

AFRECS E-Blast: June 26, 2014

PRAY. TEACH. PARTNER. URGE. GIVE.

Message from AFRECS Executive Director, Richard Parkins

From Refugee to Leader

For several years, the UNHCR has called on the international community to observe World Refugee Day. These observances mark both the courage and achievements of refugees while reminding us of the several million who still languish in camps and in improvised, insecure situations around the world. This, indeed, describes the plight of Sudanese. The recent conflict in South Sudan has led to the displacement of thousands with nearly a half million living as refugees in adjacent countries. Another 100,000 are internally displaced within South Sudan. However, as we seek safety and freedom for those Sudanese at risk because of the war, let us remind ourselves of our Sudanese friends who live among us as contributing members of our communities. Many of these former refugees now stand ready to be agents of peace and development in the homeland from which they have fled. It is this possibility that warrants attention as we acknowledge the commitment of our Sudanese friends with whom we have journeyed since their arrival in the U.S.

The remarkable achievement of Sudanese men and women who have made America their home is truly inspiring. What is more inspiring is the number of these friends who wish to contribute to a new South Sudan if ways can be found to allow them to offer their gifts. Through hard work, many have educated themselves. Some have already acquired advanced degrees. Others have honed their leadership and advocacy skills. Some have imbibed the entrepreneurial spirit of the communities that have embraced them. As one who has been blessed by friendship with Sudanese from their days in the Kakuma camp or makeshift communities in Cairo to their lives in the United States, it has been amazing to see their transformation from years of desperation and struggle to productive lives in the US.

It is important to see these young men and women as a resource that could make vital contributions to their former homeland. Many have pleaded for a chance to offer their gifts in making South Sudan a better nation. Certain challenges must be confronted if these offers were to be accepted and their contributions realized. Among these are the opportunities in both public and private sectors for their talents to be employed. Meshing skill sets with the right niche in South Sudan is a major task. Also, providing compensation sufficient to allow established Sudanese in this country to serve a stint in South Sudan is another challenge. Most Sudanese in this country have taken on responsibilities that require an adequate level of compensation to feel secure about interrupting their lives to work in South Sudan. These challenges are not insurmountable. There is now a need for an organized effort to translate the desire of committed and creative Sudanese Americans to serve in South Sudan. Their gifts at this critical juncture in the history of this new

nation could be a valuable asset as South Sudan seeks to recover from the horrors of the past several months. What greater tribute to an important refugee community than to create a pathway that allows them to share their achievements as new Americans with a country to which they still have ties.

Faithfully,
Richard Parkins

[Follow this link](#) to read a paper entitled, "South Sudan - China Relations: A Reversed Courtship". It was recently published by Luka B. Deng Kuol, Associate Professor at the University of Juba, Global Fellow at the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO), and Associate Fellow at Harvard Kennedy School. In it, the author reviews the conflict that has roiled in South Sudan during the past six months and cites the negative effects it has had on South Sudan's development. Included are the sanctions put in place by the US government, the resignation of Hilde Johnson, who headed the UN Mission in South Sudan, and the loss of respect for the new nation of South Sudan in the international community. Against this troubled background, South Sudan's Vice President will make a diplomatic visit to China in search of a trade agreement and a loan.

The paper concludes with this paragraph:

As mentioned by Francis Deng that foreign policy is an extension of domestic policy with its success and effectiveness depending on a positive domestic "commodity to sell" in promoting international cooperation. It is apparent that the Vice President during his visit to Beijing is in shortage of positive domestic commodity to sell to China to make his diplomatic courtship effective. Rather than looking for new partners, South Sudan should put first its house in order with a positive domestic policy on which to base its foreign policy outreach. When our house is in order, South Sudan will not only consolidate and strengthen its relations with traditional partners and friends but it can create new partnership with new partners such as China and Russia.

This article by Chris Herlinger, a contributing writer to National Catholic Reporter on humanitarian and international issues, describes the difficulties that face women and children in South Sudan. Entitled '[Women hold society together amid war](#)', here is a brief excerpt:
Sr. Amala Francis agreed that male domination over women "is harming development in South Sudan overall," and that the legacy of continuing war has only skewed priorities favoring war over

peace.

"What's the point of arms?" she said of the proliferation of guns and weaponry in a country where two million died in the decades-long civil war; one million have been displaced in the recent conflict; where a third of children are underfed; and 98 percent of people, by some estimates, live on less than \$1 a day.

"You say you are protecting the people. But the people are starving."

"Voice of the Voiceless: The Role of the Church in the Sudanese Civil War 1983 - 2005" is the title of a new book by John Ashworth written with Dr Haruun Lual Ruun, Ambassador Emmanuel LoWilla and Professor

Maura Ryan who are eye-witnesses and primary sources. It demonstrates the ecumenical nature of the Church in Sudan, how aid and development, peace-building and advocacy became key elements of its pastoral ministry and how Church personnel lived out a theology of incarnation, being present on the ground with the people throughout the conflict. [See this link for details.](#)

Another recent publication, entitled "A Poisonous Thorn in Our Hearts: Sudan and South Sudan's Bitter and Incomplete Divorce" is written by James Copnall, BBC Sudan correspondent from 2009-12. Covering South Sudan's independence, the Darfur war, rebellions and clashes between the Sudans, it is available through [Amazon](#).

Follow this link to an article published in [IRIN: Humanitarian news and analysis, a service of the UN](#) Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Written by Anjli Parrin, the article is entitled: "Analysis: Looking beyond IGAD in South Sudan. It gives a thorough look at the past and a look towards the future of South Sudan, highlighting the hope that is found in grassroots peace initiatives.

Finally, here is the [Press Release](#) issued on 18 June from the Faith Based Organizations - South Sudan Council of Churches and South Sudan Islamic Council - Peace Delegation to the IGAD Led Peace Process of the Republic of South Sudan in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: "Stop War and Start Talking".

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

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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@afrecs.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.