



Africa  
Faith &  
Justice  
Network

THE *Activist'*  
GUIDE

**A little knowledge that acts is worth infinitely more than much knowledge that is idle [Kahlil Gibran].**

**Politics hates a vacuum. If it isn't filled with hope, someone will fill it with fear [Naomi Klein].**

**We don't accomplish anything in this world alone ... and whatever happens is the result of the whole tapestry of one's life and all the weavings of individual threads from one to another that creates something [Sandra Day O'Connor].**



**125 Michigan Ave NE  
Washington, DC  
20017**

**202.884.9780  
202.884.9774**

**afjn@afjn.org**

*www.afjn.org*

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# letter from the executive director

**W**elcome to this invitation to be part of a network of advocates for Africa. We at the Africa Faith and Justice Network are excited to share our challenging work of speaking up for the peoples of Africa by changing US perceptions as well as policies towards Africa. Whether you have served in Africa in a wide number of capacities. Some of you may have studied there, or have classmates from Africa and share that “different” perspective, that “personal connection” with Africa that makes a whole lot of difference. Often we hear only the horror stories of poverty, war, illness, exploitation and the like when it comes to Africa. Unfortunately, a lot of that may be true, BUT, there is much more to the story of Africa, the hopes and talents of her people that tell a different story if some things could change.

These pages offer you a window into the world of advocacy, a world that you can be part of. The power, energy and talent of many college groups have changed a lot in our world. We invite you to be part of the change we hope for when it comes to Africa. Check out these pages and see. And if there is an issue or an area of concern towards Africa that we missed, maybe that is where you can start. Flesh it out and send it our way and it will find a place on this guide. As an Ethiopian proverb says: "When spider webs unite, they can tie up a lion!" So, do become part of our advocacy!

Peace,

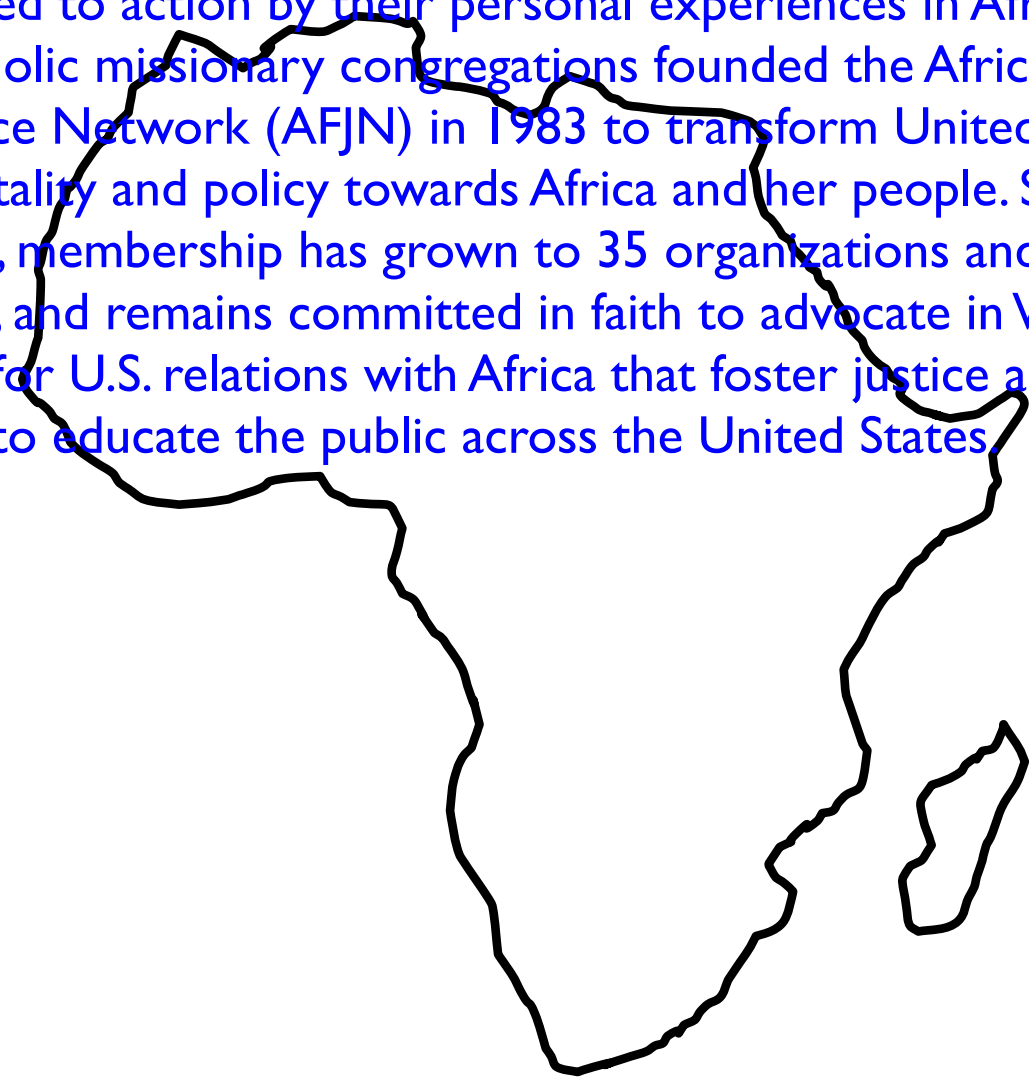
Rev. Rocco Prapola

# THE MISSION:

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

# THE INSPIRATION:

Moved to action by their personal experiences in Africa, three Catholic missionary congregations founded the Africa Faith and Justice Network (AFJN) in 1983 to transform United States mentality and policy towards Africa and her people. Since that time, membership has grown to 35 organizations and 770 members, 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.



**this and that**

**tidbits of information**

# OUR FOCUS AREAS:

## Current Focus Campaigns:

- promote peace in the D.R. Congo

*U.S. Military Policy in Africa*

- restorative justice •

*2009 africa Synod*

## Other areas:

### CRISIS AREAS:

sudan/darfur •  
somalia • niger  
delta • great  
lakes region

### CONTINENTAL ISSUES:

trade reform • agricul-  
ture • natural resource  
extraction • arms pro-  
liferation • democracy  
and governance •  
church in africa

# afjn *highlights*

- ◆ AFJN's work extended out into the development of RESOLVE Uganda by former staff, Michael Poffenberger. AFJN was Resolve Uganda fiscal sponsor.
- ◆ Helped support the formation of the Congo Global Action, a global coalition of 30 faith-based and non faith-based organizations partnering together to bring attention to the conflict in Democratic Republic of Congo. AFJN was the fiscal sponsor for CGA.
- ◆ Participation and support putting together the Annual Uganda Lobby Days where over 700 participants came together to lobby on the steps of the Capitol in 2006-2008.
- ◆ Through raising awareness and advocacy, we have made Congress members seriously reconsider the negative effects of increasing militarization of foreign aid in Africa. Through our commitment and efforts, working with other GNOs, we lobbied Congress to cut AFRICOM's (US' military command in Africa) budget by 1/3.
- ◆ AFJN was one of the first organizations to speak directly to the U.S. government about the role of Rwanda in the conflict in the DRC.
- ◆ Numerous published articles in Pambazuka News, AllAfrica.com, Foreign Policy in Focus as well as quoted in the *New York Times*, the *Inter Press News Service*, the *Huffington Post*, live on *Africa Now* and on *Voice of America's* TV show "*in Focus*"
- ◆ Developed strong relationships with key State Department Desk Officers and staffers in Congress.

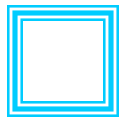


# WHY YOU?

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So you're wondering, *why should I get involved?* How much influence can I really have?

*You have a lot. So, we need YOU because...*



## **ADVOCACY AT THE GRASSROOTS ROCKS.**

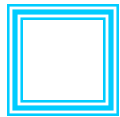
**Injustice lives on when there is silence.**

When President Obama and politicians hear your voices, and know that you won't stand for unfair U.S. policies in Africa, they will feel the pressure and act. But without your voices, absolutely nothing can change.



## **YOU'VE GOT A NETWORK.**

As a student, you've got access to a whole campus of students and faculty—a total support system. You've got access to countless ideas, sources, venues, etc. – all of which can help you start an AFJN chapter at your school.



