

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 17, 2010

Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton
Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Clinton:

We write to you to express our concerns over the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo and to request renewed action from the State Department to prevent further violence against women and children.

We were shocked and dismayed to learn of the mass rapes and violence that took place in eastern Congo and in particular around the village of Luvungi during August 2010. Furthermore, we are disappointed by the recent report from the United Nations on September 9, 2010, that details how the U.N. mission in Congo learned of the attack on Luvungi days after it took place and was unable to provide protection for the civilians in the region.

We appreciate the work you have done to support the country's transition to democracy and to strengthen its healthcare and education systems. In addition to the humanitarian assistance that the United States currently provides, we support the Fiscal Year 2011 Economic Support Funds to support the government of Congo's stabilization and recovery program, as well as the International Military Education and Training program to train Congolese officers. However, the nature of the increasing violence in Congo, and in particular the violence against women and children, demands a renewed response from the United States and the international community. Toward this end, we respectfully request action on the following items.

First, the U.S. should coordinate with donor governments and the Congolese government to spearhead a comprehensive security sector reform (SSR) plan for the Congolese army, as part of a package to include training of multiple battalions; payment reform; barracks construction; and streamlining of large, unwieldy battalions. The time is ripe for such reform due to donors' improved SSR coordination mechanism and the Congolese government's welcoming of an increased U.S. role in SSR.

Second, the U.S. should help devise a targeted strategy to disarm the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR). The FDLR is responsible for much of the most horrific violence in Congo, while providing an excuse for the existence and criminal behavior for nearly every other armed group in Eastern Congo. A focused effort is needed to target senior FDLR leadership, reintegrate mid-level FDLR officers, and arrest and sanction FDLR leaders and funding sources abroad.

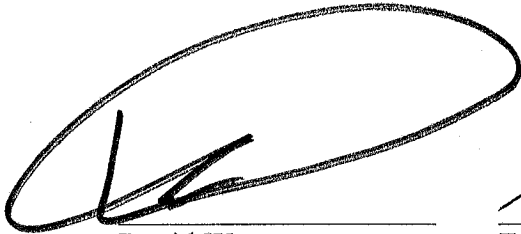
Third, the U.S. should help create a multi-stakeholder certification process for conflict minerals, in partnership with the governments of Congo and Rwanda. Following the passage of legislation on conflict minerals as part of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street reform bill, a certification process with independent monitoring is the necessary next step to stop the flow of conflict minerals that continue to provide funds to the FDLR and other militias.

Last, we believe that the administration should appoint a Special Envoy to the Great Lakes to work directly with heads of state in the region on a regular basis to address the key security issues of the region.

We understand that it will take a sustained effort from the international community on multiple fronts to resolve this conflict and are committed to ensuring that the United States lives up to its role as the world's leader on human rights. As members of Congress, we look forward to working with you to implement these measures and bring hope to the innocent women and children of eastern Congo.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration. We look forward to your response and renewed focus on this issue.

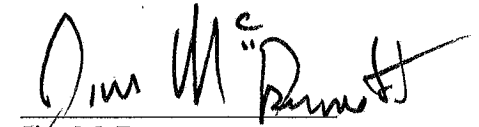
Sincerely,



David Wu
Member of Congress



Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress



Jim McDermott
Member of Congress



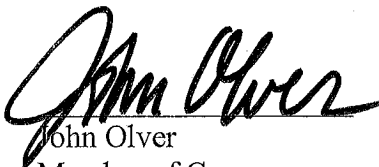
Ted Poe
Member of Congress



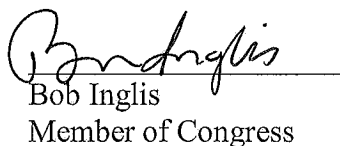
Luis Gutierrez
Member of Congress



Peter DeFazio
Member of Congress




John Olver
Member of Congress

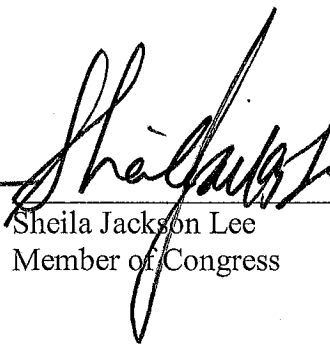



Bob Inglis
Member of Congress





G.K. Butterfield
Member of Congress

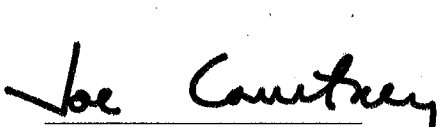

Jim Moran
Member of Congress

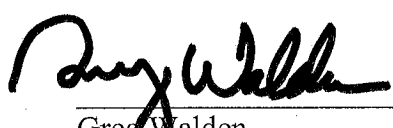

Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress



Bob Filner
Member of Congress

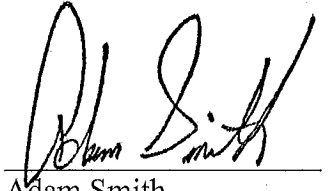

Brad Miller
Member of Congress

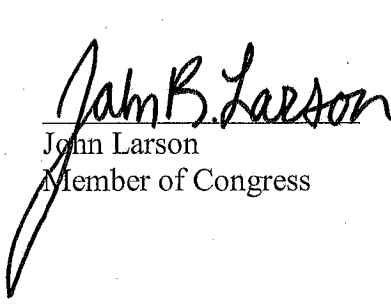

Virginia Foxx
Member of Congress

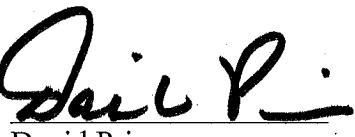

Joe Courtney
Member of Congress

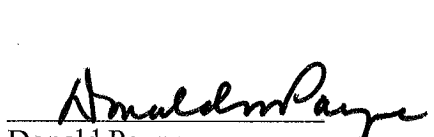

Greg Walden
Member of Congress


Mike McIntyre
Member of Congress


Adam Smith
Member of Congress


John Larson
Member of Congress


David Price
Member of Congress


Donald Payne
Member of Congress