



## Committee on International Justice and Peace

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October 13, 2022

Honorable Antony Blinken  
Secretary of State  
United States Department of State  
2201 C St. NW  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken:

I write to you in my capacity as Chairman of the Committee on International Justice and Peace of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. I wish to affirm the general thrust and the objectives of the U.S. Strategy Toward Sub-Saharan Africa and to offer some reflections that I hope will be helpful in its implementation.

Last July our committee issued a new document entitled “[\*A Renewed Call to Solidarity with Africa\*](#)”. We highlighted the enormous progress and promise that Africa holds. We raised up the hopes of the people of Africa. We raised the many challenges that Africa faces like good governance, supporting democratic processes, addressing conflict, and prioritizing the needs and expectations of their people, especially people living in poverty. We commend it to you for your consideration.

We are encouraged that the new U.S. Strategy toward Africa searches to build a partnership of equals with Africa to address the challenges of poor governance, corruption, lack of social services, democratic backsliding, conflict, and climate degradation. However, the Strategy fails to mention the critical role local faith-based organizations play within civil society in promotion of these shared objectives. Valuing and protecting religious freedom are absent from the text.

The Church has long supported human rights and raising the voices of women and youth. Our work has strengthened the Church in countries like the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic, and South Sudan and has contributed to policy successes in these countries and in the U.S. This must be done in the context of recognizing the family as the fundamental unit of any society and ensuring due deference for African cultures and traditions.

The ultimate value and impact of this strategy will come in how true the United States will be to its principles in the face of some governments that will resist positive change for the common good. In this effort, the United States should see the Catholic Church as an important ally. I urge you to work with our Committee to implement your new strategy towards Africa. We look forward to facilitating partnerships between the State Department and the Church in Africa.

Sincerely yours,

Most Reverend David J. Malloy  
Bishop of Rockville  
Chairman, Committee on International Justice and Peace