



Committee on International Justice and Peace

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November 25, 2008

Most Reverend Nicolas Djomo
Bishop of Tshumbe
President of CENCO
B.P. 3258
Kinshasa-Gombe
Democratic Republic of Congo

Dear Bishop Djomo:

At this time of suffering and crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), I write to express the solidarity of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops with the Church and people of the DRC. Your Conference statements of October 13 and November 13 are the most recent examples of a long history of courageous Episcopal leadership in the face of conflict.

We share your condemnation of violence as a means to resolve problems. We appreciate your observations that conflict occurs in areas where resources are extracted and the exploitation of these natural resources fuels the conflict and causes enormous suffering to the people who live nearby. It is clear that illegal mines and the militia that control them have, in your words, divided the country into small “dwarf” states, where there is no rule of law and militias act with impunity.

The Bishops of the Democratic Republic of Congo have our deepest respect for your many efforts to stop the violence, to address the root causes of the fighting, and to promote a just and sustainable resolution of the conflict.

Our Conference is writing Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and the Special Envoy to the Great Lakes Region, Mr. Tim Shortley, to echo your concerns. We will ask them to increase U.S. humanitarian assistance and to expand support for MONUC, giving the U.N. Mission in the Congo all the resources they need to stop the violence and resolve the conflict.

Our Conference and Catholic Relief Services will do all we can to assist the delegation that we understand will visit the U.S. from the Church in Congo. We will help them meet with public officials in Washington so that they can express your concerns directly.

Praying that God will continue to bless your work as pastors and peacebuilders, I remain

Fraternally yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Howard J. Hubbard
Bishop of Albany
Chairman, Committee on International Justice and Peace