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**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union
on the killing of the Archbishop Michael Courtney in Burundi**

The European Union condemns firmly the death of the Apostolic Nuncio in Burundi, Archbishop Michael Courtney, brutally murdered during a road ambush in Minago, and expresses its deep sympathy to his family and the Holy See.

The European Union pays homage to the figure of the Archbishop Michael Courtney whose commitment to alleviate the enormous suffering of the local population and to stop violence was highly appreciated by the Burundian people and the international community.

The European Union urges the Burundian government to clarify the circumstances under which the assassination has occurred and expects that the perpetrators of this crime will be brought to justice. The European Union hopes that this heinous shooting does not jeopardise the implementation of the peace process.

The European Union calls on the National Liberation Forces Movement (FNL) to abandon the military option which aggravates the enormous suffering already visited upon the population.

The Acceding Countries Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia, the Associated Countries Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey and the EFTA countries, members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this declaration.

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