

Message from AFJN's Executive Director Dr. Steven Nabieu Rogers

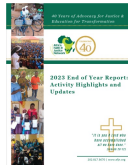
This summer, the Africa Faith and Justice Network (AFJN) will continue its vital mission of empowering African communities both in the United States and Africa. Our projects in Africa will continue to provide education and skills training workshops, advocacy events, and mentoring programs led by Africans, engaging stakeholders and fostering community leadership in several countries. Also, recognizing the importance of amplifying African voices on the global stage, AFJN co-sponsored a timely panel discussion on governance reform during the 2024 International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (WB) Spring Meetings as part of the Civil Society Policy Forum (CSPF). As our family continues to grow, we warmly welcome our newest Board Member, Sr. Chero Chuma, CSJP, from the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Peace, who will bring fresh perspectives and ideas to our Board. We are grateful for your generous support, which has enabled our accomplishments, and we hope you will enjoy reading about our recent work in this bulletin. God Bless.



Donations



Membership



Also, I encourage you, if you haven't already, to please read AFJN's "2023 End of Year Report: Activity Highlights & Updates" knowing that it only contains a small selection of stories from a fully packed year. [Read it here.](#)

Events

Ecumenical Advocacy Days 2024 Spring Summit (May 17-19)



Join AFJN on May 18th for the International workshop "Reforming the U.N. Security Council: Bridging Gaps for Global Inclusion" during Ecumenical Advocacy Days 2024 Spring Summit *Faith in Action: Advancing Human Rights and Peace for All*. This in-person summit requires registration. [To learn more and to register click here.](#)

CSPF Event on Governance Reform during IMF - WB 2024 Spring Meetings

Civil Society Policy Forum Side Event at the 2024 World Bank Group - International Monetary Fund Spring Meetings

**GOVERNANCE REFORM THROUGH TRANSPARENCY
THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN COMBATING CORRUPTION**

Many developing countries have established mechanisms to reform corruption. However, this top-down approach has yielded little impact despite decades of reform efforts. Participants will discuss how civil society organizations can be effective partners in fighting corruption and promoting reform and corruption programs. Participants will also share collaborative strategies that foster community ownership. This event is sponsored by the Africa Faith and Justice Network, Center for Accountability and Rule of Law, Ghana Integrity Initiative, and Jubilee USA Network.

SPEAKERS:

- Ntama Bahati (USA)**
Policy Analyst, Africa Faith and Justice Network
- Juan Pablo Guerrero (USA)**
Senior Governance Specialist, Governance-Public Administration, The World Bank
- Mary Awelana Addah (Ghana)**
Executive Director, Ghana Integrity Initiative
- Ntal Alimasi (USA)**
Capacity Development and Governance and Anticorruption Specialist, The Africa House
- Moderator: Steven Nabieu Rogers, PhD (USA)**
Executive Director, Africa Faith and Justice Network

SPONSORS:

18 APRIL 2024
10:00 AM - 12:00 PM (EST) (VIRTUAL)
12:00 PM - 1:00 PM (EST) (VIRTUAL)
1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (EST) (VIRTUAL)
2:00 PM - 3:00 PM (EST) (VIRTUAL)
3:00 PM - 4:00 PM (EST) (VIRTUAL)

On April 18, AFJN along with the Center for Accountability and Rule of Law, Ghana Integrity Initiative, and Jubilee USA Network sponsored "Governance Reform Through Transparency: The Role of Civil Society in Combatting Corruption," a CSPF Side Event at the IMF - WB 2024 Spring Meetings in Washington, DC. This well-attended hybrid event featured: Ntama Bahati, AFJN Policy Analyst; Juan Pablo Guerrero, Senior Governance Specialist, Governance-Public Administration, WB; Mary Awelana Addah, Executive Director, Ghana Integrity Initiative; Ntal Alimasi, Capacity Development and Governance and Anticorruption Specialist, The Africa House; and was Moderated by Dr. Rogers, AFJN. A link to the video and Mr. Bahati's remarks will be posted on [our event website here](#) when available.

Presentation with Xavier University Students on Women Empowerment in Africa

On March 27, Sr. Eucharia Madueke, SNDdeN, AFJN Women Empowerment Project (WEP) Coordinator, gave a presentation to students at Xavier University during their Liberation Theology class on the work of AFJN in Africa. During the Zoom meeting, Sr. Eucharia explored questions like: What is liberation theology in relation to Africa and AFJN's WEP mission? and How does AFJN apply the concept of liberation when empowering African

women? The students expressed amazement with the work of AFJN and asked many pertinent questions. They expanded their understanding of AFJN's mission in Africa especially in relation to the current project of ending early marriage and domestic servitude and have a new understanding of African women. Sister encouraged students to join AFJN in our mission and she shared stories of African youth activities to empower women and children.

