

**Speech by H.E. Andre NZAPAYEKE,
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Occasion: JM BUSHA 54 PEACE PLEDGE SIGNING

Title: THE SEED OF PEACE

Johannesburg, 19 October 2018

Your Excellency Former President Kgalema Motlanthe

Honourable Ministers and Former Ministers

Ambassadors and High Commissioners

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

My Brother Joseph Busha asked me to say something about peace to this honourable audience during this annual gala. I feel very humble and honoured by this request. I am convinced that most of you know more about this topic than myself because in my country, what we know the best is to fight, how to use AK47 and machete to massacre and send people as refugees to neighbouring countries who are also fighting since decades. We are still expecting peace to come by plane from the International Community. In many countries wars start easily, but they expect the solution to come from abroad, usually from those who are in the business of selling Kalashnikovs, landmines and hand grenades.

I admire this country, South Africa, I admire it for what you have achieved so far, because before 1994, for most of you, the daily life was equivalent to war, and as Trevor Noah said, most of you, blacks or coloured were born a crime. Through your efforts, you crossed rivers full of crocodiles and valleys of wild dogs to get to the top of the mountain and see the promised land. The promised land, you are heading to it since 94 and you were lucky to have leaders with vision, leaders who put the interests of the people first.

Despite the problems ahead, I would like to express my admiration for the people of South Africa who have done so far, the necessary sacrifice during 24 years to avoid civil war and destruction in the country. When I see the ongoing drama in many African countries, I would like to encourage you not to deviate from this road that is still a rough road, but that is being paved one square at a time as you move forward.

SECURITY SITUATION IN AFRICA

As expressed in the Brochure of the Foundation, peace precedes everything. The disaster we see in Africa is indeed caused by the lack of peace due to poverty and mismanagement. Forms of conflicts have evolved a lot in Africa in the past decades. The first conflicts were the liberation struggles targeting the end of the European domination on Africa and the plundering of its wealth by the colonial powers. After the independences, Africa experienced a wave of coups d'Etat. This was the case of The Republic of Togo, Benin, Ghana, DRC, CAR, Sudan, Uganda, Republic of Congo, Chad, Libya, Egypt, Liberia, Nigeria, Niger, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Comoros, etc. Since about a decade, the coups d'Etat have become very rare due to the pressure of the internal community, mainly the AU decision to systematically impose embargo on regimes issued from coups d'Etat.

After the series of coups d'Etat, we saw the emergence of rebellions and civil wars, as direct consequence of lack of democracy and confiscation of power by certain groups. Today rebellions and civil wars are active in countries such CAR, DRC, Sudan and South Sudan, Cameroon, Chad, Somalia, Nigeria, Senegal, Mali, Libya, Morocco. In some countries like Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Djibouti, Comoros, Ethiopia, Algeria, Uganda, a form of peace is back and efforts are made to rebuild these countries. Again, it is clear that peace is the key for development and welfare.

The most recent challenge for peace and security in Africa is as you know terrorism. Many African countries have already been affected or are still struggling with this phenomenon. Among them I can mention Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Somalia, CAR, Chad, Cameroon, Nigeria, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, South Africa, etc. One Ethiopian Airways was highjacked and crashed in the sea and an Air Afrique plane exploded in Niger. The entire Sahel region is now invaded by islamist terrorists such Boko Haram, Aqmi, Daesh and other and Libya has become a nest of terrorists and the largest centre for dissemination of arms through Africa.

As consequence of these situations, social and other infrastructures are in bad conditions in many countries and poverty is increasing and state capacity to protect, educate, and create jobs and wealth for their citizens is weakening, making global security conditions difficult. In some country such as CAR, DRC, Mali or South Sudan, it is even difficult to travel safely from one city to another. The capacity of many countries to invest in peace building and security strengthening is weak and the number of IDPs and refugees increases daily. Peace building and destruction of peace are both results of human actions. A country belongs to all its citizens and the possibility for each person to enjoy peacefully its right as citizen can only be possible through the exercise of real democracy. Unfortunately, in many countries, some people or groups behave as if the country is their private property with the dramatic consequences we see elsewhere.

