



TAKE ACTION!!

November 13, 2006

Support Congo's fragile democracy:

Urge your Representatives to pass S. 2125, the Democratic Republic of the Congo Relief, Security and Democracy Promotion Act of 2006

TAKE ACTION NOW! Contact your Representative to encourage support for S. 2125, the *Democratic Republic of the Congo Relief, Security and Democracy Promotion Act* by urging House leadership to bring the bill up for a vote before the end of the Congressional session. Visit the CRS Action Center to send your Member a message today: <http://actioncenter.crs.org>.

WHY THIS ISSUE IS IMPORTANT: In their 2001 statement, *A Call to Solidarity with Africa*, the Catholic Bishops of the United States wrote: "We stand in solidarity with the Church and the peoples of Africa, to recognize and support their courageous commitment to peace, justice, and reconciliation. We encourage the Catholic community in the United States to contribute its diverse talents and gifts to the continent's causes of justice, peace, and integral development. We call the U.S. government to demonstrate responsible leadership and increase its engagement in working with African nations in order to address their present challenges and future possibilities." Visit <http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/africa.htm> to read the entire statement.

In response to this commitment to solidarity with our African brothers and sisters, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and Catholic Relief Services (CRS) have been supporting S. 2125, the *Democratic Republic of the Congo Relief, Security and Democracy Promotion Act*, introduced by Senator Barack Obama (D-IL). This bill would address some of the most urgent concerns arising from the longstanding conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). It has been one of the deadliest conflicts since World War II, **killing an estimated 4 million people and displacing 1.6 million from their homes.**

S. 2125 has already passed the Senate and is pending approval from the House of Representatives. With only a relatively short time remaining in this Congressional session, we are urging House leadership to place this bill on the suspension calendar, thereby expediting its consideration and supporting quick passage. Click here to read a **recent letter from Bishop Wenski** of Orlando, Chairman of the Bishops' Committee on International Policy, to House Speaker Dennis Hastert urging that S. 2125 be placed on the suspension calendar as soon as the House reconvenes: <http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/international/20061102congoltr.pdf>

BACKGROUND: The DRC recently completed the second round of its first democratic national elections in over four decades. The Catholic Church with support from CRS provided non-partisan civic education to voters and trained election monitors. The announcement of second-round election results and subsequent installation of a legitimate, democratically elected government provide the United States with a unique opportunity to advance the building of peace and stability.

Passage of S. 2125 would help to build a better future for the Congolese people, as well as make a significant U.S. contribution to greater peace and security for the entire region. The bill would establish a partnership between the United States and the DRC to promote peace, justice, democracy, and development and provides much-needed assistance to the DRC. Specifically, it authorizes a twenty five percent increase in U.S. international assistance, calls for a special envoy to the region, recommends the strengthening of the current United Nations peacekeeping force, and sustains the U.S. commitment to rebuilding the DRC for at least 3 years.

TARGET YOUR ACTION NOW! Urge Members, especially House leadership including Representatives Hastert (R-IL/14th), Boehner (R-OH/8th), Blunt (R-MO/7th), Pelosi (D-CA/8th), and Hoyer (D-MD/5th), to place S. 2125 on the suspension calendar for immediate action. Visit <http://actioncenter.crs.org> to send a message today.

For more information, contact:

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