

AFRECS E-Blast: October 24, 2014

PRAY. TEACH. PARTNER. URGE. GIVE.

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LATE BREAKING STORY from Kakuma Refugee Camp: Prayers are requested for the victims and those who struggle with the flooding at Kakuma. Reported by Jerry Drino of *Hope With South Sudan* from his phone contact with a friend on the ground:

People were stranded overnight in the middle of a flood plane near the camp, caught in floods from heavy rains in Uganda and northern Kenya. They were able to reach Kakuma in the morning but now they are discovering dozens of bodies, often mothers with children, refugees who were trying to reach Kakuma or were waiting to get into the camps. Portions of the camp may have been swept away.

"Such tragedy on top of tragedy," Jerry writes. "Words cannot express the sadness at the loss of these lives that struggle so hard to find life. May we pause in silence to offer a prayer for them as they have been received into the arms of their loving Creator."

May they rest in peace.
The Editor

Message from AFRECS Executive Director, Richard Parkins

WHAT CAN WE DO?

In the midst of spreading violence in South Sudan and what appears to be a stalemated peace process, despair can readily take hold of those whose hope and prayers have been directed toward a cessation of hostilities. Our concern is heightened by the conflict that now exists in other regions of South Sudan. The notion of a unity government that would allow for a President Kir and a Vice President Machar to take charge has gained no traction as negotiations in Addis falter.

There is another side to this story, however, that needs to be lifted up and encouraged. There are still those of our Sudanese sisters and brothers who have not bought into the inevitability of conflict and suffering. There are those who believe that a culture of peace is achievable. Those of us whose lives are inextricably linked through mission and ministry to South Sudan and the ECSSS should take heart that significant gestures of peace are happening.

Several of us shall go to Juba in a few days to be a part of the peace and reconciliation initiative sponsored by the Justice, Peace and Reconciliation Commission of the ECSSS. Bishop Samuel Peni who chairs the commission is dedicated to making the peace making work of the ECSSS a credible effort. We now know of a nationwide peace and reconciliation effort recently launched which has engaged the services of persons recognized internationally for their expertise in this challenging field. (See this [link](#) for more about the work of the Committee for National Healing, Peace, and Reconciliation in South Sudan.)

In addition, a Summer Peace Institute was competed a couple of months ago where both Dinka and Nuer religious leaders were involved. (See current issue of [Sudan Connections](#) for more about the training at Bishop Gwynne College in Juba.) Also, through the efforts of Bishop Abraham Yel and other colleagues, a peace initiative has begun among rival tribal groups residing in the Kakuma refugee camp - hopefully as a safe laboratory where methodologies in peace making and trauma healing can be tried and then serve as tools for future peace making efforts in South Sudan. (Read more about this in [Sudan Connections](#).) We also know that similar efforts are being contemplated among South Sudanese in Uganda where members of tribes that are in conflict in South Sudan are seeking unity rather than conflict in their temporary homeland.

Moreover, the Youth Commission of the ECSSS has embraced a peace and reconciliation agenda. In the near future, the Colorado Episcopal Foundation will send a team to Kakuma to examine peace making possibilities there as well. While we recount this array of peace making initiatives, may we also lift up the relentless efforts of ECSSS bishops and church leaders. They work fervently to minister to their people, conveying an abiding faith that God will bring them to a place of peace and safety.

No doubt the fruits of these myriad efforts will not yield immediate results - at least not results that will allow peace advocates to feel that the goal of peace is imminent. What these efforts do show, however, is that many people are: committed to a peaceful alternative; dismayed by the intractable position of the principals in this conflict; and lifting up the church as a moral force and resource for a new way of living together in South Sudan.

There is a lot of testing and experimenting which takes place as many try to break the cycle of violence that seems so pervasive in South Sudan. By praying for and upholding the peace makers, we can help make a difference. Our prayers and support must be as steadfast as the resilience and determination of our South Sudanese sisters and brothers. As they step out in faith, believing that the way of Christ will prevail, let us help them bear the cross that leads to new life.

Faithfully,
Richard Parkins

Dear Friends,

Several hundred folks receive our e blast messages that generally reach you on alternate Wednesdays. AFRECS is pleased to provide this service as our way of keeping you updated about developments in South Sudan and Sudan. Our editor, the Rev. Dr. Ellen Hanckel, reviews the many sources of information about South Sudan and Sudan to select important and current items that you might not readily encounter in your perusal of the news. Still they are important to understanding developments in both countries. We trust that you value this service.

