

## In view of tragedy in Djugu : « what did you do to your brother ?”, urges Bishop Uringi of Bunia



**Bunia, February 26, 2018 (caritasdev.cd):** "The violence in Djugu has led to the displacement of more than 250,000 IDPs, who found shelter in schools, churches and hospitals, living in overcrowded conditions and having difficulty finding food" , deplored the UN Mission for the Stabilization of the DRC (MONUSCO), in a tweet this Monday, February 26, 2018.

For his part, after condemning the atrocities committed in the territory of Djugu in Ituri as the death toll rises to more than 60 deaths and several thousand internally displaced, the Bishop of Bunia spoke to the people of Ituri and men of good will: "*the human being is created in the image of God. We all have, without exception, the duty and the obligation to protect the life that God has given us.*"

In a message dated February 11, 2018, Bishop Dieudonné Uringi highlighted that "God has made us to live as brothers and sisters, because it is good for brothers to live together and to love one another". In his capacity as Pastor of the Church of Bunia, he added: "God will always ask us as he did to Cain: Where is your brother? What did you do to your brother "(Gn 4: 9-10).

Bishop Uringi quotes Pope Benedict XVI, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Constitution of the DRC on the sanctity and inviolability of life: no one has the right to take away someone's life, because, human life is sacred.

### **Considerable damage and Hema-Lendu peace process in jeopardy**

The sad events occurred from 2 to 10 February 2018 broke the glimmer of hope that lit up in December 2017 in the peace process aimed at ending the interethnic conflict between the Hema and the Lendu in the Djugu Territory.

Violence recorded in some chieftaincies has caused killings (more than 60 deaths), the majority of which are women and children; house fires (over 2,000 homes); theft ; several thousand internally displaced persons, including 20,000 identified by Caritas Bunia and more than 60,000 refugees in Uganda; about 100 schools and 5 emptied and deserted hospitals; ...

### **Passivity and silence of the Authority**

"We regret that the Ituri people have not learned from the recent suffering of the fratricidal wars of the years 1999-2003," deplores the prelate. He also regrets the exploitation by some people of the misery of their brothers for reasons of positioning and easy money gain. "In the end, we regret the masked silence of the Authority in place and its passivity in the face of this situation as well as the indifference of the Deputies and Senators of Ituri. While

the Police and the Army are deployed in the damaged area, the attacks of men and the fires of the villages continue and take up space, "indignant Bishop Dieudonné Uringi.

**Recommendations to Iturians, MPs, Government, MONUSCO, ...**

The Bishop of Bunia strongly condemns these despicable acts and condemns the instrumentalization of ethnic sensitivities in Djugu which can only aim to divide and rule.

To the Iturians and the inhabitants of Djugu in particular, he recommends saving their fraternity to build together their diocese and their young province of Ituri, but also the DR Congo, without yielding to the spirit of revenge.

To the sowers of desolation, the Bishop asks for an examination of conscience and to return to good feeling.

"Secure people and their property impartially," he recommends to the police and soldiers of the people.

To the Deputies and Senators, "it is an imperative duty for you to make an urgent plea to the National Assembly and the provincial assembly to launch a parliamentary inquiry into the atrocities committed in Djugu", continues the Bishop.

He asks the Prime Minister and the Governor of the Province to show their good will and their ability to govern. And this, pacifying in the best time the troubled area; by taking care of IDPs and survivors of all these atrocities; by seeking out and punishing the actors of this violence and by taking effective measures to avoid such hostilities forever.

Bishop Uringi recommended that MONUSCO adequately fulfill its mandate of stabilization and protection of civilians in the Djugu Territory.

And "in the face of the humanitarian crisis, we call for the intervention of members of the Caritas Network, Humanitarian and other organizations, both national and international, as well as United Nations Agencies," he pleads.

Finally, the Bishop salutes and encourages all peace actors for their initiatives that give reason to hope, while imploring the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary for her Diocese, her Province and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

**Dody ISHAKU (Intern) & Guy-Marin Kamandji**

**(Translated by Edhosal Tshibanda)**