## **YOU'VE GOT TALENT.**

As a young leader, you have this incredible, creative ability to mobilize your peers, make them concerned and work together to make big changes. Now, that's **power**.

**SOUNDS GOOD?! *Let's get started.***

# Great expectations.

What do we expect from you?

What can you expect from us?

*It's all about*

**PARTNERSHIP.**

## **YOU:**

- ◆ **KEEP US UPDATED** on what your chapter is doing, so we can proudly tell our members—and so we can provide assistance in anyway we can!
- ◆ **REFLECTIONS** from your projects and activities post-event. Write a quick blog for the website after events, telling us about all the great work you've been doing!
- ◆ **LET US KNOW** if there's something we can do to help your chapter be as successful as possible! We welcome your feedback!

## **US.**

- ◆ **WE'LL KEEP YOU UPDATED** on our work here in D.C., too! We'll send you email blasts, updates on our program and new ways you can get involved!
- ◆ **WE'LL PROVIDE ADVISING** to you to help you get your chapter started. You can use us to learn more about our current initiatives, connect to potential guest speakers, ideas for events, or just as an idea sounding board.
- ◆ **PROMOTION** of your events and work on our website and newsletter.
- ◆ **INVITATION** to our Annual Conference, and other events you might be interested in.

## **BOTH OF US:**

- ◆ **COMMUNICATE** what's going on in both of our ends.
- ◆ **SHARE** ideas, resources, prospective events and projects.
- ◆ **EXPAND** our social network of activists and academics. Share with each other contacts we have with academic professors, NGO workers, motivated students, governmental leaders who may be interested in supporting our work.
- ◆ **COLLABORATE:** Let's think of ways we can work together! Imagine connecting your campus to our organization here in D.C.—we could make a lot of things happen!

# Breaking down

## WHY AFRICA?

A painful history of colonialism and neo-colonialism that has resulted in devastatingly high rates of extreme poverty, several corrupt regimes, western sponsored wars, etc. Africa has the highest rates of extreme poverty in the world. The struggle tributed to genocides and wars that have taken the lives of countries on the continent in past two decades.

Why:  
over natural resources has con-  
millions of people in over 23

## WHY FAITH?

AFJN follows Catholic Social Teaching which proceeds from the Gospel and among other things calls everyone, no matter your background, color or creed, to work for justice and peace in the world. Specifically, as U.S. citizens our faith calls us to make sure U.S policies toward Africans are fair and equitable. *Learn more about Catholic Social Teaching on page 36!*

## WHY JUSTICE?

A common phrase states that there can be no peace without justice, thus, in our pursuit of peace, we are attempting to lay down the foundation so justice can be realized in Africa. We believe that through seeking justice, we can help bring forth a world where people not only live in a world free from violence, but free from every uncertainty of peaceful future. We imagine a world where people not only have their minimum needs met but they have the ability to prosper.

## WHY NETWORK?

Simply put, we can not do it without you. The great thing about America is that when people join together to declare, "No, we do not accept this injustice." - well, our leaders have no option but to listen. Change may take time, but through collaboration with various partners, organizations, governmental institutions, religious leaders, students and (hopefully!) you, we know we can make a difference.

# activism 101



**all the info to help  
you get started**

# GET ACTIVE!

## **activism**

'ak-ti-,vi-zəm

*noun*

a doctrine or practice that emphasizes direct vigorous action especially in support of or opposition to one side of a controversial issue

## **2. communicate.**

**SPREAD THE KNOWLEDGE.** Now that you are in the know, spread the knowledge to your friends, family, classmates, and campus.

- ♦ **START A CAMPUS CHAPTER** - See our *How-To-Guide* on the next page!
- ♦ **DO AN AWARENESS CAMPAIGN** - Set up a table on the quad or student center, make posters and handouts and spread the information!
- ♦ **HOLD A LECTURE/PANEL DISCUSSION EVENT** - Invite experts, professors, or AFJN to come and speak. Get people interested in joining your chapter!

## **1. educate.**

**KNOWLEDGE IS POWER.** To really make a difference, you can't just have *good intentions*. You have to have an understanding of the *real situation*. So,

- ♦ **READ** - newspaper, books, reports (check out our suggested sources in this packet!)
- ♦ **KNOW** - your current events! Stay on top of what's going on in D.C.— and the main actors - in regards to Africa.
- ♦ **VISIT**- [afjn.org](http://afjn.org) and stay up to date on our work and current campaigns.

## **3. participate.**

**NOW WITH YOUR TEAM, GET ACTIVE!**  
Start planning events!

- ♦ **CHOOSE** a focus campaign.
- ♦ **WRITE LETTERS** to your Congress members to let them know that you are a concerned citizen and you want this to be on their top agenda.
- ♦ **HOLD ADVOCACY DAYS** on campus to bring together concerned citizens, and think about what you can do together to press our leaders for reform.
- ♦ **TAKE YOUR VOICES** to the CAPITOL!

# Starting a chapter on your campus

## 1 get organized!

- ◆ Figure out your key focus issues
- ◆ Think about how to mobilize your campus group
- ◆ Connect with AFJN staff in DC to get ideas, materials
- ◆ Learn as much as you can about the issues!

## 2 get mobilized!

- ◆ Put together your team of leaders
  - ◆ Consider having a diverse group of individuals (different majors, different interests, different experiences domestically and abroad)
  - ◆ Consider different talents (creativity, organization, social relations, event planning)
- ◆ Establish position responsibilities, group expectations
- ◆ Make a mission statement and a list of goals for the year ahead

## 3 make it official!

- ◆ Look into the rules at your Student Activities Office, and learn how to go about making the chapter an OFFICIAL CLUB at your university!
- ◆ Why make it a club?
  - ◆ University funding
  - ◆ University sponsored
  - ◆ Increased legitimacy
  - ◆ Easier to reach out to the entire university
  - ◆ Easier to hold events on campus

## 4 talk it up

Now is the time to PUBLICIZE!

Recruit members for the club

- ◆ Hold an information session for interested students—tell them about all the neat things AFJN does and why they can really make a difference!
- ◆ Don't forget the sign-up sheet!

Get the name "AFJN" out there

- ◆ Spread the word and tell departments, student government and clubs/groups on campus!
- ◆ Consider joining up forces with a couple clubs and departments in the future for collaboration on projects/events (It's a great way to reach more people AND cut down on costs!)

# keeping members:

the fight to keep members  
when balancing overloading,  
stress, exams, homework,  
and a social life take  
over

## BUILDING A TEAM:

- ◆ While the goal of the club is rooted in advocacy for Africa, don't let yourself get so caught up in executing event after event that you don't get to know all the great people in your club.
- ◆ Plan group bonding events. Offer free treats and snacks and you will get them to come, and you will all get a great experience from it!
- ◆ Rather than think of a leadership team as a delegation team, think of yourselves as leaders who will help motivate others and encourage others to share their ideas and inputs. Always strive for *inclusiveness*.
- ◆ Use your leadership to build more leadership, especially to keep the club going after you're gone. It's awesome to have a few great leaders, but keep building stronger leaders! Delegate *out*, have committees with committee leaders—have different leaders for different projects. The more involved people become, the more they feel like an integral part of the team—and they are!

## CLUB MEETINGS:

- ◆ Regularly, but short: If you never have meetings, members aren't going to feel like they are really a part of a club. They don't have a stake in it if the closest they get to the issue is via computer. Have meetings, but keep them SHORT, stick to what is important, don't ramble over trivial things. Do what you need to via email, but utilize meetings for what is really important otherwise members will drop!
- ◆ Don't lecture, ENGAGE: Another way to make people feel like they don't belong in the group is to make them feel unimportant. Ask them for their input and ideas. Break them up into small groups and have them brainstorm and talk amongst themselves. Students sit in lectures all day—don't let your club be another classroom!

# planning an event

## what?

The event depends on you, and what you think would really reach out to your peers and campus. There are a few questions you have to ask yourself.

## who?

The key is to **KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE**. Who are you trying to reach (teachers, students, the community)? And then, know what appeals to them. Is your school ultra-competitive where an event that puts two dorms up against one another would be really popular, or is your school more low-key where people are more interested in attending lectures and learning more about different issues? Are your peers really passionate about advocacy and jump at the opportunity to attend a rally or protest? Whatever the case, knowing your audience helps ensure that your event is successful.

