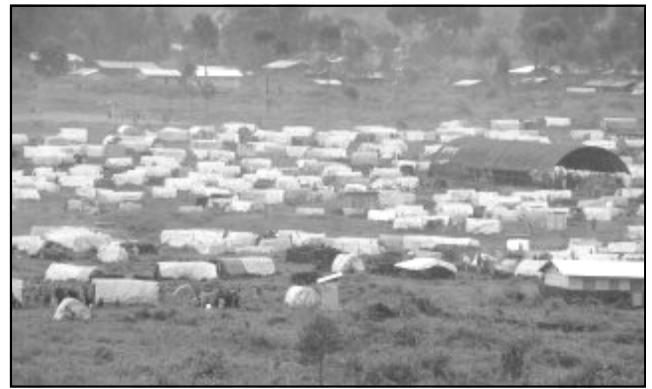


## The Scope of the Congo Crisis

By Bahati Ntama Jacques



A internal displacement camp in Kibumba, near Goma.

<b>Conflict in Congo</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Merry Christmas!</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Obama and Africa</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Department of Development?</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Climate Change</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>ACTION!</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>2009 EAD</b>	<b>7</b>

With the renewed violence in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, the number of victims continues to rise and hundreds of thousands of people have been displaced. On November 6<sup>th</sup> in Kiwanja, civilians were massacred by Laurent Nkunda and Rwandan troops in retaliation to an attempt by the Congolese armed resistance group commonly known as Mai Mai to draw Nkunda’s men out of Kiwanja.

Mr. Alan Doss, the special envoy of the United Nations’ secretary general and top leader of the United Nations’ peace keeping mission in the Congo (MONUC) confirmed the Kiwanja massacre in an interview given to the local radio channel, Radio Okapi and promised to release a related report very soon. Regarding MONUC’s work in the Congo, Africa Faith and Justice Network’s contact in North Kivu said that the Congolese people feel that “talking about Nkunda’s crimes without arresting him is useless. Had the level of crimes been the way to get international support, the crisis in the Congo would have been over by now.”

About six million people have lost their lives in the Congo since Rwanda first invaded the Congo in 1996. The international community and many analysts continue to wrongly address the Congo crisis as primarily a Congolese internal problem instead of recognizing that it is and has been mainly a conflict between Rwanda and Congo. Their disagreements are over the presence of the Rwandan Hutu rebel group, the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), in eastern Congo since 1994, Rwanda’s access to Congolese natural resources, and the Rwandan government’s military support of the Congolese rebel group the National Congress of the Defense of the People (CNDP).



(“CONGO” continued on page 2)

(“CONGO” continued from page 1)

**The War: A Step Backwards in the Democratic Process in Congo**

This third Rwandan invasion of the Congo in partnership with CNDP sets back the clock of democracy established on December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2006 by the Congolese people when they democratically elected a president after thirty-two years of dictatorship, twelve years of a bloody war, and a long transitional government (July 2003-December 2006). This war undermines the government’s internal peace initiatives in eastern Congo such as the Act of Disengagement signed on January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2007 in Goma between the government and twenty-two armed groups. The implementation of the Act has been conducted under the umbrella of the Amani program. Furthermore, the international community,

aware of the conflict between Congo and Rwanda, got the two nations to sign the Nairobi Accord on November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2007. The Accord deals with peace, security, and stability between the two nations. It demands that the Congolese government disarm the FDLR, and suggests that the Rwandan government stop supporting CNDP led by Laurent Nkunda, a former soldier in the Rwandan army.

**Understanding CNDP and FDLR**

The Rwandan connection to CNDP and FDLR explains the most important political aspect of this crisis. The FDLR is a Rwandan Hutu rebel group operating in eastern Congo whose desire is to go back to Rwanda and regain the power they lost to the current Tutsi regime of Rwanda after the 1994 genocide. The Rwandan government accuses its Congolese counterpart of supporting the FDLR instead of turning them in to be judged for genocide crimes in Rwanda.

The CNDP is a Tutsi rebel group led by Laurent Nkunda

whose mission is to protect the Congolese Tutsi community from the FDLR and to thereby gain control over Congo’s natural resources. Nkunda’s financial support comes from Rwandan businessmen and natural resource sales. He is also militarily assisted by the Rwanda government and recruits his soldiers from the Tutsi community in Rwanda, Burundi, and the Congolese refugee camps in Rwanda. He also recruits inside Congo by forces in territories he controls. In several interviews, one with the British Broadcast Corporation (BBC) in early November 2008, Nkunda said that his mission is no longer to protect only the Congolese Tutsi community, but also all the Congolese oppressed by the Congolese government.

