

COMMUNIQUE FOLLOWING THE MEETING OF BURUNDIAN RELIGIOUS LEADERS ON SUSTAINING PEACE IN BURUNDI, HELD IN ARUSHA, TANZANIA, FROM 18 TO 19 OCTOBER 2017, UNDER THE SPONSORSHIP OF THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES AND THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON GENOCIDE PREVENTION AND THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT

We,

Religious leaders from Roman Catholic Church; National Council of Churches of Burundi; Council of Union of Christian Churches; Islamic Community of Burundi; Confederation of Churches and Revival of Burundi; and Seventh-day Adventist Church;

Meeting in Arusha, from 18 to 19 October 2017, under the sponsorship of the World Council of Churches and the United Nations Office on the Prevention of Genocide and the Responsibility to Protect, in order to examine the current situation in Burundi, as well as the role of religious leaders of Burundi in contributing to enhance peace, security and reconciliation in this country;

Thanking God who has made it possible to hold this meeting and seeking inspiration and wisdom from His Holy scriptures and teachings;

Encouraged by the positive developments / progresses regarding peace and security in Burundi;

Grateful for efforts made by the Burundian Government and other actors, including the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and Burundian religious leaders, who are contributing to the return of refugees;

Thankful to the Burundian Government for issuing the order to the Burundian police and the wider population to protect refugees' properties;

Recognizing and valuing ongoing attempts to consolidate peace in Burundi by neighbouring countries, the region and the international community;

Conscious of the urgent need to contribute to peace, security, stability, reconciliation and unity in order to prevent the risk of ethnicisation of the conflict and escalation of violence along identity lines;

Grateful to governments of various countries, regional and international organisations, national and international civil society, as well as the Burundian population for supporting ongoing peace and reconciliation efforts carried out by different actors;

Convinced that there is no plan to commit genocide in Burundi; and encouraging the Burundian government to continue to consolidate peace and reconciliation in the country;

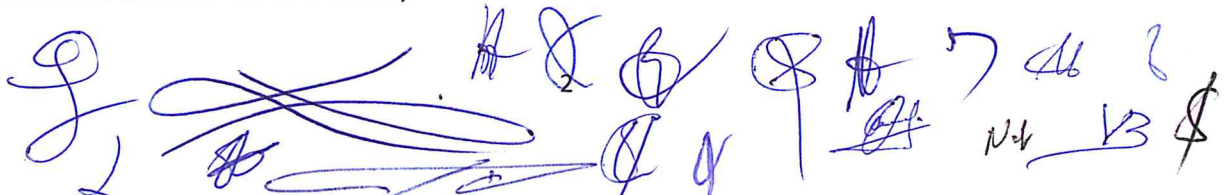
Calling the international community and the Government of Burundi to re-establish good diplomatic relationships;

Urging the international community to enhance assistance to development as well as to refugees and returnees;

Commit ourselves to:

- (i) Multiply our efforts to consolidate peace and reconciliation in Burundi, based on the principles and values of the Holy Scriptures;
- (ii) Work together in this regard;
- (iii) Organise inclusive interfaith prayer sessions for peace and reconciliation in Burundi;

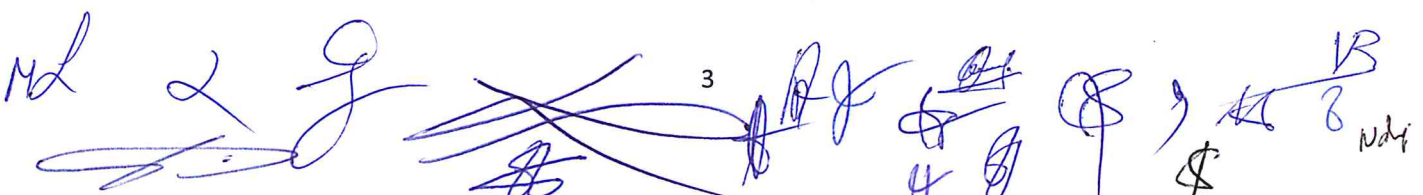
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- (iv) Organise a workshop on peace and reconciliation in Bujumbura early 2018 engaging all religions. This workshop should present, discuss and validate the 2016-2020 Strategic Action Plan for Peace and Reconciliation in Burundi as a contribution of Burundian religious leaders in this regard;
- (v) Disseminate this communiqué at national, regional and international level.

Jointly call the

- 1. Burundian Government:** to continue to pursue the path of national peace, security, reconciliation, inclusive dialogue and social cohesion; and to establish the conditions for free, fair, and transparent elections in 2020;
- 2. Burundian political leaders:** to prevent the dissemination of divisive speech and narratives and incitement to violence, as well as promote peace, unity and non-violent behaviours;
- 3. Burundian civil society:** to contribute to peace, security, and unity of Burundians through their activities and programmes and prevent the dissemination of rumours and lies;
- 4. Burundian population:** to discard rumours and lies, and remain peaceful and united;
- 5. International Community, including the Africa Union and the United Nations:** to re-establish good relationships with the Government of Burundi, to provide assistance to the 2020 general election, and to accompany the Burundian nation on the path of development, peace and reconciliation;
- 6. the World Council of Churches, the All Africa Conference of Churches, the American Friends Service Committee, Norwegian Church Aid, Christian Aid, Action by Churches Together (ACT)**



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Alliance, EIRENE, and the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar to be ambassadors of Burundian religious leaders and, as such, to accompany and support Burundian religious leaders in their efforts for peace and reconciliation in Burundi;

7. His Holiness Pope Francis and His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury, as well as senior religious leaders: to contribute in this regard.

8. Burundian religious leaders: to avoid being involved in politics and stick to their prophetic and divine role.

Signed in Arusha on 19 October 2017

Catholic Church

Bishop Venant BACINONI

Bishop Bonaventure NAHIMANA

Father Anatole RUBERINYANGE

Father Lambert NICITERETSE

Father Charles KARORERO

Mr. Isidore HAKIZIMANA

National Council of Churches of Burundi

Bishop Justin NZOYISABA

Archbishop Martin Blaise NYABOHO

Bishop Deogratias NSHIMIYIMANA

Bishop Eraste BIGIRIMANA

Reverend Nicodeme AHISHAKIYE

Reverend Sylvestre BIZIMANA

Madame Marie NYAMBURA

Islamic Community of Burundi

Mufti Sheikh Abdallah KAJANDI SADIKI

Madame Johari ASSUMANI

Council of Union of Christian Churches of Burundi

Archbishop Dr. Simeon NZISHURA

Reverend Pastor Alice NITUNGA

Confederation of Christian Churches and Revival in Burundi

Bishop Jean Bosco SINDAMBIWE

Reverend Juvenal BAZISHAKA

Seventh-day Adventist Church in Burundi

Pastor Joseph NDIKUBWAYO