



# CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE OF ENGLAND AND WALES

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[www.catholicchurch.org.uk](http://www.catholicchurch.org.uk)

*From the President – Cardinal Vincent Nichols*

16<sup>th</sup> February 2018

The Most Reverend Marcel Utambi Tapa  
Archbishop of Kisangani  
President – CENCO  
CENCO General Secretariat  
Kinshasa-Gombe  
Democratic Republic of the Congo

Your Excellency

The Bishops of England and Wales extend their fraternal concern and solidarity with the Bishops of the Congo Catholic Bishops' Conference during this ongoing time of instability and violence in your country.

We are aware of the efforts that the Bishops have made in laying down the general principles of democracy and the peaceful transfer of power to consolidate stability in your country through the Saint Sylvester agreement. We are also aware of the way in which your efforts have been thwarted by those who continue in the path of violence. We offer our sincere condolence to all who have lost loved ones, especially the members of your Bishops' Conference.

Your Excellency, the Bishops in England and Wales have called on their faithful people to join in the Holy Father's proposal for a day of fasting and prayer for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan and all other areas of conflict in the world next Friday, 23<sup>rd</sup> February. May this act of Christian witness and loving solidarity with you and your people bring about real change in the hearts of those who seek non-legitimate ways to exert power and influence.

The witness you and your people give is not only to democracy, but to the very fundamental human rights of freedom and dignity of the person that underpins all our Catholic teaching; your prophetic voice must be heard by all, within the Democratic Republic of the Congo and beyond.

We are willing to support you, especially through our agencies and through encouraging the UK Government to play a constructive and diplomatic role in this crisis. Above all, Your Excellency, be assured of our prayers and support as you continue in your dedicated service of the Church and all the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

With all good wishes and prayers,

Vincent Cardinal Nichols  
President