

# Democratic Republic of the Congo: *A Humanitarian Crisis* *A New Way Forward*



All-Party Parliamentary Group on  
the Prevention of Genocide and  
other Crimes against Humanity

September 2009

*“Humanity's experience of genocide has left us with some understanding of its appalling nature, including an appreciation of a pattern of warning signs that foreshadow its onset.”*

*— Dr. Frank Chalk, Montreal Institute of Genocide and Human Rights Studies*

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# Foreword by the Chair

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We knew what was happening during the Holocaust, in Cambodia, and in Rwanda. Yet we did little to stop it. And we know what is happening in Darfur, Sudan and in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and still, we do very little. Are we indifferent bystanders to the suffering of our fellow global citizens?

It was not always this way. One of our own Canadian leaders, Lester B. Pearson, was hailed for defusing the Suez Crisis in 1956. His efforts gave birth to the contemporary concept of peacekeeping. Canadians today maintain the same vigor and commitment to provoking positive change. Canada's political leadership, however, lacks the will to deliver on those commitments.

In April 2009, I travelled to the DRC as a delegate for a field visit with the Parliamentary Network on the World Bank. I was in the country that is the epicenter of some of the worst and most atrocious crimes against humanity ever recorded in history.

In the eastern provinces of Ituri, North Kivu and South Kivu, various armed groups and militias systematically use sexual violence, mass rape, genital mutilation and sexual slavery as a deliberate strategy in their armed conflict. These crimes against humanity indicate the onset of a *femicide* — the systematic and planned destruction, in whole or in part, of a female population.

Moreover, these militias are partially financed by the profits from the illegal resource industries. For instance, the illicit extraction and trade of coltan, among other resources, is an indispensable source of income for these belligerents. Coltan — a metallic ore comprised of both columbium and tantalum — is found in all cell phones, BlackBerrys, PlayStations and other electronic devices we use regularly.

With this link, we are no longer mere bystanders but are now implicated and responsible for the plight of our fellow global citizens. As Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel once said, "What hurts the victim most is not the cruelty of the oppressor but the silence of the bystander." We may have missed the early warning signs in the DRC, but it is not too late to act.

Let us follow in the footsteps of our past Canadian leaders with the will to effect change.



Paul Dewar, MP

Chair

All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Prevention of Genocide and Other Crimes Against Humanity (Canada)

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# Executive Summary

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In contemporary armed conflicts women's bodies have become the battleground on which rebel and government troops inscribe unimaginable acts of violence. Women have become targets of widespread and systematic sexual violence, such as rape, gang rape, abduction and sexual slavery. Despite all this, Canadian policymakers have yet to recognize sexual violence as a security problem requiring an effective security response.

The ongoing armed conflicts in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) highlight how sexual violence is employed as a weapon and strategy of war by all factions. According to Peacebuild, since January 2009, 40 women have been raped every day in the eastern DRC. When a Congolese village is located over a mineral deposit, militias use rape to displace the people and gain access to resources, such as columbite-tantalite (coltan).

Moreover, the current economic recession may become a pretext for the continued government oppression of political opposition in the DRC. Rebel armed groups may increase the use of mass rape as a cheap and effective way to achieve their goals.

Canadian parliamentarians should take steps in addressing these problems. Despite its commitments to eliminating violence against women and children, the Government of Canada has yet to implement United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820. Canadians are also concerned about the indirect consequences of the ongoing violence in the DRC, including economic and security challenges posed against Canada. As of December 31, 2008, the Canadian cumulative mining assets in the DRC were valued at over \$5.7 billion. Canada must recognize that a peaceful and stable DRC is crucial for a prosperous Canada.

As a middle-power country, Canada is able to provoke change. Canada must:

- 1. Follow through on its international obligations to Resolutions 1325 and 1820, by drawing up a strong national action plan regarding their implementation.*
- 2. Work with the UN to end the culture of impunity that surrounds sexual and gender-based violence.*
- 3. Provide specialized training on sexual and gender-based violence to UN peacekeepers.*
- 4. Formulate and pass legislation for "rape-free phones" and other rape-free products.*
- 5. Renew and/or increase funding to existing Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) supported projects in the DRC.*

# Introduction

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The *All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Prevention of Genocide and Other Crimes Against Humanity* (the *Genocide Prevention Group*) is an unofficial group of Parliamentarians from all political parties in the House of Commons and the Senate who have a common interest in the prevention of genocide and crimes against humanity. To ensure impartiality, the *Genocide Prevention Group's* executive is composed of one vice-chair from each political party in Parliament and a chair elected by its membership.

