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The project to end genocide and crimes against humanity

## The Answer to Conflict in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo

Following a landmark peace agreement and a tumultuous political transition backed by the world's largest United Nations peacekeeping operation (MONUC), the Democratic Republic of Congo held largely successful elections in 2006. However, elections were not a panacea to Congo's ills; 45,000 people die each month, mostly from hostilities and the crippling effects of widespread displacement in the country's eastern provinces. Some 500,000 people were displaced in 2007, and women and girls are routinely subjected to appalling acts of sexual torture.



This complex crisis is rooted in the 1994 Rwandan genocide. Fourteen years later, the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda, or FDLR, a militia led by the Rwandan genocidaires, remains responsible for terrorizing much of eastern Congo and giving other armed groups an excuse for continuing to rape and pillage civilians.

Finally, in late 2007 and early 2008, the United States and its allies secured a ceasefire between the Congolese government and multiple armed groups operating in the East. This deal is just the beginning. The United States government, working closely with its allies, must strongly support the deal's implementation and help rid eastern Congo of the militias that wreak havoc on civilian populations.

Strong pressure from U.S. citizens can move Congo up on the foreign policy agenda and strong U.S. engagement can avert a catastrophic conflict.



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**Within the context of ENOUGH's "3Ps" crisis response strategy, the international community must immediately develop a "carrots and sticks" approach to avoid full-scale war:**

**Peacemaking:** Strong international follow-through is necessary to support recent diplomatic gains in eastern Congo. The U.S., EU, and key African states must support the Congolese government's commitment to counter the FDLR. MONUC must reinforce its positions to better observe the current cease-fire and report violations quickly.

**Protection:** MONUC should use military force to restrict the access of the FDLR and other armed groups to the minerals and other natural resources that they exploit to fund their movements. To prevent sexual violence, MONUC should provide a greater deterrent by locating units at sites where women and girls are most vulnerable—displaced person encampment sites, road blocks, rivers, and the areas where women collect firewood.

**Punishment:** To end the impunity that reigns in Congo, the international community must cut-off supply lines to belligerent parties in DRC, support future prosecution by the International Criminal Court, and increase support for justice reform so that Congolese themselves can effectively punish the perpetrators.



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