

***Peace Message from the World Council of Churches and the All Africa
Conference of Churches to all parties in Burundi***

...seek peace and pursue it.

Psalm 34:14b

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

On behalf of the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), we offer greetings of peace and blessing.

We make this solidarity visit, March 1-4, 2016, to the Republic of Burundi to express our commitment to work with all religious leaders and all peace-seeking people of Burundi and to support their tireless efforts on the ground to secure a lasting peace and stability in Burundi.

We acknowledge the great contribution of Burundi in peacekeeping missions in Somalia. Likewise, we recognize the heroic peace building work that the people of Burundi have accomplished since the Arusha Accord and the peace Burundi enjoyed for over 10 years.

In this same spirit of peace and cooperation, we, as representatives of the Christian community, pray for peace to prevail in Burundi and the Almighty God to bring Burundi back from the path of violence to peaceful co-existence. We want to highlight the need for promoting national unity, healing and reconciliation.

We want to express our great concern over the current escalation of tensions and violence in the country following the recent election. As fellowships of Christian churches dedicated to promoting a culture of peace, WCC and AACC urge all parties in Burundi to stop the killings and to work nonviolently and in a peaceful way to address any disagreements and to respect human dignity. We oppose all acts of violence, committed by whomsoever in Burundi. We call on all parties in conflict in Burundi to end all forms of violence immediately and achieve lasting stability, security and peace by coming together in constructive dialogue.

We call on all churches in Burundi to strengthen their unity and mobilize resources to attend to humanitarian needs and to put in place an impartial, independent, locally led faith based mediation process for national unity, peace and reconciliation and to heal the wounds in Burundi following the election crisis. We believe that the churches in the country can be strong agents of peace and that they should be seen as vital resources toward this end.

We encourage H.E. President Pierre Nkurunziza and his government, opposition leaders, all religious leaders in Burundi, Civil Society Organizations and all the people of Burundi to join in and give priority to an open, comprehensive and representative national dialogue to achieve a political solution to the crisis and to promote a culture of peace, national reconciliation and healing in Burundi. We want to stress the importance of all parties committing to the inter-Burundian dialogue process.

We call on regional organizations such as the African Union, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), the East African Community (EAC), the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries (CEPGL), and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) to play a leading role in complementing the process of inter-Burundian dialogue and in the effort to promote peace and reconciliation in Burundi.

We call on all parties to embrace the Entebbe Peace Process initiated by the East African Community, endorsed by the African Union, and mediated by H.E. President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda.

We call on the international community, the United Nations, the AU, the EAC, and all other concerned bodies to urgently address the humanitarian needs of the refugees and internally displaced people following the crisis in Burundi.

We do believe that, though the support of the international community to resolve the issue is required, a durable and peaceful solution will come only within Burundi and by Burundians.

GOD OF LIFE, LEAD BURUNDI TO PEACE, JUSTICE AND DIGNITY.

AMAHORO ASAGAMBE MUBURINDI

God bless Burundi and all Burundians!

Members of the delegation:

1. Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, WCC General Secretary and leader of the delegation,
2. Dr Agnes Abuom, Moderator of the WCC,
3. Bishop Jan Janssen, Lutheran Church (EKD) in Germany,
4. Archbishop Valentine Mokiwa, AACC President
5. Rev. Frank Chikane, AACC Rep.
6. Mrs Elizabeth Kisiigha, Executive Director of The Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa F ECCLAHA
7. Dr Nigussu Legesse, WCC staff,
8. Ms Afiwa Alahare, AACC staff

Bujumbura, March 1, 2016