The *Genocide Prevention Group's* mandate is to improve Canada's efforts to prevent genocide and crimes against humanity. Created in 2006, the *Genocide Prevention Group* endeavours to:

- ❖ Ensure that the Government of Canada does all that it can to prevent genocide and crimes against humanity;
- ❖ Increase the flow of independent information and analysis to parliamentarians about genocide; and
- ❖ Engage in communication and collaboration with like-minded bodies in other parliaments.

On February 5, 2009, the *Genocide Prevention Group* held its third Annual General Meeting. The membership reaffirmed its commitment to genocide prevention and expressed concern about the ongoing atrocities and crimes against humanity in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Acting on this growing concern, the *Genocide Prevention Group* hosted a series of events in the spring of 2009 to raise awareness about the gamut of issues in the DRC and provide policy recommendations for Canadian parliamentarians.

This report is made specifically for Canadian parliamentarians. The findings presented in this report are derived primarily from the following events:

- ❖ A field visit to the DRC with the Parliamentary Network on the World Bank.
- ❖ A panel discussion on April 28, 2009 with Ms. Eve Ensler, the founder of the V-Day organization.
- ❖ A provocative soirée entitled "Until the Violence Stops: How Canada can help end the use of sexual violence as a weapon in war" with Ms. Eve Ensler and Mr. Stephen Lewis, Chair of the Stephen Lewis Foundation and former United Nations Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa.
- ❖ A follow-up panel discussion on May 5, 2009 that presented tangible policy recommendations on how Canadian parliamentarians can help end the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war. Five expert panellists discussed the following themes: human rights, humanitarian, security sector and diaspora issues.
- ❖ A day dedicated to Congolese-Canadians on Parliament Hill, hosted by Senator Mobina Jaffer's office on June 11, 2009.

- ❖ A seminar on June 18, 2009 about the “Economics of Conflict” and how the current economic recession may potentially impact human rights violations and crimes against humanity.

A detailed explanation of these events and the expert participants is included in Appendix I. As a follow up to these events, the Office of the Chair of the *Genocide Prevention Group* decided to issue a report documenting its findings. Independent consultations with Mr. Maurice Nwamira, Executive Director of Héritiers de la Justice, and Ms. Violeta Manoukian, Director of IN-PACT Group and former International Advisor to the DRC’s Ministère du Plan, also contributed to these findings. Unless otherwise specified, the information presented here was reiterated throughout the course of these panel discussions and consultations. The following section presents the challenging issues that were analyzed at these events and consultations.

## Statement of the Problem

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### Sexual violence

The use of sexual violence as a tactic of war dates back to antiquity. Despite its historical prevalence, only since the Second World War has mass rape been considered a human atrocity. Widespread and systematic sexual violence includes rape, gang rape, abduction, sexual slavery and other offences. These criminal acts breach the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and the 1998 *Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court*, among other international humanitarian laws and conventions.

Despite existing legal frameworks, the use of rape and sexual violence in armed conflict is still pervasive in contemporary wars. Sexual violence is used as a strategy of warfare to attain political and military goals; it is used to torture, terrorize, injure, degrade and punish affected populations.

Consequently, mass rape enables perpetrators to demoralize and humiliate entire communities. Beyond the physical trauma, such as HIV/AIDS and vaginal fistula, the social stigma and exclusion continue to haunt survivors of sexual violence. These consequences have far-reaching social effects, including the erosion of family and community fabrics. Traumatized and suffering from physical injuries, survivors are often rejected by their spouses, families and excluded from their communities. These assaults have ramifications for the subsequent generation born of rape who are similarly shunned by members of their community. The physical and psychological trauma is further compounded by the lasting socio-economic ramifications.

Although there are growing instances of male victimization, the use of sexual violence disproportionately affects women and girls. The overrepresentation of women and children

among displaced populations heightens their vulnerability to sexual attacks by marauding armed groups as they venture out of refugee or displacement camps in search of food or firewood. In effect, women's bodies have become the battleground on which rebel militia, government troops and civilian and police personnel inscribe unimaginable acts of violence.

The evolving nature of armed conflict in recent decades has been characterized by an increased civilian-combatant interface. This has made the protection of women more difficult and sexual violence more severe. Despite all this, Canadian policymakers have failed to recognize sexual violence as a security problem requiring a systematic and effective security response.

Peacekeeping and other international missions are increasingly mandated to protect civilian populations under imminent threat of physical violence; however this mandate has yet to be matched with the political will, resources and guidance necessary to address the unacceptable prevalence of sexual violence.