## what's your point?

You also have to know what you want your audience leaving the event with. Do you want to raise awareness on an issue? Raise some money for a cause? Really get some ideas rolling on how to advocate for change on a certain issue? Simply bring people together to talk about an issue? Know your end goal and plan accordingly.

## what can I do?

**fundraiser • lecture • conference •  
workshop • rally • D.C.  
trip • information  
session • working group  
meeting • protest • q&a • informati  
on luncheon • benefit  
dinner • coffee & conversation •**

what can't you do?



# a few event ideas

## **LECTURE SERIES...**

- Purpose: to stir interest, to inform
- Capacity: the sky's the limit!
- Focus in on one theme, say, the conflict in the DR Congo.
- Bring in professors from your university who know about the subject, or bring in experts from NGOs, the government, think tanks, etc. (Contact AFJN for assistance!)
- Leave room for a questions and answers session afterwards

## **Coffee & Conversation...**

- Purpose: to have a lively discussion in a comfortable, informal setting
- Capacity: Keep it small. 15-25 people.
- Reserve a comfortable room/lounge where people can sit amongst one another for a casual conversation over coffee and tea
- Speakers should sit amongst the attendees to create a more equal, inclusive environment
- Leave room for people at the end to engage the audience, answer questions and have discussions over issues raised during the event. You could even break the group down into smaller groups.

## **Policy Working Group**

- Purpose: a group of individuals who are working on turning awareness-raising into advocacy; answering the difficult question, "So, now that we know this, what now?"
- Capacity: the smaller the better, so that everyone can really be involved. Groups of less than 10.
- Hold this event for individuals who understand an issue pretty well, and now can start thinking about where to go from here.
- Before the event, send out some information about the issue, what has been done by the U.S. government about it, and what NGOs/think tanks have been recommending.
- During the working group meeting, work together or break down into smaller groups to brainstorm the main problems/challenges, and from there, brainstorm some recommendations for the U.S. government.
- Use what you draft up for a letter-writing campaign or petition letter to the government!

## **Artists for Africa...(benefit concert)**

- Size: the sky's the limit, but you can have a small concert (~100 people) or a big concert (~500+)
- Purpose: to fundraise money for a specific cause or for AFJN to continue their work advocating for justice and peace in Africa!
- Bring in student/local bands, artists, performers for one great cause and a celebration of Africa!
- Start the show by showing a quick documentary or a slideshow to give guests a background of what your chapter is working to improve.
- Between performances, take advantage of the time to inform guests and raise their awareness about U.S. policy in Africa.
- Along with charging an admission, have accessible place throughout the venue where guests can give donations, or purchase other items that contribute to the fundraiser!
- Have booths in the main areas where guests can learn more about how they can help promote justice and peace .

## **Rally**

- Purpose: taking what you've learn to advocate for peace and justice in your community, or even on the steps of the Capitol!
- Capacity: the sky's the limit!
- Have a clear goal or objective in mind. What's your message? *Ex: The U.S. must promote peace in the DR Congo.*
- Have 1-2 great speakers for the event.
- Spread the word!
- You can hold the event on campus or organize a trip to rally in front of the Capitol.
- Contact media stations so that your event (and message!) can be publicized!
- Have a petition people can sign during the rally, and information to hand out to people who walk by.
- Make signs and posters for everyone to see!

# The <sup>planning an</sup> event checklist

## 28 day countdown:

- Purpose - what's the purpose of the event? Depending on what your end goal is, the type of event you hold may be different.
  - Make it catchy - pull people in by making a catchy title, theme, event - think creative!
  - Cost - how much will this event cost? Do you have the funding for it as a club?
  - Venue - where are you going to hold it? How many people can the venue hold? Does it cost money? What kind of environment does the venue promote?
  - Speakers - who is going to speak at your event? When are they available? What exactly do you want them to speak on?
  - Delegate out - A lot goes into planning an event. That's why it might be best to divide up responsibilities and tasks to different leaders. Possible positions: artistic director, logistics director, social relations, etc.
  - Get your partners - are there any clubs/departments on campus you can collaborate with? You see:  
More collaboration = more funding = more attendees = the best event.
- ever.
- Get approval from your university - usually this is a lengthy process, so make sure to get this done as fast as you can.

## 14 day countdown:

- Start making advertisements (posters, table tents, facebook invites; emails to listservs, departments, student government, and clubs)
- Contact media (newspapers (local campus, local, and maybe national- depending on the event))
- Organize who is going to be there at the event, and who is going to be responsible for what (checking people in, passing out handouts, etc., making sure speakers arrive on time, etc.)
- Send AFJN a quick blog of what you're doing, and let us know if there's anything we can do to help support you! Promote the event on your website.

## 7 day countdown:

- Put up advertisements (posters, table tents)
- Spread the word! - tell your members to spread the word in the dorms, classes, group of friends, etc.

## 1-3 days countdown:

- Make sure everyone knows what they are doing. Send out the schedule.
- Send a reminder email/facebook message to possible attendees.

## The big day:

- Make sure everything is in place. Don't forget any handouts or information you were going to pass out.
- Pass around a sign-up list for people who might want to join AFJN!



# **getting closer:**

**A deeper look at our current  
campaigns and pressing issues**

# **focus**

# **campaigns:**

**promote peace in the  
D.R. Congo  
u.s. military policy in africa  
restorative justice**

# Democratic Republic of Congo

and the deadliest war since WWII

About 6 millions lives lost since 1996 . Many more displaced.

A political and economic conflict. *The plunder of resources:* Diamonds, Gold, Coltan, Tin, Silver, Cobalt, Niobium, Timber, etc .

## BACKGROUND:

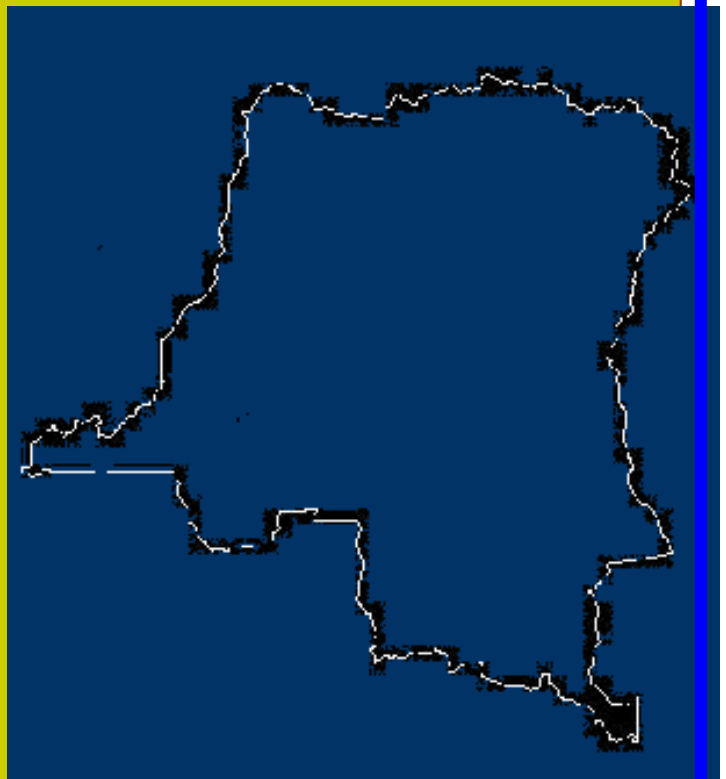
*The war began when Uganda and Rwanda invaded to overthrow DRC's President Mobutu Sese Seko in 1996. They invaded again in 1998 to overthrow Mobutu's successor, Laurent Kabila. In response, three other countries--Zimbabwe, Angola, and Namibia--intervened to defend Kabila and fought against Rwanda and Uganda. The withdrawal of these countries from the Congolese territory in late 2002 left behind a DRC in shambles. Rwanda and Uganda continued to wage proxy wars against the RDC. More than 20 rebel groups were created.*

## THE GOOD:

- ◆ A 2003 peace agreement was signed in South Africa and gave Congo a transitional government: a president and 4 vice presidents. In 2005 Congo held its first democratic.
- ◆ The Rwanda-sponsored rebel leader of the National Congress for People's Defense (CNDP), Laurent Nkunda, was put under house arrest by Rwanda and in Rwanda on January 23, 2009.
- ◆ Former CNDP and other former rebel groups are slowly integrating into the Congolese national army.
- ◆ Former vice president Jean-Pierre Bemba appears before the International Criminal Court where he faces war crimes with charges of rape, torture and pillaging.

