

**DECLARATION OF THE BANYAMULENGE COMMUNITY AT THE END OF THE
INTRACOMMUNITY FORUM HELD FROM FEBRUARY 13 TO 15, 2020**

Excellency the Prime Minister and Head of Government;

Honorable deputies and senators;

Excellency ladies and gentlemen members of the government;

The coordinator of the National Monitoring Mechanism of the Addis Ababa Agreement;

National Director of Interpeace;

National Director of ADEPAE;

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

It is with great honor that we express our heartfelt thanks to His Excellency the President of the Republic, Félix Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo, Head of State, for having enabled these historic meetings to take place. We also express our gratitude to the coordinator of the MNS for his active involvement in the organization of this forum. We cannot forget the efforts and sacrifices made by the Interpeace and ADEPAE organizations for the effective holding and success of this work.

I am going to give you the content of the declaration which sanctions the work of this forum.

We, members of the Banyamulenge Community, from all continents, gathered from February 13 to 15 of the current year, in the city of Kinshasa, in the Intra-community Forum, at the invitation of the National Monitoring Mechanism of the framework agreement of Addis Ababa, in partnership with ADEPAE and Interpeace, and under the high patronage of His Excellency Félix Antoine TSHISEKEDI TSHILOMBO, President of the Republic, Head of State, to

- Reflect on the security and humanitarian crisis prevailing in the regions and highlands of Fizi, Uvira and Mwenga,
- Express our concern about the deterioration of the security and humanitarian situation in the regions and highlands;
- Affirm that this is not an inter-community conflict or an inter-ethnic war, but rather a war waged by a coalition of known, structured and equipped armed groups with macabre objectives against our community;

- State that we are convinced that this planned and unjust war is clearly aimed at ethnic cleansing and the uprooting of our community from the land of its ancestors;
- Consider the extremely heavy toll in terms of loss of human life, malicious destruction, housing and looting of almost all of the cattle herd on the scale of three territories in the highlands;
- Consider that the acts and facts reported are based on an ideology of ethnic hatred, persecution and discrimination of a minority in violation of the constitution and laws of the Republic;

ASK FOR THE FOLLOWING:

A. To the Government

1. Protect and secure the civilian population made up of nationals of the Banyamulenge community as well as other neighboring communities (Babembe, Banyindu, Bifuliru and Bavira);
2. Urgently release the resources necessary for humanitarian aid to rescue the population in distress (food, medicine and blankets) and for the reconstruction of infrastructure and the resettlement of populations;
3. Strengthen the authority of the State in the plains and highlands of Fizi, Uvira and Mwenga (administration, police, army, justice), subject to recurrent conflicts;
4. Prosecute the perpetrators of the crimes and propagators of ethnic hatred, including in social networks;
5. Take measures to prohibit the politicization of the issue of nationality by politicians in bad position as well as discrimination linked to facies;
6. Pass a law that strengthens the criminalization and repression of tribalism and the expression and spread of ethnic hatred;
7. Establish a clear and accepted policy of unity and national cohesion by including it in the education program and promoting reconciliation between local communities;
8. Raise awareness and disarm local armed groups and install a DDR center in the middle and highlands of Fizi, Uvira and Mwenga;

9. Eradicate foreign armed groups including RED TABARA, FOREBU, FDLR and FNL and repatriate them to their countries of origin;
10. Rehabilitate the Banyamulenge chiefdoms created respectively on 06 October 1891, June 03, 1906 and May 02, 1910 suppressed by an unjust colonial decree of December 05, 1933 of Minister L. FRANCK;
11. Relieve and punish commanders of units deployed to local level which were illustrated in the complicity with the armed groups against the civil population in the means and high plateaus of Fizi, Uvira and Mwenga;
12. Prosecute criminally and judge in a fairground the authors of the rapes and assassinations committed in the middle and highlands by certain elements of the FARDC;
13. Rebuild the burned villages which number more than 200, ie more than 7000 houses, including schools, health centers, hospitals, churches and all other public infrastructure:
14. Locate the looted herd still held in various places and seize the cows which are sold in particular on the markets of KABAMBARE, SALAMABILA, KINDU, LUGUSHA, KAMITUGA, MISISI, MUTAMBALA, KILEMBWE and return them to the owners;
15. Dismantle the mafia networks and punish the administrators and officers involved in the trade in looted cows;
16. Proceed with compensation and compensation for the damage suffered by the population as a result of systematic looting of the livestock, estimated at more or less at 125,852 head of cattle killed or carried away to date;
17. Install effectively the coordinators of the municipality of Minembwe and other new entities in South Kivu like the cities of BARAKA, UVIRA and KAMITUGA in order to strengthen the authority of the State;
18. Organize tripartite UNHCR-Host Country-DRC meetings for the repatriation of members of our refugee community to neighboring countries;
19. Establish a development program and projects in the space of medium and high plateaus of Fizi, Uvira and Mwenga, integrating all the communities and aiming to fight against poverty;
20. Ensure the urbanization of the municipality of Minembwe and the construction of roads connecting the three Territories.

B. To the Banyamulenge Community

1. Establish regular consultation structures internally as well as with other communities (BARZA INTERCOMMUNAUTAIRE) in order to prevent any dispute that could compromise the peaceful coexistence of communities;
2. Put an end to internal divisions which harm harmony between members of the community. This intra-community dialogue testifies to our desire to achieve this and thus mark out future dialogue with other communities;
3. Promote and support development projects of common interest with a view to consolidating peaceful coexistence between communities;
4. Avoid globalization in the event of faults committed by a member of another community;

C. To neighboring communities:

1. The municipality of Minembwe is governed by law. It cannot be a justification for the war in progress. It should no longer be mentioned in our dialogues aimed at peace and peaceful coexistence between neighboring communities. In all cases, the Banyamulenge cannot answer for government decrees;
2. Establish structures for regular consultation with other communities (BARZA INTERCOMMUNAUTAIRE) with a view to preventing any dispute that could jeopardize the peaceful coexistence of the communities;
3. Promote and support development projects of common interest with a view to consolidating peaceful coexistence between communities;
4. Avoid globalization in the event of faults committed by a member of another community;

D. The Banyamulenge Community wishes to make the following updates:

1. It does not support an armed group from far or near. The Gumino group, which is only a group of soldiers awaiting reintegration into the FARDC, is wrongly attributed to it;
2. The so-called TWIRWANEHO group (Self defence) is only a spontaneous organization of young and old dedicated to self-defence after having noticed the complicity and / or inaction of the FARDC deployed in Minembwe to ensure their security. ;

3. The desertion of the Col. RUKUNDA Michel of the regular forces was a personal decision and cannot be attributed to his community. Besides, several other officers from neighboring communities deserted before and after him without this being attributed to their communities;
4. The Banyamulenge community undertakes to participate in the awareness-raising process with the aim of obtaining an immediate cease-fire in order to give a chance for dialogue and peace;
5. The Banyamulenge community reaffirms its commitment, in the interest peace, to dialogue with neighboring communities. It reaches out to local armed groups and the communities from which they come. It requests the Government to organize this dialogue;
6. It undertakes to propose a plan to end the crisis;
7. The Banyamulenge community reiterates its legendary loyalty to the Republic and all its Institutions and undertakes to work for the restoration of peace and security, in particular, it renews its confidence in the FARDC and undertakes to cooperate for the return of peace.

Completed in Kinshasa on 02/15/2020

Thank you

/See original document for 49 signatories making this Declaration