

November 2021

AFJN eBulletin

As the holiday season begins, we take this time to reflect on the past year and recognize our words cannot express our thanks to the Great One for the many favors the Africa Faith and Justice Network (AFJN) family received this year. Our gratitude to God for making us stand straight and strong amidst the harsh reality of the COVID-19 pandemic. We are thankful that we are able to resume our face-to-face engagements with our partners in Africa with the Women's Empowerment and the African Church Together Against Corruption Projects. Our current office space is secured for the next five years. Our US-African policy advocacy is moving forward with the introduction of bills that would curb illicit financial flows, increase transparency, and we are gaining support for a global response to COVID. The world has recognize the issues of child labor with the the United Nation's General Assembly declaring 2021 as the "International Year for the Elimination of Child Labour." We welcomed new interns and senior fellows into our family.

Wonderful One, You live among us and You journey with us. You are the Leader who goes before us and the Great Mantle which covers us. We shall know, love, and praise You, beholding our end of year which is truly no end. Amen! Alleluia!!!



Together we are making a difference in the US and in Africa.

Consider Donating Today!

See highlights of our work below and also on our website:

www.afjn.org

Women's Empowerment Project



AFJN's **Women's Empowerment Project** was back on the continent with in-person and virtual workshops, meetings, and events. Outreach has started in the **Democratic Republic of the Congo** on raising awareness of human trafficking.

In **Ghana**, the Women's Empowerment project joined with the African Church Together Against Corruption Project to raise awareness on land grabbing, trafficking, empowerment and child labor.

In **Nigeria**, AFJN continues in moving forward advocacy and educating sisters and youth monthly. Major events include meeting with the Catholic Women's Organization, "**Youth Arise and Shine - Now is the Time**", workshop, "Let us work together to eradicate human trafficking" campaign, the presentation of Valentine Iwenwanne's report "**AFJN Report: Current State of Human Trafficking in Nigeria (Akwa Ibom State) 2021**", stakeholders meeting with the Nigerian Drug Law Enforcement Agency, town hall meetings, World Day Against Trafficking in Persons event, "**AFJN Nigeria Youth Video for Peace**", participation the the diocese's "Youth Week 2021", and the **youth produced video calling for peace and nonviolence** ahead of the elections. The sisters were featured on **Catholic Television of Nigeria**.

In **Tanzania** the sisters lead a youth workshop "Tanzania Youths: Working Together to End Human Trafficking" that talked about gender-based violence (the District Commissioner of Songea was present), held "**Witnessing to Our Faith in the Public Square**" workshop for sisters with over 80 sister from over 50 congregations, held a public campaign against trafficking and met with the Temeke District and Social Welfare Officers and Former Ambassador to Japan. Sauti Ya dada Wadogo Radio and Radio Tumaini (<https://youtu.be/rSsuk8kW8oQ>, <https://youtu.be/9cY5FpP5q-g>, <https://youtu.be/r4qpt-bOt2M>) were some of the media that covered the event and the youth had a weekly appearance on Jogoo Radio FM 930 every Saturday.

In **Uganda** the sisters produced a "**Brief History of the Africa Faith and Justice Network Uganda**" video, they also held several human trafficking prevision and education outreach events, were featured on Fort Portal's Jubilee Radio 105.6 on World Day Against Human Trafficking, and are building support groups of youth survivors providing counseling and a community support network.

In **Zambia**, a discussion "Advocacy as a Christian Calling" was held with the Executives of the Zambian Conference of Women Religious, advocacy workshops titled "**Religious Vocation, Church, Society, and their Prophetic Witnessing**" held in November on issues of justice, human dignity, and the issues of the prevalence of human trafficking in Zambia were addressed as part of the empowerment project. Sisters were surprised to the extent that trafficking and other injustices were happening in their communities. They were on Radio Maria 99.3 FM Lusaka and on **Loyola Television Zambia**. They also met with four government ministries including: immigration, home affairs, the vice president, and the chief justice.

Re-Trafficking Prevention

AFJN has been working with three survivors (two in Uganda and one in Nigeria) who were trafficked abroad. The witness these survivors provided during our workshops and trainings have been immeasurable. Thanks to additional funding from the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur Base Communities, AFJN was able to provide these survivors with skills training and materials to start their own business as a way to thank them. The survivors were very grateful for the support.

