

Solidarity message in standing together with the people of Democratic Republic of Congo

As at April 2023 until now the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is among the top ten (10) Watchlist 2023 according to Rescue.org. The Global Conflict Tracker (2023) suggests that death tolls over the decades' long conflicts is estimated to reach over 3 million people.

The UNHCR (2023) asserts that ***“some 5.6 million Congolese are internally displaced (IDPs) in the DRC, with over 4 million in the eastern provinces of South Kivu, North Kivu and Ituri alone. Additionally, over 990,000 refugees and asylum-seekers from the DRC are currently sheltered across the African continent”***.

We are very much aware of varied roles and actions ongoing in responding to the needs of victims in a multisectoral humanitarian way. We know that Christians and other religious bodies are responding to the crisis in DRC. We commend the ECC/The Baptist Community in Central Africa (CBCA), ECC/Community Association of Evangelical Churches of Lulonga (CADELU), the United Evangelical Mission (UEM) and all others who are forefront in providing humanitarian support to victims.

Sadly, the security situation especially in the eastern DRC has continued to deteriorate with intensive fighting since March 2023 between the March 23 Movement (M23), an armed group, and the Congolese forces. Major disease outbreak, worsen food insecurity, school disruption are just few of the impacts of the conflict.

Firmly rooted in the preamble of the Constitution of DRC is *“United by destiny and history around the noble ideas of liberty, fraternity, solidarity, justice, peace and work; Driven by our common will to build in the heart of Africa a State under the rule of law and a powerful and prosperous Nation based on a real political, economic, social and cultural democracy”*. May we kindly remind all the actors to this very statement which is the aspiration of the people of DRC and call for the adherence to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of Child and the Rights of Women who are among the most vulnerable in conflict situation. Furthermore, article 12 states ***“All Congolese are equal before the law and have the right to equal protection by the law”***. Article 52 also states ***“All Congolese have the right to peace and security on the national as well as on the international level***. So are articles 14, 15, 16, 17, 43, etc.

We are not convinced that the government and all the other world leaders do not have what it takes to end the conflicts in DRC. We know they can do it and we are calling on them just to do so on time. The time to act is now. We are making a passionate appeal to the over 100 armed groups operating in eastern Congo to consider the plights of babies, children, pregnant women, elderly persons and many other vulnerable people to put down their weapons and accept dialogue as the best way to finding solution to their needs.

The International Community of Diaconic Management (ICDM) on this day Wednesday, June 7, 2023 makes this Solidarity message as sign of togetherness in mind and spirit in support with our sisters and brothers from the ICDM, the people of eastern Congo and the republic.

Signed. 07.06.2023

Rev. Godwin Ampony

Chairperson, International Community of Diaconic Management