## **Sexual Violence in the DRC**

*“What is happening in the DRC is the worst violence towards women in the world.”*

— *Eve Ensler, Founder of V-Day*

The ongoing armed conflicts in the eastern DRC highlight how sexual violence is employed as a weapon of war by all belligerent factions. (See Appendix II for a background summary of the DRC).

Although there is a lack of accurate evidence as to how many women have been raped in the DRC, various estimates merely indicate the tip of an iceberg. It is a widely accepted statistic that in the last 12 years, 6 million Congolese have been killed and a quarter million have been displaced. The 'heart of Africa' has been the bloodiest battleground since the Second World War.

Above and beyond these statistics, thousands of women and girls have been raped and tortured. Despite the limitations of current recorded data, available statistics indicate that three out of four women in North Kivu have been raped, often resulting in irreparable fistulae, mutilation or death.

According to Peacebuild, since January 2009, 40 women have been raped every day in the eastern DRC. Human Rights Watch reports that infants and grandmothers alike are indiscriminately targeted by the militias, rebel groups and government troops. Hospitals in North Kivu confirm these statistics, reporting that 500 raped girls and women have been arriving each month since January 2009. These are only the cases that have been documented; the reality is far worse.



Moreover, the indirect consequences of sexual violence have repercussions on the country's economy. Rape and sexual violence strike a fatal financial blow to women, the main providers of their families' livelihood. The persistent high levels of unemployment, due to multiple crises in DRC, have left men without work. Those who are employed often receive meager wages or experience payment delays. Clearly, in these critical times, it is predominantly women who serve as the pillars of the Congolese household economy, where the vast majority of the population is presently relying on subsistence agriculture. Women are responsible for feeding their families – they plant, harvest, transport, buy and sell their produce at local markets. They also fetch and transport, often times over long distances, all water and firewood used in their households. Daily calendars show that women are working 15 to 18 hours per day, engaged in both domestic chores and the informal sector. The latter has come to represent a dominant share of the Congolese economy. According to the United Nations Human Development Report, approximately 2% of the population engages in salaried employment. Moreover, a 2005 survey found that 68% of the revenue of the rural population is based on agricultural production.<sup>1</sup> Since the agricultural sector is comprised mainly of women, these figures clearly show that the Congolese economy presently rests on the shoulders of women.<sup>2</sup> The numerous consequences of sexual violence can preclude women from participating in the formal and informal economy which may further exacerbate poor economic conditions.

United Nations Under-Secretary General Mr. John Holmes contends that the sexual violence occurring in the DRC is the worst in the world. If it is allowed to continue with impunity, it will set a precedent that it is permissible to commit such atrocities against civilians. Sexual violence as a strategy of war, coupled with HIV/AIDS, is a particularly lethal tactic. And yet the crime of mass rape continues to occur with impunity.

Experts in the field are now using the term *femicide* to describe the systematic and planned destruction of a female population as a tactic of war. In this war, the use of rape allows militias to clear villages and pillage the mines of their coltan, gold, tin and other natural resources.

## **Coltan**

The systematic and planned use of sexual violence in the eastern DRC is used as a strategy of war to further economic, political and strategic interests. According to Héritiers de la Justice and Ms. Eve Ensler, when a Congolese village is located over a mineral deposit, militias rape entire villages to displace the people and gain access to the resources. Among other resources, columbite-tantalite (coltan) is a metallic ore that is widely known for its link to the armed conflicts.

Although coltan is found in many parts of the world, "it is generally believed that 80% of the world's reserves are in Africa, with the DRC accounting for 80% of the African reserves."<sup>3</sup> Coltan is used in most electronic equipment such as laptops, cell phones, PlayStation consoles and a variety of other electronic products. Owing to its simple and artisan extraction methods, as well

as its prevalence in the DRC, coltan can be easily exploited by unskilled and untrained miners with minimal equipment. This allows rebel groups to directly control and manipulate the coltan industry. As a result, coltan has become a principal source of income for the rebel factions accused of systematically using sexual violence in the eastern DRC.

Despite the known details about the process of coltan extraction, tracing the coltan supply chain is no easy task. Metal originating in the DRC often passes through at least 10 hands before it winds up in an electronic product. Even though the entire process of the coltan extraction and trade is unclear, one thing is certain: rebel groups are involved in almost every step of the process until the coltan leaves the country.

Furthermore, the DRC has been plagued by civil war since the mid-1990s. Coupled with weak and corrupt institutional structures, the DRC has become a fragile state. The inability of the government to regulate the trade of natural resources has allowed both Congolese and foreign armed groups involved in the use of sexual violence in the eastern DRC to finance themselves through trade in high-value minerals.

