

**GOOD SHEPHERD PARISH VOICES FOR JUSTICE
ACTION ALERT – MARCH/APRIL 2010
*Stop Violence in Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)***

Urge Congress to support S. 891/H.R. 4128

BACKGROUND

The violent conflict in the Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo has by some estimates killed more than five million people - most from malnutrition, disease, and lack of access to health care - and has currently displaced more than 1.7 million people from their homes. Related to the conflict, an estimated 400,000 women and girls have been raped in the Eastern DRC in the past ten years.



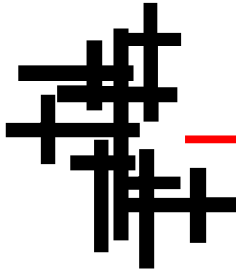
Much of the instability, displacement, conflict, and sexual violence in the Eastern DRC is financed by armed groups' control over lucrative mines and mineral trade routes. One of several such "conflict minerals" is coltan, a critical component for the production of cell phones, laptops, and other electronics. Much of the DRC's coltan is being illicitly mined in conflict zones and illegally exported through neighboring countries.

THE CHRISTIAN/CATHOLIC CONNECTION

Our faith calls on us to uphold the life and dignity of the human person by alleviating human suffering and promoting justice and solidarity worldwide. We are called to help end this violence in the DRC and assist people in developing nations to realize the benefits of natural resource extraction and restrain the misuse of their mineral wealth.

The Catholic bishops of the DRC have identified conflict minerals as a critical issue and traveled to the U.S. to focus attention to these drivers of the crisis. Our Holy Father, Benedict XVI, stated in his encyclical letter, *Charity in Truth*: "The stockpiling of natural resources, which in many cases are found in the poor countries themselves, gives rise to exploitation and frequent conflicts between and within nations. These conflicts are often fought on the soil of those same countries, with a heavy toll of death, destruction and further decay. The international community has an urgent duty to find institutional means of regulating the exploitation of non-renewable resources...."

(See next page for recommended action)



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ACTION

Take Action Now! Join Catholic Relief Services and send a message to your members of Congress. (In most cases for Good Shepherd members Congressman James Sensenbrenner) Urge Congress to help stop the violence in the DRC by co-sponsoring H.R. 4128 in the House of Representatives or S.891 in the Senate. We need to ensure that these bills move forward quickly.



Both bills require companies to provide more information about where the minerals they are purchasing come from. While in different ways, both bills call for on-going documentation of the links between mining and human rights violations in the DRC, including maps of mines and mineral trading routes that finance conflict. They also promote more humanitarian and development assistance for affected communities in the DRC.

CONTACTS FOR ACTION:

Rep. Sensenbrenner 2449 Rayburn House Office Building Washington, D.C. 20515-4905 Phone: (202) 225-5101 Fax: (202) 225-3190	Senator Kohl 330 Hart Senate Office Building Washington, D.C. 20510-4903 Phone: (202) 224-5653 Fax: (202) 224-9787	Senator Feingold 506 Hart Senate Office Building Washington, D.C. 20510-4904 Phone: (202) 224-5323 Fax: (202) 224-2725
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CONTACTS FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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- Catholic Relief Services Action Center:
http://actioncenter.crs.org/site/MessageViewer?em_id=18241.0

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