



**TAKE ACTION!!**

December 6, 2006

**CONGO'S PEOPLE NEED YOUR HELP:  
Urge your Representative to pass S. 2125 this week**

**TAKE ACTION NOW!** Contact your Representative today, **excluding** those Members who are part of the House International Relations Committee, and urge support for passage of S. 2125, the *Democratic Republic of the Congo Relief, Security and Democracy Promotion Act*, scheduled for consideration this week by the House of Representatives. Visit the CRS Action Center now to send your Member a message today: <http://actioncenter.crs.org>.

**BACKGROUND:** The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) recently completed the second round of its first democratic national elections in over four decades. The Catholic Church in the DRC 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.

**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 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 must now be approved by the House of Representatives. Thanks to advocacy efforts across the country, House leadership has placed the bill on the suspension calendar for quick approval this week before Congress adjourns for the rest of the year.

Now we urge the House of Representatives to ensure passage of this bill when they vote. We are asking advocates not to contact Members of the House International Relations Committee because they have already committed their support and have previously been inundated with messages on this issue. Visit <http://www.internationalrelations.house.gov/members.asp?committee=full&subnav=close> for a complete list of Members of the House International Relations Committee.

**TAKE ACTION NOW!** Urge all Members, **excluding** those who are part of the House International Relations Committee (see <http://www.internationalrelations.house.gov/members.asp?committee=full&subnav=close> for a complete list), to strongly support passage of S. 2125 this week. Visit <http://actioncenter.crs.org> to send a message today.

**For more information, contact:**

Tina Rodousakis, Legislative Network Specialist, CRS, 1-800-235-2772 x 7462; [Trodousa@crs.org](mailto:Trodousa@crs.org)  
Steve Colecchi, Director, International Justice and Peace, USCCB, (202) 541-3196; [Scolecchi@usccb.org](mailto:Scolecchi@usccb.org)

