

## **To His Excellence Mr. Adolphe Muzito, Prime Minister and Head of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo on the Occasion of His Trip to Bukavu:**

Excellence Mister the Prime Minister, it is for us a great joy to welcome you in the South-Kivu, less than one week after your nomination and for the first time since you were nominated to the office of Prime Minister of our country. Taking on this responsibility encourages and comforts us. Due to circumstances, we are counted among the first recipients of your missions inside the country. Your presence here raises enormous hope for the people, who wait to know the response of the Government to the crisis which torments the country in general and the East in particular.

As you know, on August 28, 2008, the hostility resumed in North-Kivu. There is a risk that the country will again be set ablaze and will regress back to the starting point. Thus, it would be more than 5,000,000 people who died for nothing, 1 billion dollars per year spent for MONUC according to their budget of the last 6 years and 5 million dollars of electoral expenses thrown in the water; and the martyrdom of the Congolese people continues. People are decimated in the greatest struggle on one side of the country while the greatest tranquility reigns on the other. Why?

The Congolese drama has economic and political implications at different levels: international, national and local:

### **A. At the International Level**

The Democratic Republic of Congo has been at war since 1998. After that date, this war was clearly revealed to be a war of regional and international invasion. The inability to manage the political ambitions of the Congolese actors was just an epiphenomenon. This was confirmed by the Panel of the United Nations on the plundering of the natural resources of the Democratic Republic of Congo. When it comes to gold, diamond or coltan, entire populations are decimated, their dwellings are occupied, destroyed or set on fire by Congolese armed groups often clearly supported by foreign armies, with international ramifications even wider than we can imagine.

A double lawsuit at the International Court of the Hague informs us about these facts: Uganda and Rwanda were namely indicted. But justice was not really done in favor of Congo, at least not until now, vis-a-vis its neighbors being used as a proxies to international predators who are well identified by the Panel of the United Nations on the networks of plundering of the natural resources of Congo.

Among the proposals adopted by certain leaders to settle the question, a summit is being held in Nairobi. Wouldn't it be relevant to also consider another summit which would bring together the United States, the European Union, and certain countries of the South-East Asia so that they can solve their problems around their geostrategic, economic and even land interests which feed the fatal tensions in this sub-region in general and in Congo in particular? That would thus prevent the death of many peasants and there would be fewer criminals. This would also reduce the task of humanitarian organizations and would promote investors initiatives.

### **B. At the National Level**

A process to consolidate peace and State authority was set up by democratically elected institutions. The implementation of the process was delegated to the AMANI Program by the resolutions concluded and [signed in Goma on January 23, 2008](#) . We sincerely hope that we, the Congolese people, will unanimously be able to support this democratic process and the Amani Program by

putting, first and foremost, the supreme interest of the nation before our personal interests which have led to divisions.

On this precise point, there is a huge gap between the aspirations of the people and the political manipulation of some elected officials put in office by these same people. In exercising this democratic power, we hope to see the State fully carry out its institutional responsibilities and ensure its prerogatives of sovereignty (territorial integrity, unity, peace and safety of citizens, good governance, leaders who serve the people). It seems necessary and urgent for a country rich in natural resources like ours to build a sufficiently strong army to guarantee its stability and its development. This revolution cannot be done with the current carelessness revealed by the corruption within the military hierarchy and of the public services.

### **C. At the Provincial Level**

We expect our elected officials to stay engaged in people's concerns, especially those related to peace, safety, and good governance. Instead, we have the impression that they are more concerned about their egoistic political future position and their own interests. Indeed, a year ago, our representatives mobilizing themselves like only one person and forced out of office the governor. However, with regards to the problems of teachers, health workers and other social issues, they are silent. Now that the Nation is in danger, we are witnessing a total silence; are they working on the issue and not informing the public? We would like to know the priorities of our elected officials in Provinces.

### **D. Perspective**

Not long ago in 2007, I addressed the Ambassador of France regarding the people's security concerns and the planning of a new war. Eminent personalities found the tone exaggerated and estimated that the situation was under control and there was no reason to worry. At the steering committee on September 23, 2008, we said that what was rumor yesterday became reality today. In any case, more than ever, vigilance has to be rigorous. In a system that has become as fragile as ours, one feels locked up in a closed circle: we pass from rebellions to talks, from talks to agreements, to new appointments within new institutions and from new institutions to rebellions. In short it is an eternal ritual of beginnings.

In fact, the Congolese population is held hostage by several regional and international factors.

- Congo's natural resources lead armed groups of all kinds to sacrifice Congolese populations by securing spaces that escape State authority. Each one then comes to freely plunder at no cost. This is true of Congolese armed groups as well as foreign militia. At the current speed, the country runs the risk of becoming a safe haven for robbers, and if we do not become more vigilant it will become a safe haven for terrorists against all humanity.
- The prevention of genocide in Rwanda dictates the paradigm of several leaders who cease to think when they hear this word pronounced. Because of this emotion, and even for moral reasons, they let the holocaust of the Congolese people happen. More than 5 million Congolese have lost their lives in this matter. Our opinion is this: the genocide is to be avoided absolutely; we share this point of view with the international community. But doing it at the expense of other people, it is to correct evil by evil. The genocide was committed in Rwanda by the Rwandans and on the Rwandans. It is thus absurd and unjust that the

international community continues to make the Congolese people pay the price for the Rwandan genocide for which they are innocent in its planning and execution. Rather, [it is necessary, for example, to help the Rwandan people to reconcile with themselves instead of exporting their problem elsewhere where it won't find any solution.](#) The international community helped the Congo and Burundi to organize their respective national dialogues, as well as free and transparent democratic elections. It is time that we do the same for Rwanda. It is after such dialogue that the rebirth of the CEPGL (French acronym for the Great Lakes Nations' Economic Community) makes sense. Otherwise, does the Congo have to pay the price of the bad judgment of the international community which did not stop the genocide when it was on the spot and strongly armed?

- What is the role of the MONUC (French Acronym for United Nations Mission in Congo), at its present stage now? Are things the same as they were before the elections? After having invested so many resources, will MONUC let the country sink in chaos, stand on the side and witness the ongoing increase in loss of lives, the displacement of people, victims of rape and their victimizers? One wonders whether the institutions put in place by the elections fulfill their duties or if they are still under MONUC supervision. Do they really do all they are expected to do to make the country a respectable state among other nations? Like all the Sovereign states, the D.R. Congo has the right and the duty to maintain peace and safety across its territory, to ensure harmonious development countrywide, and to acquire necessary and adequate means of reaching these goals.

### **Conclusion**

We, the Church of Bukavu, sharing in the suffering of our people, are committed to peace and development, and ask the institutions legitimately put in place at the national level as well as at the provincial level to carry on the duties of their offices with full responsibility. We ask all our countrymen to support them in this heavy task. Together, let us be responsible for our young democracy.

While acknowledging the exceptional efforts made in Congo by the international community, we ask the latter to treat the Congolese issues within the Great Lakes Region with an additional level of equity.

Lastly, Excellence Mister the Prime Minister, we ask that these concerns be taken into account as political alternatives and carried to international negotiations so that all people in this Great Lakes sub-region may regain peace and the peaceful coexistence of past.

Bukavu, November 5, 2008  
+ François-Xavier MAROY RUSENGO +  
Archbishop of Bukavu

This document has been translated from French by AFJN.