In sum, the illegal coltan extraction and trade is directly financing the armed conflict. The Congolese government's fragility has allowed for the continuation of the civil war in the eastern provinces. The rebel groups fighting in this war generate much of their income from the illicit industry of natural resources, such as coltan, in the country. This lucrative industry contributes to overall state fragility by empowering the rebel groups, corrupting institutions, and hampering the establishment of practices of good governance.

Canada, along with other members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), continues to fuel the demand for these resources. This has created an incentive for the rebel groups and neighbouring countries to continue with the illegal extraction and trade of these minerals which ultimately contributes to the perpetuation of sexual violence in the DRC.

## **The Current Economic Crisis and Crimes Against Humanity**

Despite the past quarter-century of growth and development, in 2008, the world was plunged into an economic recession. According to Dr. Manfred Bienefeld, Professor at Carleton University, "the current economic crisis has only begun and will be getting worse." Researchers have started to predict that the current economic recession can, and is, leading to greater repression. Specifically, the economic crisis is said to be a stressor and a catalyst for conflict and crimes against humanity.

The *Genocide Prevention Group's* consultations with experts in this field have highlighted how the current economic crisis will affect areas that are already vulnerable to state fragility and economic shocks. Dr. David Gillies of the North-South Institute emphasized that the recession

will reduce commodity export revenues, remittances and foreign exchange, while increasing levels of unemployment and the price of food. This means that the recession could continue to exacerbate pre-existing insecurities for many vulnerable communities. In countries with no or “frayed” social safety nets, this could lead to riots, repression, conflict and potentially, crimes against humanity. Amnesty International also reports that rising poverty and desperate economic conditions have led, and continue to lead, to political instability and mass violence. This means that the number of people living in poverty and subjected to human rights abuses is likely to increase during the recession.

Moreover, the economic crisis could be accompanied by increased repression. Governments with existing records of human rights violations may increase the oppression of political opposition to detract attention on economic pressures.

In a conflict zone, such as the DRC, the population is exposed to both governmental repression as well as human rights violations by rebel groups. As weapons become too expensive for rebel factions to obtain, rape may be increasingly relied on as the principal weapon and strategy of war. Thus, in the context of an economic crisis, rebel armed groups may find the tactic of mass rape to be a cheap and effective way to achieve their goals. Overall, the current economic crisis may serve to catalyze a government’s repression of its population or a rebel group’s deliberate use of sexual violence as a strategy of war.

## Why Canadian Parliamentarians?

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*“In the Congo, Canada is the leader in mining.”*

*— Mr. Denis Tougas, Director of Programs for Africa, Great Lakes Region of Africa Issue Table, Entraide Missionnaire inc.*

The continued use of sexual violence in the DRC, coupled with the potential for further difficulties wrought by the global recession continues to pose significant challenges for the lives of Congolese people, particularly for the women and children of that country. Inaction by international actors betrays an indifference and disregard for their lives. While speaking to parliamentarians on April 28, 2009, Ms. Ensler asked: “Is it that coltan, the mineral that keeps our cell phones and computers in play, is more important than the bodies and souls of little Congolese girls?”

Canadians should be disturbed by the fact that our BlackBerrys, PlayStations, cell phones and computers all contain minerals extracted at the expense of the Congolese people. The coltan connection implicates Canadians and their parliamentarians.

The deliberate and widespread use of sexual violence as a strategy of war violates Canadians' virtues of upholding human rights and human dignity. The Government of Canada's commitment to eliminating violence against women and children through its vocal support of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 (Resolutions 1325 and 1820) obliges Canada to prioritize peace in the DRC. As a respected international actor with both wealth and resources, Canada is optimally placed to effect change in the DRC.

Despite the complexity of the armed conflict in the DRC, conflict and post-conflict situations can represent the greatest potential for change. Canada, as a middle-power country, has the ability to become a leader on these issues. A number of Canadian parliamentarians from different political parties have begun the process of addressing the issue and inspiring change. At its nascent stage, the activities have included raising money for a new hospital in the DRC, raising awareness about human trafficking, and providing a forum for the voice of Congolese-Canadians to be heard by their elected officials. On this foundation, greater number of parliamentarians can build a coordinated approach to make peace in the DRC a priority for the Government of Canada.

