



228 West Lexington Street
Baltimore, MD 21201-3443
crs.org / crsespanol.org

September 29, 2016

Your Eminence/Excellency,

I am writing to advise you that Michael Hichborn, who has frequently launched attacks against various Catholic agencies including Catholic Relief Services through his organization, The Lepanto Institute, has indicated that he will release another report on CRS on Friday, October 7. If Mr. Hichborn follows form, there will be allegations (new or old) that there have been violations of Church teaching in some aspect of CRS overseas programming, along with a request for donations to his "Institute."

As you know, CRS has been through this before and is ready with a thorough process for dealing with, and if necessary, responding to this one. Despite claims that are often startling, a closer examination has shown little substance. Often they are claims that are nothing more than guilt by a tenuous association. This is because CRS has very clear policies in place which govern its programming's alignment with Church teaching that include extensive staff training, consultation with our board of bishops and lay people and regular reviews by moral theologians. If we ever do find anything that needs correction, we do so swiftly.

Mr. Hichborn has made a couple of allegations recently – including insinuating that Carolyn Woo's departure signals some wrongdoing by her or CRS – that we know are false. We are very grateful to Dr. Woo for fulfilling her commitment for five years and helping to arrange a smooth and effective transition process. As previously, we expect the upcoming attack also to lack a relationship with the truth. As evidence, we have already received letters of support (below) from the Kenyan bishops and the bishops of the Democratic Republic of the Congo who are aware that Hichborn has been digging into CRS' work in in their countries. Hichborn has also suggested there will be information about Nigeria. As always, when we receive the latest report CRS will investigate thoroughly.

If you receive any inquiries after Mr. Hichborn's report, we would ask that you reply with expressions of confidence in CRS and assurance that CRS has systems and processes in place to ensure fidelity to its Catholic identity and to look into and address any concerns. We are providing below a general statement about CRS' systems to ensure its Catholic identity for you to use should you receive any inquiries. Once we see the report, if there are other updates we will send them as soon as possible.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any concerns or questions.

Fraternally yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul S. Coakley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'P'.

Most Reverend Paul S. Coakley
Archbishop of Oklahoma City
Chair, Catholic Relief Services

faith. action. results.

Draft Language for Responding to Inquiries

Catholic Relief Services was established by the bishops of the United States and is the official international relief and development agency of the Catholic Church in the U.S. The agency represents us in more than 100 countries around the world helping 100 million people each year. CRS prioritizes ensuring that the agency is upholding Catholic teaching in all its programming. This work is carefully reviewed by a board of bishops and by a committee of moral theologians to ensure that it is consistent with Catholic teaching. It is disappointing and disturbing that there are groups that raise funds and mislead the faithful in an attempt to breed discontent and distract from the wonderful work Catholics are accomplishing around the world through CRS. As the Administrative Committee of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops said in 2013, these groups 'do not speak for the Catholic Church and we advise the Catholic faithful to exercise caution and consult the CRS website for clarification before endorsing or giving credence to the groups' critiques.' I stand by this counsel.

See letters from the bishops of Kenya and the Democratic Republic of the Congo below.

KENYA CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS



KENYA CATHOLIC SECRETARIAT

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Website: www.kccb.or.ke

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

27th September 2016

Mr. Lane Bunkers
Country Director
Catholic Relief Services

Dear Mr. Lane,

RE: STATEMENT FROM KCCB

Greetings from Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops.

The Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops stands behind the work of Catholic Relief Services, with whom we have partnered for more than 51 years in Kenya. The work of CRS has always been faithful to Catholic teaching and supports the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

We reiterate our thanks and appreciations to CRS for partnering with the KCCB and the Diocesan Caritas to serve the poorest and most vulnerable Kenyans as we carry out the mission of our loving Lord, Jesus Christ. These programs have positively impacted thousands of lives.

Once more we thank CRS and look forward to continued support and collaboration.

With prayerful best wishes, I remain,

Yours sincerely,

Very Rev. Fr. Daniel Kimutai Rono
General Secretary



CONFERENCE EPISCOPALE NATIONALE DU CONGO

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Object: Our thanks and appreciation to CRS
for partnering with the CENCO

Mr. Timothy Bishop
Country Representative
Catholic Relief Services
Kinshasa, DRC

Dear Mr. Bishop,

Greetings from the Conference of Catholic Bishops (CENCO) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The CENCO stands behind the work of Catholic Relief Services, with whom we have partnered for more than 40 years. The work of CRS has always been faithful to Catholic teaching and the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

We reiterate our thanks and appreciation to CRS for partnering with the CENCO and many of our Diocesan Caritas offices, to serve the poorest and most vulnerable Congolese. Together, the CENCO and CRS carry out the mission of our loving Lord, Jesus Christ. Our partnership, and our programs, have positively impacted thousands of Congolese lives.

Once more, we thank CRS and look forward to continued collaboration and support in the years to come.

With prayers and good wishes for the glory of God.



Father Donatien NSHOLE
1st Deputy Secretary-General of CENCO
Secretary-General a.i. of CENCO

C.I.:

- His Excellency Marcel UTEMBI TAPA, Archbishop of Kisangani, President of the CENCO.