



July 17, 2025

Most Reverend José Moko Ekanga
Bishop of Idiofa
Democratic Republic of the Congo
President
Association of Episcopal Conferences of Central Africa (ACEAC)
General Secretariat
B.P. 20511
Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Dear Bishop Moko,

On behalf of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on International Justice and Peace, I write to express our profound ecclesial solidarity with the bishops of the Association of Episcopal Conferences of Central Africa (ACEAC) and all the faithful of Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and Rwanda, as you work to defend human dignity and propose peaceful alternatives to violence in the Great Lakes sub-region. As brothers, we stand with you in the face of the cycles of war that have grieved your people for so long, and particularly with our brothers and sisters in Eastern DRC, who continue to suffer the impacts of a deadly conflict that risks engulfing the sub-region.

We are hopeful that the peace agreement signed by the foreign ministers of the DRC and Rwanda on June 27th in Washington will serve as a tangible step towards addressing the complex crisis that has caused such grave violence to our brothers and sisters in Kivu, and the Great Lakes more broadly. We pray that this agreement serves as an effective complement to the regional and international peace processes that are underway. We also recognize that lasting peace cannot be achieved without inclusive dialogue, care for those wounded and traumatized by war, and respect for the role of the people as artisans of peace and stewards of the land's natural resources.

As diplomatic efforts continue, we recall [Pope Francis' prophetic exhortation during his Apostolic Journey to the DRC in 2023](#): "Room needs to be made for diplomacy that is authentically human, for a diplomacy where peoples are concerned for other peoples, for a diplomacy centred not on control over land and resources, expansionism and increased profits, but rather on providing opportunities for people to grow and develop."

We are grateful for the witness of the bishops of ACEAC and your flocks in Burundi, the DRC, and Rwanda, as you transcend borders and entrenched divisions to live out your evangelical mission as peacebuilders, "transform[ing] deadly swords into plowshares for



the development of the sub-region.”¹ The Catholic faithful in the U.S. appreciate the opportunity to fraternally accompany you through the charitable and humanitarian work of Catholic Relief Services in your countries. We are also united in praying that your aspirations for reconciliation, justice, and peace in the sub-region be realized in abundance.

We join in the [prayer of Pope Leo XIV](#), following the beatification of Goma native and “man of peace” Floribert Bwana Chui bin Kositi on June 15th: “May the long-awaited peace in Kivu, in Congo, and across all of Africa come soon — through the intercession of the Virgin Mary and Blessed Floribert.”

Fraternally Yours in Christ,

The Most Reverend A. Elias Zaidan
Bishop of Maronite Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon
Chairman, Committee on International Justice and Peace

Cc: Fr. Jean Pierre Badidike, Secretary General, ACEAC

¹ACEAC, « Heureux les artisans de paix » : Message des Évêques membres de l’ACEAC à la population de la sous-région des Grands-Lacs. (Feb 26, 2025). https://eglisecatholique.bi/images/2025-ACEAC/Francais-Message_des_Evques_de_lACEAC_la_population_des_Grands_Lacs.pdf