- ❖ United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security calls for the participation of women in peace processes and the protection of women and girls from violence and respect for their rights
- ❖ United Nations Security Council Resolution 1820 on the use of sexual violence in conflict demands parties to armed conflict to adopt concrete protection and prevention measures to end sexual violence and asserts the importance of women's participation in all process related to ending sexual violence in conflict

Overall, the Government of Canada has supported and continues to contribute to various humanitarian and peacekeeping initiatives in the DRC. Since April 2006, Canada, through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), has provided over \$80 million for both humanitarian and long-term development assistance in the DRC. This includes about \$15 million to support a multilateral effort to help survivors of gender-based violence. In the past 10 years, Canada has contributed \$235 million to the United Nations Assistance Mission in the Congo (MONUC).

Yet, the current Canada-DRC relationship is not one-sided. As of December 31, 2008, the Canadian cumulative mining assets in the DRC were valued at over \$5.7 billion.<sup>4</sup> With Canada's strong economic interests in the DRC, Canada must recognize that a stable and peaceful DRC is crucial for a strong and prosperous Canada.

The Government of Canada can lead the world in proactive measures to ensure lasting solutions that will guarantee the security of the Congolese people. Our past indicates that Canada has the ability to mobilize and inspire the rest of the world. Mrs. Louise Ramazani, the Ministre-Conseiller and Chargé d'Affaires of the Embassy of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in Canada, has specifically stated that the Congo believes that Canada should play a leadership role by mobilizing the most powerful Western countries to put an end to the pillage

of Congolese natural resources, the origin of the violence plaguing the DRC.<sup>5</sup> Ultimately, if Canada, which has a great deal of influence at the UN, does not help put an end to the violence, the problem will continue and expand, posing economic and security risks to Canada itself.

## What Can Canadian Parliamentarians Do?

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Sexual violence affects society as a whole. It is urgent that Canada act immediately to develop both emergency and long-term strategies of engagement. Canada has the capacity and experience to work with all sectors of society to address the problem of sexual violence by adopting a multi-faceted approach.

### Policy Recommendations for Canadian Parliamentarians

*“At present, Canada is part of the problem.”*

— Mr. Denis Tougas, Director of Programs for Africa, Great Lakes Region of Africa Issue Table, *Entraide Missionnaire inc.*

Experts have shared their policy recommendations focusing on the occurrence of sexual violence in the DRC, with the *Genocide Prevention Group*. The following are their amalgamated policy prescriptions:

1. Experts unanimously called on Canada to follow through on its international obligations, based on UN Resolutions 1325 and 1820, and to provide global leadership to end the use of sexual violence as a strategy of war.
  - Namely, Canada must work to draw up a strong national action plan on the implementation of Resolutions 1325 and 1820.
    - o The national action plan should be a whole-of-Government strategy with the demonstrated commitment of senior leadership and clearly allocated ministerial responsibilities.
    - o The plan must include new and sustained resource commitments and a rigorous performance measurement framework with specific targets and indicators.
  - As a signatory to Resolution 1325, Canada must ensure that all existing minimum standards are applied and that additional space is created for the voices, leadership, participation and, most importantly, decision-making by Congolese women, in the peace-building process.
  - Canada must adopt a long-term approach to addressing sexual violence in crisis situations.

- This includes prevention, response, protection, and support during the post-conflict and recovery phases.
2. It is imperative to lend full support to the current motion before Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade, to commission a study on the implementation of Resolutions 1325 and 1820 in Canada and to complete the implementation of a national action plan on these two resolutions.
  3. Canada must continue to support humanitarian reform, by providing core funding to agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working to address sexual violence; supporting training programs for UN Humanitarian Coordinators; and advocating for a new UN women's agency.
  4. Canada must work with the UN to end the culture of impunity that surrounds sexual and gender-based violence by helping to develop effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms which include participatory approaches and involve stakeholders such as survivors, perpetrators, and service providers.
  5. Canada must provide specialized training on sexual and gender-based violence to UN peacekeepers with the aim of strengthening their capacity to prevent assault and improve response capabilities.
    - Canada can capitalize on the expertise of the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre in providing training and capacity-building to peacekeepers as well as local Congolese police forces.
  6. Canada must invest in social infrastructure and lend greater support to existing services designed efforts to help those affected by sexual and gender-based violence within Canadian communities. This includes the provision of better physical and mental health care, counseling services and education.
  7. Canada must channel the voices of Congolese women and work to ensure their inclusion in policymaking discussions at the national and international levels.
  8. Canada can act as a leader of Western nations and recognize that the Congolese people are in charge of their own resources.
    - Using the expertise of Canadian academics, civil society and policymakers, Canada must focus policy attention on strengthening the fragile aspects of the Congolese political system.
  9. Canadian parliamentarians must formulate and pass legislation for "rape-free phones" and other rape-free products.
    - Canada must invest in scientific research to promote new technologies and develop electronic products without the use of coltan.