*To learn more about these programs visit our **Women's Empowerment page**. This project is made possible by a large grant from the Conrad Hilton Foundation, Dominican Sisters of Peace Shalom Fund, Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur Base Communities, Missionaries of Africa, and AFJN organizational and individual members.*



Promoting Good Governance and Justice - ACT Project

In **Cameroon**, leaders who participated in the implantation of AFJN's ACT pilot project evaluated the project, discussed ways to institutionalize processes, and honored Madame Ferancide Massa, the Coordinator of the Justice and Peace Office of the Diocese of Bafoussam for her excellent transparent management of the funds.

Success Story: After our event the staff of the Health Center, managed by the Sisters of the Holy Family of Bafoussam and under the Diocese of Bafoussam, resigned when it came to light, that it was common practice for the center's staff to sell medications stolen from the center, collect kickbacks for offering discounts on services, and referrals to friends clinics. These practices impacted the center's quality of care, reputation, and its financial viability. After the resignations, the center hired and trained new staff committed to integrity, the results are already promising.

In October the Diocese of Bafoussam and AFJN **brought the court to the people**. For one day, locals were able to have their birth's registered and received valid birth certificates without leaving their town. This was the first event of it's kind and was highly attended and well received. The children, who would have been easy targets for birth certificate corruption, are free from worry when they grow up because they now have their birth certificates registered with the proper authorities. Stay tuned to our website and social media for a video interview of this event.

In **Ghana**, the AFJN team, led by Bahati, and Fr. Barthelemy Bazemo, M.Afr., AFJN Board of Directors, held a live radio show and five in-person land grabbing awareness and prevention meetings in Ghana's Volta, Oti, Greater Accra and Bono East regions. Like preachers, they brought the message in the local languages to people in their villages and in schools. For over a year and a half, the team has been working remotely with partners in Ghana to move these workshops forward. Sisters, members of AFJN Ghana Chapter, joined the efforts to prevent and bring awareness to the realities of human trafficking, gender-based violence and child labor.

Success Story: In Kpekpo people are struggling with polluted water sources and poisoned environment by agribusinesses who spray chemicals in their farms, land they leased from the community. The minds of the landowners who attended were changed through our educational program after they carefully listened and were persuaded by our arguments. They promised that they would withdraw from the talks they were having with an investor who wanted to lease their land.

Read more in the [“Land Grab Awareness Campaign Ghana: For Systemic Change, Prevention & Advocacy for Those Living in Poverty and the Powerless”](#) report.

In Liberia, Fr. Aniedi Okure, OP and Fr. Bazemo, MAfr. held a training program for priests, seminarians, seminary professors and Justice and peace coordinators at the Seminary of the diocese of Diocese of Gbarnga. The program was well attended and received.

To read more about our campaigns on [Justice](#) and [Just Governance](#) visit our [Focus Campaigns](#) page. The project was made possible by grants from the Raskob Foundation for Catholic Activities and the Missionaries of Africa along with AFJN organizational and individual membership.



News and Events

Organizational Member Briefing

In May, organizational leadership attended the annual briefing where AFJN staff showcased the results of the past year. This year AFJN focused on the Women's Empowerment Project. Organizational Members interested in additional briefings on our [Focus Campaigns](#) or to learn more about AFJN best practices may email [Lydia Andrews](#).

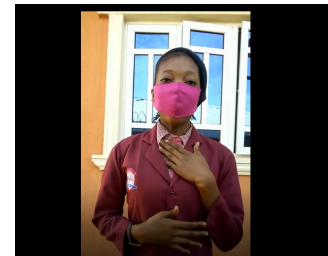


CALAR Anniversary Video

Africa Liberation Day, May 25, 2021, was also the one-year anniversary of the Coalition for Africa's Liberation and Restoration (CALAR). To mark this important occasion AFJN produced the video "[Africa Remember Who You Are](#)" which highlighted Africa and called Africans to remember what it means to be African and their many accomplishments.

Nigerian Student Poem

On June 16th, AFJN premiered “[International Day of the African Child - 'Africa, My Africa'](#)” a spoken poem written by a Mmadueke Onyinye Silvia, a Nigerian student who participated in AFJN’s workshop. Ms. Silvia was inspired by the mission and work of AFJN and CALAR. Read [Sr. Eucharist’s reflections](#).



