

ACTIVIST BRIEF

Eastern Congo: Beyond Crisis Management, Toward Conflict Resolution

OVERVIEW

Despite millions of dollars spent by the international community on national elections and billions more on a U. N. peacekeeping mission, the conflict in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, or DRC, persists today as the deadliest conflict in the world. While media and high-level international diplomatic attention to the conflict materialized in late October as a rebel army was poised to capture Goma, the capital of North Kivu province, efforts toward resolving the conflict remain hopelessly reactive and limited. In order to end the conflict, the United States must pursue a long-term, proactive, and comprehensive strategy to secure a lasting political solution to the crisis through the appointment of a special envoy and sustained high-level diplomacy.

BACKGROUND

Since late August, fighting between the Congolese army and a rebel group called the National Congress for the Defense of the People, or CNDP, has displaced an estimated 250,000 people in North Kivu province. After the CNDP captured a number of key towns in the province and advanced on the provincial capital Goma, rebel leader Laurent Nkunda announced a unilateral ceasefire on October 29. However, Nkunda claims that his ceasefire only applied to fighting with the Congolese army, and CNDP continues to clash with militia groups as it establishes a foothold over a broad swathe of territory in North Kivu.

While the recent appointments of former Nigerian President Olesgun Obasanjo as Great Lakes mediator and former Tanzanian President Benjamin Mkapa as U.N. special envoy signal a higher level of commitment to resolving the standoff, a mediation effort will fail without greater urgency from key international actors. The United States, the United Kingdom, and the European Union, among others, must deploy full-time, field-based

senior envoys to support mediation efforts and muster the political will and resources to support a sustained and comprehensive effort to secure a lasting political solution to the local, national, and international dimensions of the crisis.

TAKE ACTION!

The current round of fighting is the most destructive since 2005 and the latest chapter in a war that has killed an estimated 5.4 million people since 1998. With the CNDP and other armed groups terrorizing civilians and destabilizing North Kivu, the new Obama administration and Congress must act quickly to help end this conflict of holocaust proportions.

Make an impact in less than 15 minutes.

1. Sign the petition to President-elect Barack Obama urging his administration to take immediate action to end the violence in eastern Congo. Visit www.raisehopeforcongo.org to sign the petition and join the movement.
2. Call your senators and representative* and urge them to:
 - a. Demand that the incoming Obama administration appoint a special envoy to the Great Lakes region
 - b. Ask the president-elect's national security team to announce their strategy for ending the conflict in eastern Congo

*Call the U.S. Capitol Switchboard at (202) 224-3121 and ask for your senators' and representative's office.