



Human Rights Council – 31st session
Item 10 – Interactive Dialogue on Burundi

Speaker: Albert Hengelaar

22 March 2016

Mr. Vice-President,

The World Evangelical Alliance is concerned about the societal crisis in Burundi. This is the time for preventive action and a pro-active approach of peace institutions. This is first and foremost the responsibility of the Burundian government and people. Yet, we have to remember other countries where violence disrupted societies into battlefields. This is the time to avoid another Somalia or South Sudan.

The Burundi government can be offered the example of Sierra Leone and Central African Republic. In the latter country in December 2012 a crisis emerged leading to widespread anarchy. In due course a real inclusive political dialogue was started across the communities by the Interfaith Peace Platform, based on a perception that citizens belong together in one nation. A U.N. peace keeping umbrella was solicited and provided. What we see today are cautious signs of optimism. Violence did not win the day.

The key to peace is real inclusiveness. The government of Burundi has the prime responsibility to seek that. The government has the means of the state. They are meant for peace and prosperity. Also for minorities. A dialogue among friendly interest groups is not what will sustain a society. The minorities need to be included in the political process without violence backed threats.

The World Evangelical Alliance has the following questions for UNHCR:

1. How does it envisage that peace can be retained in the situation where human rights institutions are threatened?
2. How does it envisage that a real inclusive political dialogue across the population starts to avoid a “winner takes all” illusion?

These questions are all the more relevant as the country is a member of this council.

Thank you Mr. Vice-President