United Nations Parallel Event on "An Intergenerational Panel: Confronting Poverty Through Diverse Lenses"



On March 16, Sr. Eucharia, presented at a United Nations' (UN) parallel event "An Intergenerational Panel: Confronting Poverty Through Diverse Lenses" at the invitation of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur and Trinity Washington University. This event brought together three sisters of Notre Dame de Namur (Sisters Vivien Echekwubelu, Isabel Izika, and Eucharia) and Trinity Washington University students to "discuss the concept of the feminization of poverty and its impacts on multigenerational poverty in North America and Africa" and was held in New York during "the United Nation's Conference on the Status of Women 68" according to TrinityDC on YouTube. Watch the [video here](#).

Winter 2024 Luncheon with Fr. Augustine Ekeno, SJ



On February 8th, the Ignatian Volunteer Corps invited AFJN to be their guest for the Jesuit Friends & Alumni Network's "Winter 2024 Luncheon with Fr. Augustine Ekeno, SJ". Fr. Ekeno, SJ, a Kenyan Jesuit priest, gave a talk on "A Jesuit's Journey - Navigating Borders and Seasons to Serve Others" at The University Club of Washington, DC. He is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University and holds a M.A. in International Peace Studies from Trinity College, University of Dublin, Ireland. He has worked in South Sudan as a parish priest and director of Multi-Educational and Agricultural Jesuit Institute of South Sudan (MAJIS). Learn more about the [work of the province here](#).

US Advocacy

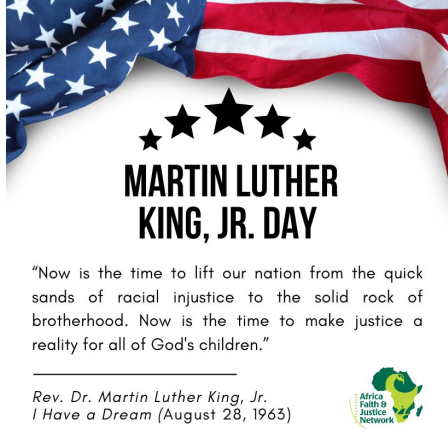
AdNA's Illicit Financial Flows (IFFs) Fact Sheet



Mr. Bahati as co-chair of the Africa Advocacy Network for Africa (AdNA) Accountability Working Group, helped draft the "Illicit Financial Flows (IFFs) are Impoverishing Africa: What Are They? How Do They Work? What Can Be Done?" fact sheet under leadership from the African Justice Network. Read more [here](#).

Public-Private Alliance for Responsible Minerals Trade (PPA)

In April, AFJN participated in the PPA's member briefing that included the current situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and minerals trading which is perpetuating the conflict and instability in the region. Members, especially those who are technology giants, were encouraged to do their due diligence to ensure that their end products do not contain conflict minerals from the DRC in accordance with the [requirements from the United States Security and Exchange Commission](#).



Just Governance

Cameroon



In January, the AFJN Just Governance Project helped 310 children register their births in Cameroon via a mobile court at a local school complex in Foubot City. Students from Kpouptamou City also assisted in the distribution of Certificates (from the June 16th registration event) at the nearby School Complex instead of City Hall. This strategic move drew attention to the importance of birth certificates, as many in attendance lacked this document. Afterwards, the AFJN team went to Kpouptamou City Hall where over 100 public school students actively participated in the distribution of the certificates (also from the June 16th event) with the approval of the school system area inspector. Sixth-year students need their birth certificates to take the primary education national exam. The event was attended by many parents.

Liberia



Fighting Corruption in Liberia

In March, Dr. Rogers and AFJN's Cameroon Coordinator, Ms. Massa Ferencide, embarked on a preparatory visit to Liberia for this year's AFJN Just Governance workshops in the Diocese of Gbarnga. At the invitation of Bishop Tony Borwah, the team conducted a comprehensive survey and workshops in five selected Catholic high schools within the Diocese, examining the impact of corruption on the education system. Liberia's education sector is notoriously plagued by patronage, bribery, and sexual exploitation. A total of 250 stakeholders, comprising teachers, students, clergy, parents, PTA leaders, parish leaders, and school administrators, participated in the survey. Ms. Massa shared valuable insights and lessons learned from AFJN's grassroots-led anti-corruption project in Cameroon, which can be adapted and replicated in Liberia. Many participants expressed keen interest in learning more about the project's success and grassroots approaches to combating corruption. The report will be officially launched in the fall, followed by a diocese-wide engagement in December 2024, aiming to spark meaningful change and promote just governance.