Panelists

Sister Jane Wani, RGS
San Partner Program in Democratic Institutions of Congo
Program Director

Josee-Blandine Ongotto, Esq.
International Labor Organization
Regional Manager
Child Labor in Mining
Democratic Republic of Congo

Ntama Bahati Jacques
Associate and Justice
Network
Policy Analyst

Maribeth Gallagher
Investor
Advocates for Social Justice
Director

Fabien Mayani
Directeur de Programme
Gouvernance des
Industries Extractives du
Congo-Kinshasa en RDC

Registration: <https://bit.ly/3oUjDuh>

United Nations CSO Side Event on Child Labor

Ntama Bahati, AFJN policy analyst, was a panelist on the June 18th United Nations (UN) Civil Society Organization (CSO) side-event “[Unraveling Child Labor in the Mining Industry and the Congo Basin](#).” This side event was sponsored by the NGO Mining Working Group in Commemoration of the International Day of the African Child, World Day Against Child Labor, and the [International Year for the Elimination of Child Labor](#). Bahati address the social, economic, and political context in which child labor is happening in the mining sector in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Watch the video and learn more [here](#).

Interfaith Vigil for Vaccine Access

On July 20, 2021 a coalition of over 70 organizations held the “Interfaith Vigil for COVID-19 Vaccines Access” on the National Mall in front of the US Capitol. Bahati read a prayer during the event. Representative Janice D. Schakowsky (on the left), one of the champions of COVID-19 Global vaccine access, attended the rally. To watch the video and learn more [click here](#).



Speakers:

Overfishing Africa's Seas: Prof. Nii Kwame Akueteh
Professor, George Washington University and Chair, Security Working Group, Adisa, Washington, DC USA/Ghana

Sucking Africa's Oil and Gas: Dr. Nimma Bassey
Director and Founder, Health of Mother Earth Foundation, Benin City, Nigeria

Extracting Africa's Minerals: Mr. Alain Foka
Journalist, Radio France Internationale, Paris, France

Grabbing Africa's Land: Ms Faith Alubbe
Executive Director, Kenya Land Alliance, Nairobi, Kenya

Moderator: Prof. Eric Chinje
Visiting Scholar, George Mason University, Fairfax, VA, USA

Introduction: Jacques Bahati

Continuing Plunder! Brutal Extraction of Africa's Resources

This webinar on the illicit depletion of Africa’s wealth through internationally owned extractive enterprises and, at times, with local collaborators, presented evidence to raise awareness of a very consequential phenomenon. It explored the questions: *How is Africa’s wealth stolen? Where is the looting of Africa most intense today? What historical trends have brought African nations to the position they are in today? What can be done to move forward and create a more prosperous Africa?* [Watch the video](#).

Congressional and US Administration Meetings

AFJN continues to meet with Congressional Offices and the Administration on important issues that impact those living in poverty and the vulnerable populations. We participated in meeting with several Congressional Offices including Representatives Betty McCollum (MN), Lou Correa (CA) and Cheri Bustos (IL), and Senator Edward Markey (MA) advocating for “H.R. 986 - Robust International Response to Pandemic Act” and act introduced by Rep. Chuy Garcia. We also advocated the Senate for “S.67 - Support for Global Financial Institution Pandemic Response Act of 2021” by Senator Dick Durban. In August, AFJN met with the House Financial Services Committee staffer Daniel McGlinchey. On August 9, AFJN participated in a meeting with Ambassador Hilda Suka-Mafudze, Permanent Representative of the Africa Union to the US about COVID-19 vaccines for Africa. This effort aimed at coordinating AFJN’s vaccine advocacy access and harnessing the power to speak as one voice for our African sisters and brothers. We met with US Trade Representative on the US-Kenya trade negotiations and their negative impact on small African farm holders.

In August, Bahati gave a presentation on S. Res. 80 for the establishment of the Senate Human Rights Commission to the International Religious Freedom Roundtable.

