



## **OBAMA, AFRICA AND PEACE**

**By John Prendergast and John Norris**  
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### **ACTIVIST BRIEF**



AP/Charles Dharapak

Despite entering office facing a myriad of problems around the world, the Obama administration has a unique opportunity to fundamentally transform U.S. relations with Africa. The cornerstone of this effort must be a greater emphasis on the most cost-effective element of our foreign policy tools: peacemaking. By investing in diplomacy to resolve conflicts and through long-term investments in development, crisis prevention, and support of African regional institutions, the U.S. can help end the world's deadliest conflicts and usher in a new era of peace for the continent.

To achieve this ambitious objective, the Obama administration will need to shift current U.S. policy from simply *managing* the symptoms of Africa's biggest wars to *ending* these conflicts. This requires broadening the diplomatic focus beyond single conflicts to address the regional crises that drive the cycle of violence that has played out over the past few decades. The basic elements of an enhanced peacemaking strategy would include increased diplomatic capacity in the form of an inter-agency task force, the appointment of robustly supported special envoys, and Washington meetings that clearly demonstrate top-level leadership on these issues.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AFRICA'S THREE WORST CONFLICTS**

#### **1. Sudan**

Enough has called for a "peace surge" to address the void of peacemaking in Sudan. Right now, the international community lacks a coherent strategy for making peace in Darfur and implementing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement that ended more than 20 years of bloody conflict between North and South. The Obama administration should provide the requisite leadership to develop and implement a new peace strategy by working with China, Qatar, and other key Arab states

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that have economic leverage with the Khartoum regime. The new administration should also support the forthcoming indictments of Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir and others (including rebel leaders) as well as expanding multilateral sanctions against Sudan's ruling party and initiating NATO planning to enforce a ban on offensive military flights.

## **2. Eastern Congo**

Improving the situation in eastern Congo will demand some very tough diplomacy, and a firm message from Washington that the administration will not tolerate either the Government of Congo or Rwanda offering direct support to militia groups on the ground. The Obama administration should provide robust support to existing conflict resolution efforts, lead international efforts to remove foreign rebel groups from Congolese territory, work through the U.N. to improve protection for civilians ensnared by ongoing violence, tackle long-term issues such as security sector reform and demobilization of armed groups, and deter the exploitation of "conflict minerals" in the East.

## **3. Somalia**

The Obama administration should focus on supporting and upgrading the existing U.N.-led peace process and oppose efforts to put in a U.N. peacekeeping mission without a clear mandate and ample resources. Furthermore, a parallel diplomatic effort should be launched to deal with the simmering Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict in the attempt to avoid a renewed interstate war, an outcome that would be devastating for the Horn of Africa.

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*Enough is a project of the Center for American Progress to end genocide and crimes against humanity. Founded in 2007, Enough focuses on the crises in Sudan, Chad, eastern Congo, northern Uganda, Somalia, and Zimbabwe. Enough's strategy papers and briefings provide sharp field analysis and targeted policy recommendations based on a "3P" crisis response strategy: promoting durable peace, providing civilian protection, and punishing perpetrators of atrocities. ENOUGH works with concerned citizens, advocates, and policy makers to prevent, mitigate, and resolve these crises. To learn more about Enough and what you can do to help, go to [www.enoughproject.org](http://www.enoughproject.org).*



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