

## Reflections from Gervain Dembele, on behalf of the participants from Mali

(with photos of 3 drawings, on following pages)

Here, I describe a collective wound that affects my people until this day, namely jihadism in my country. This drawing that you see is only the tip of the iceberg, the rest of the wound remains buried deep down.

One day armed men entered our country, shooting everywhere, killing many people, and also raping our mothers, sisters and aunts. This is still painful since some of them do not even know where the body of their missing person has disappeared.

We are on our way to forgiveness, but it is very difficult. However, we still want peace.

1.

- Ancient and old wounds: I would speak of French colonisation, which still affects our countries to this day.
- Recent wounds are to be found in the rebellion of 1991, which impacts us today.
- Since 2012 Mali has been living a multidimensional crisis.
- The country was about to turn into a Caliphate, where all the jihadists of the world wanted to gather.

2,

The origins of these wounds among our people are to be found in the fact that the settlers divided us, armed us one against the other.

3.

Power struggles, nepotism and political corruption have also caused some wounds.

4.

As regards my personal experience: I was a victim of rejection in a police admission exam. I think I have the required physical and mental aptitude, but I could not realise my dream of becoming a policeman because I am poor, I cannot buy this job.

5.

As an example of taboos, I should mention freedom of worship in some parts of my country. You cannot practise your faith, especially as a Christian, without running the risk of being executed.

6.

As a French author says: 'When I speak of myself, I speak of you'.

The other is me, we are them, so I cannot live my life without the others, and vice versa.

7.

We must forgive one another, not forget, but accept one another, since even our fingers are not all the same size.





