



Committee on International Justice and Peace

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December 17, 2015

Most Reverend Banshimiyubusa Gervais
President of the Burundi Catholic Bishops' Conference
B.P. 1390
Bujumbura, Republic of Burundi

Dear Bishop Banshimiyubusa:

As Chair of the Committee on International Justice and Peace of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, I write to express our support and solidarity to the Bishops' Conference of Burundi and to the people of your country. We are following the events in Burundi since the elections earlier this year with great concern. We are saddened by the loss of life, the social disruption and the negative effects that these events have had on human lives, the economy and people's livelihoods.

We join you in your call for a halt to the violence and the immediate startup of inclusive dialogue among all parties in Burundi, facilitated by regional partners and international donors. As Pope Francis has said many times, dialogue is the only productive way to discuss grievances and conflicting interests. This dialogue must be sustained long enough to generate shared solutions that would avoid violence and eventually rebuild the social fabric of the country.

Our Committee and the staff in our Office of International Justice and Peace are committed to do everything to assist you at this time within our limited resources. I welcome your thoughts and ideas on what we can do to support the Church in Burundi during these difficult times. I also invite you to offer any suggestions you might have on how the Government of the United States could promote peace and prosperity. Our Office is in contact with officials in the Special Envoy's Office at the State Department and we are very willing to pass on your ideas and recommendations.

During this Advent Season when Christians all over the world look forward to celebrating the birth of the Prince of Peace, it is my hope and prayer that He will create a spirit of peace and reconciliation in the hearts of all Burundians.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Oscar Cantú
Bishop of Las Cruces
Chair, Committee on International Justice and Peace
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops