



Committee on International Justice and Peace

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His Excellency Archbishop Ouédraogo Paul Yembuado
President of the National Episcopal Conference of Burkina Faso and Niger
B.P. 1195
Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

Your Excellency:

As Chair of the Committee on International Justice and Peace, I write to express our condolences and solidarity with the people and the Catholic Bishops Conference of Burkina Faso, as you struggle with the ongoing wave of violent terrorist attacks. It is tragic these attacks have increased five-fold to 158 instances in 2018 and have taken the lives of approximately 400 Burkinabe people since 2015. Others have been kidnapped and remain missing like Father Joel Yougbaré. Allow me to join the Holy Father in his statements and expressions of condolences and support in reaction to these church attacks and add my own following the most recent attack on a Catholic church 26 May in Toulfé that killed four people.

I have learned these wanton attacks have also forced around 100,000 people to flee their homes. It is tragic that 1,111 out of 2,869 schools have been forced to close because of the attacks, or out of fear for future attacks. Around 150,000 children have lost their right to an education. This factor is indeed compounded by the challenges to education in your country.

This violence has also destabilized the government leading to the resignation of former Prime Minister Paul Kaba Thiefa. Burkina Faso has struggled to build a democratic country where Christians and Muslims have lived side by side in peace. The peace and resilience of the Burkinabe people is certainly being tested to the extreme. It is my hope that you and the Burkinabe people will persevere and protect your liberty, democracy, and the right to freedom of religion.

If there is some way that this committee can support your efforts, please let me know. The staff of our Committee on International Justice and Peace (IJP) and I often work with our State Department and the United States Agency for International Development to find ways to support Church and civil society efforts in Africa to bring peace to difficult conflict situations. Your ideas and guidance are essential to the efforts of the IJP staff.

In closing, rest assured of my prayers and solidarity in this difficult time.

Fraternally yours in the Risen Lord,

Most Reverend Timothy P. Broglio
Archbishop for the Military Services
Chair, Committee on International Justice and Peace