

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 2

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By: **Delegate Braveboy**

Introduced and read first time: February 8, 2013

Assigned to: Rules and Executive Nominations

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION

1 A House Joint Resolution concerning

2 **Ongoing Conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo**

3 FOR the purpose of asserting that certain leaders and the international community
4 need to break the cycle of violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and
5 the surrounding region; urging that certain action be taken by certain persons
6 to address certain issues in the Democratic Republic of the Congo;
7 acknowledging the work of a certain individual and certain organizations;
8 providing that a copy of this resolution be forwarded by the Department of
9 Legislative Services to certain individuals; and generally relating to the ongoing
10 conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

11 WHEREAS, Since the 1990s, an estimated 5,000,000 people have died and more
12 than 2,000,000 people have been displaced due to repeated cycles of conflict and
13 atrocities committed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, particularly in North
14 and South Kivu provinces; and

15 WHEREAS, The United States Department of State, the United Nations, and
16 humanitarian organizations have documented staggering rates of sexual and
17 gender-based violence resulting in tens of thousands of cases perpetrated by the army
18 and armed groups in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; and

19 WHEREAS, The natural mineral wealth in the Democratic Republic of the
20 Congo, including the discovery of oil, has been a key driver to insurrection, violence,
21 and exploitation; and

22 WHEREAS, The deeply flawed November 2011 elections in the Democratic
23 Republic of the Congo laid bare significant political, economic, and social challenges;
24 and

25 WHEREAS, The Democratic Republic of the Congo is home to one of the world's
26 longest enduring and most expensive international peacekeeping operations; and



1 WHEREAS, The November 20, 2012, seizure of the city of Goma by the M23
2 rebel group, despite bilateral and multilateral efforts to address longstanding
3 humanitarian crises, forge lasting peace, and pursue security sector reform and
4 accountability, demonstrated that the underlying causes of the recurring conflicts in
5 the Democratic Republic of the Congo and eastern provinces remain unresolved; and

6 WHEREAS, On November 15, 2012, the United Nations Group of Experts
7 provided compelling evidence that the current crisis is fueled and exacerbated by
8 direct and indirect engagement by the Government of Rwanda, including evidence of
9 significant military and logistical support, as well as operational and political
10 guidance, to the M23 rebel group; and

11 WHEREAS, The United Nations and the United States have imposed sanctions
12 on the M23 rebel group and its leaders for human rights atrocities, including rape,
13 massacres, and the recruitment and physical and psychological torture of child
14 soldiers; and

15 WHEREAS, It is imperative to provide critical, life-saving humanitarian aid,
16 particularly to displaced people and conflict-affected communities; now, therefore, be
17 it

18 RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the
19 General Assembly:

20 (1) asserts that the time has come for the region's leaders and the
21 international community to break the cycle of violence and impunity in the Democratic
22 Republic of the Congo and the surrounding region and address the underlying root
23 causes of this and previous crises;

24 (2) calls on the governments of the Great Lakes region in Africa to
25 respect the national security and territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the
26 Congo and to immediately halt and prevent any and all forms of support, including
27 support provided by individuals, to Congolese nonstate armed groups;

28 (3) recognizes the recent efforts of the government of the Democratic
29 Republic of the Congo to end the recruitment of children into the armed forces by
30 demanding an immediate cessation to the recruitment and exploitation of children by
31 militias, and calling on all armed groups to free civilians, including children, held
32 against their will;

33 (4) calls on President Obama and his administration, in close
34 coordination with international and regional partners, to mobilize a comprehensive
35 response to prevent further deterioration of peace and stability in the Democratic
36 Republic of the Congo;

37 (5) acknowledges the work of the existing Special Advisor to the Great
38 Lakes and the Democratic Republic of the Congo;

1 (6) requests the addition of a United States Presidential Envoy
2 position to secure an immediate and permanent end to hostilities and to maintain
3 humanitarian assistance to those in need in the Democratic Republic of the Congo;

4 (7) calls on President Obama and his administration to fully
5 investigate and make actionable recommendations to address and prevent heinous
6 crimes in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including fully implementing
7 sanctions outlined in § 1246 of the federal National Defense Authorization Act for
8 Fiscal Year 2013;

9 (8) urges the government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo,
10 with close support from the international community, to investigate and prosecute
11 those who have committed war crimes, crimes against humanity, grave violations of
12 children's rights, and other serious human rights violations; and

13 (9) calls on the government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to
14 meaningfully engage in security sector reforms that will prevent militia combatants
15 accused of abuses, particularly the M23 rebel group, from integrating into the
16 military, in addition to hosting an internal dialogue to address critical internal
17 political issues and strengthen its work toward state institution building; and be it
18 further

19 RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded by the Department of
20 Legislative Services to President Barack Obama, The White House, 1600
21 Pennsylvania Ave., Washington, D.C. 20500; the Honorable James F. Entwistle,
22 United States Ambassador to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ambassade des
23 Etats-Unis, 310 Avenue des Aviateurs, Kinshasa, Gombe, Republique Democratique
24 du Congo; the Honorable Faida M. Mitifu, Ambassador of the Democratic Republic of
25 the Congo to the United States, 1726 M Street N.W., Suite 601, Washington, D.C.
26 20036; and the Maryland Congressional Delegation: Senators Barbara A. Mikulski
27 and Benjamin L. Cardin, Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510; and
28 Representatives C. A. Dutch Ruppersberger III, John P. Sarbanes, Donna Edwards,
29 Steny Hamilton Hoyer, Andrew P. Harris, John Delaney, Elijah E. Cummings, and
30 Christopher Van Hollen, Jr., House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515.