AFJN signed on to: a [Letter to President Biden calling for vaccine access, testing and treatments](#); the ["Groups Urge Congress Groups Urge Congress to Support Rep. Jayapal Amendment to Authorize More Economic Relief to Fight Deadly Pandemic"](#) joint statement; a [letter to President Biden ahead of the UN General Assembly](#) meeting that included TRIPS waivers; and a letter in ["Support for the Counter-Kleptocracy Act"](#)

We issued statements on: a [White House Coronavirus Response Coordinator Jeffrey Zients](#); ["The Release of \\$650 Billion of the International Monetary Fund's SDRs Must Include Transparency and Accountability Measures"](#); ["Coalition of Over 50 Organizations Issues Statement on Historic IMF's Release of 450 Billion in SDRs"](#); ["Organizations Tell Congress to Support the Counter-Kleptocracy Act"](#) and ["COVID Defense Act Must Include Accountability Measures."](#)

AFJN Staff News

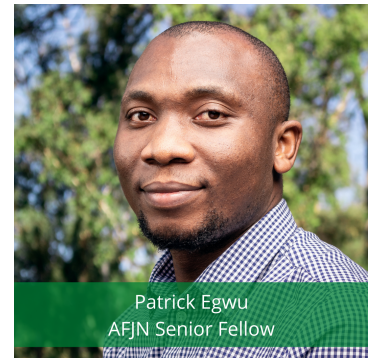
AFJN Welcomes Senior Fellows

In 2021, AFJN started to offer Senior Fellowships highlighting professionals who share in the mission of AFJN in their own prospective fields. This fellowship is an unpaid position. Please join AFJN in welcoming:

Patrick Egwu

Patrick Egwu is an award-winning freelance investigative journalist who has covered several of AFJN's Women's Empowerment Project's workshop in Africa. He has written extensively on the injustices in Africa including human rights abuses and human trafficking.

Patrick won the 2021 ICFJ Global Health Crisis Reporting award. He was also part of journalists at the GSR recently honoured by the Associated Church Press and the Religion Communicators Council with an Award of Merit for in-depth coverage of the Covid-19 pandemic. [Click here](#) for his full biography. He is also a 2021-2022 JHR/Gordon N. Fisher Fellow at Massey College in Canada



Denis Mpagaze

The Africa Faith and Justice Network (AFJN) is excited to have Denis Mpagaze, teacher, researcher, author, journalist, consultant and the voice of the voiceless marginalized communities in Tanzania, as our newest AFJN Senior Fellow. Denis has over 12 years of teaching experience at St. Augustine University of Tanzania, a university owned by Tanzania Catholic Bishops. Apart from teaching he manages Radio Jogoo a community radio station (93.0 Mhz in Tanzania).

[Click here](#) for his full biography.



AFJN Internship Program

Josh Schlicht - Summer Intern

University of Colorado Boulder
International Affairs Major, German and Business
Minors

Jared Watkins - Summer Intern

Lipscomb University
International Relations and Social Work

Ayo Adeyemi - Fall Intern

American University
Business, Language, and Culture, Mandarin
Chinese

We are so grateful to our interns who participated in morning briefings on Africa, Congressional Zoom meetings on important policies, media outreach, and publications.

For information on our Internship Program, [click here](#).

New Grants

- AFJN received a \$5,000 grant from the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur for the redesign of our WordPress website.
- AFJN received a \$26,500 grant from the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur Based Communities for work in human trafficking survival.
- AFJN received a \$10,000 grant from the Holy Child Sisters to continue the work around the issues of human trafficking in particular with migration, so that migrants can be fully informed of the possible risks and their rights.
- AFJN received a \$10,000 grant from the Missionaries of Africa for advocacy training for Zambian sisters.
- New grant was made to the Dominican Sisters of Peace to continue to work with the youth and sisters in Jos, Nigeria.

AFJN in the News (Highlights)

- [“AFJN Call to Action During World Day Against Trafficking in Persons”](#) on July 30
- AFJN held a video premiere [“Doing Business Ranking: How the World Bank Served the Rich Poor People's Food”](#) discussing the significance of the World Bank's audit of their **Doing Business Report** findings of corruption and manipulation on September 20.
- On May 20, 2021, Patrick Egwu, AFJN senior fellow and freelance journalist, mentioned AFJN's work to end human trafficking in his article [“Sisters fight Nigeria trafficking with networking, advocacy and collaboration”](#) featured in Global Sisters Report.
- On June 16, 2021 the Catholic Television of Nigeria featured AFJN's Jos, Nigeria youth workshop in [“Catholic Daily News | African Faith Network Organizes a One Day Leadership Workshop for Youth.”](#)
- On June 29, 2021, Sr. Teresa Anyabuikwe's article [“Warning girls about the tactics of human traffickers”](#) was featured in Global Sisters Report.
- On August 30, 2021, [Jacques Bahati was interviewed](#) by Walter Turner on Africa Today on KPFA Radio

Support Our Work

Africa Faith and Justice Network

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