

## **Statement on the situation in Burundi**

*For all the boots of the tramping warriors  
and all the garments rolled in blood  
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.  
For a child has been born for us,  
a son given to us;  
authority rests on his shoulders;  
and he is named  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:5-6)*

The World Council of Churches (WCC) and the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) join in expressing their grave concern for the people of Burundi in the current situation of extreme tension and escalating violations in the country. Indeed, based on the information we have received, the situation is even worse and more urgent than generally reported in the international media.

The political crisis that has gripped Burundi since April 2015 has latterly been marked by brutal violence, targeted attacks, extrajudicial killings, severe oppression and the incitement of communal tensions. Against the tragic recent history and raw wounds of civil war and genocide in the region, these developments have an awful familiarity and threaten the foundations established by the Arusha Agreement of August 2000.

The WCC and the AACC therefore welcome the efforts of the international community to address this alarming situation, especially through the African Union Peace and Security Commission, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, and most recently the special session of the UN Human Rights Council on 17 December. It is critical that the international community expedite and strengthen the implementation and follow-up of these measures.

We appeal to the government and political leadership of Burundi to step back from the path of violence onto the path of peace. We call for responsible leadership that does not tolerate complicity in the killings and other serious violations now so obviously prevalent in the country. We call on the President to be true to his proclaimed Christian faith, and to act in Christian love and compassion. We demand an end to the killings, attacks and enforced

disappearances, and accountability for those violations. We support calls for an inclusive and genuine inter-Burundian dialogue, through regionally-led mediation, in order to find a nationally-owned solution to the current crisis.

We pray for the churches and church leaders of Burundi, that they may be strengthened and empowered to work together for peace and against division and violence, and to be faithful witnesses and guides on the pilgrimage of justice and peace in Burundi.

In this Advent season, in which we await the nativity of the Christ Child, the Prince of Peace, we pray that all those who now espouse violence and division in Burundi will learn and pursue the things that make for peace in this wounded land.

God of life, lead Burundi to justice and peace.