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Democratic Republic of Congo, Conflict

Democratic Republic of Congo: The Battle on Education, Health, and Political Instability

The Democratic Republic of Congo is a poor country. It has many mineral resources, but the minerals are in the area of conflict. This creates problems throughout the country. This is part of the reason the country is so poor and why many people live below the poverty line. There are many things that can be done, but not many of them can be done in a timely fashion.

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is a country in the middle of Africa, along the equator. This means it has an equatorial weather with daytime temperatures up in the high seventies to high ninety's and nighttime temperatures at fifty degrees with high humidity. This country has a wet season from October to April. The summer months tend to be dry and dusty (Climate).

The Democratic Republic has a population of 84,231,330, as of July 31, 2018 (DR), with forty and a half percent of the population in the urban areas of the country. The Democratic Republic has a Republic government, with President Joseph Kabila as the Chief of State, and Prime Minister Bruno Tshibala as the Head of Government. The constitution in the Democratic Republic of Congo was signed in 2006. Around fifty-five percent of the people in this country live below the poverty line, many of these families are living on less than one dollar per day. The vast majority of the poor and poverty-stricken people live on the eastern side of the country where conflict and lack of roads make it difficult to bring aid and help to the region (Democratic Republic).

Only about ten percent of the land in the DRC is used for farming, and many of the farms are only used for subsistence farming, which is a self-sufficiency farming system in which the farmers focus on growing enough food to feed themselves and their entire families. The crops that are grown in this area are plantains, maize, groundnuts/peanuts, rice, tobacco, coffee, sugar cane, rubber, palm oil, mangoes, oranges, mangoteens, guavas, papaya, avocado, and bananas. Many people in the country depend on hunting wild animals for meat, also known as bush meat, but fish is also valuable protein. The country doesn't have enough food for exports, but the meat that is brought in has such a high price from global prices, many families can't afford to purchase it (Climate &).

The conflict that makes the Democratic Republic of Congo, so poverty stricken is the massive refugee crisis and spillover from the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. The Hutu genocidaires led to the Eastern side of the DRC and formed armed groups, thus causing opposing Tutsi and other opportunistic rebel groups to arise. The government was not able to control and defeat the various groups, some of which directly

threatened populations in neighboring countries. This conflict is also known as the Second Congo War, from 1998 to 2003, government forces supported by Angola, Namibia, and Zimbabwe fought rebels backed by Uganda and Rwanda. The death toll reached over five million people. Despite the signing of the peace deal and the formation of the transitional governance in 2003. The weak government and institutions, along with corruption and an absence of the rule of law, have contributed to ongoing violence perpetrated by armed groups against civilians in the eastern region. One of the most prominent rebel groups to emerge in the aftermath was known as March 23 Movement (M23). This rebel group is made up of mostly ethnic Tutsis allegedly supported by the Rwanda Government. M23 rebelled against the Congolese government for supposedly renegeing on the prior peace deal signed in 2009 but were defeated by the Congolese army and United Nations peacekeepers in 2013 after it gained control of Goma. Goma is resource rich primeval capital in eastern DRC on the border with Rwanda and home to over one million people. United Nations Security Council authorized an offense brigade under the mandate of the United Nations Organizations Stabilization Mission in the DRC to support the DRC state army in its fight against M23. Since M23's defeat, other armed groups have emerged due to general lawlessness, chaos, and weak government in eastern DRC(Global).

The country's massive resource wealth-estimated to contain twenty-four trillion US dollars of untapped mineral resources, (*Mining*) this also fuels the violence. The mineral trade provides financial means for the armed groups to operate and buy firearms and other weapons. In an effort to prevent funding armed militias, the United States passed legislation in 2010 to reduce the purchase of "conflict minerals." Due to complex supply chains in the DRC mineral sale business, obtaining certification has proven to be difficult for companies that purchase resources from second hand buyers, this results in multinational companies refusing to buy minerals from the DRC. Thus, putting miners out of work and even driving some of them to join armed groups to gain a source of livelihood.

