

PEACE FOR CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

To all of you who seek for peace :

Peace !

I invite you, this month, to pray for peace in Central Africa. Since 2003, this country is divided between two factions : one, named the anti-balaka faction, supports the former president François Bozizé ; the other, named the Seleka, supports the former president Michel Djotodia. This political and military conflict is becoming an inter-community conflict now that many exactions against civilians, muslims or christians, who flee from villages to seek refuge in the bush. The conflict also has an international dimension as the UN Security Council, on the 5th of December 2013, mandated by the resolution 2127 an international Mission to support Central Arica led by the African Union (MISCA) for 12 months, in order to end the total failure of public order, the absence of the rule of law and inter-confessional tensions.

The Bishops of the Central African Republic insist upon the fact that the resolution of the crisis cannot be achieved without the participation of their fellow citizens, and invite them to take responsibility in this crisis that tipped the nation into chaos and opposed them to one another. For them, "political games and respect of human beings, created in the image and likeness of god". More than a political struggle, the bishops of Central Africa assert that "the real fight to be fought is that of development, economic recovery and fight against poverty, misery, impunity". Concretely, the bishops suggest different solutions such as : refunding the security apparatus by restoring urgently a republican army, formed and equipped in order to ensure the security of the national territory and the security of the people of Central Africa ; reducing the transition period and organizing elections very quickly ; establishing an international and independent commission of investigation in order to shed light on the violations of human rights in Central Africa ; sending peacekeeping soldiers as soon as possible given the complexity of the process on the field; disarming without complacency the former-seleka and anti-balaka, and any person in possession of weapons; starting to demobilize, disarm and repatriate the mercenaries from Tchad and Sudan, and reinserting soldiers from Central Africa; promoting the dialogue between worshippers of different religions who cohabit in Central Africa; repairing and compensate the victims of the rebellion; fighting against the system of social exclusion based on ethnicity, religion and regional identity; getting the relations with neighboring countries right, especially with Tchad

(http://justice-paix.cef.fr/IMG/pdf/Reconstruisons_ensemble_notre_pays_dans_la_paix.pdf).

So that peace comes back to this country, let us pray the Lord:

O Lord of Peace, your Son Jesus-Christ, by his death and Resurrection, has destroyed the wall of hate between all peoples. We pray You for our sisters and brothers of Central Africa: may them be able to disarm the hands, the heart and the spirit; may them get back confidence, tolerance and forgiveness; finally, may them renew their hope in You and in mankind. May them live thus in the culture of truth, of justice and of peace that Jesus brought us. Amen.

Kindest regards,

br. Irénée Rezende Guimarães

Benedictine Monk at Notre-Dame Abbey, Tournay, France.

Tournai, 18th April 2014.