

# ***Never Again Coalition's Accomplishments for 2016***

**Here are some of the highlights of what we accomplished in 2016.**

\*You might notice that we mention particular congresspeople. That's because they are the congresspeople we work closely with through the Postcard Brigade and in other ways. Check out the "scorecard" we've created also to see how the Senators and Representatives did with legislation we've been pushing for.

## ***March***

**Chocolate for Congo** - We had 11 participating restaurants and bakeries for the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Chocolate for Congo that was held in March. We partnered with Theo Chocolate again and raised \$2217 for Eastern Congo Initiative (ECI). We've now raised over \$10K for ECI through this event. An added bonus this year was being in multiple publications as well as having tv and radio interviews.

## ***April***

**Good Deeds Day** - NAC participated in Good Deeds Day in April, which was held at Portland's Mittleman Jewish Community Center. We presented a mock "Little Ripples Pond" preschool. Participants could see and play in a preschool setting, similar to one in a Darfuri refugee camp in Chad. Children created fabric flags to make banners for the actual preschools in Africa, and listened to a story about welcoming refugee children. In addition, children could make a "Cup for the Refugee Child" to be used in their Passover seders.

**Letter to Obama** - Over ninety Members of Congress signed on to a letter, including California's Ted Lieu and Oregon's DeFazio, Bonamici and Blumenauer. The strong bipartisan letter was sent to President Obama, urging him to "keep Sudan/Darfur a high priority for leadership and action" during his final year in office. NAC members worked diligently with the offices of Bonamici and Blumenauer to facilitate the sign-on. And NAC added its name to those of over 40 organizations supporting this letter.

## ***August***

**Release of Fred and Yves** - Congolese prisoners of conscience Fred Bauma and Yves Makwambala were released from detention. They were awaiting trial that could have seen them facing the death penalty. There had been great international support for their release. During the past almost year and a half, NAC sent over 100 messages urging the release of Fred and Yves.

## ***September***

**H.R. 2494 passed** - The Senate and House passed the END Wildlife Trafficking Act. The act addresses a serious problem: criminals, gangsters, and even terrorists are taking advantage of wildlife trafficking to fund their deadly operations – specifically through the sale of rhino and elephant tusks. The bill became law on October 7. NAC sent multiple postcards to congress regarding H.R. 2494. Congressmen Blumenauer, Lieu and DeSantis all co-sponsored the bill.

## **September cont.**

**S.Res. 485 passed unanimously** - A resolution urging the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to comply with constitutional limits on presidential terms and fulfill its constitutional mandate for a democratic transition of power in 2016. This was another Postcard Brigade ask.

## **October**

**Team Congo PDX** - Members of NAC participated in the Cause + Event Run/Walk as part of Team Congo PDX. All funds raised by the team went to Eastern Congo Initiative. A huge thanks for Amanda Ulrich for organizing this yet again.

**iACT for Refugees** - We helped organize and sponsor the 1<sup>st</sup> annual iACT for Refugees event, a fundraiser for iACT's programs. The event took place at Lagunitas Community Room. There was music, food, an auction and raffle and speakers from iACT. The event raised over \$6200 which will provide meals for 50 students in the Little Ripples preschool program for a year.

**Chemical Weapons** - Amnesty International released a report of the use of chemical weapons by the Sudanese government in Darfur. NAC worked with Act for Sudan in the drafting of two letters. One was to the U.S. Representative to the Organization for the Prevention of Chemical Weapons and the other was a Dear Colleague letter to Secretary Kerry. Blumenauer, Bonamici, and DeFazio signed the Dear Colleague letter. We also worked with Darfur activists groups in France, Italy and England to have a unified message to our government leaders, the U.N. and the Organization for the Prevention of Chemical Weapons that an investigation must take place regarding chemical weapons in Darfur.

**Senator Wyden** - A delegation from NAC met with Senator Wyden's office. As a result, he agreed to co-sponsor S. 2551, the Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act. Oregon's Senator Merkley co-sponsored in February. California's Sen. Boxer was also a co-sponsor of S. 2551.

## **November**

**Measure 100 passed** – NAC collected signatures to get Measure 100 on the ballot and not only did it get on the ballot, it passed! The Save Endangered Animals measure strengthens H.R. 2494 (see September) by specifically shutting down the Oregon market to poachers and terrorist groups, blocking the sale of products and parts from 12 types of threatened or endangered animals.

**H.Res 780 passed** - Urging respect for the constitution of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the democratic transition of power in 2016, passed the House almost unanimously. This was a Postcard Brigade ask. This was followed by the U.S. imposing targeted sanctions on individuals in Kabila's inner circle. We believe that President Obama took this action because of the strong approval for sanctions based on H. Res 780 and S. Res 485 both passing.

**Congresswoman Bonamici** - We continue to work closely with Congressman Blumenauer and Congresswoman Bonamici's offices. A delegation from NAC met with Bonamici's office in November to discuss a variety of issues in Sudan, South Sudan, DR Congo as well as legislation related to the refugee crisis.

## **December**

**Global Magnitsky passed** - The Global Magnitsky Human Rights and Accountability Act passed the House and Senate as part of the 2017 National Defense Authorization Act. Through postcards, phone calls and email discussions, NAC worked hard to have Global Magnitsky included in the NDAA. We can all consider this a huge victory; its passage is a watershed moment in global human rights accountability and the fight against corruption.

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In addition, NAC has built upon our relationships with national organizations such as Jewish World Watch, iACT, Panzi Foundation, Eastern Congo Initiative, the Enough Project and Act for Sudan. We are also proud to support and work with local organizations such as Friends of Minzoto and IRCO. We've spoken at local area schools about our work as well.

Our relationships with members of Congress as well as city and state officials only gets stronger. We are working with the governor's office on a proposal to officially make April, Genocide Awareness and Prevention Month in Oregon. Members of NAC have met with city of Beaverton officials regarding the Conflict Free City Initiative. Congressman Blumenauer works tirelessly on issues relating to Sudan, South Sudan and the DR Congo.

We are proud to have recently become a part of the CORE group of Act for Sudan. We participate in regular calls with various international and national groups working in our three areas.

We have big plans in the works – a documentary about genocide prevention with interviews of survivors of genocidal atrocities; a genocide awareness film festival; Chocolate for Congo expanding to other cities; and the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual iACT for Refugees fundraiser.

Although there are mass atrocities taking place in countries other than the three we work in, NAC is committed to pursuing peace and justice for people in Sudan, South Sudan and the DR Congo. We will from time to time work on actions in other situations but we remain committed to the areas we work in.

2016 was an especially hard year for people all over the world who have been forced to leave their homes. Men, women and children in Sudan, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo continue to be at the top of that list despite the conflicts in those countries being under-reported. We couldn't do any of our work without your support and we know that we will be more successful if we all work together.