

UN envoy and Church leaders in DR Congo condemn attacks against Catholic facilities

24 February 2017 – The United Nations peacekeeping mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the National Episcopal Conference of Congo, known as CENCO have called for an immediate end to the spate of violent attacks against Catholic facilities in several parts of the country.

The UN Organization Stabilization Mission (MONUSCO) and CENCO, along with the Apostolic Nunciature said they are “deeply concerned” about recent attacks on parishes and other Catholic facilities. According to the Mission, the attacks were particularly violent in the provinces of Kinshasa, Haut-Katanga, Kasai-Central and Kasai-Oriental.

MONUSCO chief Maman Sidikou, Monsignor Marcel Utembi, Archbishop of Kisangani and President of CENCO, and Monsignor Luis Mariano Montemayor, Apostolic Nuncio in the DRC, “strongly condemned” the violence, which they noted are punishable in Congolese criminal law.

They also reiterated that “places of worship belong to all, and as such, are supposed to be apolitical; Churches are also places of contemplation for the people and must be respected and protected. By attacking them, their perpetrators and/or sponsors are harming a common good of all Congolese.”

Call for the immediate cessation of these “deplorable acts,” MONUSCO, CENCO and the Apostolic Nunciature called on Congolese political actors to condemn them “just as firmly,” in order to frustrate any attempt to manipulate the implementation of the comprehensive and inclusive political agreement of 31 December 2016, which set out, among others, a timeframe for elections.