

4Ps for Protecting and Empowering Women



There is a solution for the plight of women and girls in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. Enough believes that there are four essential ingredients to successful conflict resolution. This framework is called the 4Ps. By promoting peace, providing protection, punishing the perpetrators, and promoting the prevention of sexual violence and other crimes against humanity, we can end the conflict, stop atrocities, and protect and empower Congolese women.

Promoting Peace

Sexual violence in eastern Congo occurs within a broader context: since 1996, eastern Congo has been the epicenter of the deadliest war since World War II. Rape and sexual violence in eastern Congo are more than just individual criminal acts; they are weapons of war. Predatory armed groups use rape and sexual violence to terrorize and destroy entire communities. The United States and its partners—including the United Nations, European Union, and African Union—must lead efforts to establish a strong peace process and help to dismantle these armed groups; otherwise the violence against women will only increase.

- **STEP UP DIPLOMACY:** Increase the diplomatic presence in eastern Congo to forge a peaceful solution. Efforts must focus on consolidating the fragile cease-fire and pressing ahead with political talks between the Congolese government and opposition groups.
- **DEMOBILIZE ARMED GROUPS:** Increase funding and deploy personnel to support the UN-led process of disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement, and reintegration of fighting forces. This process, whereby former combatants give up their weapons in exchange for educational and economic

opportunities in civilian society, is one of the most difficult but crucial components of peacemaking, as these fighters will continue to commit sexual violence if they do not successfully rejoin society.

Providing Protection

Sexual violence and rape in eastern Congo occurs on a scale seen nowhere else in the world. The United States must lead international community *now* to improve protection for women and girls in eastern Congo.

- **IMPROVE UN PEACEKEEPERS' RESPONSE TO SEXUAL VIOLENCE:** The UN peacekeeping force in the Congo, known by its French acronym MONUC, must provide more of a deterrent military presence in places where women are most vulnerable—such as camps for the displaced, road blocks, rivers, and places where women collect firewood—and increase patrols at night, when most rapes and acts of sexual violence occur.
- **FUND PROGRAMS TO RESPOND TO AND HELP PREVENT SEXUAL VIOLENCE:** Increase funding and support for sexual violence reduction and prevention activities. This means deploying civilians, working for the U.N. or humanitarian organizations, to help reduce women's exposure to sexual violence and deal with its traumatic consequences.
- **NEUTRALIZE THE WORST OFFENDERS:** Devise comprehensive strategies to deal with the worst perpetrators of rape and sexual violence, in particular the Congolese army and the Hutu rebel group known as the FDLR. Donor countries should embed military trainers in Congolese army units and improve human rights education. Donors should also provide equipment and training to enable MONUC to take offensive military action, if necessary, against armed groups that refuse to demobilize.

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- **PASS HELPFUL LEGISLATION:** The U.S. Congress should pass the *International Violence Against Women Act (S. 2279)* as a small but important step toward ending violence against women in the Congo and around the world.

Punishing perpetrators

A culture of impunity in the Congo is fuelling the epidemic of rape and sexual violence. For the women and girls who have had the courage to publicly identify their rapists, prosecutions are exceedingly rare. Those few perpetrators thrown into jail are often able to bribe their way to freedom, or simply break out, as authorities rarely chase escapees. The United States must lead international efforts to hold the perpetrators of rape and sexual violence accountable.

- **PURSUE INTERNATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY:** Publicly call for the International Criminal Court to open an investigation into rape as a war crime in eastern Congo and provide information to assist the court in building cases. Rape as a weapon of war in eastern Congo is systematic and widespread, and militia leaders and military commanders who have committed atrocities must be brought to trial.
- **MAKE SANCTIONS BITE:** The United States and all UN member states must aggressively enforce existing UN targeted sanctions against individuals and groups responsible for rape, sexual violence, and other crimes against humanity. The international community must eliminate the political and economic support from outside the Congo to predatory armed groups.

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Promoting Prevention

Preventing sexual violence in eastern Congo will require political and financial commitment to reforming Congo's security, justice, and economic institutions over the coming years. The United States can start the ball rolling on this monumental task by prioritizing four areas.

- **REFORM THE SECURITY SECTOR:** Support the vetting and training of Congo's military and police so that they can and will protect the civilians whom they currently threaten with atrocities.
- **RESTORE THE RULE OF LAW:** Increase funding and coordination to assist the Congolese government to investigate, arrest, and try suspected criminals and to keep them behind bars. These efforts should include support to the Congolese armed forces to prosecute and punish perpetrators of sexual violence within its ranks.
- **STAUNCH RESOURCE EXPLOITATION:** Lead international efforts to curb the illegal exploitation of minerals and other natural resources in eastern Congo. Congo's wealth of natural resources fuels the conflict, as armed groups commit horrific atrocities to control and profit from these resources.
- **INVEST IN CONGO'S DEVELOPMENT:** Support economic recovery by building roads and reestablishing trade, raising the standard of living, and creating jobs, all of which contribute to preventing the relapse of conflict in Congo.

Visit www.raisehopeforcongo.org to learn more and join the movement!

Questions? Email congocampaign@enoughproject.org.