

## **Experiences in peacebuilding**

My name is Barwendé Médard Sané, from Burkina Faso. I am a Jesuit Graduate Fellow at the School of Education, University of San Francisco, California. I am doing a doctorate in leadership studies with a concentration in Ignatian leadership for peacebuilding. During the past fourteen years (2005 - 2019), I have been working in conflict regions of Africa, including the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Chad, Ivory Coast and the Central African Republic (CAR). I recorded grassroots experiences as a committed peace activist and NGO leader. From 2015 to 2017, I was in contact with our esteemed late Dr. Glenn Page who recommended me to Pr. Anoop Swarup with whom I am still in contact via emails. My publications and researches are focused on the challenges of a Nonkilling Africa. Both Dr. Page and Dr. Swarup have been encouraging me in this research. My key questions are: What kind of political vision is to be fostered in order to bridge the gap between the African living philosophy of life and the sorrowing milieu of war, conflicts and terrorism? What are the African values from which nonkilling paradigm could be grafted? How engage people of goodwill to prevent and resolve violent conflicts and build peaceful and just systems and societies? I have published 6 books, including *De la violence à la non-violence active en Centrafrique. Etude statistique et sociologique*. (Paris, l'Harmattan, 2020). It is a research focused on the experiences of violence and the collection of African traditional values of nonviolence.

## **Book Review**

Central Africans are not of nature violent. However, violence does revolt them. 68 % were witnesses and victims of the violence happened in the country from 2012 to 2013. Some were surprised by the atrocities of the crisis. Some others (19 %) had to take up arms to defend themselves against unprecedented and usurpering violences. Others have turned from being victims to perpetrators to ensure their own safety or to seek justice at the expense of their fellow communities. The weaknesses of sovereign institutions, ignorance and illiteracy, the lure of easy gain and material poverty, regionalism, corruption and the interference of imperialists foreign countries, looking for precious stones and lands to grab are pointed as the main causes of violence in Central African Republic. 61 % of the population believe it is possible to have a killing free CAR and 93 % are ready to live with a person of different another religion to make peace happen. The Dream for a killing free society in CAR is nourished by African active nonviolence values including:

- ***The principle of Zo Kwe Zo***

This principle is from the Central African Republic. It means, all men/women are equal and deserve respect. According to President **Barthelemy Boganda** : “Civilization means respect for the rights of others.

- ***The principle of “I am because we are”***

At the center of African morality is human life. Life is sacred. The family includes children, parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, brothers and sisters, departed relatives, and the unborn members who are still in the loins of the living.

- ***The principle of Ujamaa***

*Ujamaa* is a Kiswahili concept of people working together. It means unity in supporting one another by any means available. Ujamaa is the soul of African socialism proposed by Julius Nyerere in Tanzania during the post-colonial period.

- ***The principle of Burkindlem***

*Burkindlem* is the essential virtue of the Burkinabe, people of Burkina Faso: “country of upright people.” Burkindlem means integrity. A man of integrity, or a Burkinabe, is a person who is honest, upright, incorruptible, fair, and impartial. This Philosophy was developed by President Thomas Sankara.

- ***The principle of Ubuntu***

*Ubuntu* is an invitation to promote human rights, impartial political authority, fair international relations, and the common good. Ubuntu has been promoted since the end of apartheid in South Africa to build peace and reconciliation, and solidarity among people. It is saying, A Person is a Person through Other Persons.

- ***The principle of Bisoite***

As fellow humans, we are called by justice to treat others and be treated by them with respect, care, trust, and humility. To be *I* as a person, I need the *We* as community of persons and the *We* need *I* to be.

**Barwende M. SANE, SJ.**