

March 27, 2018

Your Eminence,  
Your Excellencies,

### **Message of Solidarity and Prayers**

We are members of the Catholic Task Force for Africa (CTFA), a group of Catholic organizations in the Washington, DC Metro Area of the United States, and the New York based Religious at the United Nations (RUN), concerned about, and working for the good of our brothers and sisters on the continent.

We commend you for your leadership in facilitating the political dialogue between the government and opposition parties which resulted in the signing of the St. Sylvester Agreement on December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2016 and the efforts you demonstrate in ensuring justice and peace for the citizens of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

We have been following the events that have occurred in your beloved country, the Democratic Republic of Congo, especially the events of the past several months and have accompanied you with prayers. We convened a special session, joining you and our sisters and brothers worldwide on the day of fasting Prayer for South Sudan and the DRC on February 23, 2018 initiated by the Holy Father, Pope Francis and we continue to pray for the DRC.

We are particularly concerned about the rise in the level of violence, the killings on the streets and the conflicts that seem to degenerate into sectarian nature. More specifically, we are disturbed about the rising use of force, the arrest, torture, extortion and killing of peaceful and unarmed civilians while exercising their constitutional right to assembly. We lament the loss of lives of men, women and children who responded to the call by the Comité Laïc de Coordination (CLC) to stand up for justice.

The active and peaceful nonviolence of the demonstrators that we have seen in the DRC is commendable and urge that you take the moral high ground in this process. The most basic human right is the right to life (Matthew 5: 21). Active Nonviolence respects the sacredness of human life and aims to convince and convert the other for the common good. We support your nonviolent and peaceful struggle.

As your brothers and sisters in Christ, we urge you all to use all that is within your power, and your good offices as shepherds and pastors entrusted with the care of the people, to impress upon the people their spiritual bonding that comes from our common baptism and the need to transcend all forms of divisions for the common good: “In Christ all distinctions between Jew and Gentile, slave and free, male and female, disappear; you are all **one in Christ Jesus**” (Galatians 3:28).

The Lord Jesus has made it clear that some of the most effective tools in the hands of the evil one are fear, division and a feeling of unworthiness on a personal and institutional level; a feeling that arises from self blame or blaming errant members. We pray that as you stand up for justice, the Spirit of the living God will keep you alert to these tactics, make you attentive to the larger issues, and enable you to focus on what is at stake and for the future of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Be assured of our unwavering solidarity and continuous prayers for justice and peace, the respect of human rights and the promotion of the common good in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Sincerely yours,

**Catholic Task Force for Africa – Washington DC Metro Area**

Africa Faith & Justice Network (comprising 25 organizations)

Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM) United States

Friends in Solidarity (with South Sudan)

Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

Pax Christi International

U.S Missionary Oblates Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Office

**Religious at United Nations (RUN) New York**

Comboni Missionary Sisters

Comboni Missionaries NAP

Congregation of Marist Sisters-SM

Filles de la Sagesse (Daughters of Wisdom)

Fondazione Proclade Internazionale-Onlus (Claretian Missionaries)

Holy Union Sisters

Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate

Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus

Religious Sisters of Charity

Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur

Society of the Sacred Heart

The Brigidine Sisters

The Leadership Team of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Agnes

The Sisters of the Divine Compassion

Ursuline Sisters Congregation of Tildonk

Ursuline Sisters of Louisville, KY

Ursuline Sisters of Mount Saint Joseph

Vivat International