

## **NOMINEE FOR VICE PRESIDENT: African Studies Association of Africa (ASAA)**

### **Biosketch: Toussaint Murhula Kafarhire**

I am originally from the Democratic Republic of Congo, and a member of the Jesuit Order. Currently, I live and work in Nairobi, (Kenya) where I teach a variety of courses at Hekima Institute of Peace Studies and International Relations (HIPSIR). These include theories of international relations, foreign policy analysis, Diplomacy, and African cultures and conflicts.

About my educational background, I have a B.A. in philosophy from the *Facultés de Philosophie Saint Pierre Canisius* in Kinshasa; a B.A. in theology from Hekima College of the CUEA in Nairobi; an STL (which is a canonical postgraduate degree in Sacred Theological Licentiate) in Ethics and Social Theories from the Jesuit School of Theology in Berkeley (Santa Clara University). I also hold a PhD in political science from Loyola University Chicago. My current research interest focuses on popular perceptions and conceptualizations of democracy in Africa; hermeneutics and the role of human consciousness meaning-making and social transformation; the role of African traditions in polity and institutional changes; and the power and influence of multinational corporations in global politics.

About my professional background, I have experience teaching middle-school, high school, college, post-graduate students and professionals for over twenty years. I have taught a variety of subjects including moral theology, the Catholic Social Tradition, African cultures and African politics. Besides academic work, I have served humanity in a variety of capacities as community organizer, assistant parish priest; coordinator of programs in HIV/AIDS care and prevention; or spiritual guide.

My interest in the social sciences was prompted by the enduring conflicts and political violence rigging the continent of Africa. I founded Elimu Foundation in 2005 ([www.fondationelimu.org](http://www.fondationelimu.org)) to provide education to disadvantaged children in war-torn areas of the DRC; and the following year, I founded the Ballet Renaissance Africa to tap into the artistic talents and harness the creative power of the Congolese youth to address social traumas from years of wars. I am also a published poet.

### **Vision Statement**

First and foremost, my vision is to support and promote ASAA mission. I have a burning desire to work toward mobilizing others for the promotion of a positive image of Africa, the advancement of a knowledge that will contribute to free African minds from the colonial past.

To me, it is of critical importance to have the ASAA leadership team work together, in synergy with its President, to design and shape the direction in which the organization will have to grow, producing knowledge that can affect policies to enhance and protect the fundamental human dignity and sacredness of human life on the continent. Our

knowledge production should always seek to improve the living conditions of Africans everywhere.

I take seriously Aimé Césaire's warning that, "the commonest curse is **to be dupe in good faith** of a ***collective hypocrisy that cleverly misrepresents problems*** and thus, better **legitimize** the hateful solutions provided for them." Since reality is first what the mind can imagine, a cogent diagnosis of the situation is needed before mobilizing intellectual and financial capabilities to meet our goals. Hence, ASAA should encourage scholarship on and about Africa that seeks to dismantle enduring colonial representations and colonizing structures that perpetuate the anthropological poverty of Africans.

By listening to African and Africanist scholars' preoccupations, I hope to contribute toward forging a unifying agenda that offers to foster hope, life, and positive self-image among Africans in order to overcome the legacy of false dichotomies and linguistic divisions that jam the minds of Africans.