



June 2, 2014

To Whom It May Concern,

As President and CEO of the Alliance for Peacebuilding, I am deeply committed to increasing the visibility and efficacy of peacebuilding efforts. The documentary *Fragile Island of Peace* that Spectrum Media and their fiscal sponsor, Filmmaker's Collaborative, have proposed, would be a powerful step in supporting that effort. This film could provide much needed exposure to the work of peacebuilders, who are quietly working to promote reconciliation in challenging environments, but are typically unacknowledged by the mainstream media.

Both Burundi and its larger neighbor the Democratic Republic of Congo are members of the g7+, a group of countries self-identified as "fragile states" that are or have been affected by conflict and are now in transition to the next stage of development. **Over 1.5 billion people live in conflict-affected and fragile states**, and must cope with the adverse effects of these difficult conditions. There is clearly a need for more deliberate and comprehensive peacebuilding efforts, and the first step to harnessing peacebuilding's potential is demonstrating its value. We need to build new narrative that links the achievement of peace to the process of peacebuilding.

Peacebuilders have not been as effective as we need to be in developing our own story, and promoting the enormous benefits of this practice. We need to change the narrative of peace and security. To do that we need to shine a light on the transformative stories emerging from peacebuilding initiatives around the world. Stories themselves are compelling and the act of storytelling is central to any kind of peacebuilding; it is a crucial part of how we connect and understand each other as humans.

The story *Fragile Island of Peace* seeks to tell is complex and flawed, as is the fragile peace Burundi has managed to achieve. Even now as this small nation prepares for a 2015 democratic election, there are rumors of potential violence and threats to their hard earned stability. The current situation makes it even more important to capture what was done during the peacebuilding process and show the world, and Burundians themselves why it is important to continue the effort.

I especially want to congratulate Jamil and his team on their intention to create a Kirundi version of the film. We need to change the expectation that peace is always perfect and help audiences understand that even succeeding part of the time is good in dealing with complex conflict situations. The western version of the film will provide a window for viewers far from Burundi to better understand what was done there. Like a mirror, the Kirundi version will reflect back on the process for the people who went through it.

The route the Burundians chose to achieve their fragile peace is unusual. The peacebuilders trained 8,000 leaders over an 8-year period, from Presidents to police chiefs. By highlighting Burundi, the film will show viewers what is possible in this troubled region, and globally. As peacebuilders, we must demonstrate that peacebuilding is not only a viable response to conflict, but also a desirable one. This film will probe the question of what made Burundi's peacebuilding efforts successful and what parts of it can be reproduced.

*Fragile Island of Peace* would be an invaluable tool, not only in elevating awareness among the general public, but also as a way to reach influential diplomats, policymakers, and educators who have the power to radically shift the future of this field.



Alliance for  
Peacebuilding

That being said, I enthusiastically endorse Spectrum Media's proposal to produce *Fragile Island of Peace*. This film could help to remove the veil of obscurity from peacebuilding work and demonstrate its enormous potential to viewers.

Sincerely,

Melanie Greenberg  
President and CEO