

## **Contract of peaceful cohabitation (neighbourhood Teza ii of Kamenge), Burundi**

We, the inhabitants of Kamenge, neighbourhood Teza II, the Hutu and Tutsi, displaced persons, returnees and receiving communities living in the neighbourhood:

- Considering that Burundi has just spent more than ten years in war
- While the war has largely destroyed Kamenge, where the Tutsi were driven from their homes, and thereafter the Hutu have been driven off their homes, and where populations have been victims of looting, killings, rape and many other crimes that were committed in time of war. We affirm that:
- Our life together here in the neighbourhood of Teza II has been largely destroyed by people from outside, be it by the politicians, the military or other wrongdoers
- During the war, the Tutsi have left their households and have become refugees, driven away particularly by fear
- The Hutu were also expelled and persecuted with such gravity that some have found themselves with the Tutsi in camps for displaced or elsewhere. As the saying goes in Kirundi: "Nta mwonga ubura isato iba idahizwe" (there is no blood without thorns). Wrongdoers especially among young people have committed crimes to those who are not of their ethnic group, have persecuted them, looted their property and even killed.

We Hutu affirm that:

- We, who have already returned home, hope that our neighbours also return to their homes so that we live may together.
- We are sincerely preparing to welcome them. They must occupy their original plots of land.
- We will help them to rebuild their homes, and they will also help us to rebuild ours.
- We will fight together against any perpetrator or enemy who seeks to destroy our neighbourhood.

We Tutsi affirm that:

- We are very pleased to see our neighbours again. We all want regain our homes to join our neighbours who are already returned. We know that in large part what happened to our country was a consequence of an unhealthy politics of the country, which takes advantage of the ignorance of small people, which manipulated us and caused thousands of deaths.
- Even if some remain scared, we wish that there are many meetings and visits to restore confidence between us.

All of us Hutu and Tutsi, aware that some very serious crimes have been committed by the people of our neighbourhood themselves, from now on refrain from pointing the finger of blame to avoid the risk of going back to conflict. However we hope that the guilty ask forgiveness and pardon is already granted automatically.

However, there where there are reasons to criticise his neighbour one might seize the committee elected herewith to help resolve the matter.

We the Hutu and Tutsi, we agree as follows:

- No Hutu shall kill or persecute a Tutsi for ethnic, political or other reasons.
- No Tutsi shall persecute or kill a Hutu for ethnic, political or other reasons.
- We will be always united in order to withstand any political or other onslaught. We commit ourselves to the following:
  - Live together in peace
  - Mutually forgive
  - Begin a new life devoid of mistrust, contempt, and of hatred
  - Forming a united front while we supporting each other
  - Combat all destructive messages, be it political or otherwise
  - We assist each other to rebuild the houses destroyed
  - To make a peaceful cohabitation devoid of injustice
  - Restore the confidence between us by visits or meetings To ensure our commitments stand, we elect a committee, which will be responsible for enforcing them. The

Committee is composed of six persons:

Two representatives of young people: 1 living in the neighbourhood

Two representatives of men: 1 living in the neighbourhood

Two representatives of women: 1 living in the neighbourhood

On behalf of the inhabitants of Teza II, the Committee elected: [Name & Signature]

The representative of young people living in Kamenge : [Name & Signature]

The representative of young people displaced: [Name & Signature]

The representative men living in Kamenge: [Name & Signature]

The representative of internally displaced men: [Name & Signature]

The representative of women living in Kamenge: [Name & Signature]

The representative of displaced women: [Name & Signature]

We call on ACORD, CADEKA and all other benefactors to support us in the following:

- Maintain meetings and other collective work to strengthen the trust between us.
- Rebuild and especially in offering us iron sheets.
- To prepare a meeting of young people so that they too undertake to meet these commitments because they constitute a group easily manipulated.

These commitments are approved by 150 people living in the neighbourhood of Teza II, representing all segments of the population.

Signed in the neighbourhood Teza II, in the house of the bishop Dacillia Joseph, alias Buyengero, 30/06/04.

Source: Community Peace Recovery and Reconciliation: A Handbook for Generating

Leadership for Sustainable Peace and Recovery among Divided Communities (Nairobi, The National Steering Committee on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management (NSC), Ministry of Provincial Administration and Internal Security, Office of the President; Agency for Co-operation & Research in Development (ACORD) and United Nations Development Programme, 2011), pp. 57-59