

AFRECS E-Blast: May 18, 2016

PRAY. TEACH. PARTNER. URGE. GIVE.

**Lest We Forget**

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**Message from Executive Director, Richard Parkins**

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Dear Friends,

This past week included two powerful reminders of how horrific genocide can be. On Saturday, I was able to come a bit closer to understanding the pain and suffering and the utter anguish of those who survived the Rwandan genocide. I was privileged to listen to several personal testimonies during a four hour memorial service for those whose family members were victims of this event that began thirty two years ago.

A few days earlier, Bishop David Jones and I shared time with Bishop Andudu Elnail as he recounted the horrors that continue to be inflicted upon the innocent people of the Diocese of Kadugli. ([See a recent letter from Bishop Andudu here.](#)) His people continue to experience unmitigated warfare at the hands of the Khartoum government. The bishop is interrupting his training in peace education at Eastern Mennonite University to return home. Our prayers go with him as he tries to bring solace to a people whose stories someday might equal the wrenching accounts that I heard at the Rwandan memorial service. We have memorial services to recall the suffering of a previous time, hoping that the present and future will not include the atrocities that made a memorial service necessary.

As we are consumed by the events of the past two and a half years in South Sudan, there is a danger that the relentless warfare that has persisted for years against the people of the Nuba Mountains will slip into the background of our memories just as it has seemingly slipped from the attention of the media. But forgetfulness by outsiders does not mitigate the pain of those to whom Bishop Andudu ministers.

At a recent board meeting, AFRECS committed funds to help the people of the diocese of Kadugli. Our modest grant is far, far short of what is needed. I would ask that as you pray for an end to the suffering of these people, including the killing of innocent children, you think of providing financial support to both feeding those on the brink of starvation and underwriting a struggling training center for pastors as AFRECS is doing. AFRECS will gladly receive your donations designated for the Diocese of Kadugli and transmit them immediately to the account that we maintain to assist Bishop Andudu and his people.

We know that the funds, however generous we might strive for them to be, are insufficient, given the enormous need before us. Thus our advocacy continues with those whom we believe have a mandate for responding to the plight of the people of the Nuba Mountains.

Let our prayers continue as fervently as possible. Let our compassion extend to giving tangible evidence that we deeply care.

Faithfully,  
Richard

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**SAVE THE DATE for the [2016 AFRECS CONFERENCE](#) October 21 - 23. Location: St. Timothy's Episcopal Church, 1020-24th St., West Des Moines, IA.**

**Under the theme of 'Building Bridges of Reconciliation' the conference will**

- 1) Explore opportunities for the Sudanese diaspora to contribute to peacemaking in the Sudans and**
- 2) Explore ways the friendship of North Americans can contribute to peacemaking in the Sudans.**

**Distinguished Guest Speakers and workshop leaders: (Tentative)**

- 1) Archbishop Daniel Deng Bul; The Episcopal Church in South Sudan and Sudan.**
- 2) Bishop Samuel Enosa Peni; Diocese of Nzara, South Sudan and Chairperson of the Joint Peace and Reconciliation Commission of The Episcopal Church in South Sudan and Sudan.**
- 3) Congressman Jim Leach; Congressman from Iowa, 1977-2007, and Retired Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities.**
- 4) Dr. Dane Smith; Adjunct Professor, School of International Service, American University, Washington DC and Former Senior Advisor in the Office of the US Special Envoy for Darfur and Deputy Chief of Mission in Sudan as well as Ambassador to Guinea and Senegal.**
- 5) The Rev. Canon Angela S. Ifill, Missioner, Black Ministries, The Episcopal Church (U.S.)**

**If you are interested in working on or contributing to this conference which is developing now, please contact Rich Jones, Chair of the Conference Planning Committee by replying to this email or by using our main contact email address: [info@afrecs.org](mailto:info@afrecs.org).**

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## South Sudan and the Region

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**Bishop Samuel Peni** (see above Conference Information, #2 under Distinguished Guest Speakers and workshop leaders) recently traveled to Nairobi to participate in a training session conducted by [Coalition for Peace in Africa \(COPA\)](#) that focused on gender and violence prevention in post conflict transitions. Bishop Peni's participation in this training was co-sponsored by: The Episcopal Church Office of Global Partnerships; American Friends of the Episcopal Church in the Sudans; and the Diocese of Iowa.