As you may know, AFRECS is largely a volunteer organization with a very modest budget partially underwritten by its dedicated board of directors. Their contributions fund much of our work, however, we do need additional donations. With your support, we can continue the work of advocacy and maintain links with an array of US partners as well as ties to church partners in both Sudan and South Sudan. We also publish an occasional news letter, [Sudan Connections](#). See the most recent issue which has been added to our webpage, just in the last few days.

Of considerable importance is our advocacy work which allows Sudanese bishops visiting the United States to give first hand accounts to US policy makers. These reports attest to the challenges faced by their people. We organize advocacy training and participate in conferences and workshops thereby attempting to express the needs of our Sudanese friends, especially at this time of horrible conflict.

Your financial support of any amount will help us to continue this work and to be a source of news and thus understanding of what is happening in a place which has often been neglected by the mainstream media. For those who receive our eblast messages, please make a gesture of appreciation with a donation of any amount to AFRECS. Your support will extend and encourage our volunteer effort and sustain our work as a voice for the Sudanese who continue their struggle for peace and safety. Donations can be made on-line at this [link](#) or by mail to AFRECS, PO Box 12026, 3737 Seminary Road, Alexandria, VA 22304.

Thanks for being a supporter.

Faithfully,

Richard Parkins
Executive Director
AFRECS

[Sudan Connections](#) - A new issue is posted on-line. Stories included in this issue are:

-Messages from AFRECS President, Bishop David Jones and AFRECS Executive Director, Richard Parkins;

-a report on the peace initiative at Kakuma Refugee Camp by Jeffrey Gill;

-an update on 'pennies from heaven' for South Sudan, coming from a church in Virginia;

-the South Sudan Network in Solidarity with ECSS&S by Ranjit Mathews;

-a report on the Bishop Gwynne College Peace Building Training by Samuel Marial and Ellen Hanckel;

-collaboration of Dinka and Nuer to build water wells by Nancy Frank;

-three perspectives about Hope and Resurrection Secondary School in Lakes State - one by a board member, another by a student, and one from a graduate;

-two entries by Greg Miller - one about covenants between small parishes and a poem about the massacre of 14 women who were taking refuge in St. Andrew's Cathedral in Bor last January.

Also included is information about networking by conference call and about travel for education and advocacy.

Many thanks to all contributors and to *Connections Editor*, Jacqueline Kraus and *Connections Designer*, Constance Wilson.

South Sudan

Warring South Sudanese rivals meet in Tanzania, according to a recent report on [Yahoo News](#).

A youth leader in South Sudan's Warrup State urged citizens to uphold the country's transitional constitution, as reported recently in the [Sudan Tribune](#).

The [UN Mission to South Sudan](#) demands safe release of abducted personnel, according to the Sudan Tribune.

Relief Web reports that a campaign against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse ([SEA](#)) began recently at a UN protection of civilian site in Malakal, the capital of Upper Nile State.

Sudan:

Sudan could be arming South Sudanese rebels, according to [Eric Reeves](#) who cites a leaked report.

[Voice of America](#) reports that Two Sudanese Opposition Leaders seek peaceful change in Sudan.

According to [All Africa](#), a short list of five potential candidates have been chosen in advance of the Sudanese convention which begins on Thursday. The list includes the current president as well as four others.

[Radio Dabanga](#) reports improved food harvest in Sudan.

Thank you to our readers for your interest, your prayers, and your support.
Ellen J. Hanckel
Editor

Requests from the AFRECS Treasurer, Christy Hollywood

Renew your membership online at <http://www.afreecs.org/getInvolved.htm>

Make an additional donation to support the Episcopal Church in South Sudan and Sudan's efforts to provide solace and encourage reconciliation.

Encourage others to support AFRECS as well.

PRAY FOR PEACE AND DEEP HEALING OF THE CONFLICTS AND RIVALRIES IN SOUTH SUDAN.

PARTNER, URGE, GIVE

If you'd like to be doing more to help address the crisis in South Sudan, please consider the following:

* If you have contacts in South Sudan and are able to get news of various parts of the country and the church from them, keep AFRECS in the loop by replying to this email or using our main contact email address: info@afreecs.org.

* Pay attention to the evolving events and be prepared to advocate for peacemaking with the US (or other) government, especially if attention to conflict resolution wanes.

* Give to provide relief for internally displaced persons and others whose resources are compromised by the fighting and instability. One hundred percent of [donations to AFRECS](#) go to ECSS&S entities that can provide direct help to the people most in need.