- Canada can be a leader in denouncing the exploitation of natural resources in the international arena as the main cause of the war and human rights abuses in the DRC.
- Canada must put in place strong and effective Corporate Social Responsibility measures as recommended by the National Roundtables on Corporate Social Responsibility to ensure that its multinational companies are not breaching OECD guidelines and violating human rights in the DRC.
- Following the path of the United States, Canada must introduce legislation mirroring American legislation S-891, the *Congo Conflict Minerals Act of 2009*, as submitted by Senator Sam Brownback in the United States Senate.
  - o The *Congo Conflict Minerals Act of 2009* (S-891) seeks to require American-registered entities to disclose the country of origin of columbite-tantalite, cassiterite or wolframite that they themselves have extracted, imported or exported *OR* that appears in products or components of products that these entities sell. If these minerals come from the DRC, the mine of origin is also to be disclosed in an effort to ascertain that no American company is contributing to the armed conflict and human rights abuses in the DRC.
  - o Canadian parliamentarians must support legislation that aims to ensure that corporations engaged in mining and receiving support from the Government of Canada act in a manner consistent with Canada's commitments to international human rights standards.

10. Canadian parliamentarians must renew and/or increase funding to existing Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) supported projects in the DRC.

- The "Project Against Sexual Violence" (#A032983-001) expires at the end of 2009. Having provided \$15 million over four years to the UN Population Fund, the Canadian government can renew this project which provides critical medical care, as well as psychological and other needed support to victims of sexual violence.
- The "Democratic Republic of Congo Health Care – CARE Canada 2008" (#M012762-001) project provides CARE Canada with \$1 million to provide increased health care to 50,000 individuals in North Kivu, including those affected by sexual violence.

These tangible recommendations focus on various sectors, from the strengthening of existing institutions to the introduction of new legislation regarding natural resources.

# Conclusion

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*“...the death of an African daughter is the death of your own. The death of a Congolese mother is the death of your mother.”*

— *Eve Ensler, Founder of V-Day*

By drawing on events, panel discussions and private consultations, the *Genocide Prevention Group* has engaged in an in-depth investigation of the prevalence of sexual violence in the DRC. The seriousness and complexity of these problems call on Canada to honour its international commitment as a defender of a woman’s right to security.

*Femicide* is a crime against humanity. It is a heinous act, abhorrent to all Canadians. That such violence continues to occur is deplorable; it is equally shameful that those with the requisite resources do so little to prevent the unimaginable terror of *femicide*.

The use of *femicide* as a strategy of war and, most prominently in view of the situation in the eastern provinces of the DRC, reminds us that the fight against genocide and crimes against humanity remains a pressing issue of concern for Canadian policymakers. The continued and intensified perpetration of these crimes illustrates that this fight is far from over and merits serious attention. Indeed, the time for action could not come any sooner.



# Appendix I – Event Summary

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## **A Field Trip to the Democratic Republic of the Congo with the Parliamentary Network on the World Bank**

The Parliamentary Network on the World Bank (PNoWB) invited the Chair of the *Genocide Prevention Group*, Paul Dewar, to represent Canada in a field visit program to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) from April 13 to 17, 2009. The delegation consisted of six parliamentarians from developing countries and six parliamentarians from donor countries.

This program allowed Mr. Paul Dewar to make political assessments about how development aid can be used as part of a strategy for conflict prevention and post-conflict reconciliation. Supported by a grant from the Government of Finland, the delegation met with representatives and parliamentarians of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, experts in the field of natural resources and conflict and experts on post-conflict development and reconciliation. The delegation also visited a World Bank development project in Inga: a hydroelectric dam located about 360km away from Kinshasa.

## **The Genocide Prevention Group’s Panel Discussion with Ms. Eve Ensler**

On April 28, 2009, Ms. Eve Ensler met with the members of the *Genocide Prevention Group* to discuss her experiences in the eastern DRC and the systematic use of sexual violence as a tactic in the Kivu Conflict.

In addition to being the founder of the V-Day organization, Ms. Ensler is a playwright, performer and activist for women’s rights. She is the award-winning author of *The Vagina Monologues*, a theatrical production that has been published in 45 languages and performed in over 120 countries. Ms. Ensler has created a “City of Joy” for survivors of sexual violence in the eastern DRC. She shared her unique insight and policy recommendations with the members of the *Genocide Prevention Group*.

## **“Until the Violence Stops: How Canada can help end the use of sexual violence as a weapon in war”, with Ms. Eve Ensler and Mr. Stephen Lewis**

On April 28, 2009, the *Genocide Prevention Group* hosted a creative and provocative soirée to inform parliamentarians about the systematic and widespread use of sexual violence, the “normalization” of rape in war and the political will to intervene.

