

**DIOCESE of BUTEMBO BENI**

## **CARITAS BUTEMBO-BENI**

**B.P. 179 Butembo République Démocratique du Congo**

**Tel. +243 998110763, +243 824953718 E-mail : caritasbube@gmail.com**

### **A YEAR OF CARNAGE, A HEAVY TOLL .**

2<sup>nd</sup> October 2014 ... 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2015. For a year now the spectre of death has gripped the region and town of Beni in the province of North-Kivu in eastern DR Congo. This spectre emboldens the terrorists, allegedly members of the ADF-NALU, who have used their machetes, knives and axes, their hammers and bullets to kill and maim the old and the young, men, women and children.

Strangely enough, even the United Nations' MONUSCO soldiers have not been immune to the barbarity of these terrorists. For 365 days, the blood of innocents has been flowing on the soil of 'Great North' Kivu, in the western part of the diocese of Butembo-Beni. In the Mbau quarter of the town of Beni itself, the death squad has made its presence felt. Throughout the year, the ADF-NALU suspects have day and night, sharpened their knives and carefully prepared their weapons to eliminate 467 peaceful citizens and kidnap 882 people of whom, according to the those in leadership in Beni Mbau, only 162 (18.4%) have returned home. The fate of the other 720 hostages is known only to God.

There was also the KIKINGI carnage that occurred in 2013 on the Mutwanga-Nobili axis and the even greater number of ambush victims on the Eringeti-Beni axis. The harbinger of widespread carnage dates back to December 2013, on the Kikingi-Mwenda axis (at the foot of the Ruwenzori mountains) where 23 people were massacred by associates of the ADF-NALU rebels. Despite the exhortation for an unconditional restoration of peace by the Bishop of Butembo-Beni and the Bishops of the ecclesiastical province of Bukavu, and despite the concentration of proven loyalist troops in the city and region of Beni who were sent to punish the ADF-NALU, these enemies of peace are still making their presence felt. Their strength is in their use of asymmetric guerilla tactics, a terrorism that is slowly becoming the norm in the east of the DRC. Indeed, whereas in the early days of the carnage large-scale massacres were carried out mainly with blades, in villages such as NGADI, ERINGETI, AILI, MAMOVE, KATIMADOKO, MUNZABAYE, KASINGA, BUILI, KOKOLA, MBAU, OICHA, MAYIMOYA, KAINAMA, MALIBO, KAMBI YA MIBA, SULUNGWE, MUKIDA, MABUO, MONGOMONGO, MALOLU, TIPIOMBA, ONTOTO, LINZOSISENE, MUKOKO, ... today this method is giving way to another: ambushes of travellers on Highway No.4, the burning of cars and merchandise, and the killing of the passengers. For what purpose? An open secret!

Terrorist activity seems to be growing in the region, with countless incidents being carried out allegedly by ADF-NALU terrorists in just September 2015. Between Oicha and Eringeti, in the space of a week, two vehicles were set on fire, allegedly by the ADF-NALU, and a motorcycle-taxi driver and his client were killed. On Friday, September 18, there was looting and a Fuso vehicle was burned near Eringeti. Three days later, September 21, another large vehicle was set on fire at night a few kilometers from Eringeti. Then on September 29 on the same stretch of road, two young people (18-year-old Joseph KATEMBO KIVO and Germain KATEMBO VIVALYA), travelling on a motor bike from Oicha to LINZO, were killed not far from KOKOLA. All these incidents allegedly by the ADF-NALU.

The consequences of this carnage on the life of the population are unbearable. In fact, most of the citizens of the region and town of Beni have been traumatised, directly or indirectly, by the killing of a close friend, relative, neighbour or classmate. Large numbers of families, probably about 14,400, are still homeless and in great need of humanitarian help. The families who have been housing them for a year also deserve aid. The health facilities and schools have difficulty in functioning because the people, in their grinding poverty, are unable to pay health bills or school fees. The main reason for this is the proven destabilisation of the local economy which has resulted from people being unable to get to their fields – and the principal activity here is farming.

Multidimensional, urgent humanitarian activities (food security, essential household items, protection, health and nutrition, education, ...) preceded by thorough assessments are of paramount importance for this area. May men and women of good will, caring hands and compassionate hearts come quickly to the rescue of this peaceful population that keenly needs to recover its dignity by means of large-scale humanitarian projects. The Bishop of the Diocese of Butembo-Beni, Mgr Sikuli PALUKU Melchizedek, aware of the suffering of his sheep and in solidarity with families that have been suffering directly and indirectly, has just decreed one month's Mass intention for the victims of the carnage of the city and territory of Beni over the past year.