



21, Ballance Road London E9 5ST

The Right Honourable Dominic RAAB MP
Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth
King Charles Street
London SW1A 2AH

London 04 August 2020

Right Honourable,

The Congolese Community in the United Kingdom (CCUK) is writing to raise your awareness and urge your actions regarding the ongoing violence perpetrated on populations in the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), mainly in South and North Kivu as well as Ituri provinces.

The crimes committed in the DRC, since 1997, breach Article 6, 7, 8 of the Rome Statute defined as crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, on sexual violence, on the persecution and forced displacement: "war crimes". There are several misrepresentations and misleading information regarding the crisis in the DRC, which has never recovered since UN SC Resolution 929 "Operation Turquoise", in the aftermath of 1994 Rwandan genocide.

Under the pretext of self-defence, Rwanda officially invaded the DRC since 1994 and engaged in genocide of civilians, Congolese and Rwandan Hutu refugees, and took this opportunity to plunder DRC natural resources. This incited the "convoitise" of other countries bordering the DRC, including Uganda. This gave rise to a regional war on Congolese soil, which included more than seven foreign countries, including the Rwandan and Ugandan armed forces that fought each other in a fierce battle in eastern DRC city of Kisangani, in 1999 and 2000, with total international impunity, despite numerous reports on innocent Congolese civilian casualties and sexual violence committed by their troops.

One of the main drivers of conflict in the DRC is its plethora of valuable minerals and resources, including cobalt, copper, diamonds, gold, tantalum, and tin. Indeed, the Congolese government's inability to control the entirety of its territory has allowed rebel armed forces to exploit these resources and fuel the continuous conflict in the Congo. Many of these minerals are exported to electronics companies worldwide, and rebels not only keep the profits of this illicit trade, but also rape women as a means of invoking terror in mining zones.

It is documented that the DRC has registered more than ten times the number of dead since 1997, than number reported in 1994 on the Rwandan genocide of Tutsi and Hutu. In October 2010, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) released report on *DRC: Mapping Human Rights Violations 1993-2003*. The report notes that “the vast majority of the 617 most serious incidents [of human rights abuses] described in the mapping report point to the commission of multiple violations of human rights and/or international humanitarian law, which may constitute crimes against humanity or war crimes, and often both at the same time.” It also states that “the apparent systematic and widespread attacks described in this report reveal a number of inculpatory elements that, if proven before a competent court, could be characterised as crimes of genocide.

A particularly component of the Mapping report is the implication and responsibility of the Rwanda’s army for acts of genocide against Congolese civilians and particularly on Rwanda Hutus living in the DRC, reprisals for the 1994 Rwandan genocide against the Tutsis. Similarly, the Report accused Ugandan troops of having committed war crimes in the DRC.

As a result of the dysfunctioning government, the Congolese army is not in position to defend the territorial integrity of the DRC.

In reality the current Rwanda’s government has been reported to have colluded with armed groups, based in the DRC, to create incidents of various nature and victimise Rwandophone refugees communities in the DRC as well as killing Congolese autochthonous civilians. The aim is to get international support for self-determination. The policy of killing Rwandophone Tutsi and claim victimisation was successfully used by Rwandan Patriotic Front under President Paul KAGAME since the Rwandan genocide in which both Tutsi and Hutu populations perished.

Considering the recent on-going killings of Civilians in the east of the DRC, the 2018 Nobel Peace Prize, Doctor Dennis MUKWEGE, denounced the invading armies, but he soon found himself under torrent attacks, through his twitter account, by Rwandans. They are taking advantage of the turmoil and insecurity in the DRC to convince the International Community that the DRC needs to be balkanised, which is not the will of local populations.

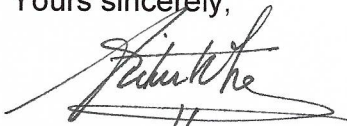
Similarly to Dr MUKWEGE, for almost 10 years, Congolese populations have been asking for an examination of the Mapping report carried out by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. This report contains a compilation of war crimes, crimes against humanity and crimes of genocide detailed from 1993 to 2003. Without analysing these crimes which mark the history of the Congo, without justice being rendered for these crimes, no people involved in these conflicts will be able to recover or be able to live in peace.

As stated by Dr MUKWEGE: “It seems that advocating the creation of a special court to try crimes in the Congo scares some people who pour their hatred on social media by pitting one against the other, often on the basis of lies. *Telling the truth is the start of change*”. Reconciliation between people and the establishment of reparations for the victims cannot be achieved without our relentless search for the truth. This is valid for a victim of sexual violence as well as for a victim of war, genocide or any trauma.

Her Majesty's government has leverages to gain access to accurate information on the crisis on the DRC, as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, the UK contributes massively to the budget of the United Nation Peace Keeping/Stabilisation Mission in the DRC, and has platforms to this end.

Our CCUK representation is to provide you, Right Honourable, with accurate information and we hope that you will use your informed judgement in this matter. Congolese populations have long suffered to be subjected to another trauma based on misrepresentation and misleading information that does not represent their interests.

Yours sincerely,



AckysKituba
Coordinator

Cc:

- Rt Hon Emily THORNBERRY, Shadow Foreign Secretary –
- Chi ONWURAH MP, Chair of *All-Party Parliamentary Group for Africa*
- Robert JENRICK MP, Chair of All-Party Parliamentary Group for Genocide Prevention and Crimes Against Humanity
- Mr Andrew MITCHELL MP, Chair All-Party Parliamentary Group on Rwanda
- Rebecca LONG-BALEY MP, Salford and Eccles.

References

1. 1994. Opération Turquoise - United Nations Security Council Resolution 929
2. <http://worldwithoutgenocide.org/genocides-and-conflicts/congo>
3. <https://www.easterncongo.org/about-drc/history-of-the-conflict/http://www.responsibilitytoprotect.org/index.php/crises/crisis-in-drc>.
4. IRC. Crisis Watch: Special Report: D.R.Congo. Forgotten Crisis. 2006-2007: Congo Mortality survey. http://www.theirc.org/resources/2007/2006-7_congomortalitysurvey.pdf
5. 2010 (March). "Mapping Project" report of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on the DRC.
<http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/pdfid/4d8b45432.pdf>.
<https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2019/country-chapters/democratic-republic-congo>
6. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/01/drc-one-year-since-tshisekedi-took-office-insecurity-and-impunity-still-imperil-human-rights/>

<https://fondationpanzirdc.org/appeal-a-la-paix/>