Keynote speakers included:

- Ms. Eve Ensler; V-Day founder and playwright of *The Vagina Monologues*
- Mr. Stephen Lewis; Chair of the Stephen Lewis Foundation and former United Nations Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa

The master of ceremonies for this event was Ms. Françoise Nduwimana, a lecturer at the Université du Québec en Outaouais, where she teaches "*Le développement communautaire comparé.*" She also works as a gender consultant in peace, security and development. Ms. Nduwimana is currently with the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre.

## **Until the Violence Stops: Policy Recommendations**

The *Genocide Prevention Group* hosted a panel discussion on May 5, 2009 that followed up on the "Until the Violence Stops" event. This round table presented tangible policy recommendations on how Canadian parliamentarians can help end the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war.

Five expert panellists from local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) discussed sexual violence as a crime against humanity, justice and human rights, sexual violence and the security sector, and survivors of sexual violence in Canada. The panellists included the following individuals:

### **1. Sexual violence as a crime against humanity**

– *Robyn Baron, Oxfam Canada*

Ms. Robyn Baron is currently with the Humanitarian Unit at Oxfam Canada, where she has worked on women's rights in crises and sexual violence in conflict. Within this, she has supported programming and policy work related to some of the most acute crises around the world, including Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sudan. She is also one of the Oxfam staff responsible for developing and implementing all of Oxfam's humanitarian programming in the Horn and East Africa. Robyn's experience in these areas encompasses everything from work with local and international NGOs in Central America and the Caribbean on grassroots women's rights projects to policy work at the national and international level on UNSC Resolution 1325, civilian protection and the international community's engagement with current humanitarian crises.

## **2. Human rights and justice**

– *Gisèle Eva Côté from Rights & Democracy*

Ms. Gisèle Eva Côté is the Women's Rights Programme Officer at Rights & Democracy, where she focuses on initiatives related to the campaign against impunity for perpetrators of sexual violence in the DRC, as well as the issue of reparations for victims of sexual crimes. She coordinates the activities of the Coalition for Women's Human Rights in Conflict Situations in the DRC. Ms. Côté is a social anthropologist and a long-time activist for indigenous women's rights. She has worked on various international cooperation projects in Latin America, as well as in Togo, Burkina Faso and Mozambique over the course of many years.

## **3. Sexual violence and the security sector**

a) *Isobel Anderson from the Ottawa Police Service*

Ms. Isobel Anderson began her policing career with the British South Africa Police in a segregated Rhodesia, now known as Zimbabwe. She immigrated to Canada in 1989 where she continued her policing career with the Ottawa Police Service, working in different areas such as Domestic Violence, Youth Section, and Diversity and Race Relations. In September 2008, Ms. Anderson was seconded to the Canadian Police College as coordinator/facilitator on the Senior Police Administration Course for two years. Ms. Anderson currently serves on the board of directors of Ontario Women in Law Enforcement, the Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization and Leadership Ottawa. She also travels to various countries in Africa with the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre to develop and deliver pre-deployment training for United Nations (UN) police officers. In November 2008 and February 2009, Ms. Anderson travelled to Kenya with a team of facilitators to deliver gender-based sexual violence training to UN police officers on mission in Darfur.

b) *Julie Filteau from the Service de police de la Ville de Lévis*

Ms. Julie Filteau has been an active police officer with the Lévis Police Department in Quebec for 19 years. Before becoming the team leader of her department's sex crimes unit, she worked as a detective sergeant within that unit for 10 years. At the United Nations' request, Ms. Filteau was deployed to the Democratic Republic of the Congo between 2004 and 2005 as part of a Sexual Exploitation and Abuses team to investigate sexual crimes committed by peacekeepers. In addition to her position with the Lévis Police Department, Ms. Filteau works as a part-time facilitator and subject matter expert for the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre.

#### **4. Diasporas in Canada**

– *Sandy Onyalo from the Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre*

Ms. Sandy Onyalo is the Executive Director of the Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre. She is an advocate for sexual violence survivors, women's equality and social justice issues. Ms. Onyalo's also has experience in human resources management and employment equity, community development and health promotion. She has worked with numerous communities in Ottawa and Toronto on a variety of issues, including violence against women. Under her leadership, the Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre has undertaken a number of initiatives to provide psychosocial supports to immigrant and refugee survivors of sexualized violence. These activities include training for immigrant servicing organizations in Ottawa, a "train the trainer" peer mentoring initiative with diverse immigrant women's communities, providing psychosocial supports for women and youth from immigrant and refugee backgrounds and a soon-to-be-launched cultural competence handbook for counsellors and practitioners working with immigrant and refugee survivors of sexual violence.

