



**KWAZULU-NATAL  
CHRISTIAN COUNCIL**

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**STATEMENT FROM ZOOM MEETING**

HELD ON 5 AUGUST 2020

*by*

**DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC (DRC) OF CONGO KAIROS**

**KAIROS SOUTHERN AFRICA(SA)**

**NEHEMIAH HOPE PROJECT**

**AND THE METHODIST CHURCH OF SOUTHERN AFRICA (MCSA)**

Kairos SA, the MCSA, Kairos DRC and the Nehemiah Hope Project jointly held a meeting on 5 August 2020 and called upon all churches and religious entities to unite together to restore a just peace and human dignity to all in the DRC.

They feel this is attainable through mass mobilisation of grassroot churches and religious bodies. This be beneficial for the DRC and also for the entire continent of Africa. The DRC could become one of the strongest economic hubs that could steer Africa into a new era. All this could be started by the actions of local united church and inter-religious action facilitated by a Kairos movement in every corner of the DRC.

This was the strong message which came out of the third webinar in the four-part virtual launch of the “DRC Kairos” series featuring church leaders and social activists in the Congo and in South Africa. The “DRC Kairos” is a carefully crafted thought document clearly outlying the current situation in the Congo, and pointers towards achieving resolution.

“We are strongly convinced that peace, prosperity, and freedom are overdue in the DRC. We are making an urgent call on all of us: government, civil society, the church, local communities and the international community to take a different course of action. The difference we are envisaging is peace, justice, freedom and equality for all in DRC,” explains project co-ordinator, Rev Mike Vorster on behalf of the authors of the document, co-ordinated by the KZNCC (KwaZulu Natal Christian Council).

The word Kairos was an ancient Greek word Meaning “opportunity”, “season” or “fitting time”. The first South African Kairos Document was a theological statement issued in 1985

by a group of South African theologians challenging the churches response to the Apartheid regime's State of Emergency, originated by a group of church leaders in Soweto.

The factual context for the webinar series is the recent spate of appalling carnages whereby more than 1300 Congolese citizens have been brutally killed, women raped and mutilated thus far this year. Children too have not been spared. In recent weeks 15 and 16 July we heard of further atrocities in places like Kipupu where 220 people perished and again on 31 July 2020 in Sange.

“All these incidents remain grossly underreported as though African lives don't matter,” remarked Rev Vorster.

Noting how for decades and centuries this part of heaven in Africa has been turned into a constant living hell for all its citizens through the greed of international commercial interests and neighbouring states with constant threats of balkanisation.

We were reminded by Presiding Bishop of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa, Bishop Purity Malinga at the launch of the DRC Kairos on 31 July 2020 that: “Africa is endowed by enriching natural resources, and yet these resources continue to enrich people of other continents while the African people remain the poorest of the poor in the world. The situation is made worse by the self-serving leaders of the African countries, who sell their souls to enrich themselves and their connections at the expense of the masses they claim to lead. They turn a blind eye to the sufferings of their fellow Africans as they insist on pleasing colonisers (old and new) in exchange for power and money. It is time Africans unite and come in solidarity with each other to reject divisions, sponsored conflicts and tribal wars perpetuated for individual and foreign enrichment.”

We strongly condemn all these hellish activities perpetrated by sinister forces. And call that all perpetrators are brought to a swift justice. However, condemnation is not enough. It is therefore time to find a different pathway other than the cycle of violence and greed<sup>1</sup>

It is time to find a DRC Kairos pathway; whereby the higher values of dignity of all life is restored and maintained because all are created in the image of God

We applaud the work already begun through the Inter-religious council of the DRC; the Council of Churches and United Methodist Church of the DRC through their significant contribution to reunification; peace-making and peacebuilding since the 1990's. Kairos DRC wishes to expand this work enabling the church to grow its core calling of liberating the least; least and lost through its priestly; pastoral and prophetic functions.

Therefore Kairos SA, the MCSA and Kairos DRC meeting on 5 August 2020 calls upon all churches and religious entities to unite to restore a just peace and human dignity to all in the DRC. We feel that this is attainable through mass mobilisation of grassroot churches and religious bodies.

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<sup>1</sup> Toward a just peace and the restoration of human dignity for all citizens of the DRC

This we believe can be achieved through: Mass united church action by establishing Kairos driven Local Ecumenical <sup>2</sup>Action Reflection Networks; uniting churches to begin in earnest to offer people practical hope through the development of:

- a. Theological reflection – with reference to a Kairos framework
- b. Grassroots peace-making programmes
- c. Trauma healing opportunities
- d. Food security income generating projects
- e. Giving youth hope through Youth economic- empowerment projects

These Kairos Local Ecumenical <sup>3</sup>Action Reflection Networks (KLEARNs); and other progressive NGO's, like Nehemiah Hope will also be sources of first-hand knowledge of outbreaks of violence and atrocities and that they be linked constantly to connect other African bodies like KwaZulu-Natal Christian Council, MCSA and Kairos SA for further awareness raising, advocacy and solidarity action

Both Kairos DRC and Kairos SA are willing to assist with the training and enabling of such KLEARNs to be established.

Through Kairos DRC and Kairos SA, we approach South African Council of Churches; All Africa Conference of Churches and the World Council of Churches to add support to these actions

The Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA) together with the United Methodist Church (UMC) of the DRC will approach the African Methodist Council to support this Kairos initiative and call on all other denomination who have African church networks to do likewise.

Kairos DRC and Kairos SA will also approach Religions for Peace through the All Africa Council of Religions to do something similar with other religions within the DRC.

We are aware that the church itself is divided and needs to find its common call in Jesus Christ as peacemakers' healers and justice-seekers. We appeal to all churches to move beyond political partiality and other deviant forces that are currently tearing the body of Christ apart,

We call on all religious entities to channel all their prayers, resources and energies into breaking the bonds of hell so that an abundant life of heaven on earth for all especially the least and the last in the DRC, may be realised.

## **Ends**

*Issued on behalf of the KZNCC / DRC alliance*

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<sup>2</sup> (United Church)

<sup>3</sup> (United Church)

*Summary by Rev Mike Vorster*

*Issued By:*

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