

A PUBLICATION OF THE



30 YEARS OF ADVOCACY

**MISSION STATEMENT**

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

**ABRIEF 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.

**Africa Faith and Justice Network:  
Influencing US Policy and Educating  
the Public.  
*Selected Issues***

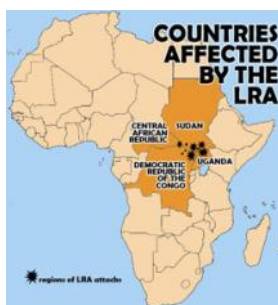
For 30 years the **Africa Faith and Justice Network (AFJN)** has worked to influence US-Africa policies on different issues and to educate the American public about Africa from our unique perspective as people of faith, missionaries and long serving agents of justice, peace and development in Africa. We have and continue to strive to achieve our goals working with our partners in the United States and in Africa. We are in the process of extending our Africa network to the Symposium of the Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) and its affiliates to empower Africans to work for lasting solutions to these issues.

**Global Health: Clean Water, Malaria, HIV-AIDS and Tuberculosis**

AFJN has been advocating for policies that fund projects to enhance global health, namely access to clean water and the fight against malaria, HIV-AIDS and tuberculosis. The President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) initiated by George W. Bush has been a successful project in some parts of Africa such as Uganda and South Africa. Similarly, the campaign to prevent and treat malaria and tuberculosis has made progress in places where it is implemented in Africa. For example, it was estimated that about 2 million children under the age of five died from malaria every year, but in the last decade this has been cut in half. This also means that children are spending more time in the classroom and less in the hospital, and families are saving money on medical bills. Congressional funding for these programs has been bi-partisan since 2001 and we hope that it will continue.



Photo by Melanin Homen Smith, Banka/South Kivu/DRC Congo



**Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda and Rwanda**

AFJN condemned the Rwandan genocide and the Rwanda-Uganda invasion of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in 1996. We continue to urge President Kagame to open the political space to all Rwandans to promote reconciliation. We oppose the training and equipping of Rwandan troops by US Special Forces and US funded private military companies; the deadly effects have been evident in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). We are one of the strongest advocates for change in US policy to-

## Debt Cancellation and Vulture Funds

AFJN supports debt cancellation for heavily indebted countries, most of which are in Africa. Some of these debts were created by corrupt and irresponsible regimes whose people could not hold them accountable for their actions. Debt cancellation can allow these nations to, among other things, invest in much needed social projects such as health care and education. Most importantly debt cancellation can save indebted nations legal fees, avoid asset confiscation by vulture Funds which are private investment funds that buy the foreign debts of countries in financial crisis and, having become secondary lenders, require payment of interest at extraordinarily high rates.

ward Rwanda because of its role in the conflict in the DRC. Lately there has been a shift in US policy toward Rwanda. In December 2012 President Obama called President Paul Kagame and asked him to stop arming the rebels in DRC. Furthermore, we have been working to get the US to support efforts to hold Uganda accountable for its role in the 1996 invasion of DRC.

## Conflict Resolution and Prevention through African Mechanisms of Justice

We opposed the military intervention option embedded in US Public Law 111 172, the Lord's Resistance Army Disarmament and Northern Uganda Recovery Act signed into law on May 24, 2010. Consequently, AFJN opposed President Obama's decision to send "combat equipped US forces to central Africa to provide assistance to regional forces that are working toward the removal of Joseph Kony from the battlefield." We support the Ugandan religious leaders' plan to use the Acholi traditional mechanism of Justice to deal with Kony.

From 2006-2008 AFJN was the key organizer of the Annual Uganda Lobby Days where hundreds of participants came together in Washington DC to advocate for an end to the violence carried out in Northern Uganda by Joseph Kony's Lord's Resistance Army rebel group. AFJN's work extended out into the development of RESOLVE Uganda by former staff member, Michael Poffenberger. We advocate for no politicization, support and restoration of traditional mechanisms of justice of Ubushingandahe in Burundi, Gacaca in Rwanda and Baraza ya Wazee (councils of elders) in eastern DRC, Mato Uput in Uganda, Fambol Talk in Sierra Leone to resolve, prevent violent conflict and address long standing ethnic related tensions.

## Extractive Industries

Resources like oil, natural gas, tin, tantalum, tungsten, gold and diamonds are often a curse for African countries. The extraction of these natural resources has led to years of armed violence and caused many deaths in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone, Angola and elsewhere. AFJN has been advocating for measures to stop the conflict mineral trade and for accountability. AFJN was one of the strongest supporters of sections 1502 and 1504 of the Dodd-Frank Law of 2010 which requires companies to respectively disclose their mineral supply chains and payments made to foreign governments.



