



United States
Conference of
Catholic Bishops

Committee on
International Justice
and Peace

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September 16, 2025

Most Reverend Melchisédech Sikuli Paluku
Bishop of Butembo-Beni
B.P. 179
Butembo
North Kivu
Democratic Republic of the Congo

Your Excellency,

On behalf of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Committee on International Justice and Peace (IJP), I offer our solidarity and profound condolences at the loss of dozens of our brothers and sisters massacred in attacks in the Lubero and Beni territories of North Kivu on September 8th and 9th.

In spiritual closeness with you and the people of your Diocese, we implore God to comfort the families who mourn these defenseless civilians, many of whom were brutally murdered while themselves mourning at a funeral service. We pray fervently for those wounded, traumatized, and displaced by these grievous acts of violence.

We offer our fraternal prayers for you, Your Excellency, and for the faithful of the Diocese of Butembo-Beni, as you traverse this time of great suffering. May the Lord bring hope, justice, and protection to the Congolese people, and particularly those of eastern Congo, who, despite efforts to bring security and peace to the region, continue to endure cycles of murderous violence and oppression.

We stand in solidarity with all the Catholic faithful in the Democratic Republic of the Congo as you prepare to unite for a National Day of Peace, Democracy and Living Together, on September 21st. Through the intercession of Mary, Queen of Peace, may peace reign in Kivu, throughout the DRC, and the entire Great Lakes Region.

Fraternally Yours in Christ,

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

CC: Most Reverend Archbishop Fulgence Muteba, Archbishop of Lubumbashi, President of the National Episcopal Conference of Congo (CENCO)