

# peacemail

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**act for peace**  
reduce poverty | protect refugees  
prevent conflicts | empower communities



**A**ct for Peace's project partner, the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), has continued to collaborate with its members and church leaders to advocate for sustainable peace in Africa. One of the key strategies to turn words into action has been the formation of the Eminent Persons Ecumenical Peace Program in Africa (EPEPPA). EPEPPA builds on the experience of ongoing peace processes in Africa by increasing engagement in high level advocacy and diplomacy involving political and church leaders. The interfaith collaboration by religious leaders has achieved a significant impact in conflict resolution and consolidation of peace.

The participation of ecumenical leaders in EPEPPA is an important and unique contribution in a continent where culture and tradition give great opportunity for church leaders to be heard and respected. When they speak in unison for African nations, they have proven successful in turning communities from violence to meaningful peace-building dialogue. A living demonstration of Isaiah's prophesy, *"They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks, nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."* Isaiah 2:4

**\$720** can develop a full information and negotiation strategy for EPEPPA visits

**\$1450** can transport and support an eminent African leader on a EPEPPA visit.

Act for Peace is the international aid agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA).

**actalliance**



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**THANK YOU Partners** for your commitment to Act for Peace through your prayers and regular gifts. Through your generosity, Act for Peace is making a real and lasting difference to the lives of many people, in areas of conflict around the world. Please tell a friend about this work and encourage them to become an Act for Peace Partner to help address the root causes of conflict and poverty.

If you would like further information or if you wish to upgrade your own regular gift, simply free call Howard or Sarah on **1800 025 101** or email [hgraham@ncca.org.au](mailto:hgraham@ncca.org.au). Your feedback and suggestions are welcome, as we love to hear from you and to pass on comments to project partners, as this gives them great encouragement.

On the other hand, if you are not yet an Act for Peace Partner and would like to be or would just like to help this project, please call or email us today!

## African Religious Leaders Address Conflict at its Root

*Dear Act for Peace Partner,*

Our Eminent Persons Program for Peace in Africa (EPEPPA) has been pivotal in creating a growing culture of peace in Africa and has strengthened the churches' role as peacekeepers and influential negotiators in the political sphere.

We use eminent leaders such as Archbishop Desmond Tutu, government leaders and former presidents who have done exemplary work for peace. We mobilise these people to speak and negotiate with governments and warring tribes and bring messages of peace. We are arguing for governments to give freedom of faith and worship for everyone. We do not want Africa to fall to the temptation of having Muslim or Christian states. This is the message we take to leaders like Omar-Al Bashir in Sudan. If you cannot act, you will be part of the problem. If you don't talk and there is war, you hold the responsibility for the blood that is shed.

Following the 2010 African Union's Year of Peace and Security, we have made great progress in improving the fragile peace in several regions such as the Great Lakes, northern Uganda, Sudan and the Central African Republic (CAR).

Through our EPEPPA program, a team of 16 high profile participants including interfaith leaders and former heads of state visited Nigeria last year. We listened, learnt and shared approaches and challenges in overcoming violence in the Jos Region, Plateau State where there has been recurrent violence over the last few years.

The team was welcomed by the Nigerian Church, ecumenical leaders and the President of Nigeria, His Excellency Jonathan Goodluck. In the city of Jos, the team met with the Governor, Mr. Jonah David Jang, who said that the crisis in Jos was caused by land disputes, ethnicity, religious tensions and poverty.

In Dogonahawa, near Jos, we gathered to pray around a mass grave where about 323 people, mostly women and children have been murdered in early March. There was a poignant meeting with 60 year old Kumbo Chuwang, who lost family members and whose hand was cut off. Prayers and comfort were offered and to a teenage boy, Tebita Danjuma, whose parents and siblings were killed. He ran and hid in the middle of the night when the attackers set fire to their home but still he sustained injuries.

The team also visited the nearby town of Bukuru, which was deserted. An entire market had been burnt and hundreds of houses and shops destroyed. Most members of the team could not hide their grief as they met with men, women and children who lost their loved ones.

The team's five recommendations to the Nigerian government included provisions for security for all communities, humanitarian assistance for all the victims, good governance, equal citizenship rights and establishment of platforms for interreligious relations and dialogue. When meeting with heads of governments, heads of churches and civilian leaders, the team always makes it clear that it is only through dialogue and consultation that political crises are resolved peacefully. It costs much less than confrontation and violence.

I fondly remember my visit to Australia in April last year, when I had the joy of meeting many Act for Peace supporters. Thank you for your assistance. Your support and encouragement from so far away mean a great deal in Africa.

*Dr Andre Kamaranga*

General Secretary, All Africa Conference of Churches



*Kumbo Chuwang at an EPEPPA gathering*



### **Partner's Prayer Points:**

***Give thanks for the vital work in reconciliation and peace-building by Africa's church leaders.***

***Pray that the hearts of those steeped in ethnic violence and hatred may be turned to find ways to achieve stable and lasting peace throughout the continent.***