Photo by Benoit Jacques, Malaria Child Fund, DRC Centre

## Land Grabs and Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs)

Since 2008, the US and other foreign investors, some of whom are private banks and pension funds, have acquired huge tracts of fertile farm land across Africa. This land-grabbing results in displacement and loss of livelihood for many thousands of families. Corrupt government officials are mortgaging African farmland to foreign investors, with leases ranging from 39 – 99 years often costing pennies per acre. Yes, Africa's agricultural sector needs to be improved, but only governments with strong democratic institutions can ensure that contracts are fair, people's resources are protected, and companies are held accountable for abuses such as pollution, tax evasion, and more. Africans cannot financially, politically or strategically afford to entrust their land to foreign large-scale commercial agriculture multinationals whose central goal is profit, not Africa's food security.

Furthermore, genetically modified crops are known to kill off native species. It will create a situation where African farmers are dependent on these "investors" for seeds to plant, further exacerbating Africa's overall dependency on foreign aid. Africans cannot financially, politically or strategically afford to entrust their land to foreign large-scale commercial agriculture multinationals whose central goal is profit, not Africa's food security.

## Reform of US Aid

AFJN continues to advocate for US aid reform which would include funding for poverty-reduction, civil society empowerment, good governance, women's empowerment, health, and education. We oppose direct aid to regimes with poor human rights records.

## Small Arms Trade

AFJN supports measures to control the flow of small arms and ammunition in Africa as one of the steps toward ending persistent armed conflicts in Africa. The proliferation of small arms is a major cause of Africa's underdevelopment, instability, internal displacement, and refugee problems.

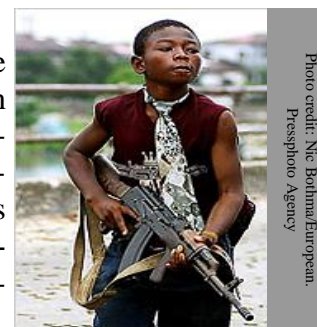


Photo credit: Nic Bothma/European Pressphoto Agency.

## US Militarism in Africa

We oppose militarized aid to Africa. President Bill Clinton created the African Crisis Response Initiative to train and equip African forces. Since the 1998 terrorist bombings of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania the war on terror has been a major component of US policy in Africa. In February 2007, President George W. Bush created the US Africa Command (AFRICOM), to protect US geopolitical, economic, strategic, and security interests on the African continent. AFJN was among the first to oppose AFRICOM and called for US-Africa policies focused on diplomacy, development and conflict prevention, peace building and peaceful resolution of conflicts. Furthermore, the current use of drones in Africa is of grave concern to AFJN.

## Democracy Promotion and Civil Society Empowerment

For 30 years AFJN has advocated for strong US foreign policies that promote democracy, freedom and human rights in Africa. To accommodate its economic, strategic and political interests, the US has looked the other way by supporting autocratic regimes some of which are constitutional dictatorships instead of helping willing Africans to achieve greater social, political and economic freedom, peace, justice and development. In 2012 AFJN started a new initiative, in collaboration with the Symposium of the Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM), to support local church groups in Africa in their efforts to empower people to fight government corruption and promote democratic governance.



## Toxic Dumping, Gas Flaring and Toxic Chemical Use in Mining

We continue to advocate for tougher regulations in the US and other industrialized nations to address the issue of gas flaring and toxic chemical use in oil and other natural resource extraction in Africa, electronic and toxic waste such as nuclear dumping in Africa. These practices are causing many deaths, cancers and respiratory illnesses, poisoning drinking water sources, arable land, sea water and aquatic life. Many communities in the industrialized world do not want toxic waste stored close to them, but unfortunately parts of the African continent have become a cheap and easy dumping ground. While African governments are still indifferent to these critical problems, the governments of industrialized nations have the moral obligation to enact legislation along the line of sections 1502 and 1504 of US public law (PL 111–203) known as Dodd-Frank law to forbid toxic and electronic waste dumping and require safe natural resources mining in order to protect Africa and our shared environment.



The 2004 Tsunami brought to Somali shores this Toxic waste containers

and require safe natural resources mining in

Support Africa Faith and Justice Network (AFJN) today  
Become a Member or Just Support our Work

AFJN's justice ministry of education and advocacy for US just relations with Africa is made possible by generous support of faith communities and concerned people like you. The need for AFJN's ministry is even more important than before. We need your support to build our capacity to deal with injustices facing our brothers and sisters in Africa. Together and in solidarity we can contribute to bring about the much needed social, economic and political transformation on the African continent.

**Become AFJN Member Today:**

Individuals.....\$50  
Parishes, dioceses, educational institutions and organizations ..... \$1000

To learn more about membership, please contact: [director@afjn.org](mailto:director@afjn.org) or call 202-817-3670.



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