## THE BAD:

- ◆ Fighting continued in eastern Congo where Uganda and Rwanda are still suspected of supporting local militias.
- ◆ Today in the mineral-rich region of eastern Congo, two foreign rebel groups are active: the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) from Uganda and the Rwandan Democratic Liberation Front from Rwanda.
- ◆ Human rights violations go from killing, looting, burning people live, sex slavery, kidnapping, forced labor, and rape as never seen before (since 1996 200.000 cases, a conservative number by 2009 U.N report.) who raped (rapes): soldiers from Rwanda, Uganda, UN peace keeping, mercenaries who fought with Rwanda, FDRL, LRA, rebel group forces, Congolese army, civilian. Who is raped? Women and men.
- ◆ Other challenges: malnutrition, disease, poverty, violence and abuse.



# Democratic Republic of Congo

and the deadliest war since WWII

## AFJN's POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

I. The US government must take a leadership role in pressuring the Rwandan government with regard to its role in the D.R. Congo crisis and its obligation to be part of the solution. A democratic Rwanda would encourage the Hutu rebels (FDLR) to return home. Rwanda must break any its ties with CNDP.

II. The U.S should increase humanitarian and democracy-building assistance to match the scale of the country's immeasurable needs. Civil society strengthening should be a priority.

III. Fully fund United Nations peacekeeping operations that are maintaining stability in the volatile eastern region, demand that they address the grotesque sexual violence committed by the army and rebel groups, and use its voice and vote at the United Nations Security Council to urge that the force disarms remaining rebel groups.

IV. The U.S should encourage the Congolese government to conduct free and fair elections in 2011, promote freedom of speech, reform the justice system, bring perpetrators of crimes against humanity to justice, quickly form integrated police and military forces, and disarm remaining rebel groups.

V. Continue facilitating meetings of Great Lakes countries to ensure that Congo's neighbors do not again invade under any pretense.

VI. Support reform of the timber and mining industries to ensure that profits are regulated and going toward national development. U.S mining companies in Congo must do business according to American standards

## MORE RESOURCES:

- ◆ S. 891: Congo Conflict Minerals Act of 2009 <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/billtext.xpd?bill=s111-891>
- ◆ Congo Global Action Coalition <http://drccoalition.blogspot.com>
- ◆ Enough Project [www.enoughproject.org](http://www.enoughproject.org)
- ◆ Run For Congo Women [www.runforcongowomen.org](http://www.runforcongowomen.org)
- ◆ Oxfam International [www.oxfam.org](http://www.oxfam.org)
- ◆ United Nations Integrated Regional Information Networks [www.irinnews.org](http://www.irinnews.org)
- ◆ International Crisis Group [www.crisisgroup.org](http://www.crisisgroup.org)
- ◆ International Action Network on Small Arms [www.iana.org](http://www.iana.org)
- ◆ Amnesty International [www.amnestyusa.org](http://www.amnestyusa.org)
- ◆ Raise Hope for Congo: <http://www.raisehopeforcongo.org/resources>



# U.S. Military Policy in Africa

## Pushing towards demilitarization

On February 6, 2007, President Bush and Defense Secretary Robert Gates announced the creation of U.S. Africa Command ([AFRICOM](#)) “to work in concert and with partners to achieve a more stable environment in which political and economic growth can take place.” Its mission was to foster a relationship with African countries that would enable security, development, diplomacy and prosperity through a strategy of “war prevention rather than war fighting” to reign in the continent.

Yet, in December of 2008, AFRICOM worked with the Ugandan People’s Defense forces (UPDF) to plan a poorly executed attack on the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA), who had moved their bases to northeastern DR Congo. The United States not only helped train soldiers for Operation Lightning Thunder, but it took part in the direct implementation of the operation as well as provided over \$1 million dollars of its budget to the military attack.

Not only did the act result in a severe setback in the peace negotiations with the Government of Uganda, but it caused the LRA to initiate a series of retaliatory attacks and abductions of Congolese civilians, killing more than 1,000 and displacing over 180,000 to date.

*AFRICOM, despite its attempt to hide behind the cloak of a humanitarian mandate, is instead designed to increase access to Africa’s oil, counter terror, and offset China’s economic influence in the region. The new command is coming on line just as the United States is beginning to buy nearly one-quarter of its oil from African sources. This conviction is reaffirmed by the refusal of African countries to support AFRICOM, and statements made by AFRICOM commanders. Liberia is the only country thus far to publicly announce its support for an AFRICOM base.*

Even if AFRICOM’s mission was genuinely for the pursuit of peace and stability in order for Africans to prosper, Africa Faith and Justice Network firmly believes that increasing militarization is not the way to achieve these ends. In 2007, the AFRICOM budget was 50 million. Now, in 2009, under President Obama’s administration, AFRICOM’s budget has raised to a staggering \$392 million. If peace and stability is the aim of the United States, shouldn’t this money be more properly used to provide humanitarian aid, relief, and sustainable programs rather than to fund more violence?

Yes to diplomacy and no to militarism.

# U.S. Military Policy in Africa

AFRICOM

## AFJN's POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

- I. Rather than proposing military action through AFRICOM, the United States should encourage a peaceful resolution to conflict in Africa. That avoids interventionism and enhances local efforts at promoting an end to the conflict.
- II. Ask the Congressional Research Service to conduct a study on viable alternatives to military action.
- III. Decrease military spending in Africa and across the globe and increase development and diplomacy.
- IV. Stop all training and equipping of undemocratic governments, but empower African Union to allow it to respond first hand to African security needs.

## MORE RESOURCES:

- ◆ Department of Defense [www.defenselink.mil](http://www.defenselink.mil)
- ◆ State Department [usinfo.state.gov](http://usinfo.state.gov)
- ◆ Council on Foreign Relations [www.cfr.org](http://www.cfr.org)
- ◆ CSIS Africa Policy Forum [forums.csis.org](http://forums.csis.org)
- ◆ TransAfrica [www.transafricaforum.org](http://www.transafricaforum.org)
- ◆ AFRICOM <http://www.africom.mil/>
- ◆ Obama and AFRICOM <http://allafrica.com/stories/200906110882.html>



# Restorative Justice

Justice that reconciles and promotes peace

## WHY RESTORATIVE JUSTICE?

In Western culture, there is a tendency to automatically equate justice to punishment. How does such kind of approach to justice benefit communities affected by conflict?

AFJN believes that although people who use violence and warfare should be held accountable for their actions in order for justice to be achieved, justice is also locally defined and locally driven. Justice in the court does not result in justice in the community. How can we help bring about justice between individuals and groups once perceived as enemies? How do we help rebuild trust and relationships after pain and trauma? AFJN believes that restorative justice is an essential component to building peace, and this is why restorative justice is one of our focus campaigns.

## The Role of Community-Based Justice Mechanisms in Burundi and Uganda

In order for there to be true peace within these countries, the desires of its people to utilize community-based justice mechanisms to restore peace fully must be recognized. *Despite the irrefutable importance of rebuilding economy, infrastructure, and homes, the rebuilding of lives and relationships amongst the people lie at the root of post-conflict transformation and true, lasting peace.*

# Restorative Justice

## AFJN's POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

I. The U.S. government must gain a firmer understanding of the roots and significance of local definitions and approaches to justice in post-conflict countries.

II. Congress and the U.S. Administration should create policies and provide assistance in ways that enhance local approaches to justice.

III. The U.S. government should refrain from directly funding restorative justice efforts which might take away from the value of a locally-led process. Rather, the U.S. should invest in areas such as education, women's empowerment and national reconciliation efforts to build upon local efforts towards peace and justice.

IV. In Burundi and Uganda, for example, the U.S. government should use its power to encourage President Nkunrunziza and President Museveni to recognize traditional reconciliation efforts, and to ensure that they fairly include women and minority groups.

a. In Burundi, the U.S. should encourage the Burundian government to put the power of appointing members of the *Bushingantahe* back into the hands of the people in order to retain the council's role as the independent preserver of justice, truth and reconciliation.

b. Regarding Uganda, the U.S. should re-examine the potentially harmful consequences of passing H.R.2478, the bill on the Lord's Resistance Army Disarmament and Northern Uganda Recovery Act of 2009, with the original clause on authorization to use AFRICOM, the U.S. command against Joseph Kony. The U.S. government, instead, should use its power to exert pressure on President Museveni to get Joseph Kony back to the peace negotiation table, and reassess his demands for ending the war in northern Uganda.

