

# Eastern Congo (DRC): Africa's Forgotten Conflict



**STAND**  
The Student Led Division of  
**GENOCIDE INTERVENTION**

## Glossary of terms:

### **The Congolese Army (FARDC):**

Composed of poorly trained, frequently unpaid soldiers, and responsible for widespread human rights violations. The FARDC has been accused of collaboration with the FDLR, in violation of international agreements signed by the Congolese government.

### ***Congrès national pour la défense du peuple (CNDP):***

An armed group led by General Nkunda that claims to defend eastern Congo's Tutsi population. Indiscriminately kills, rapes, and severely injures non-combatant civilians, and continues to fight FARDC in violation of a ceasefire agreement. Though they are still operating separately in some areas, the CNDP was integrated into the FARDC in 2009 after Nkunda's arrest by the Rwandan government.

### **Democratic Liberation Forces of Rwanda (FDLR):**

Composed of former Rwandan Hutu militiamen and *Interahamwe* génocidaires. FDLR forces commit widespread atrocities in Tutsi and non-Hutu majority areas.

### **MONUC:**

UN mission in the DRC. MONUC is the largest UN peacekeeping operation to date, with over 18,000 troops in the theater.

### **Operation Kimia II:**

A collaborative assault on the FDLR by MONUC and FARDC, started in January 2009. The assault had a limited effect on the FDLR, though many think it resulted in even more human rights violations committed throughout the Congo.

**Educate yourself about Congo and more at [www.standnow.org/learn](http://www.standnow.org/learn)**

## Where we are now:

Between 1998 and 2003, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DR Congo) played host to a devastating war that killed an estimated 5 million people, making it the deadliest conflict in terms of civilian casualties since World War II and earning it the nickname "Africa's World War." Today, despite the signing of several peace accords and the presence of the world's largest United Nations peacekeeping force, the violence continues.

Atrocities - in which both the government forces and rebels have been implicated - include rape as a weapon of war, forced displacement of hundreds of thousands, and mass killings of civilians. UN-brokered ceasefires have been consistently violated in renewed clashes between the FARDC, CNDP and FDLR. In January 2009, the UN mission joined government forces in an assault on the FDLR known as Kimia II.

## How we got here:

Tensions in eastern DR Congo arise out of the region's position as a meeting point of the Congolese and Rwandan/Burundian ethnic groups. Interethnic conflicts were historically fought over political power and land rights in the Kivu provinces. A massive influx of refugees into DRC after the 1994 Rwandan genocide exacerbated tensions. The latest war started shortly after the overthrow of long-serving dictator Mobutu Sese Seko. Since 1994, eastern DR Congo has seen periodic warfare that has displaced millions. Despite the signing of several peace accords, rebel groups continue to operate with impunity in the eastern DR Congo.

The DR Congo's vast mineral wealth has also been a contributing factor to violence. Multiple armed groups have fought to gain control of natural resources, including gold, coltan, tungsten and tin; these mines serve to fund and sustain the militias.

## Our Response:

The behavior of the FDLR and the LRA during their retributive attacks in the DR Congo indicate that the targeting of civilians is a primary tactic of both groups. The widespread use of rape by armed actors throughout the DR Congo also indicates the direct targeting of civilians by constituent members of the FDLR, LRA and FARDC. Protracted insecurity has resulted in widespread displacement across the region, with an estimated 2.1 million people displaced in the DR Congo, and 1.1 million displaced in North Kivu alone. The widespread malnutrition and disease caused by the displacement seems to STAND and GI-NET another example of the government's inability to protect its own people.

STAND and GI-NET are working with partners to ensure that United States government policy toward the Democratic Republic of Congo works towards a lasting political solution to the conflict in the DR Congo including actions to protect the human rights of civilians who suffer at the hands of rebel and military perpetrators.

STAND is uniting students around the world to create a permanent constituency to prevent and end genocide and mass atrocities wherever they occur. While the current violence in eastern DRC has not been classified as "genocide," it is characterized by intentional targeting of non-combatant civilians on a nearly unparalleled scale.