These panellists ultimately called for a study on human rights to be commissioned and for a National Action Plan for implementing United Nations Resolution 1325.

Dr. Kate McInturff from Peacebuild moderated the event. Dr. McInturff received her doctoral degree from the University of British Columbia. She has worked at the American University in Cairo, McMaster University and, most recently, at the Institute of Women's Studies at the University of Ottawa. She is currently the coordinator of the Gender and Peacebuilding Working Group of Peacebuild. Her research is focused on gender, development and cultural issues in postcolonial African states.

#### **A Day dedicated to Congolese Canadians on Parliament Hill**

On June 11, 2009, Senator Mobina Jaffer hosted a day event to raise awareness about the DRC, particularly the sexual violence against Congolese women and young girls in the eastern DRC. This event included about 100 Congolese-Canadians who shared their thoughts and recommendations on how Canadian parliamentarians can contribute to ending the dire security and humanitarian situation in the DRC.

#### **Economics of Conflict**

*The Genocide Prevention Group* hosted a seminar on June 18, 2009 on how the current economic recession may potentially impact human rights violations and crimes against humanity.

Dr. David Gillies and Mr. Abraham Sewonet Abatneh discussed the implications of the economic recession on political instability, conflict and crimes against humanity. They used a case study of the Sudan. Dr. Gillies is currently on an executive interchange at the North-South Institute and is a public servant based at the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). He has served as a policy analyst in Sudan and as CIDA Head of Aid in Zimbabwe. Dr. Gillies has also worked at the British Department of Foreign Affairs, as well as with two NGOs: Aga Khan Foundation Canada and Rights & Democracy. Dr. Gillies was educated at Oxford University and holds a PhD in political science from McGill University. His research interest while at the North-South Institute is governance in fragile states.

Dr. Manfred Bienefeld discussed the longer-term issues that breed recession and governments that are not responsive to their citizens, while providing a few tangible policy recommendations for Canadian foreign policy. Dr. Bienefeld is a professor at the School of Public Administration at Carleton University. He teaches and carries out research on development policy, human capital, and technology and industrialization in Africa, Canada, East Asia and the Pacific. His interests are debt crisis, protectionism, planning and the newly industrializing countries.

## Appendix II – Background on the Democratic Republic of the Congo

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Following independence from Belgium in 1960, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) experienced political instability. President Mobutu Sese Seko came to power amidst a political crisis in 1965. His regime was characterized by its use of brutal violence, ethnic strife and civil war.

In 1997, Laurent-Désiré Kabila ousted President Sese Seko. However, after Kabila seized power, an ethnic armed group accused the new Congolese president of tribalism. Backed militarily by Rwanda and Uganda, this group emerged in opposition to President Kabila who was supported by Angola, Zimbabwe and Namibia. This conflict is known as the Second Congolese Civil War.

The Lusaka Peace Accords of 1999 established a ceasefire and created the United Nations Assistance Mission in the Congo (MONUC), which was tasked with implementing the ceasefire; the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process as well as facilitating the political transition.

Despite the Lusaka Peace Accords, fighting in the eastern Congolese provinces continued. The situation deteriorated, resulting in a multi-dyad civil war among government troops, rebel forces, Rwandan and Ugandan proxy militias, the former Rwandan *génocidaires* and indigenous fighters. All of these parties are accused of raping civilians, pillaging villages, exploiting natural resources, destroying social infrastructures and the natural environment, and continuing extortion by the imposition of so-called ‘taxes’ on the population of territories under their control.

In January 2009, the Rwandan Armed Forces arrested General Laurent Nkunda, the leader of one rebel group accused of war crimes in the DRC. Pursuing the Rwandan *génocidaires*; the Rwandan Army’s invasion is said to have dispersed the *génocidaires* into North and South Kivu and further aggravated the humanitarian situation. To this day, the various militia groups continue to commit atrocities against the population and fight in the eastern provinces, which are rich in natural resources and remain outside effective state authority. This is known as the Kivu Conflict.

The war in the DRC remains extraordinarily complex, dragging on for over a decade and causing the deaths of millions of people. The International Rescue Committee estimates that about 5.4 million people have died since 1998, mostly from lack of access to food or medical care. It is within this context, that policymakers need to address the use of sexual violence by warring factions in the DRC.

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# Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> Violeta Manoukian, "Realities of Women and Children in DRC", 2008 Draft report to UNICEF/Kinshasa.

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