The concerns of the country are a weak governance and the prevalence of many armed groups have subjected Congolese civilians to widespread rape, sexual violence, massive human rights violations, and extreme poverty. The United Nations, African Union, and neighboring countries have struggled to address threats posed by remaining rebel groups and promote development. The DRC's continued violence has the potential to spill over into Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi, countries with longstanding ties with the United States (Global). Another concern are the health threats. Fewer than a quarter of people in DRC have proper sanitation facilities, fewer than half have access to clean water. Water-borne diseases such as diarrhea, bilharzia/schistosomiasis, and cholera are common. Cholera outbreaks are yearly, three percent of those that contract the disease die because of lack of treatment. Greatest threat to health is malaria, 6.7 million cases in 2009, two out of five child deaths are malaria cause. Half of infant deaths are linked to malnutrition, caused by lack of vitamin A, zinc, and iron in diets. Healthcare is another concern; most hospitals and health centers are poorly staffed and equipped. Health system collapsed during years of conflict, health professions have not received a wage from the government for many years. Facilities have either gone private, emigrated, or become an employee of one of the foreign non-government organizations (NGOs) providing healthcare (Poverty). Education in the DRC constitution provides free and compulsory primary school education, but they have a small education budget and general mismanagement of funds, parents must pay for their children's education at most

schools. Even if tuition is paid, the cost of supplies and books make education unaffordable for many families. Schools usually have five villages in one school, but many schools aren't able to operate because the country has a shortage of teachers. Girls are more likely to drop out of school than boys are, because girls are supposed to stay home and help their mothers with house work. Everyone in five girls in the DRC are mothers by the age of fifteen. The few girls and many boys that go on to further their education find it hard to go because of the price of schooling, and many families don't see any benefit to secondary and further education for their children. Only about five percent of student go to universities or get a college education and usually wealthy families send their children abroad for school (Education).

Helping the DRC would be a costly and timely project that requires lots of time and planning. There are lots of things that can be done later in time but the now things that need done are clean wells for water that stay clean, enforce government policies for education and the laws, and more education for women and awareness about diseases. These projects can be implemented in no time, as long as there is support from the society. Creating new wells for clean water is a small price to pay for have healthy citizens. Implementing new government policies for education can include lowering the cost the books and helping families with scholarship options so they can pay less, other laws that can be implemented are those to enforce laws on mineral resources, and the basic laws of the country. Education options should be top priority for the country, because having educated people in the country will help turn the country around, also having more teachers come would help with the education gap.

Creating a new and strong government is one of the key factors in solving all the problems in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Creating a stable and strong government is a very difficult thing to obtain in a country that doesn't have control over the eastern part of the country because of the militant groups. The militant groups would have to first agree to a peace meeting and sign a peace agreement. Then the people of the country would then be allowed to vote for their president. The president would then begin to create laws and have help creating laws by the other branches of the government. These laws would need to be for the bettering of the country in which he/she is running. If need be they would be able to ask opinion from the United Nations or the African Union. They could help find someone to run the country, help create laws to benefit the country, and better their economy.

Once the country has established a strong government, some of the laws and departments that need to be inducted include water sanitation departments, government/police forces, and education systems. In order to keep the people of a country happy and healthy, you need to keep the water in the country clean and sanitary. The first thing that needs to be done is sanitize and clean the preexisting wells with water soluble and earth friendly cleaners. The next thing to do is create new wells in other rural towns and villages, although it costs about seven thousand US dollars to put in a three-hundred-foot-deep well, it would be well worth the time and money to keep the citizens healthy. Another policy that should be implemented is police forces, and a government police force. These forces can better a community because the people within the community feel safe being there. Another thing that needs to be done but is very difficult to obtain is enforcing new laws about education. These laws should require children to get an education, whether it be from homeschooling or going to a school, because the future of the country

lye in the hands of the children of today. The education of the children is very important. Many schools are being shut down because of lack of teachers. The teachers are the center of the classroom and they need to be paid for their efforts, but another thing that needs to happen in these schools are education options for women and children and education on diseases. The women in the country need to teach how to read and write, but also should be encouraged to continue their education and become the leaders of tomorrow. The diseases in the country are the main killer, many children are dying every day because of cholera and other diseases like it. The country needs to educate the people on how to keep away from the diseases and what to look for when diagnosing these things. The people need to be aware of what is happening in their own country.

Another big thing needs to be included is a federal agency that deals with the trade and resources of the country. This agency will help with tariffs and taxes on imports and exports. It will also help control what can and can't be sold within and out of the country. This agency will be the main contributor to knowing what is produced within the country and when they can sell it. It will also help maintain the resources within the country by limiting how much of the mineral resource can be harvested at one time. Thus, creating stability and trust for the government and the agencies within it.

The last big thing that needs to happen, is having the support of the people within the country. Without the support of the people, you can't create a great country for them to live in. You need to have the support and input of the people to know what to do with the country. The people of the country are the people that the government need to support. The people of the country will see the work being put into rebuilding the country and they will want to help, they will want to restore the country to its former glory and create a competitive economy and a great infrastructure.

In conclusion, the Democratic Republic of Congo has many problems that will take years to fix, but in the meantime having clean water, better education, a strong government, and the backing support of the country will create a better tomorrow and a brighter future for the people that live within the country.

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