uncertain livelihoods, those who were raped and still nursing physical and psychological scars, those traumatized by ethnic hatred? What is the best way forward? Do our leaders have the political will to work in the best interest of our common good?

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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