

## RAISE Your Voice: Advocacy Toolkit



Become an advocate and urge your elected officials to prioritize ending the conflict in eastern Congo and protecting and empowering Congolese women and girls. You have the power to impact this conflict and bring it to a peaceful resolution. You have the power to demand an end to sexual violence and other crimes against humanity being committed in the Congo. You have the power to decide when enough is enough.

That power is your voice. You can speak out against these atrocities and demand that our leaders invest time, energy and resources to ending the conflict in eastern Congo once and for all. No matter how much we know or how much we care, we will only succeed if we all speak out and demand action from our leaders.

### Make Your Case

What has inspired you to act? The single most important component to being a successful advocate is passion. Passionate advocates are persuasive advocates. So speak from your own personal experience and from your own personal passion.

### Contact Your Elected Officials

Urge your elected officials to take action to protect and empower Congolese women and girls. To find out who your elected officials are, use the following resources:

- **SENATORS**

[http://www.senate.gov/general/contact\\_information/senators\\_cfm.cfm](http://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm)

- **REPRESENTATIVES**

<http://www.house.gov/house/MemStateSearch.shtml>

- Dial 1-800-GENOCIDE. By inputting your zipcode, you will have access to the contact information for elected officials ranging from your state Governor to your Senator.

Keep in mind that hand-written letters, phone calls, and petitions are much more effective than a mass e-mail or fax. Also remember that when submitting a petition, make sure to get the names, signatures, and addresses of everyone on the petition.

### Set Up a Meeting

Request to meet your official. Start by calling your elected officials' district office or their Capitol Hill office. Phone calls are more efficient than e-mailing or sending a letter. Most offices require that you fax in a meeting request. Make sure you include all of your contact information, a few possible dates, and your reason for wanting to meet.

Don't be discouraged if your elected official is unable to meet with you. Ask if you can meet with his/her staffer that handles the issue instead. Staffers have a direct line of communication with their boss, so it's important to get them on your side. And remember, you can still be an effective advocate even if you don't meet your elected official.

If you are able to meet with your elected official, keep the following in mind:

- Be prepared and research the issue. For background on the issues, you can read our [campaign materials](#) and [reports](#).
- Delegate a spokesperson if you are going in a group—organization is key.
- Find out if there is legislation involving your issue—check out the [RAISE Your Voice](#) page and the Enough Project's [Take Action](#) section for more information, and read about [Enough's 4 P's policy approach](#).
- Meetings generally last approximately 20 minutes, so plan accordingly.

- Feel free to take materials to the meeting—Enough one pagers on the conflict, photos of events, rallies, or newspaper articles that highlight the issue.

#### Tips for the Meeting

- Introduce yourself, let them know where you are from, and tell them which issue you'd like to discuss.
- If you are having difficulty engaging in discussion, ask open-ended questions. For example—How much do you know about the conflict in eastern Congo? Did you read about the recent news in eastern Congo? Can you tell me about your position on X legislation?
- Remember that if you are meeting with an assistant or staffer, they might not know everything there is to know about the conflict. Offer to provide background materials and discuss the issue.
- Be clear and concise—make your point, and do not ramble.
- Ask them to take action—if there is a piece of legislation in the works, ask them to co-sponsor it.
- Be polite and thank them for their time—remember, even if they don't agree with you, be nice!

#### Follow-Up

- If your elected official tells you that they will look into a certain piece of legislation, schedule a time to follow up.
- As you advocate to others about an issue, call your elected officials' office and let them know what you are doing to make an impact.
- Continue to keep them updated on the issue.

For more information: [www.raisehopeforcongo.org](http://www.raisehopeforcongo.org)

Email: [congocampaign@enoughproject.org](mailto:congocampaign@enoughproject.org)