

AFRICA FAITH & JUSTICE NETWORK

25th Anniversary Conference and Annual Meeting April 2008 – Washington, DC

Resolution on Ending Violent Conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

Africa Faith & Justice Network is committed to call upon the U.S government to fully engage in ending the conflict and promoting peace, justice, reconciliation, and good governance in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. AFJN also calls upon the Congolese government to respect the democratic process and practice good governance, transparency, justice, and peace; to ensure the protection of all Congolese people, and end violence against women and the child soldier phenomenon.

Whereas the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has claimed 5.4 million lives according to the 2007 International Rescue Committee DRC mortality survey,

Whereas children continue to be enrolled in the ranks of foreign and local militia groups in the Congo,

Whereas the Congolese government published on March 24, 2008 the review of some unfair mining contracts signed during the period of conflict (1996–2002) and the transition period (2003–2006); a process that began in April 2007,

Whereas Joseph Kabila was elected and confirmed president on December 27, 2006 as a result of the first multiparty elections held in DRC in 46 years and made possible by support from the international community through the United Nations (UN) and individual nations;

Whereas security continues to be a challenge in North and South Kivu because of local militia groups and foreign fighters such as the Hutu rebel groups from Rwanda, members of Lord Resistance Army (LRA) from Uganda, and support by the Rwandan government to the rebel group led by Laurent Nkunda,

Whereas evidence showing that in the Congo and particularly in the Kivus, the pandemic of rape by foreign fighters (90%) and by the Congolese army, police, and civilians (10%) continues to be used as a weapon of war to destroy not only the lives of the victims, but of Congolese society,

Whereas the Democratic Republic of the Congo Relief, Security, and Democracy Promotion Act of 2006 (S. 2125), designed to improve U.S. assistance to the Congolese people by promoting humanitarian relief, peace, democracy and transparent management of natural resources, was approved by the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives and became Public Law 109-456 on December 22, 2006,

Whereas Timothy Shortley was appointed to the Great Lakes Region as Senior Advisor for Conflict Resolution under Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Ms. Jendayi Frazer on the crises in Congo and Uganda,

Be it resolved that members of the Africa Faith & Justice Network:

1. Call on the U.S. Congress to support the full implementation and subsequent renewal of the Democratic Republic of the Congo Relief, Security, and Democracy Promotion Act (S.2125).
2. Call on the United States government to expand the ongoing diplomatic efforts to ensure peace and security of the Congolese people – particularly those in the conflict zones of the Kivus – and to encourage the government of Rwanda to commit to taking a lead role in the peace process in the Congo.

3. Call on the Bush Administration to continue to support the UN peacekeeping mission in Congo (MONUC).
4. Call on MONUC to provide the necessary military support to the Congolese police and army to effectively deal with active militias, foreign fighters operating in Congolese territory, the threat of aggression by neighboring nations, and widespread instability in the country particularly in the Kivus.
5. Call members of the U.S. Senate to pass the International Violence Against Women Act (IVAWA), S.2279, a bill that will allow the US to address the ongoing rape and violence against women in the Congo and the world.
6. Call upon the Congolese government to encourage the democratic process, to promote a participatory government, respect freedom of speech, and combat the child soldier phenomenon.
7. Call upon the Congolese government to ensure that mining contracts continue to be reviewed without exception, that mining is done with respect to the environment, that people are not driven away from their land to make room for mining sites, and that the revenues benefit the Congolese people.
8. Continue to work toward global awareness about the situation in Congo.