This project is made possible by funding from the Raskob Foundation for Catholic Activities, Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ and Sisters of the Holy Cross.

Women Empowerment Project (WEP)

Ghana - WEP



Tamale

In March sisters revisited the 10 Northern Ghana communities they engaged in 2023. During the follow-up visit, sisters learned about the new policies implemented to protect young girls and children. In Pong Tamale sisters met with 53 youths (students, female apprentices, and town youth) and 10 adults (representatives of the Chief and opinion leaders). In Diare, following our advocacy engagement, the Chief and Elders made bylaws that included: banning 3-days music and dancing; implementing a 10:00 pm curfew for youth and children that would send rule breakers to the Chief's Palace and that fined their parents; and the creation of a task force of volunteers patrol the community at night. The Chief, individuals, and community groups were happy and grateful to AFJN for bringing these issues to light. In Bogkurugu, following our sensitization event, the Chief and Elders decided to fine families, to make families more conscious about the movement and behaviors of their children. According to the Chief, a decree was made in the community that any family whose girl child became pregnant will be fined a sheep and some amount of money. He added that many children have been enrolled in the school (many were observed at home during our first visit). The Chief and Elders stressed that this law has come to stay in Bogkurugu and expressed their sincere gratitude to AFJN-Ghana.

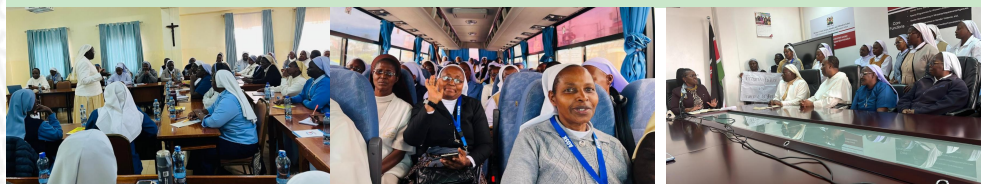
In April, a one-day community advocacy workshop was held for 20 participants from 6 communities. During this workshop participants created a strategic plan for their community engagement.



AFJN-Ghana Video Montage

AFJN-Ghana created a video montage from the April workshop "Working Together to End Child & Early Marriage & Domestic Servitude in Ghana". [Watch it on YouTube here.](#)

Kenya - WEP



In April the Women Empowerment Project held advocacy training workshops, with over 56 sisters (from all parts of Kenya and members of the Association of Sisterhoods of Kenya) and a traditional chief, on the challenges facing women and girls like: femicide, underage marriage, gender-based violence (GBV) and more. The executive secretary of the conference of women religious welcomed the sisters, and a young chief spoke on the challenges facing women and girls, insisting that the government needs to act but also that the sister must do more to prevent it from escalating. The participants met with The Cabinet Secretary for Gender Honorable Aisha Jumwa and the National Council for the Administration of Justice (NCAJ), presenting a Memorandum that urged strong measures, policies and programs to prevent and respond to the rampant cases of GBV across the country. The sisters were well received and media were invited to cover the events.

Sisters Media Coverage



[Watch Capuchin TV's Coverage here](#)

[Kenya's The Star article](#)

[Read "Declare gender-based violence a national disaster, Catholic sisters ask Ruto" on Nairobi News here.](#)

Malawi - WEP



In January, at the invitation of the Conference of Women Religious in Malawi, AFJN led an advocacy training workshop for sisters (including sisters from Zambia and Zimbabwe). The focus of the event was to work with the sisters in social analysis and advocacy. On the first day over eight media outlets covered the event. The Minister of Trade and Industry pleaded with the sisters to work with him on these 'top priority' issues (that the sisters addressed) during their advocacy visit. He revealed that when the sisters speak people listen. The sisters were calling for more government accountability and for the government to address the needs of the people, lifting vulnerable voices, and to work for the common good. During the sisters visit to the Ministries of Gender and Home Affairs, they asked for the creation of an environment to ease youth suffering to reduce youth divide cases. Following the workshops and advocacy visits the sisters shared how they have found new confidence in speaking out with the knowledge they have gained.



Read "[Sisters train to advocate for Malawi's displaced cyclone survivors](#)" in *Global Sisters Report* and in *National Catholic Reporter*.



