

First Prize

Original language: French

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Bangui

To: Raphaël Dufun

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Dear friend,

I am really pleased to be given the opportunity to write you this letter. I know you are well and that it will reach you. I would like to offer you my moral support, as you know no peace; only the nostalgia for peace brought on by wars, decisions and hatred. I also know that for you every day that passes is an ordeal and a great struggle in your country. As time goes by evolution, development, progress, pride, hatred and war have all opened up huge divisions, differences, confrontations and mutual contradictions between men, countries, nations and continents.

Have you never, ever asked yourself why there are so many changes and differences, so many decisions and reasons for hate?

Well, simply because people are not used to putting up with or tolerating what could be banned, rejected or accepted, nor are they willing to do so. If we all could just adopt, accept and analyse one another's opinions, we would be stronger and more tightly knit, standing shoulder to shoulder. "United we stand", as they say – solid countries based on tolerance make much faster progress than countries that steadfastly reject other people's opinions and values. Do people in your country accept their differences? Are they united? Do they come together to vote for effective decisions?

Yes! The world really needs more tolerance, because tolerance has for so long enabled nations to come together in reconciliation, creating a more mixed community, based on differences and shared values. Tolerance is usually seen as a virtue, because it tends to help us to avoid conflicts. It has also enabled many people to escape the scourge and anger of revenge and given them a second chance in life – promoting different races and nations,

the unifying culture of languages, the survival of traditions and the consolidation of countries. In today's world tolerance should be a goal in life. It still has not been adopted by everyone and maybe there is a problem of information and awareness – we have yet to see more of the virtue of bearing or tolerating what we can accept or forgive. We need it for ensuring the stability of future generations, for promoting and sustaining cultures, traditions and the wealth and variety of values. We need the mutual trust that results from bringing people closer together, above all to lead the world to its zenith.

Dear friend, I know that, like everyone, you too have been hurt and traumatized by this war. Like many others you have lost dear ones to this conflict, one of the nastiest consequences of intolerance. And I sense that the flames of revenge burn in your heart. But calm down, take a hold of yourself and forgive their intolerance! Poor things! Tolerate them and give them a second chance to redeem themselves and you will see the results of tolerance! They will be grateful to you and you will know peace, not only because you avoided a conflict but also because you did not have to spill blood. Since kind deeds are never wasted, you will make new friends and have so much to share with them: your culture, your traditions, your values and your language – and vice versa. You and they will discover the virtues of peace as a weapon.

I send you my best wishes. Try and tell everyone you know about tolerance, give them information and documentation, hold meetings with your family, friends and neighbours, and talk about tolerance. I hope you will answer this letter. I also hope that you will come and spend your summer vacation with me.

From your friend,

Hoza Moïse Luther