**Other Layers to the Congo-Rwanda Crisis**

Because the reasons why Rwanda invaded the Congo remain unsolved, the Congo has yet to be pacified 12 years later. If the issues were only internal to Congo, the crisis would not be of this magnitude. This war is also about the enormous natural resource deposits in the Kivus, wanted by many developed nations around the world to support the electronic industry. Congo holds approximately eighty percent of the world’s coltan, vast stores of the world’s tin, and other important minerals such as uranium, copper, and gold. Rebel groups often sell Congo’s natural resources to mining companies or electronics manufacturers in Rwanda, Burundi, and Uganda. These bloody minerals are then used in nearly every cell phone, video game system, and laptop computer sold around the world.

Also, this war is about political influence. For example, the United States, under President George Bush, continues to train and equip the Rwandan National Army despite its invasion of the Congo. This military program has allowed Rwanda to become a major player in the region and boosts US influence and interests against the Chinese and Europeans in Central Africa. The US policies in Rwanda are similar in vision and purpose, albeit on a smaller scale, to those of the US and Israel in the Middle East. As such, the crisis will be difficult to end with one political maneuver and will require investments by all parties to ensure the safety of the Congolese.

“If the issues were only internal to Congo, the crisis would not be of this magnitude.”



*A Merry Christmas To All!*

This special greeting is sent to your entire staff and members of the AFJN organization. We wish you a Merry Christmas celebration and pray that as you enter into the New Year, you shall enter with joy and happiness. As you engage in working for the interest of the people of God around Africa, no evil or danger shall befall you and no plague shall come near your place of work and dwelling. Once more, I wish you a Happy Christmas Celebration!

—Martin Conteh, Student of Philosophy, Freetown, Sierra Leone

## What Does an Obama Presidency Mean for U.S. Africa Policy?

By Beth Tuckey

Within the African community, both in the US and on the continent, many have speculated about what an Obama presidency will mean for Africa. As the son of a Kenyan man with family still in Kenya, expectations tend to run high. Still, some have cautioned against such optimism, reminding us that Barack Obama will be subject to the same political difficulties as any other president and that changing US policy toward Africa simply will not be a top priority.

The truth is probably somewhere in between. As he has said himself so many times, Obama will not be a perfect president; he will rely on advisors who do not see the same vision for Africa that we do, he will maintain a military presence in Africa through AFRICOM, and he will often relegate the African agenda to the end of his list of concerns. But that does not mean he lacks the will or desire to chart a new direction in America's relationship with Africa. His deep concern for 'the people' and for seeing a world free of the tyranny of injustice means we may finally have a president who is willing to make policies that treat Africans with dignity and respect, as long as we pressure him to do it.

As concerned American citizens or as those on the continent who are directly affected by Obama's Africa policies, we have a right to hold him to a higher standard. Those of us fighting for social justice in Africa must make it clear to President Obama that an initiative like AFRICOM works against his laudable goals of ending foreign wars and protecting our environment. He needs to know that AFRICOM discounts his own endorsement of diplomacy as the first tool in the US foreign policy toolkit and that it jeopardizes the stability of African societies.

As part of the liberal movement, we must remind Obama that AFRICOM is completely antithetical to his broader progressive agenda. It puts military might ahead of diplomatic talk, it reinforces an ideological war against terrorism that can never be won by the Pentagon, and it proves

that the US cares more about maintaining an open oil pipeline that it does about African peace and prosperity. Obama must know that it is not a policy that Africans endorse and that for a president who ran his campaign on 'change,' supporting AFRICOM is the absolute wrong way to go.

Obama must be reminded throughout his presidency that a global system that delivers profits to some and robs others of their prosperity will not create the change he seeks. It is our job to ensure that when he says he wants to 'strengthen the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), that it does not mean he will put more money in the coffers of the oil companies who have benefited from President Clinton's unsuccessful attempt at African development.



President-Elect Barack Obama may fall short of the change he promised, unless we hold him to it.