## MORE RESOURCES:

Text of H.R. 2478 bill, *Lord's Resistance Army Disarmament and Northern Uganda Recovery Act of 2009* <http://www.opencongress.org/bill/111-h2478/text>

Restorative Justice in Burundi and Uganda, AFJN report

<http://www.afjn.org/focus-campaigns/other/other-continental-issues/82-general/660-post-conflict-burundi-and-the-role-of-ubushingantahe-council.html>

[Acholi Religious Leaders' Peace Initiative](http://www.km-net.org.uk/about/partners/arig/main.htm) ; <http://www.km-net.org.uk/about/partners/arig/main.htm>

**crisis**

**areas:**

**Sudan/Darfur**

**Somalia**

**Niger Delta**

**Great Lakes**

# Sudan/Darfur

Sudan suffered from a **twenty-year civil war** between northerners and southerners (mainly Muslim north and Animist/Christian south) only to find themselves entangled in another episode of violence in the western region of Darfur in 2003. Rebel groups in Darfur (the Sudanese Liberation Army/Movement and the Justice and Equality Movement) have fought against the Sudan militia and the Janjaweed. The government of Sudan continues to deny its support of the Janjaweed, a group which has executed many joint attacks with the Sudanese military, waging a brutal campaign of terror – one of which the United States has publicly called a **genocide** - against innocent civilians.

A peace agreement was signed in 2005 between the Sudanese government and southern rebels. The peace process, however, has been extremely **unstable** as fighting and violence continues and, at times, the rebel group has suspended their participation in the power-sharing government – a part of the peace agreement. In July 2008, an arrest warrant issued for President Omar al-Bashir further threatened the peace process in Sudan. President Omar al-Bashir publicly denounced the International Criminal Court indictment, and the African Union unanimously refused to arrest him, despite their responsibility to the international court to do so. In 2008, it was estimated that over **400,000 Sudanese might have died** in this brutal war, and over 2 million continue to be displaced. Under the peace agreement, elections are set to occur in 2010, with a referendum held to decide whether southern Sudan will secede. Whether or not President al-Bashir will follow through and allow the elections and referendum to occur, however, is uncertain.

## Sudan: Layers of Conflict

- ◆ The problem cannot be simplified. It is a conflict between Northerners and Southerners, Arabs and Blacks, Muslims and Christians, and Nomads and Agriculturalists.
- ◆ It is also a conflict over resources, the control of resources (oil!) and power by a small ruling government in Khartoum.
- ◆ It is a conflict over division of national wealth – especially oil revenues and power-sharing, and the possibility of losing southern Sudan.

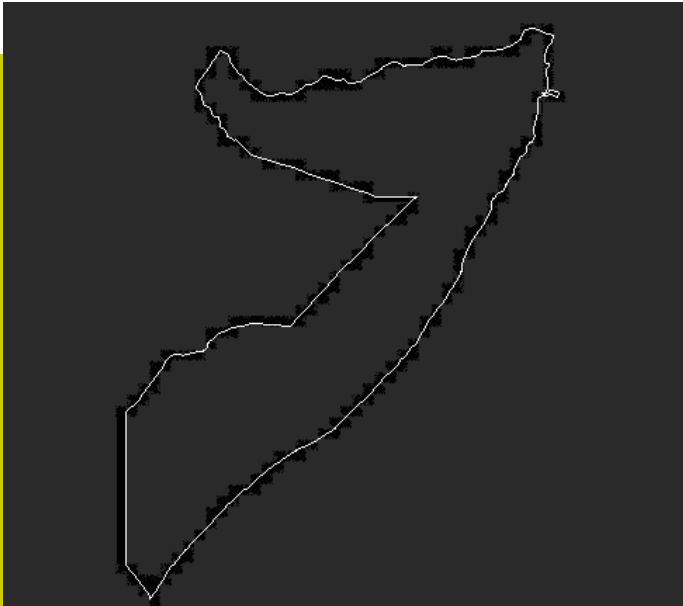
# Sudan/Darfur

## AFJN's POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE U.S GOVERNMENT:

- I. Fully fund peacekeeping operations in Sudan
- II. Provide funding for humanitarian relief to ensure that displaced populations and returning refugees have access to livelihood opportunities.
- III. Support the implementation of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA).
- IV. Maintain targeted economic sanctions on Sudan until the Government of Sudan demonstrates a clear shift in mentality toward inclusive and democratic governance that respects basic human rights.
- V. Pressure the Government of Sudan with diplomatic and economic means to accept democratic reforms and work toward national unity and reconciliation.



# Somalia



Somalia has been a failed state (without a working central government) since President Siad Barre was overthrown in 1991. It continues to be the site of some of the worst humanitarian crises: malnutrition, famine, disease and violence. Since 1991, there have been over a dozen attempts to establish a government in Somalia, attempts hindered by the numerous clan fiefdoms and insur-

gencies within the small country.

More recently, piracy on the Somali coast has threatened the ability of international agencies to deliver humanitarian aid. Over 150 ships have been hijacked in the past year. Although the pressing need to stop piracy is irrefutable, the underlying issues of lack of governance, poverty, disease in Somalia are even more pressing. Putting a stop to piracy may resolve the issue in the short-term, but without addressing Somalia's enduring instability, this surely will not be the last cases of piracy in Somalia.

Even more, AFJN believes that the international body must recognize its own role in inciting piracy. Since the ousting of Barre, European, Middle Eastern and Asian fishing companies have used the Somalian situation to their own advantage. Now, years of over-fishing on the coast of Somalia and dumping barrels of toxic waste into its waters has started to bear its costs—to the people of the country that is. Big foreign companies reap profits while the people of Somali do not even have enough to feed themselves. Yet, the media continues to present a one-sided story on the crisis in Somalia, neglecting the role of international actors as perpetuating the conflict in the country.

# Niger Delta



Violence broke out in 2003 in the Niger Delta, the delta of the Niger River in Nigeria. Nigeria is one of the world's biggest oil exporters, and the Niger Delta, specifically, is an area rich in oil reserves. The country, however, continues to be one of the world's thirty poorest countries with sixty-percent of the population living below the poverty line, according to the UNDP Human Development [Index 2006](#). Exploited by foreign companies like Chevron and Shell, as well as neglected by their own government,

some rebel groups in the Niger Delta have resorted to the killing of civilians, stealing oil and destroying oil reserves to make their grievances heard. Different rebel groups have also turned against each other, fighting each other for access to the oil lines.

One significant challenge to resolving the conflict is the slow flow of information. There are clashes between the government militia(?) and rebel groups in insolated areas in Niger Delta. The lack of information creates for many discrepancies in trying to understand the real situation on the ground. Currently, most of the information internationals receive comes from the Nigerian military, and their credibility is doubtful.

Although no one is sure how it will play out, the situation in the Niger Delta is extremely fragile. It is an area that must be closely monitored, because if the violence escalates, it is the community that will bear the brunt of the consequences.

# Niger Delta

## AFJN's POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

### The U.S. government should:

- ◆ President Obama should express his concern about events in Niger delta to President Umaru Yar'Adua .
- ◆ Despite the requests from the Nigerian government, the U.S. should absolutely refrain from using its military command,AFRICOM, as a method of solving the current crisis in the Niger Delta.
- ◆ Withhold the approximately \$4.5 million in military training, hardware sales, and counter-terrorism and counter-narcotics education that Nigeria is expecting to receive from the U.S. in 2010. Make it clear to President Umaru Yar'Adua that financial support to the Nigerian government in any form is directly dependent on his acknowledgement of and his efforts to stop human rights abuses conducted by his government.
- ◆ Put pressure on big foreign oil companies, such as Chevron, to publicly acknowledge their participation in environmental degradation and human rights abuses alongside the Nigerian government, as well as take preventative measures to exacerbating problems.
- ◆ Establish minimum standards for extractive companies and mechanisms for monitoring the quality of their work abroad to ensure that, at the very least, their work is not hampering the lives of locals. The U.S. government should also make it clear to companies that they will be held accountable for their actions and that not obliging by these standards will have its legal ramifications.
- ◆ Continue to provide humanitarian assistance to Nigerians and monitoring this aid carefully to ensure that it reaches the people most affected.
- ◆ Use its position as one of the Nigerian government's biggest oil customers to exert pressure on Nigerian leaders to demilitarize and withdraw the Joint Task Force, and instead, push for diplomatic relations between the parties. The U.S. government must help bring the Nigerian government to the peace negotiation table.