Read "[Sister call for More Aid to Cyclone Survivors](#)" in *AfricaBrief*.



Sisters in Malawi were featured on LUNTHA TV's "The Role of the Church in Advocacy" following the advocacy training. [Watch their interview](#).

Nigeria - WEP

Major Superiors Meeting

In January, AFJN was invited to speak during the Major Superiors of Women Religious meeting in Nigeria about the Women Empowerment Project. Fr. Aniedi Okure, OP, WEP Consultant, gave the rundown of AFJN, the origin of WEP, and its activities in Nigeria. Sr. Eucharist spoke about the current and future projects, with engagement from major superiors. Two of the major superiors were AFJN members before they became Mother generals and a major superior from Ghana also spoke highly of the work in Ghana.

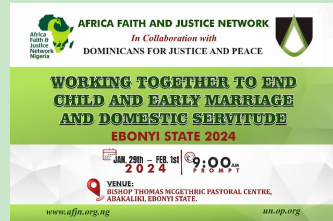


Akwa-Ibom State

In March, AFJN and AFJN-Nigeria held a stakeholder meeting on Domestic Servitude and Child Marriage in Akwa-Ibom State. The team, meeting with the Council of Chiefs in the Ibiono Ibom Local Government Area, addressed the detrimental impacts of domestic servitude and early child marriage and highlighted the urgent need to combat these practices emphasizing the importance of community collaboration in effecting positive change. The chiefs expressed their support and commitment to these issues. This collaborative effort is a significant step towards fostering awareness, advocacy, and collective action in the state. The AFJN-N team extended an invitation to the Council of Chiefs for their May stakeholders meeting and the chiefs pledged their attendance, demonstrating a shared dedication to advancing social



Ebonyi State



From January 29 to February 1, 2024, AFJN, AFJN-Nigeria, and the Dominicans for Justice and Peace held "Working Together to End Child and Early Marriage and Domestic Servitude" at the Bishop Thomas Mcgethrick Pastoral Centre, in Abakaliki. Speakers included: Rev. Dr. Flora Obia Egwu, the Deputy Coordinator of the Ebonyi State Gender-Based Violence Response Team (Task Force), Pastor Gabriel Odom, Coordinator of the

Child Protection Network, Fr. Okure, and Sr. Eucharika. Representatives from the Ebonyi State Government also participated. In one community engagement, the team met with over 300 people. The event was covered live on Unity FM 101.5FM!

They also made advocacy visits to key leaders, stakeholders, and government officials. Many vowed to collaboration with the group.

His Royal Highness Eze Charles Mkpuma, Chairman of the Ebonyi State Traditional Rulers Council promised to invite AFJN to the traditional chief's meeting where they can sensitize them on the detrimental consequences of domestic servitude and child marriage and share the letter - the blueprint for action.

Hon. Commissioner Barr. Mrs. Felicia Nwamkpuma of Women Affairs and Social Development in Ebonyi State vowed to eradicate domestic servitude and child marriage in the state and will work with AFJN-Nigeria and the community to tackle these pressing issues.

Following the advocacy visit and possible collaboration with the Vice President General Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, Hon. Dr. Haroun O. Ajah, the Ebonyi State Islamic Council sent a message that "The Da'wah and Guidance Bureau of Nigeria (DGBN) is ready to collaborate" on this agenda "especially the Muslim Communities in the country."

During the visit with Dr. Moses Ekuma, the Honorable Commissioner for Health and Commissioner of Police Mrs. Augustina Ogbodo, the team they discussed ways that the government can contribute to addressing these issues.

On February 12, AFJN, AFJN-Nigeria, Dominicans for Justice and Peace, and the Women and Child Justice Initiative Nigeria (WOCJIN) took it's sensitization program to the remote village of Ndibokoto Village in Ezza, Inyimegu Izogo Ward, Izzi Local Government Area where early child marriage and domestic servitude is rampant. People were living in poverty, malnourished, lacking access to education and other resources. The team called on the government to act to resolve this crisis.

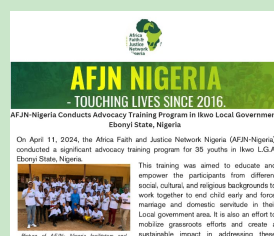


Unity FM 105

On February 17, AFJN-Nigeria, Dominicans for Justice and Peace and in Ebonyi State Radio Station (Unity FM 105) talking on the negative impact of early child marriage and domestic servitude. [Watch it here.](#)

AFJN-Nigeria Report

Read the "AFJN-Nigeria Conducts Advocacy Training Program in Ikwo Local Government, Ebonyi State, Nigeria" [here.](#)





In April, AFJN hosted a Youth Advocacy Training in Ikwo, Ebonyi State "Igniting the Fire of Change to equip young leaders with the skills and knowledge to become effective advocates for social justice and community transformation to combat domestic servitude and child marriage. These young leaders are inspired to help drive transformative change in their communities.