Perhaps most importantly, Obama must know that as long as Africa has vast, untapped reserves of oil and minerals and as long as the US economy depends so heavily on fossil fuel and electronics manufacturing for its mere survival Af-

rica will remain unstable. The exploitation of oil, natural gas, uranium, coltan, and other precious minerals by large US corporations has spurred violence in places like the Niger Delta, Somalia, and the DR Congo. Laws must be tightened to curb the power of those corporations and to hold them accountable for the crimes they have committed. (To add insult to injury, it is likely that many such corporations view AFRICOM as insurance on their investments, thereby contributing to the injustice of a military-led strategy for Africa.) Thus, as part of his Africa policy, President Obama must put forth green legislation that will reduce American dependence on African oil.

Like oil, Africa's farmland is also a precious resource, one that has the capacity to feed millions more but is compromised by violence, climate change, and unfair global trade laws, none of which are the fault of Africans alone. Obama's 'Add Value to Agriculture Initiative' is a good-hearted attempt to boost Africa's food production, but it will fall flat if it is not accompanied by a fair trade system,

*("OBAMA" continued on page 7)*

# A United States Department of Development?

By Rocco Puopolo

You've heard of the Department of Defense, the Department of State, Department of the Treasury, and others – what about a Department of Development? There is a buzz in the Beltway. Many NGO's and policymakers are emphasizing Development within the three "D" approach to foreign policy: Diplomacy, Defense, and Development.

For over a year, the suggestion of a cabinet level department for Global Development has been raised. It would extract United States Agency for International Development (USAID) from under State Department and hopefully transform the stymied aid system into effective development. AFJN brought this proposal to its members through the input of Dr. Jeffrey Sachs at our April Conference. His suggestion of such a department was met with some concern, but in theory, many thought it could be a good idea. Ultimately, in as much as we see the theoretical wisdom behind creating separate departments for these three "D"s, we feel more dialogue needs to be given in two fundamental areas:

**1. What do we actually mean by development?** What is the purpose of "foreign aid" or "development assistance"? Who does it really serve in the end? What policy change needs to be made to make real integral development happen?

**2. Will the new Congress actually fund a new department if for the past 14 years it has systematically gutted USAID?** It will take a lot of political will and money, both of which will be scarce as Congress deals with a flailing economy and an unpopular war.

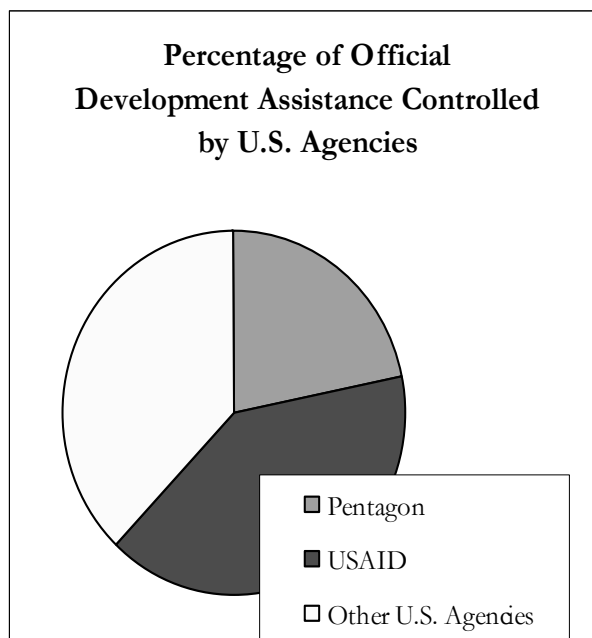
The revision of foreign aid from the global north is also a conversation that has been happening on an international level since 2000. There are the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) from the UN. There have been three High Level Forum meetings of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) – one in 2003 in Rome, another in 2005 in Paris, and a third in 2008 in Accra – each of which incrementally looked at the failure of the Bretton Woods Institutions to improve the situation in many developing countries.

In July of 2008, the Secretary General of the UN offered a report on Africa's development needs, the state of implementation of various commitments, challenges, and the way forward. In brief, he noted the reality that progress in

meeting the MDGs and other international development goals for Africa are off track. In August, Jubilee South circulated a sign on letter that looked at the challenges to the notion of aid effectiveness. It highlighted issues such as reparations, debt cancellation, illegitimate and odious debts, eradication of poverty, social services, human rights, sustainability, food sovereignty, environmental security and climate justice, the democratization of the process of aid and development, and conditionalities as issues that must be addressed in era of development.

