

**Presentation by Dieudonné Cardinal Nzapalainga, Archbishop of Bangui and President of Caritas Central African Republic on Item V**

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Thank you Chairman. I am speaking today on behalf of the platform of religions in Africa. The Chairs of Evangelical Alliance is in Central Africa the Islamic community in Central Africa and myself are responsible for the community. That forum was established to contribute to brotherhood and peace and social cohesion. And to defend threatened minorities. In 2012 there was an invasion of militia in our country. And people very quickly decided that all of these were Muslims. In 2013 there was an anti-Belukha revenge to avenge the families of some people thought these too were Christian militia. Now we the religious leaders of the religious platform we said that the Salakha were not representing Muslims and the Anti-Balakha were not representative of the Christians. This was a military and political crisis. So we came together and got to know each other, we started talking to each other, and looking for ways and means to help people to find peace and a spirit of community. It is not the aspiration of religion to be divisive but to unite people, so we in our country where we have an oral tradition, we carried out awareness raising campaigns reaching out to women and young people and children so they could contribute to addressing these issues which still haven't been resolved in the Central African Republic today. The humanitarian situation has become further deteriorated, although there was a slight improvement, because we have displaced persons in Central African Republic. They are internally displaced persons from their homes and we also have people displaced into other countries. So we the religious leaders are saying that after the elections in our country, the international community will have to help us to guarantee religious freedom both for Christian minorities in the north where sometimes they can't practice their religion, and for the Muslim minorities in the South, which also have problems because there has been a crisis, there [deprivation] of religious temples. We think everyone has the right to practice their religion and therefore we think that places of worship need to be rebuilt. SO that everyone can live freely and practice their religion. In our country, there are some young people, they are the lifeblood of the country. But they can't go to school which happens for the Muslim minorities and they can't go to universities sometimes they are afraid they prefer to go to other countries and we think the time has come to build security, so that schools and universities are placed where different people can come and talk together, so that tomorrow we can have trained young people who can help their country [uncover their religion]. Central African Republic has experienced a great crisis in terms of social cohesion. And we think that everyone that wants to work together for their community, should leave religious labels aside not and advocate patriotism of Central African Republic because we are citizens of the Central African Republic first and foremost. And this is how we want our young people to think, how our children to think, how we want our women to think and everyone who works in our country. We had a crisis but now it is time for the excluded minorities to find their rightful place. Now it is time for the international community to help CAR to rise up again and address the challenges before it

today. And I have come here on behalf of my peers to tell the international community that of course, we have new persons leading the country but the challenges before us are enormous. There are men and women who are still armed and they are warlords. And if nothing is done to prevent them then they in their turn will prevent minorities from living a normal life. SO we have to have disarmament of these militia groups if the people are to be able finally to enjoy freedom and development. I ask the international community to be mindful of what is happening in CAR and I ask you to contribute and help us so that we can become a country, which enjoys its right to peace happiness and development.