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This recent [Washington Post](#) article: 'Biggest story you missed: The other refugee crises' written by Tiffany Harness, an editor on the foreign desk, details the movement of refugees in the region of sub-Saharan Africa. Focusing on South Sudan, she writes: "More than 2.4 million South Sudanese have been displaced within the country, and nearly 1 million more have fled to nearby countries, including Ethiopia, Uganda, Sudan and Kenya, according to the U.N. refugee agency. The situation is so tumultuous that nearly 100,000 South Sudanese have made [their way to Darfur](#), a region in neighboring Sudan and itself the scene of more than 10 years of warfare that has left hundreds of thousands of people dead..."

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[KBC TV](#): Kenya to close Dadaab, Kakuma refugee camps. A brief excerpt from this recent article follows:

"Last year, the government backtracked on plans to close down Dadaab, the world's largest refugee camp, after intense pressure from the international community. The government is seeking international assistance noting that the action to close the camps will definitely spark humanitarian consequences. 'The Government of Kenya acknowledges that this decision will have adverse effects on the lives of refugees and therefore the international community must collectively take responsibility on humanitarian needs that will arise out of this action' said the Principal Secretary."

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Regrettably, the last eblast (May 4th) omitted the link to the testimony of John Prendergast, Enough Project Founding Director, before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations' hearing on "South Sudan's Prospects for Peace and Security," given on April 27, 2016. [Here is the link to John Prendergast's testimony](#)

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[The Coalition of Advocates for South Sudan \(CASS\)](#), on behalf of approximately 50 organizations and individuals advocating for the people of South Sudan, will submit the following letter to H.E. President Salva Kiir; H.E. First Vice President Riek Machar; and H.E. Vice President James Wani Igga of the Republic of South Sudan.

**RE: The Immediate Delivery of Humanitarian Aid to Address the Effects of Famine**

Your Excellencies,

We, the undersigned organizations, scholars and prominent individuals, are alarmed by the drastic humanitarian situation in South Sudan, with the Famine Early Warning Systems Network reporting increasing death rates and a deepening humanitarian catastrophe. The World Food Program just issued a report estimating that 5.3 million South Sudanese face severe food insecurity, a 15 percent increase from last year, and is also reaching into non-conflict zone areas. While the formation of the Transitional Government of National Unity is an important step, its first actions must be to end the fighting that continues and to provide immediate unimpeded humanitarian access throughout the country to alleviate the suffering of the South Sudanese people.

We urge the Transitional Government of National Unity to ensure immediate authorization for humanitarian agencies to move throughout the country... The international community must do its part, but you must also take serious and sustained action to address these issues. Otherwise, the people of South Sudan will continue to suffer.

[See the signatories to the letter by following this link.](#)

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[Voice of America](#): 14 South Sudanese Chosen for Obama's African Leaders Program.

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### **Sudan**

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[ACT for Sudan](#), an alliance of over 60 grassroots, community, and faith-based organizations across the United States, is asking supporters to take action: "120 Members of Congress sent a [letter to President Obama](#) urging him to make Sudan a priority in his remaining months in office in order to stop the long running government sponsored mass atrocities and genocide in Sudan. Since that letter was drafted, attacks on civilians have continued in Sudan, including the recent massacre of children in Heiban in the Nuba Mountains of Sudan. That's why it is so important that President Obama act." [See this link for information](#) about how to be in touch with President Obama and Ambassador Power.

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[New York Times](#): Sudan's Bashir Defies Arrest Warrant with Trip to Uganda.

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Thank you to our readers for your interest, your prayers, and your support.

We invite you to visit our [Website: http://www.afrecs.org/](http://www.afrecs.org/)

Ellen J. Hanckel

Editor

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

\*Pray for peace and deep healing of the conflicts and rivalries in South Sudan.

\*Join AFRECS or renew your annual membership on line at <http://www.afrecs.org/getInvolved.htm>

\* 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@afrecs.org](mailto:info@afrecs.org).

\* Be prepared to advocate for peacemaking with the US (or other) government, especially if attention to conflict resolution wanes.

\*[Donate](#) to support the Episcopal Church in South Sudan and Sudan's efforts to provide solace and encourage reconciliation.

\*Urge others to support [AFRECS](#) as well.