

On Friday, March 13, 2015, religious superiors in Rome who have communities in the eastern region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (specifically the province of North Kivu) gathered at the general house of the Augustinians of the Assumption to discuss the deteriorating state of affairs in this area of the country. The country has been suffering from civil conflict for almost 20 years and the United Nations has estimated that more than 5 million people have died in the RDC during this time directly from the violence or indirectly from malnutrition and disease occasioned by it.

Since this past October a new series of atrocities has occurred in the diocese of Beni-Butembo. Hundreds of inhabitants of the region have been brutally slaughtered either in night-time raids or while they are working in their fields. Theories concerning the identity of the assassins abound but no one has been able to positively identify them because they wear stolen uniforms from the national army and leave no survivors. What makes the situation even worse in the minds of these victims is that, given crises in other parts of the world (Middle east, Nigeria), the world press has taken little notice of what is happening in the Congo at the moment. These people feel that they have been forgotten and abandoned.

In order to discuss this situation, the Assumptionists, the religious congregation that has the largest number of religious working in this diocese, invited all religious communities involved in the area to a meeting not only to share information but also to discus ways in which they might be able to draw the world's attention to their plight, especially the international press.

The group decided to draft a letter that will be sent out to Vatican press agencies and all major press organizations, as well as to the superiors general of all religious orders.

Please pray for an end to this terrible conflict that has left so many without home or hope.











