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Dear brother Samuel Forba Fonki,

Grace and peace may be with you.

The United Protestant Church in Belgium is alarmed by the news we receive these days from your beautiful country.

Popular discontent, due to widespread poverty and unemployment, roils large cities, instability prevails along the eastern border with the Central African Republic, and in the far north, Christian villages are subject to attacks by Boko Haram Islamist militias attempting to establish an Islamic caliphate from north-eastern Nigeria all the way to northern Cameroon. In the process, churches are destroyed, Christians are abducted, and Muslim-Christian relations are worsened.

As if this is not enough, there are violent clashes between security forces and increasingly well-armed separatists fighting in the name of the country's English-speaking minority in the western part of Cameroon. There are indiscriminate mass arrests, burning of villages and human-rights abuses and extra-judicial executions on both sides. Many civilians have died in the conflict. More than 34,000 refugees are sheltering in precarious conditions in Nigeria and over 40,000 persons are displaced in the Southwest Anglophone region.

Members of Cameroones churches in Belgium - who are affiliated to our church - hear shocking testimonies from their loved ones in Cameroon about the suffering that many are experiencing.

Although our countries are geographically far apart, we feel close to our sisters and brothers in, and the people of Cameroon in these difficult times: "If one member suffers, all suffer together" (1 Corinthians 12:26).

We hear admirable stories about those in the churches and in society as a whole who, against all odds and at risks for their lives, engage in humanitarian work for refugees and displaced persons, continue inter-faith dialogue, and try to mediate between clashing factions. In the midst of all the suffering, these initiatives constitute a sign of hope. We pray that these peacemakers may be blessed (Matthew 5:9).

Please be assured, dear brother, of our prayers for peace, tranquillity and justice in your country, and for the efforts of the churches to straddle borders and separations that others find difficult to cross, thereby setting up signs of the Kingdom of our Lord.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'S. Fuite', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

The Revd Steven H. Fuite

President of the Synodal Council of the United Protestant Church in Belgium