



Committee on International Justice and Peace

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March 7, 2018

Representative Christopher Smith
Chairman
House Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights and International
Organizations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Smith:

As Chair of the Committee on International Justice and Peace of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, I encourage you to pass a House resolution that would strongly encourage the Administration to pressure the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) to implement the Saint Sylvester agreement fully and to respect the spirit and the letter of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2348. It is my understanding that your Subcommittee is currently reviewing a draft of such a bill that originated in the Senate.

I know you and your Subcommittee are following with concern the events of the last three months in the DRC. The Congo Catholic Bishops' Conference has met in Extraordinary Session twice in this period to review the crisis in the country and issued two strong statements that call for the St. Sylvester Agreement to be implemented fully. Meanwhile—at the cost of eight lives-- the faithful of the Congo have held three marches from Masses on Sunday in support of the same agreement.

Pope Francis called a day of prayer and fasting on Friday, February 23, in support of peace, particularly in the DRC and South Sudan. The Church is doing what it can to protect democracy in the DRC and has paid a heavy price for it; she asks the international community to accompany and support her in this effort. The United States must do its part. Earlier in October 2017, our Committee asked Chairman Ed Royce and Ranking Member Eliot Engel to support the local Church in DRC by passing a resolution that would urge the Administration to work to end the violence, support the St. Sylvester Agreement, and pressure the Congolese government to hold free and fair elections to establish a duly elected government.

The draft Resolution under your review calls for the imposition of additional sanctions. The United States has already imposed sanctions on some individuals and is considering sanctions on others. Any new sanctions should target those individuals most responsible for blocking the implementation of the St. Sylvester Agreement and threatening the peace and security of the country. To be sure, sanctions should avoid harming the general welfare of the Congolese people.

The Committee on International Justice and Peace is committed to supporting Congressional efforts to further the cause of peace and stability in the DRC.

Sincerely yours,

Most Reverend Timothy P. Broglio
Chair, Committee on International Justice and Peace