

ASUMA STATEMENT

On the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the looting of the country's natural resources

We, Major Superiors of Institutes of consecrated life and Institutes of apostolic life in the Democratic Republic of Congo convened for a Plenary Assembly session from November 2 through November 8, 2003 at Centre Catholique 'Nganda', are pleased by the peace efforts undertaken in the Democratic Republic of Congo thanks to the contribution of a number of men and women of good will. While remaining watchful, we encourage the transitional process and the launching of the institutions of the republic preparatory to free and transparent elections for a Congo always and for ever united and prosperous from its riches for its people.

Through our prayers and our apostolic commitments, we will never cease to get involved by the side of our people, especially the dispossessed and the voiceless in order to build a nation which respects each and everyone's rights and duties. Deriving strength from our faith, prompted by hope and moved by a supportive solidarity in line with the logic of the gospel, we grieve over the three million dead victims of the sons of this country and their allies thirsty for power and money. Moreover, we denounce the systematic looting of the natural riches of our country in the interest of multinational companies comparable to predators which, controlled by shameless profit, continue to spread death and devastation everywhere, plunging an entire nation in an unspeakable misery with detrimental consequences to future generations.

Therefore, we rise against the silence, the opposition to progress of our leaders and especially against anyone stirring up ethnic hatred among our people in order to establish their divide-and-conquer policy. Furthermore, we condemn what seems to be nothing more nor less than a conspiracy of several international institutions, following all the reports published in recent years by the United Nations and human rights organizations. The impunity of all the massacres, of all kinds of crime – assassinations, robbery, rape, desecration of sites of worship, destruction of hospitals, schools, etc. – perpetrated since 1996 up to now, the indifference about the looting of the resources of the Democratic Republic of Congo as well as the continued presence of foreign troops, more particularly from Rwanda, are likely to arouse hostilities and to put off the attempt to build up a society reconciled with itself and with its past history, its present and its future.

However, as consecrated men and women, we commit ourselves to work always and everywhere for reconciliation of ourselves with God, with our neighbor in order to reconcile the peoples of the Great Lakes region of Central Africa and of all Africa. Indeed we are convinced that only reconciled with ourselves, with our neighbor and with the bordering countries shall we, Congolese, build a country more beautiful than ever before, based upon peace and justice. Therefore, we deplore our lack of prophetic witness in the face of some situations of injustice, demand the truth and reparations for the crimes perpetrated, and call upon the support of all men and women of good will passionate about justice, truth, and anxious to live in a world responsible for every human being.

We hail the courage of all consecrated men and women, of priests and lay people, of members of the Catholic Church and of every person who shares the suffering of the Congolese people in this time of war and insecurity. May the blood of our martyrs make our hearts fruitful in love for each person and in hope so that God's reign may come on earth as it does in heaven, here at home and everywhere.

Kinshasa, November 8, 2003