## MORE RESOURCES:

AMNESTY REPORT: [Petroleum, Pollution and Poverty in the Niger Delta](#)

FOREIGN POLICY IN FOCUS: [Niger Delta Standoff](#)

AFRICA FAITH AND JUSTICE: ["Guilty as Charged? Oil Giant Shell Settles in Human Rights Cases"](#)



# Great Lakes Region

*The Great Lakes Region encompasses Burundi, Rwanda, the DR Congo and Uganda*

In the Great Lakes Region of Africa, some of the most atrocious human rights abuses and drawn out conflicts continue to hinder the progress towards development.

The countries in the Great Lakes Region all face their own unique situation and challenges. While some continue to be ravaged by war and violence, others are working to recover from decades of unrest and instability. Although the Congolese democratically elected their first president in 2005, fighting and attacks continue to threaten the peace process. The LRA rebels have moved their base out of northern Uganda to the DR Congo. Although child abductions, village massacres and house burnings have not recently taken place in northern Uganda, the numerous failed attempts to reach a peace agreement continues to threaten the lives of thousands in northern Uganda. The continued instability hinders Uganda and Congo's progress towards a post-conflict era where issues of reconstruction and reconciliation can be addressed.

In Burundi, a 2003 ceasefire was a step ahead toward the end of decades of power sharing struggle between Hutu and Tutsi. In 2005, Burundian democratically elected Peirre Nkunziza as president. He is so far the first elected Burundian to hold that office for more than two years. In April 2009, the last rebel groups disarmed and became a political party.

In 1994, Rwanda suffered from a genocide that took the lives of 800,000 Tutsi according to statistics in the span of one hundred days. Uncounted for are Hutu and Tutsi who died in Rwanda from 1990-1994 and the Hutu massacred by presidents Kagame and Museveni's armies in the Congo mostly from 1996-1998. President Kagame's war crimes in Congo are still uncounted for. Today, international leaders often applaud President Kagame's efforts to rebuild the Rwandan economy after the genocide. Although his efforts have been notable, his government's policies against Hutu are seriously tragic. More concerning, is the exclusion of Hutu in governing Rwanda and wealth sharing. Rwanda's peace and stability depends on how it deals with the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Rwanda, (FDLR) a Hutu rebel groups operation from the Congo to prepare to take back the power they lost to current Tutsi regime in 1994. An inter-Rwandan dialogue is a must for peace in Rwanda.

# continental issues:

**Trade reform**  
**Agriculture**  
**Natural resource extraction**  
**Arms proliferation**  
**Democracy and governance**  
**Church in Africa**

# CONTINENTAL ISSUES:

## trade reform

International trade and investment is a critical part in economic development. We believe, however, that international trade and investment policies and decisions should be transparent, involve the participation of the most vulnerable stakeholders and their governments, respect the rights of local communities to protect and sustain their natural resources, and respect and support the dignity of the human person and advance the common good.

## agriculture

Much of the global trading system is skewed against African farmers, as developing countries heavily subsidize their farmers while imposing tariffs on African agricultural goods. While the tariffs prevent sale in Western markets such as the United States, subsidies drive down prices everywhere and make it difficult for even local agriculture to develop. This creates food insecurity since the farms fold and local food production declines. It also prevents the development of cash crop industries, since they cannot compete with subsidized goods or enter protected markets. In addition, there is the question of whether genetically modified crops will, in the end, be helpful or harmful to African farmers and consumers.

Food aid usually fails to solve the problem of food insecurity and other situations for which it is intended. It can put local farmers out of business by competing with them for consumers. However, it can sometimes be used positively for projects with developmental aims, such as school feeding, and it clearly has a place in assisting those who otherwise could not afford food. It also has an important role in saving lives during emergencies, such as droughts or famine. In keeping with our hopes for a more responsible US policy towards Africa, AFJN hopes for reforms allowing African farmers and people to reap the benefits of agriculture.

## natural resource extraction

Africa is a continent rich in natural resources, from chrome to cobalt, gold to diamonds, oil to gas reserves to name a few. Thus, natural resource extraction is a bustling business for many Africa countries. Often, however, while the local governments profit from the sale of local resources, the profits never trickle down to the communities themselves. And as the Niger Delta conflict shows, the utter neglect of government and foreign companies to recognize the legitimate grievances of the people can fuel disastrous conflict and violence on people and the environment. Even more, many foreign companies maintain poor business practices, disregarding the effects of their policies on the health of the environment and people they surround. Developing the economy through international markets can help push a country towards progress, but should not come at the expense of hundreds of thousands of lives or violations of human rights and environmental rights. Africa Faith and Justice Network believes the U.S. government has an obligation to ensure that its resources are imported from conflict-free zones. Better mechanisms should be in place to track the origins of imported products. In countries where U.S. companies are present, the U.S. must exert pressure on the government to direct its profits into important areas such as education, economic development, and health care. The U.S. must also send a clear message to other foreign companies that their presence is dependent on their ability to respect, care for and maintain the human dignity of the people and their environment.

# CONTINENTAL ISSUES:

## arms proliferation

Proliferation of small arms em-

powers rebel movements and national governments to initiate conflict and gives them the capacity to commit mass human rights violations. In fact, the [Red Cross](#) cites that ninety percent of casualties in conflict areas are caused by small arms. In the last four years, some strides have been made when the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly voted to start a process towards an [arms trade treaty](#), which was eventually passed by a margin of 139 to 1, with 24 abstentions. The U.S. was the only vote in opposition to the resolution. A report was drafted and completed by the established Group of Governmental Experts in 2008, and open discussions with Member States regarding a future arms trade treaty. Recognizing that global peace and security requires the regulation and decrease movement of arms, AFJN urges the U.S. to consider supporting the global ATT and to help lay its framework by participating in the opened-ended working group being held by the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs.

## democracy & governance

A stable and prosperous country must center around good governance and democracy. People must live freely amongst one another, granted equal rights and opportunities according to just laws. The local government must be elected freely and fairly by the people, and their actions must be motivated by their responsibility and obligation to their country rather than their own motivations to full their personal pockets. Violence and conflict often stems from a fear or feeling of being threatened. Thus, if is peace is the condition for development and prosperity, the U.S., needs to develop foreign policies that promote peace in addition to good governance, freedom of speech, democracy instead of dictatorship, equality, transparency, and accountability.

## church in Africa

AFJN collaborates with the Catholic Task

Force on Africa (CTFA), a coalition of Catholic religious communities and organizations seeking to analyze and influence U.S. policy towards Africa. The CTFA is closely following the preparation and the outcome of the Synod of Africa Bishops which will be held in Rome in October 2009. More information can be found at [www.yesafricamatters.org](http://www.yesafricamatters.org)

**campaign idea**

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**365 days  
to promote peace in  
Congo**

# 365 days to promote peace in Congo

**may-august:** Use your summertime to read up on what's going on in the DR Congo, and what AFJN has been doing to promote peace in the country.

## **august-september:**

Spread the awareness amongst your club members. Pass out (or send links and spare some trees!) some information to members and get them passionate and concerned about what's going on!

Show a **FILM SCREENING/DOCUMENTARY** about the Congo on campus. Film screenings are easy to put on, but are a great way to get people interested.

**september-november:** Hold a **LECTURE SERIES** monthly or bi-monthly on the DR Congo on your campus to get more people interested and concerned about the violence in the Congo. Each lecture can address the issue from a different light. For example:

Lecture #1: Historical background of Congo, how history shaped the Congo

Lecture #2: Conflict in the Congo: Modern Day Situation

Lecture #3: Natural Resource Extraction and the Conflict in the DR Congo

Lecture #4: Challenges to Peace in the DR Congo

Lecture #5: Where to go from here: The Role of the U.S. in Promoting Peace in the DR Congo

**november:** Hold a working group meeting

Now that people are more aware of what is really going on in the DR Congo, take this opportunity to bring people together and talk about what we can do collectively to help promote peace in the country. Hold a brainstorming session so people can come together, talk about the issues, and talk about what should be done about it. Write up a few policy recommendations, and think about some ways to do some advocacy on campus on the subject. Consider also a rally in Washington, D.C.