Plateau State



In February, AFJN-Nigeria Jos held an advocacy planning meeting at the Center for Renewal to address the issues of early marriage and domestic servitude in Miango Jebu. During the meeting they identified various stakeholders, scheduled grassroots discussions and mobilization. They also recognized the need to expand to the Shendam Diocese and identified sisters who will lead the collaboration in the area and set dates for future planning meetings. The team also set

membership goals, increased participation and outreach to engage youth from other denominations and parishes with the aim to advocate for change and create a safer environment for the vulnerable populations.



River State

In March, AFJN-Nigeria sisters, women, men and youth held "Action Against Early Marriage, Domestic Servitude and Domestic Violence" workshops at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church in Port Harcourt, River State. Speakers included Ms. Patricia Ijeh, Sr . Fidelia Mary Alao EHJ, and Barr. Aimole Uju (a Human Rights Lawyer). The event sensitized the community on the rights of women and children. Short videos of the event is on the AFJN-Nigeria Facebook page.



Uganda - WEP

AFJN-Uganda has finished the process of registering their nongovernmental organization and have a website. Visit their website here: <https://afjnu.org/>

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, Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, Missionaries of Africa, and AFJN organizational and individual members.

News and Events





AFJN Mourns Sr. Teresita Weind, SNDdeN

Memorial Mass

Saturday, May 11, 2024

2:00 pm (EDT)

Cincinnati, OH

For more information [click here](#).



Africa Human Stories

The Africa Faith and Justice Network's (AFJN) Africa Human Stories is a new series that will focus on the stories at the root of our work on the continent. [Read the first story](#) of our work with the Kanuwloe village in Ghana's Volta Region.



New Board Member Sr. Chero Chuma, CSJP

The AFJN Board welcomes the newest member, Sr. Chero Chuma, CSJP, a Sister of St. Joseph of Peace. [Read her biography here](#).



2024 Spring Interns

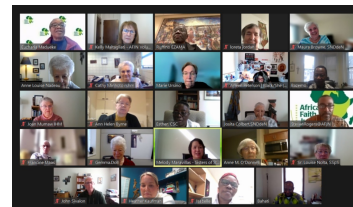
Jolade Oshinkanlu and Jasmina Storen were AFJN's Spring interns. [Read their biographies here](#).

Learn more about [AFJN's Internship Program and apply online here](#).



Office Retreat

On February 29, AFJN staff met at Dr. Rogers' home to for a retreat to strategize how to implement the new strategic plan approved by the board. AFJN is currently working on timeline for implementing the key goals of the plan.



Institutional Briefing

On February 22, AFJN held an Institutional Briefing for members and funders. The event highlighted AFJN's work with those in Africa and our work in the US and provided an opportunity for members to ask questions and make suggestions. AFJN is grateful to the members for your participation and feedback during the briefing and your support throughout these years.

AFJN News

Dr. Rogers on Straight Talk Africa

On February 28, Dr. Rogers was featured in "Why Does Russia Need Africa?" on **Voice of America's Straight Talk Africa** with Haydé Adams. [Watch it here](#).



AFRICA FAITH & JUSTICE NETWORK

PRESS STATEMENT

Press Statement on Senegal Elections

On February 7, AFJN issued a press statement "AFJN Urges Senegal Government to Honor February Election Date" following the news that the elections were to be delayed. The Senegal Government relented and eventually held the elections due to public and international pressure. Read AFJN's [statement here](#).



Dr. Rogers on Africa 54 about Sierra Leone's Former President's Treason Charge

On January 5, Dr. Rogers was interviewed by Esther Githui-Ewart on **Voice of America's Africa 54** "Analysis: Former Sierra Leone President Koroma Charged with Treason." [Watch it here](#).



Dr. Rogers on USCMA Podcast Go Forth

On January 4, 2024, Dr. Rogers was interviewed on *Go Forth*, a podcast by the U.S. Catholic Mission Association. Dr. Rogers spoke of the mission and work of AFJN and the importance and relevance of the Catholic Church and its social teaching. [Listen to the full interview here](#).

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ADVOCATE



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- Donate through [Facebook Fundraiser](#)

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