

# **Peace Strategies For the Democratic Republic of the Congo**

## **YOU CAN HELP BY MEETING WITH YOUR LEGISLATORS!**

**April 2010**

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), peace and prosperity remain elusive. In 2010, rebel groups (notably the CNDP, FDLR, and the Mai Mai) continued to fight for access to Congo's natural resources at the same time some rebels are being integrated into the national army (FARDC). In the northeastern Orientale Province, the Ugandan rebel group, Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), continues to attack civilians indiscriminately. Violence has erupted in Equateur Province over access to land and fishing rights, resulting in the displacement of at least 100,000 civilians. In other parts of the country, such as the Katanga province, American and multi-national corporations mine for copper and other minerals, and clear cut the rainforest for logs with little compensation to the local population.

From 1998 – 2007, according to International Rescue Committee an estimated 5.4 million civilians died, making the ongoing instability in the DRC the world's deadliest conflict since World War II. There are an estimated 2 million internally displaced people in the DRC, and 300,000 Congolese refugees in neighboring countries.

Because of the Congo's unrelenting conflict, its resource exploitation, and its environmental degradation, the organizations listed at the end of this document support and urge the U.S government to include the following recommendations in its 2010 DRC policy objectives:

### **Public Law 109-456: Democratic Republic of the Congo Relief, Security and Democracy Promotion Act of 2006: Fund, Implement and Extend this bill. For information go to: govtrack.us.**

This bi-partisan bill was introduced as S. 2125 by President Obama, then a Senator, and signed into law by President Bush in December of 2006. It requires the U.S. to help the DRC end its conflict, protect its civilians, conduct an open Democratic election and rebuild its country.

- *We ask Congress to 1) fully fund and implement the actions outlined in this law, especially by withholding assistance from governments that are destabilizing the DRC, such as Rwanda and Uganda, 2) hold a hearing on the status of the law's implementation and 3) extend this law until at least 2015.*

### **Violence Against Women and Children: End the Impunity**

The DRC's government and MONUC have been very ineffective at stopping the violence against women and at arresting and prosecuting perpetrators. Congolese women are continuing to be raped as a tool of war in alarming numbers, especially in the Kivu and Orientale Provinces.

*We ask the U.S. government to help strengthen the judicial structures in Congo in order to arrest, investigate and prosecute perpetrators of violence against non-combatants, especially women and children.*

- *We ask the U.S. government to pass the International Violence Against Women Act to help bring an end to violence against women in all countries and to help women live in peace and prosperity.*

### **Comprehensive Security Sector Reform**

Members of FARDC are responsible for violating human rights and are involved in illegally exporting minerals that fund their violence toward civilians, especially women and children. The Congolese military and police forces face numerous challenges that inhibit their ability to bring peace, including a lack of funding, proper training, and chronic supply shortages. The rapid and hasty integration of former rebel groups into the FARDC has resulted in heavy infiltration of members of the Rwandan and Burundian armies who were human

rights violators. Additionally, many of the former rebel group leaders have been promoted to high-ranking positions within the FARDC, despite their documented human rights abuses and war crimes.

(These issues are thoroughly documented by a UN Group of Experts in its November 2009 report: S/2009/603 – U.N. Security Council: “Final Report of the Group of Experts on the DRC”, 288 pages).

- *We urge the arrest and prosecution of FARDC personnel who are accused of human rights abuses, such as Bosco Ntaganda, who is wanted by the International Criminal Court*
- *We urge the provision of human rights training for all Congolese military and police, and subsequent disciplinary action for those who violate codes of conduct.*
- *We urge increased support for civil institutions working to protect civilians and punish criminals.*
- *We urge increased support for political entities that are responsible for regulating the military and judicial system.*
- *We urge the removal of control of FARDC funds and wages from its chain of command.*

### **Inclusive Peace Negotiations**

In order to achieve peace, governments bordering on the Congo must be held accountable for their destabilizing involvement in Eastern Congo. Peace can only be achieved through negotiations that involve all stakeholders in the region.

- *We urge the US to initiate sustained, comprehensive regional diplomacy that engages all parties until peace is achieved.*

*We urge the US government to pressure the Rwandan government to guarantee safe return for refugees still living in the Congo and to provide open political space to members of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) once they return.*

### **Democratic Elections in 2011: Insure Peace and Transparency**

To continue the progress made during the 2006 elections, the DRC will need support and resources for the 2011 national elections.

*We ask the U.S government to provide resources and training, as necessary, to ensure a peaceful, fair and transparent election in 2011 April 5, 2010.*

- *We ask the U.N. to insure that MONUC remain in the DRC at least through 2014 to protect civilians, secure peace and support peaceful and transparent elections.*

### **Track and Report the Congo's Mineral Supply Chains to Stop the Trade of Minerals for Weapons**

The DRC government currently lacks the capacity to monitor the mining and exportation of its minerals. Numerous rebel groups and the Congolese national army continue to illegally trade minerals for money and supplies. Myriad electronic, military, and medical products are made from the Congo's legally and illegally mined minerals from the DRC. The Congolese people do not receive benefits from these products.

Some corporations play a major role in human rights violations and environmental degradation by not adequately tracking the sources of their minerals and by not refusing to purchase conflict contaminated minerals. If you want to determine the history of a U.S. company that is doing business in the Congo, contact the Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility (ICCR.org).

Rwanda profits greatly from the flow of illegal minerals from the DRC, through Rwanda, to other countries. It must act to stop the flow of these minerals across its borders, and arrest people who are facilitating this.

To help stop the illegal trade of minerals for weapons, to help stop the Congo's war and to ensure that the Congolese citizens profit from their own country's natural resources:

- *We urge US negotiators for the stabilization of the DRC to place equal emphasis on the role of neighboring countries (Rwanda and Uganda in particular), armed groups and corporations.*
- *We urge the U. S. government to investigate all US companies involved in fueling the conflict since 1996. US investigators should read the myriad studies conducted over the past 13 years to determine which companies have violated the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) guidelines and decide what penalties should be imposed on the guilty.*
- *We urge the enforcement of Section 105 of Public Law 109-456: Democratic Republic of the Congo Relief, Security and Democracy Promotion Act of 2006 to withhold funding from countries that are destabilizing the Congo, until they discontinue such activities.*
- *We urge the House and Senate to change the wording of S.891 Congo Conflict Minerals Act of 2009 and H.R. 2478 Conflict Minerals Trade Act of 2009 and then to pass and implement the bills.*
- *We urge the passage of S. 1700: Energy Security Through Transparency Act of 2009 which would require companies to, among other things, publish the payments they make to foreign governments not only for oil and gas, but also for minerals.*

### **Stop VULTURE Creditors from Buying and Profiting from the Congo's Debt**

Some American companies and individuals, referred to as "vulture creditors", are purchasing the debt of poor countries for pennies on the dollar, such as the Congo's, and are demanding payment far in excess of the original debt. Such companies have been dubbed "vultures" as they scour the globe profiting from the sovereign debt of poor countries.

Congresswoman Maxine Waters has sponsored the "*Stop Very Unscrupulous Loan Transfers from Underprivileged Countries to Rich, Exploitive (VULTURE) Funds Act*" H.R. 2932, which calls for prohibiting US companies and individuals from profiting from the sovereign debt of underprivileged countries.

- *We ask that members of Congress support and pass this bill.*

Endorsing Organizations:

Africa Action  
Africa Faith and Justice Network  
Congo Coalition of Chicago  
Congo Global Action  
Friends of the Congo  
Mennonite Central Committee U.S