**december:** Promote a Just Holiday

Take advantage of the holidays and use it to raise awareness about how minerals in products we buy, such as jewelry, iPods, digital cameras and cell phones help perpetuate the ongoing violence in the DR Congo. Raise people's awareness about this issue, and encourage them to know what they are buying, ask where the materials in the products come from, and ultimately send a message to companies that they refuse to purchase products that can not be traced back to its origins.

Set up a booth in the student center. Pass out information and inform people about how the war in Congo is fueled by natural resources used by big electronic companies.

Give them the opportunity to [sign in support](#) of the [S. 891: Congo Conflict Minerals Act of 2009](#) to help the U.S. work with the international community to monitor and stop commercial activities involving the natural resources of the DRC, develop institutions that can promote transparency in the cross-boarder trading, and hold companies accountable for buying these minerals.

**january-april:** Plan 2 big events to end the school-year with a bang! Perhaps a benefit concert and a rally in Washington, D.C.?

Artists for Africa, benefit concert - Plan a benefit concert to continue to raise awareness and keep the DR Congo on people's minds. Fundraise money to support Africa Faith and Justice Network's work in the DR Congo, or raise the money for an organization that directly benefits Congolese.

Plan a rally in Washington, D.C., otherwise, hold a rally in your community or on campus. Utilize the ideas and recommendations the working group came up with to establish your points to the U.S. government, and your ideas of what civil society can do to help promote change! Contact the media to publicize your event. Pass out information and petitions for people to sign. Have an amazing speaker!

And while you're in D.C., visit the AFJN office!

# Conflict in the Congo

## In 30 seconds

### Criminal on record in DRC:

They are several, among them members of the,  
National Congress for the Defense of the People (CNDP)  
Democratic Liberation Forces of Rwanda (FDLR)  
Lord Resistance army (LRA)  
the Congolese army (FARDC)  
Rwanda government, president Paul Kagame  
Ugandan government, Yoweri Museveni

### Conflict Minerals

**Tin** - used inside cell phones and electronic products.

**Tantalum (coltan)** - used to store electricity - in iPods, digital cameras, and cell phones

**Tungsten** : used to make your cell phones vibrate

**Gold**: used mainly in jewelry, electronics

*a \$144 million dollar industry.*

### Foreign multinationals in DRC:

*control the mines, force workers to work in  
deadly conditions and pay very little.*

*Perpetuate corruption using bribe.*

### ***Massacre sites***

Wendji, Mbandaka, Katale,  
Kahindo, Tingitingi, Kasika,  
makobola, Katogota, Lusende, Oso

# additional resources





# catholic social teaching

Although mostly followed by Catholic followers, one doesn't have to be Catholic to live a life according to Catholic Social Teaching. In fact, you might be living your life in this way already! That's the great thing about Catholic Social thought...it's for anyone who desires to live their life recognizing the value and interconnectedness of everyone. Read on.

## guiding principles

### **dignity of humanity:**

Every individual possesses a basic dignity and equality that should be respected.

### **rights and responsibilities:**

Every individual has abundant rights that make a life truly human, but we also all have responsibilities to respect the rights of others and to work for the common good.

### **social nature of humanity**

Our highest capacity is realized when we connect with each other, thus, the way we organize our families, societies and communities affects our capacity to reach our full potential.

### **the common good**

In order for any individual to truly reach his/her full potential, we all must have access to fair social conditions - economic, political, material and cultural - that allow us all to thrive.

### **subsidiary**

Keeping things at the grassroots level should be the goal, because no one understands the particular situation and issue better than the local people themselves.

### **solidarity**

Despite our national, religious, economic or ideological differences, we are all a part of one human family and invariably connected to one another.

### **option for the poor**

Society can't thrive without its weakest members, too, thriving. As a result, we must ground our individual choices and public policy decisions on how they affect the poor.

### **stewardship:**

There is an inherent integrity to all of creation and it requires careful stewardship of all resources, ensuring that we use them justly and equitably so that future generations can continue to benefit from them.

# additional resources

## news

### BBC:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/>

### Africa Faith and Justice Network:

[www.afjn.org](http://www.afjn.org)

### All Africa;

<http://allafrica.com/>

### Human Rights Watch;

<http://www.hrw.org/en/africa>

### Institute of Policy Studies:

<http://www.ips-dc.org/>

### United States Institute of Peace:

<http://www.usip.org/>

### United Nations ;

<http://www.un.org/>

### Pambazuka:

<http://www.pambazuka.org/en/>

## planning

Doodle—to schedule meetings, calls

Eventbrite—to register participants for events

Campus Progress—to get ideas on events

Campus Activism—more ideas for events!

Google Sites—get started on your webpage!

## misc.

Catholic Social Teaching

Information sharing - Allows you to share information with friends via facebook, email, aim, blog, etc.

## congress/u.s. policy

Foreign Policy in Focus - stellar research think tank that writes briefs, reports, etc. for the public, media, lawmakers, and legislative staff.

Senate Committee on Foreign Relations - Committee of the Senate that deals with the issues AFJN is mainly concerned with - foreign relations and policy.

Who are your representatives? - For more information about the who the representatives are from each state.'

How laws are made - Learn about the lengthy process of making a law and how they are enacted.

Contact your Congress - Allows you to call your senator or representative's number. Gives advice on how to be effective on the phone, and advice on how to write a letter to members of Congress!

# poster making 101

The better your ads and promos for your event, the bigger the audience you'll get to spread your message! Here are few tips and ideas to help you get started...

1. the POSTER: Be CREATIVE! Why does it have to be a regular shape or color?

2. FONT: play it up! Switch it up, add color, add style, add flavor—just make sure it's readable!

3. Make what's really important BIG!

- Title
- What it is (film screening)
- Date/time

4. INFO: Provide a quick summary of the event that will make people want to know more!

5. Don't forget to let them know your chapter, especially just in case they want to get more information!

Promote **PEACE** in the **Congo**  
*A film screening*

Learn how a battle over natural resources has resulted in one of the deadliest modern wars. Discover how Western consumerism helps perpetuate the war and violence in the DR Congo.

**10.14.09 @ 9pm**

North quad  
Free admission

brought to you by  
AFJN at Notre Dame [afjn@nd.edu](mailto:afjn@nd.edu)