Those of us who have done development work on the continent through our parishes, development centers, schools, and clinics have probably used, as I have, Ann Hope and Sally Timmell's Training for Transformation, a four volume handbook, rooted in the thought and practice of Paolo Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed. This model presents a completely different approach to development that includes empowering the local people from the bottom up.

It is likely that foreign aid and development financing will undergo significant revisions in Obama's Administration. We must be sure that as AFJN members and as those who have spent years on the African continent, that our perspective is heard in Congress and in the White House.



Under the current structure, USAID only controls 40% of all U.S. Official Development Assistance (ODA). The Pentagon, which has gained power under the Bush Administration, now controls approximately 22% of ODA. Ideally, a new Department of Development would bring all ODA under one roof.

# Climate Change and the Poor: A Plea to the Relief and Development Community

*By Dan Misleh, Executive Director of Catholic Coalition on Climate Change*

Through an accident of birth, most of us enjoy an extravagant lifestyle. We have the basics—food, clothing, housing, and health care—and then some—education, stable communities, good jobs, freedom to travel and to speak without fear of reprisal.

Africa Faith and Justice Network members know that too many don't even have the basics. As people of faith, we are all motivated to change that reality because of our response to God's call to care for "the least of these" whether they live next door or on the continent of Africa.

But I believe that climate change will test our commitment by demanding more of what we do...lots more. Relief

What might some of the impacts of climate change be? For one example, let's look at water. Besides drinking, we depend on water for agriculture, power generation, and sewage systems. But in the developing countries of Africa, mismanaged or inadequate water resources as well as population growth will add significant stress to these uses. Climate change could make the situation worse.

And because climate change will continue even if we act to dramatically curtail greenhouse gases today, we must be prepared to help countries adapt over the long haul while mitigating the amount of greenhouse gas pollutants we're putting into the atmosphere in the near term.

Ultimately, our public discourse about remedies to climate change will lead to public policy prescriptions. In the faith community, we might not be experts in terms of which

policies might better address relief and development overseas. But we do have some principles, based on our belief systems, which can offer direction. For example, the Catholic bishops' call

"The faith community is saying that there will need to be provisions that protect the lives and dignity of the poorest—at home and abroad. This should be everyone's first priority."

agencies – including religiously based ones – understand that their work can be wiped out with a severe flood, a disease outbreak, or a prolonged drought. As these weather events and their aftermath begin to intensify, faith-based agencies will be asking more of their fellow believers. Will we be willing to give more?

### Climate Change and the Poor

The primary cause of climate change is relatively simple: us. By "us," I mean those of us who have the basics and then some. We've developed our economies to secure these basics by burning so much fossil fuel that we've entered an unsustainable era in the life of the planet. These greenhouse pollutants, scientists say, will create prolonged droughts, more intense storms, longer heat waves, and intensified disease outbreaks. Hundreds of thousands may become environmental refugees.

Who will bear the primary consequences of climate change? Them. By "them," I mean those who don't have the resources to withstand these changes to our climate.

for prudent action in the midst of uncertainty, the promotion of the common good over self-interest, and the protection of the poorest among us.

Building on these and other principles, the member organizations of the National Religious Partnership for the Environment (including the National Council of Churches, the Evangelical Environmental Network, the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops) have played and will continue to play a significant role in reminding our public officials that it is unjust and shameful to be the ones primarily causing the problem of climate change and yet not taking serious and sustained action to mitigate the impacts of our behaviors on the least developed nations that are most vulnerable to climate change impacts. The winners can't just be the energy companies on the one side (making a profit trading carbon credits, for instance) and environmental groups on the other (scoring reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and demonstrating progress to their funders). The faith community is saying that there will need to be provisions

(“CLIMATE” continued on page 7)

# AFJN Takes Action In the Streets of Washington



### Congo Vigil

On October 31st, AFJN co-sponsored a vigil outside the Rwandan Embassy in Washington, DC. Donning Congo Global Action Shirts, a crowd of 30 participants prayed, sang, chanted, and held candles in honor of those who are suffering in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The message was clear: Rwanda must stop all military incursions into Congolese territory and must stop supporting CNDP leader Laurent Nkunda. Embassy officials watched the vigil from the windows of the building, but did not come out to make a statement.



*Pictured Above:  
AFJN Staff Members Beth Tuckey and  
Bahati Jacques with a Congolese Flag at the Vigil*



### Resist AFRICOM Protest

Despite a heavy downpour and an incoming cold front, participants joined AFJN, Africa Action, the Institute for Policy Studies, the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement, the Washington Peace Center, School of the America's Watch, and others in a rally and protest against AFRICOM on October 27th.

