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**“House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health and Human Rights.”**

**Mr. Chairman and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee,**

It is a privilege and honor for me to be invited to your distinguished House to witness on the situation of war going on in the Democratic Republic of the Congo on its Eastern border with Rwanda, on which we need your prompt implication to help stop it and save the lives of millions of people being exposed to the death spell days and nights. 32 interfaith religious leaders and leaders from civil society, we are bearers of a petition of 70 million Congolese that received signatures of at least a million people to urge the General Secretary of the UN in New York, and the member countries, that is, the US, Canada, the UK, France, Russia, Germany and so forth, to stop this war orchestrated unjustly by Rwandan government as attested by the report of the Experts of the UN.

We did not come to represent the Congolese government nor did we come to declare war to Rwanda. Our approach does not seek to harm Rwanda in any form of action but to denounce its wrongdoings reflected in its constant killings and rapes of our people. For two decades, Rwanda has been attacking the DR Congo, by fabricating all sorts of rebels and militia groups, changing one name to another. The Rwandan regime must stop attacking our country, the DR Congo and our people, especially women, children and young men who are victimized and inflicted any kinds of debasement.

We have come to you Americans because we know who you are: you have power; you have strong voice and have all means to stop this war. You love us as we love you.

Just to remind you how hard it is; we can picture the tragic 9/11 event in New York. It was atrocity, terror, cries and tears, death, fear and destruction. Many children lost their parents and spouses lost their beloved ones. This situation brought Americans to be united as one to fight the enemy and all acts of terrorism. Seemingly, 09/11 and terrorism are going on every day in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Our people are in tears; there are cries, killing, atrocities of all kinds and poverty leaving behind orphans, widows, children without education. The situation of the women is catastrophic, no respect of the women who have become the battle field: women are systematically raped and infected with HIV/AIDS. Some are mutilated, buried alive or inflicted fissures. Knives and rifle cannons are introduced for pleasure in the genitals of the women just as acts of sabotage and debasement of the woman. Pregnant women have their womb opened wide with any kind of knife or machete to see the fetus inside. Raped women are rejected by their spouses and by society, they become victim twice: in their body and in the community.

We strongly denounce this situation and call for justice. If for 800.000 people killed during the genocide in Rwanda, the international community, including America, feels guilty and

has given all the means of the world to Rwanda and its leadership, but for the 6.000.000 that Rwanda has killed in Congo there is not even a compassion from the international community, including America. Where is justice? We come to ask America to stop this war and to do justice to the DRC and to the Congolese people. We ask America to stop barbarisms of Rwanda in the DRC, by telling Rwanda to stop. The problem of Rwanda is not the Congo, it is within Rwanda itself. Rwanda should solve its contradictions within and not by crossing the border of the neighbor to maintain killings and massacres and call it democracy and governance the Rwandan way. The hitlerian and Nazism terror and practices orchestrated by Rwandan leadership in Congo and in the Region put us in the remote era of humankind development. They are very retrograde acts and debasing leadership.

Peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo will also be peace in Rwanda and in the region. The people of Congo and the people of Rwanda live together, marry mutually, school together and do shopping together from one side to another of our border. The evil comes from Rwandan Leadership for the reason of evil.

In the name of “ The responsibility to protect” we demand America to stop this war because it is a nonsense war. If it is for minerals that the multinationals want, we invite them to address the Congolese government rather than treating with the rebels or Rwanda on the minerals that it does not produce on its territory. It is disturbing that most of these US companies which buy the minerals are dealing directly with the Rwandan regime, knowing that most of the minerals do not have any trace in Rwanda but in the DR Congo. Accordingly, the smart phones are helping fund wars in the DR Congo and contribute to the killing and raping innocent children and Congolese women.

As for the genocide that took place in Rwanda in 1994, it was a result of an internal conflict between Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda. It did not come from Congo. We wonder why Congo should pay this heavy tribute simply because of hosting Rwandan refugees on demand of the UN. So instead of the UN repatriating the Rwandan refugees for national reconciliation or dialog in Rwanda, in the contrary Rwanda attacks Congo and the International community closes the eyes. Congo needs justice as we believe in America and its institutions being defenders and advocacy of justice.

Mr. Chair, as established, the current war that Rwanda is fighting in the Congo is not ethnic-based as suggested before but resource-based.

On this token, we would like to take you back to the bill you passed in this house in 2006 known as “ Democratic Republic of the Congo Relief, Security, and Democracy Promotion Act of 2006”. Through this bill you reiterated the important geo-strategic position of the DR Congo, not only in Africa but the world. You committed yourselves to support the post-conflict DR Congo into a peaceful and prosperous country with strong institutions. We are so grateful for the support you provided and continue to provide in the organizations of our first ever democratic elections and the ongoing peacekeeping efforts through the United Nations Mission for the stabilization of the DR Congo, which mission we request that it be not only limited to observing but also mandated to intervene any time to protect the population and eradicate the armed bands that bring disasters in the region and help arrest the criminals who find refuge in Rwanda (Bosco Ntanganda, Nkunda Batware, Mutebushi, Makenga, etc).

We are grateful for your efforts directed at strengthening governmental institutions and building a strong military in the DR Congo, and for the many American mission programs which

are working in the DR Congo in the area of health, education, poverty eradication and capacity building programs thanks to USAID.

Certainly, such progress cannot be sustainable if the Rwandese regime continues to destabilize the DR Congo and exploit minerals such as Coltan, gold and killing the rare animal species that the DR Congo has protected (Gorillas, Okapi).

In reference to the Democratic Republic of the Congo Relief, Security, and Democracy Act of 2006 in its section 105, it is indicated:

“The Secretary of State is authorized to withhold assistance made available under the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961(22 U.S.C.2151 et seq.), other than humanitarian, peacekeeping, and counterterrorism assistance, for a foreign country if the Secretary determines that the government of the foreign country is taking actions to destabilize the Democratic Republic of the Congo.”

All evidences corroborate the fact that Rwanda is indeed working for the destabilization of the DR Congo, so why is this provision of the bill not being implemented? This is the cry of the Congolese people; we strongly believe that such a move will push the Rwandan regime to stop fabricating and arming the rebel groups and engage dialog for deep reconciliation within Rwanda.

As religious leaders and civil society, we live at the grassroots level; we see the suffering of the people. The US and the world have the responsibility to protect Congolese people. Rwanda should cease to behave as a spoilt child. We believe in the US justice.

God bless America, God Bless the people of Congo.

Washington, September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2012

Reporting for Church Leaders and Civil Society

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Record Keeping

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