6. Graphic art can really grab people's attention. Even one simple object can pull people in, like in this poster.

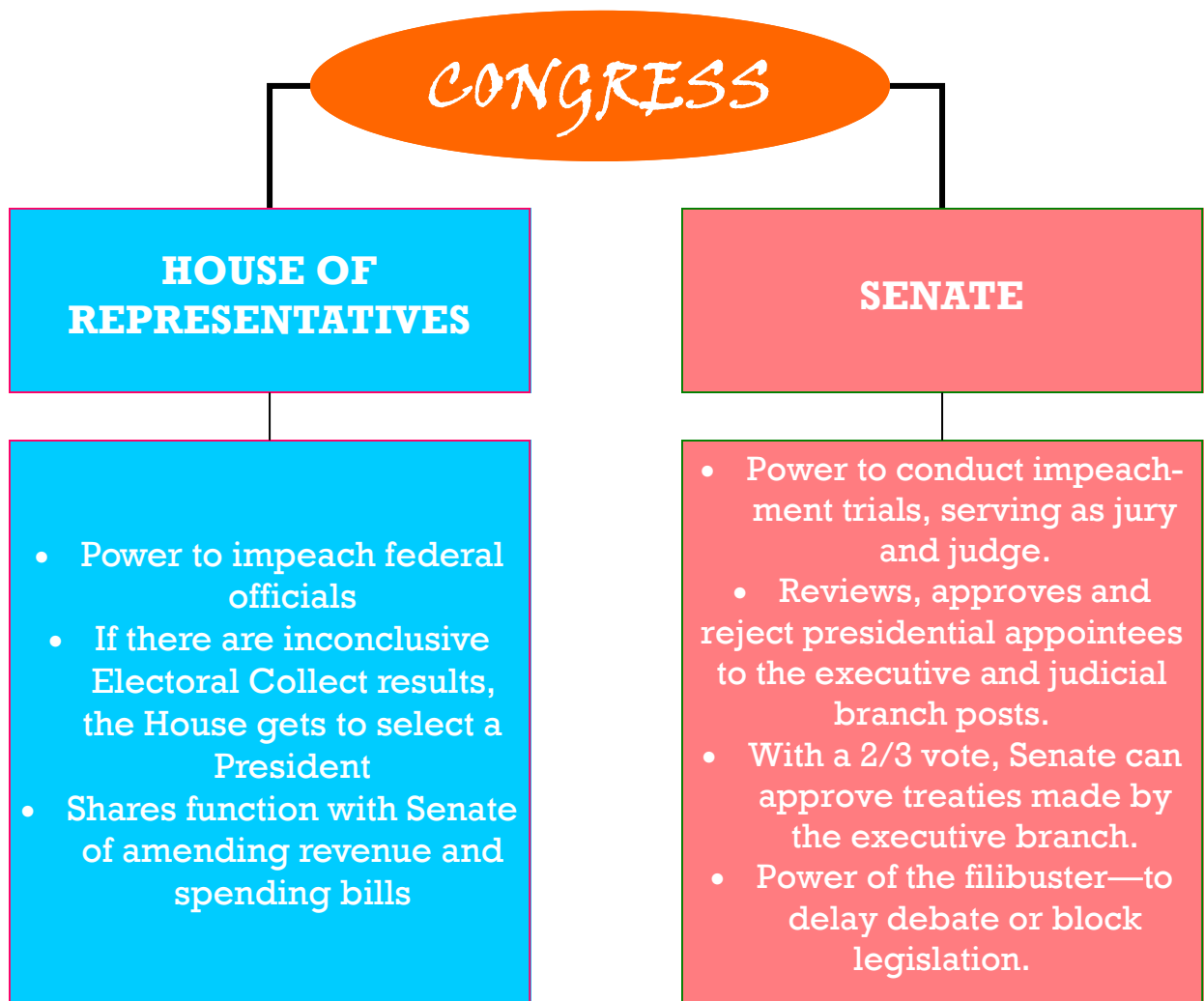
# congress 101

# Congress:

the legislative branch of the federal government that establishes *laws*. It shares power with the executive branch (led by the President) and the judicial branch (led by the Supreme Court). Congress is the only branch that is elected directly by the people.

## Congress has jurisdiction to:

- ✓ Make laws
- ✓ Declare war
- ✓ Raise and provide public money and put it where it sees fit
- ✓ Impeach and try federal officers
- ✓ Approve presidential appointments
- ✓ Approve treaties negotiated by the executive branch
- ✓ Oversight and investigations



# congress

## Basic Tips

1. Choose a single topic or issue.
2. When holding a letter signing event, allow individuals to make the letters personal. It's effective to send a massive amount of letters regarding the same bill to Congress, but it's an even more powerful message if each letter comes with a personal message from each individual sending it.
3. Keep it to the point, factual and one page at most!
4. If it involves a bill, cite the bill title and number.
5. Provide a return address if you are looking for a response.

## Addressing Members of Congress

### To Your Senator:

The Honorable (full name)  
(Room #) (Name) Senate/House Office Building  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

Paragraph 1: Who you are, where you're from (organization, school, etc.), and the specific reason you're writing

Paragraph 2: A more thorough explanation of what your concern is and what issue you'd like to address.

Paragraph 3: What you think the Senator/ Representative should do in order to address this issue. What changes should he/she make or advocate for? End graciously by thanking them and urging them to consider your request.

Sincerely,  
Signature  
Printed Name

### To Your Representative:

The Honorable (full name)  
(Room #) (Name) House Office Building  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

Paragraph 1: Who you are, where you're from (organization, school, etc.), and the specific reason you're writing

Paragraph 2: A more thorough explanation of what your concern is and what issue you'd like to address.

Paragraph 3: What you think the Senator/ Representative should do in order to address this issue. What changes should he/she make or advocate for? End graciously by thanking them and urging them to consider your request.

Sincerely,  
Signature  
Printed Name

# How YOU can play a role in the Legislative process

## WHAT HAPPENS:

## WHAT YOUR ROLE CAN BE:

A bill is prepared.	*Suggest provisions to be included in the bill.
The bill is introduced in one chamber of the legislature by one or two sponsors and many co-sponsors.	*Help find co-sponsors for the bill through letters, calls, visits.
The bill is examined by a committee according to its subject area (e.g. a bill about foreign policy would be assigned to the Foreign Relations Committee).	*Work with the committee to help its member understand the bill and prevent any alterations that could weaken its impact.
Hearings are held to discuss the bill.	*Testify at the hearings.
The committee votes on the bill.	*Lobby (phone, write, visit) committee members to gather support for the bill.
If the bill passes through committee, it is sent along to the entire legislative body for further debate and a vote.	*Lobby swing members to support the bill and generate letters, phone calls, lobby visits and media from your supporters.
If it passes, the bill is sent to the other chamber in the legislature (unless the other chamber is already working on similar legislation).	*Line up co-sponsors for the bill in the other chamber.
The bill is examined by the relevant committee in that chamber.	*Work with members of that committee to strengthen support for the bill.
Hearings are held again.	*Testify at the hearings.
If the bill passes committee, it is brought to the floor for debate and a vote.	*Lobby swing voters.
If the bill passes, it probably does so with amendments that now need to be reconciled in a conference committee made up of representatives of both chambers before it is finally voted on.	*Lobby members of the conference committee to protect the bill from weakening amendments.
If it passes both houses as amended by the conference committee, it is sent to the executive (the president or governor) for signature.	*Publicize the bill's passage and generate support for executive approval of the bill.
If the executive signs the bill, it becomes law.	Celebrate!

NOTE: This implies that you are supporting a bill, but the same actions can be taken when you wish to oppose a bill. This process may also be used for legislation on the state level.

Source: Maceachern, Diane. *Enough Is Enough*. New York: Avon Books, 1994

# Congress resources

**House of Representatives** - Main website of the House of Representatives. Right on the front page, you can check out what's happening on the house floor week by week, and check out old/new laws currently on the floor.

**Who are your representatives?** - For more information about the who the representatives are from each state.'

**How laws are made** - Learn about the lengthy process of making a law and how they are **enacted**.

**Senate Committee on Foreign Relations** - The committee most pertinent for the work we do here in AFJN. Currently chaired by Senator John Kerry.

**Contact your Congress** - Allows you to call your senator or representative's number. Gives advice on how to be effective on the phone, and advice on how to write a letter to members of Congress!

## other resources

### FOR INFORMATION:

- **All Africa** - THE place to go if you are searching for current news on Africa.
- **Friends of the Congo** - FOTC is an advocacy organization based in Washington, D.C. working for Congolese human rights and peace in the Democratic Republic of Congo.
- **RAISE Hope for Congo** - RAISE Hope for Congo works to raise awareness about the sexual violence against women and girls, and influence and change policy through Peace, Protection, Punishment and Prevention. They have some great strategy papers and information about the roots of the conflict in the Congo.
- **Institute for Policy Studies** - IPS utilizes research and dialogue with grassroots, scholars and elected officials to work towards peace, justice and the environment. Check out their projects, events, and research online!
- **United States Conference of Catholic Bishops** - Check out the Catholic Church's position on justice, peace and human development. They have an amazing amount of information on their website, broken down into regions, topics, and recent news.
- **Human Rights Watch** - They closely monitor events throughout the world, and work to protect human rights of people. After doing research and reporting, they give recommendations to governments, rebel groups, international institutions, corporations, policymakers and the press.
- READ the **LRA Disarmament and Recovery Act** - This is the current bill that is making its way through Congress to help end the crisis in northern Uganda. AFJN supports the bill, but actively opposes its military passage that supports the U.S. using its military command, AFRICOM, to seek out Joseph Kony.

### FOR IDEAS:

- **Campus Progress** - Campus Progress works to mobilize and unite youth so that they can become better leaders and advocates for change. Their website has great events and tips on organizing events on your campus, and if you sign up to join the network, you get access to grants, resources, events, conferences, and updates on current issues. They also provide assistance planning events on campus and may be able to help bring great speakers to your campus!



We're on a quest to make the world  
a more just and peaceful world.



Thanks for joining us!