

GADHOP

Group of Associations for the Defense of Human Rights and Peace

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Declaration of the member organizations of the Group of Associations for the Defense of Human Rights and Peace (GADHOP) aiming for the taking of firm measures to eradicate the abduction of the civilian population in the Beni and Lubero Territories of North Kivu

The organizations of civil society together with human rights partners and members of GADHOP are concerned about the continuing abductions of civilians in the Territory of Beni by foreign militias, ADF/NALU (Allied Democratic Forces/National Army for the Liberation of Uganda), and above all local militias, notably the militia Mai Mai or the Union for the Rehabilitation of Democracy in Congo (URDC) led by Colonels **Hilaire Kombi** and **Eric Kenso**, both former members of the Army of the Congolese People (RCD-KML) and the FARDC.

Even if this last movement is not the only actor in the abduction of civilian populations, because the ADF/NALU has already devoted itself to this practice for a long period of time, it has nevertheless claimed the abduction of 3 Assumptionist priests of the Parish of Mbau on October 19, 2012 and is regularly recognized as the principal actor in multiple other cases for which members of Civil Society and families of the victims have made attempts to negotiate their release.

This practice of abduction began in 2010, in the Sector of Beni-Mbau, in retaliation for “**Operation Ruwenzori**” led at the time by the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC) against the ADF/NALU and other local militias in the northern part of the National Parc of Virunga.

In examining the dates of this time period, the balance sheets have been abnormally grave. The monitoring statistics led essentially by the civil society of the Territory of Beni, and principally by the NGO Good Samaritan, presents the following situation:

- 2010: 37 people abducted;
- 2011: 20 people abducted;
- 2012: 45 people abducted;
- January-June 2013: 200 people abducted
 - Total: **302** people abducted (Annex the list of victims)

For three days, from **March 14, 2013 to March 16, 2013**, the Provincial Government, on the orders of Governor Julien Paluku, organized a “Social Dialogue” of all the living forces of the **Territory of Beni** in the **City of Oïcha** concerning the strategies for fighting against this phenomenon of abduction in March 2013. One must note that the Province of North Kivu has never kept its promises to financially, materially, and strategically support the follow-up Committee funded by sales taxes. Up to present, the

Committee has only held two meetings of which the resolutions are not made accessible to the population and the follow-up is not made by the provincial authority.

Interrogated on the efficacy of this Committee, local leaders call it the “*Committee of window-dressing*” (alt: deceptive committee). Thus, the provincial authority can brandish the results of these sales taxes to justify that it has not stood idly by, whereas the reality on the ground reveals nothing more than the pure and simple abandonment of the population of this Territory of Beni by the Congolese State that stands out by its absence: **during four years, from 2010 to 2013, the Congolese State watched, while doing nothing, as 302 people were abducted of which some were cruelly assassinated by militias on its national territory without doing anything!**

The civil society has not ceased to mobilize itself to denounce this situation without obtaining the least engagement of the Congolese State. On multiple occasions, the members of the civil society have warned the military command in place, notably Colonel Murenzi of the 808th Regiment, about the passing of militias. This officer—who commands more than 3,000 men in the region—always responds that he “*has not received the order to attack*”.

Moreover, since May 28, 2013, the civil society has organized a popular demonstration demanding peace following the kidnapping on May 23, 2013 of 17 people at Mbau by the Mai Mai of Hilaire of which only two girls were able to escape and return to the village. Since this date, the civil society decreed that the refusal to pay taxes until the moment when the Congolese State would take charge in liberating the people abducted by the militias would be considered civil disobedience. This position does not appear to mobilize the efforts of the public authority and the civil society does not know how to do otherwise to obtain concrete action.

It is in response to this situation that the civil society of Congolese and International organizations of human rights recommends to the national authority of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to the Organization Mission of the United Nations (MONUSCO) the following:

1. To the Congolese national authority :

- To diligently begin serious investigations on the repeated abductions in the Territory of Beni with the goal of punishing all of the implicated parties as an example to others;
- To lead an exemplary military operation to track and put an end to these militias and restore the authority of the State in the entirety of the zone of Mbau-Kamango which has become a “No man’s land”;
- To renew a frank dialogue and to replace the confidence of the populations of the Territory of Beni.

2. To MONUSCO and to other International Actors :

- To accelerate the readiness of the Neutral International Force in order to neutralize the armed groups of the East;
- To reinforce local organizations in the leading of investigations on the profound causes of the proliferation of armed groups in the two Territories of Beni and Lubero with the

goal of the identification of suitable solutions for the reestablishment of lasting peace in North Kivu.

Declaration made in Butembo on July 18, 2013

Signing organizations:

1. Good Samaritan/Coordination from Beni to Oicha
2. African Association of Human Rights, ASADHO/North Kivu
3. Human Dignity in the World, HDW/BENI
4. Women's Solidarity for Peace and Integral Development, SOFEPADI/Beni
5. Great Lakes Human Right Program, GLHRP/Beni
6. Women Judges for the Defense of Women's Rights, FJDF/Butembo
7. Solidarity for Social Promotion and Peace, SOPROP/Goma
8. Engaged Judges for the Defense of Human Rights, JEDHO/Butembo
9. Union for the Defense of Peasant Interests, SYDIP/Butembo
10. PEACE OF CHRIST BUTEMBO
11. Engaged Women for the Promotion of Integral Health, FEPSI
12. Association of the Defense of Women's Rights, ADDF/Butembo
13. Union of Working Women, SYFET/BUTEMBO
14. Collective of Women Journalists, CFJ
15. Association for the Development of Peasant Initiatives, ASSODIP/Goma