The solution of the international community in some countries to fight terrorism is to send UN or African regional troops. Is this the most appropriate solution? My view as former Prime Minister who dealt with the international soldiers in a very difficult period is very mitigated, because the limited results and the partial loss of sovereignty.

The CAR is a typical example of human destruction of peace and security. Since its independence in 1960, the country has been undermined by corruption, lack of vision, patrimonialism, nepotism, lack of social investments. Instead of building hospitals, the rulers fly to Europe for medical care. Instead of building schools and Universities, they send their children to the best universities abroad. Every CAR citizen knows what one of the numerous former Presidents say one day to students who were protesting against the bad conditions of study. He said: “you can go on strike as long as you want, this is none of my business. Look around you, none of my kids is in a university in this country”. The rulers hardly care about the bad road conditions, because they usually use helicopters, and they don't sleep over in the provincial cities, because there is no electricity, no safe water and no proper hotels. They don't care about the security of the citizens, because they are well protected by an army reduced to the role of presidential guard.

In the CAR and some other countries, chronic bad governance has weakened the global capacity of the state and should be clearly considered as one of the major causes of social unrest, coups d'état, mutinies, rebellions and civil wars. So, in my view, building sustainable peace should imply giving also priorities to these issues. In CAR, the current government in place since March 2016 is doing its best with the support of the international community to rebuilt a State from scratch, rebuilding State institutions, tackle humanitarian issues, and at the same time negotiate with the armed groups to bring back peace and security. It is obvious that it is not an easy task and without the assistance of friendly countries, it will be difficult to get out of this tunnel.

That is why I would like at this point to express my gratitude to Joseph Busha 54 which has dedicated fund to organise in 2019 different activities in CAR to support the ongoing peace efforts, focusing on the youth and women. Young people constitute one of the most vulnerable groups often misused by warlords, and women are the main victims, but also those who fight to sustain family cohesion in cases of difficulties and scarcity. For this commitment, I would like you to join me in a round of applause for Joseph Busha and his staff for their dedication to peace and unity in Africa. An African proverb says the following: “Who has planted a tree before dying did not live unnecessarily”. Joseph Busha and his team have chosen to plant a tree, a tree of peace and unity. For that, Bravo to them. Peace is in our hands, we can use it properly or wrongly. Peace is a behaviour, an attitude, a word, a handshake, a smile, etc. Political leaders have the responsibility to ensure peace and security of the citizens, but each citizen should also contribute to it according to his capacity. The actions proposed by JM Busha 54 will raise global awareness on the issue of peace building, unity and social cohesion, and will also confront each citizen with his responsibility.

Our new African Nobel Prize winner from DRC, Dr Mukwenge use to put the following question: “Where are we men when our grand-mothers, mothers, aunts, daughters and sisters are being raped and abused? Where are the mothers when their sons are raped and slaughter? Where are the Traditional leaders, the Mayors and parliamentarians we elect? Good governance, respect of the rule of law and position such as National Mediators called here Public Protectors should be strengthened.

In each of the roles we are playing peace building should be a transversal objective. To give you an example you know, the Limpopo River exist and is always there for the benefit of the people because the small streams feed it. Another African proverb says the following: “if you take the path of “I don’t care”, you will end up in the village called “If I knew”. So, let us start today like Dr Mukwenge the journey to peace using the right path.

The wealth of Africa attracts more and more foreign powers, the former colonial powers as well as the new emerging countries. Let’s get ready to face the coming challenges of destabilization of Africa, let us prepare our people, our opinion leaders, our youth, our women to be ready and strong. Social cohesion should start within our families and we should not forget that we should serve as models for our children, who are the future of our countries.

So, let us plant now in each of our daily activities, the seed of the tree of peace. In my village we say: when a tree falls, we hear it, but when a forest grows, it makes no noise. The falling trees represent the shootings and massacres, and the growing forest represent peace and social cohesion.

To conclude let me thank you all for being so polite to listen to me, but one last thing: whether you have liked my speech or not, it does not matter. My request to you is this: from today, rich or poor, get committed to the only valuable thing that will make it possible for us and the future generations to leave in happiness, plant like Nelson Mandela, Dr Mukwenge and Joseph Busha, a tree of peace and give a chance to the forest to grow in silence.

Thank you for your attention.