Protesters attended a rally in Taft Memorial Park, then marched to the Liason Hotel on Capitol Hill where military contractors were holding a conference on AFRICOM. Though our numbers were small, our message was heard by the contractors.

(“OBAMA” continued from page 3)

climate change legislation, and an insistence on good governance in Africa. America’s grossly inflated farm subsidies to agribusinesses may in fact negate some of the benefits of an agriculture initiative.

President Obama should also be aware of the influence of genetically modified seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides in maintaining a global system that is skewed toward large Western companies. Here again, the impact of oil dependence comes into play. Chemical fertilizers and pesticides are created and shipped using fossil fuels and upheld by a system that merits not local ingenuity but increased global consumption. If individual food sovereignty is the goal, that is hardly the way to achieve it.

(“CLIMATE” continued from page 5)

that protect the lives and dignity of the poorest—at home and abroad. This should be everyone’s first priority.

#### Cooperation and a Unified Voice

The faith community is seeking others with similar motivations. The Africa Faith and Justice Network is a natural ally in this fight. We urge you to join us as we call for comprehensive climate change legislation that generates additional funding to ensure that poor people affected by climate change at home and abroad are, at a minimum, no worse off than they are now by either unfolding climate change or by climate change legislation.

As for the Catholic community, we will launch a major new initiative in the spring. A Catholic Climate Covenant: The St. Francis Pledge to Protect Creation and the Poor will be unprecedented campaign urging Catholic individuals, families, parishes, schools and other institutions to pray and learn about climate change, assess and act upon their own climate impacts, and join the US bishops in advocating for public policies on climate change that both protect God’s gift of creation and assist poor people at home and abroad with climate impacts. We encourage you to sign up to receive ongoing updates about this campaign by visiting: [www.catholicsandclimatechange.org](http://www.catholicsandclimatechange.org).

Climate change should not just be a challenge borne by the poorest among us. Climate change will test all of us—especially those with more than our share of the world’s resources—to contemplate in a more comprehensive way the notion of solidarity. Those of us in the faith community might say: we must see the face of God in all who suffer—from New Orleans to Nigeria—and act accordingly.

There are many issues both in Africa and around the world that will demand Obama’s attention when he takes office in January. And while we cannot expect an immediate sea change in US-Africa policy, we can hold him to the promises he has made and should anticipate a positive shift. Obviously, on issues like AFRICOM, we have a long way to go, but Obama’s building blocks of diplomacy and green energy offer a good starting point. No, an Obama presidency will not correct all of America’s wrongs in Africa, but it will get us moving in the right direction – provided we, as civil society, make our voices heard.

*A version of this article originally appeared in Pambazuka News on November 6th, 2008.*

## Save the Date!

### 7th Annual Ecumenical Advocacy Days For Global Peace With Justice

#### “Enough For All Creation”

March 13th-16th

Washington, DC

Join us at the 7th annual Ecumenical Advocacy Days, as we explore ways to bring about a world with **Enough for All Creation**. Learn about the **connections** between **climate change, migration and poverty** in the U.S. and around the world. Come together with faith-based advocates and activists from across the United States in the nation’s capitol **March 13-16** as we discuss the abundance of our world and how it can be allocated in a way that is fair and just for all creation. Experts will train participants on policy issues and advocacy, culminating on Monday with lobby visits on Capitol Hill.

AFJN’s Annual Member Meeting will take place on Saturday, March 14th as part of EAD.

For more information, see [www.advocacydays.org](http://www.advocacydays.org)

**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

Interns and Volunteers:  
 Gbenimah Balu Slopadoe  
 Jimmy McTiernan, M.Afr.

© Africa Faith and Justice Network, Inc. ISSN 1093-4820. Materials in Around Africa are copyrighted and may be used provided AFJN is given credit. For full citations, visit the AFJN website.

**MEMBERSHIP FORM**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Individual Member \$50 \_\_\_\_\_ Organizational member \$1,000 \_\_\_\_\_

Return to AFJN, 125 Michigan Ave NE, Washington, DC 20017  
 Ph. (202) 884-9780 Fax: 202-884-9774 email: [afjn@afjn.org](mailto:afjn@afjn.org)  
[www.afjn.org](http://www.afjn.org)

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



