



Foreign, Commonwealth  
& Development Office

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Rt Hon. Jeremy Corbyn MP, Kate Osamor  
MP, Jim Shannon MP, Richard Foord MP,  
Dame Harriet Baldwin MP  
House of Commons  
London, SW1A 0AA

02 October 2024

Dear Jeremy, Kate, Jim, Richard, Dame Harriet,

As promised, I wanted to write out to members who participated in the Westminster Hall Debate on the Security Situation in eastern DRC on Wednesday 04 September. Thank you all for your contributions to the debate, and efforts to shine a light on the devastating situation in DRC. I was particularly grateful for the opportunity to hear of members' own experiences visiting eastern DRC.

I want to take this opportunity to reassure you once again of the UK Government's commitment to fostering stability in DRC and supporting regional peace processes such as the Luanda process. Conflict prevention is one of our top priorities. I shared in my speech details of the Minister for Africa, Lord Collins' visits to Angola, DRC and Rwanda, his first three ministerial visits to the continent. He met with heads of state and encouraged all parties not only to uphold their commitments under the ceasefire, but to respect it in spirit and continue to build on that progress. On the issue of armed groups, I reiterated that the UK Government strongly condemns the actions of all armed groups, including the UN sanctioned M23, FDLR and ADF.

I was asked about how the UK is cooperating with the broader region, including with South Africa specifically. In addition to our engagement on the Luanda process with Angola, officials have engaged host governments on the issue of DRC across the continent, including in South Africa, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. All will have a vital role to play. I also recognise the importance of peacekeeping initiatives, both UN led and regionally led. In my speech, I highlighted the UN resolution that the UK supported mandating limited targeted support from MONUSCO to the Southern African Development Community Mission in the DRC (SAMIDRC), as well as the UK's support for MONUSCO through both financial contributions and deployment of UK military officers. Concerns were rightly raised about the impact of MONUSCO's withdrawal, and I assured members we will work closely with the DRC Government and UNSC members to ensure smooth transition and prioritisation of protection of civilians.

All members rightly raised the devastating humanitarian consequences of the conflict, both direct and indirect, and in response I outlined the UK's £114 million humanitarian programme delivering life-saving emergency assistance between 2023 and 2026. I

reaffirmed the UK's commitment to raising the inviolability of IDP camps and calling for all parties to respect International Humanitarian Law. I also shared news of our recent agreement with World Food Programme, in which we committed £7 million to tackle food insecurity in DRC, as well as £3.1 million of funding to UNICEF to tackle the ongoing mpox and cholera outbreaks. We are currently finalising a further package of support for the mpox response.

Members also raised the plight of women and girls in DRC, a country with some of the highest rates of sexual violence globally. I outlined the UK's collaboration with DRC as members of the International Alliance on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict, and partners under the platform for action promoting the rights and wellbeing of children born of conflict related sexual violence. Through funding of civil society partners, the UK is strengthening access to justice for survivors of sexual violence and building national capacity to hold perpetrators to account.

Amongst some of the most vulnerable are those in mining communities, an issue that members raised and on which I did not get a chance to respond. DRC is rich in natural resources and is home to over 70% of the world's cobalt. Illicit mining remains a problem and supports the business models of armed groups. As well as being a barrier to economic growth, this has appalling humanitarian consequences. The legal mining sector also requires significant improvement, especially in light of the increasing global reliance on DRC's critical minerals for the green energy transition. The UK supports the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, which aims to improve transparency and governance in the mining sector. This is an issue that the UK regularly raises with the DRC Government, as well as in multilateral fora.

Despite the challenges it faces, DRC is a country of enormous potential. During Lord Collins' visit to Kinshasa, British International Investment (BII) announced that they will commit up to £35 million alongside DP World into the Port of Banana, the first deepwater port in DRC. We are committed to working with DRC to boost bilateral trade and investment, including through addressing challenges in DRC's state capacity and services. We are delivering a £15m Governance programme aimed at improving the transparency, accountability and effectiveness of DRC institutions to support democracy and lasting stability and, more widely, are committed to tackling issues around illicit financing. Ultimately, economic growth in DRC will continue to suffer while the conflict and its devastating humanitarian consequences persist. The UK and wider international community must support the region in its efforts to work towards a lasting solution.

I will place a copy of this letter in the library of the House.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anneliese Dodds', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

**Anneliese Dodds MP**  
**Minister of State for Development**

