

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 29, 2025

Mr. Massad Boulos
Senior Advisor for Africa
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Senior Advisor Boulos:

As Members of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa, we write to request further clarity on the U.S. role in the peace negotiations between the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Rwanda. The April 25th signing of the Declaration of Principles, which established a framework for mutual recognition of territorial sovereignty, limited proliferation of non-state armed groups, the return of refugees, and economic integration, was a welcome step toward greater peace in the region. While this was an important first step, we write to ask for clarity and voice concern regarding the lack of specifics on the terms of U.S. critical mineral investment in the region and the restoration of humanitarian assistance.

The Declaration, and subsequent statements by U.S. officials, outlined potential U.S. support for increased economic investment in the DRC, one of the world's most mineral-rich countries, and in Rwanda. The government of the DRC has simultaneously expressed interest in negotiating a bilateral minerals deal with the United States. However, the country's mining sector, specifically in artisanal and small-scale mines in the Kivus region, has a long history of exploitation and armed coercion that has resulted in environmental degradation, labor exploitation, forced child labor, and other human rights abuses.

U.S. Officials have not articulated the terms and conditions under negotiation for expanded U.S. access to the DRC's critical minerals (if any), and how these resources will be managed transparently and equitably. Greater clarity from the Administration and the parties on how these negotiations will advance responsible mining is essential to ensure economic benefits reach local communities and prevent further abuses. Without such commitments, we risk fueling further conflict and corruption instead of driving sustainable peace and equitable growth.

We are also concerned that the Declaration did not include commitments to ensure humanitarian access and resume U.S. humanitarian and global health assistance to conflict-affected regions in the DRC. Conflicts in eastern DRC have resulted in one of the world's largest humanitarian crises, with more than 21 million people in need of humanitarian support in 2025. Since January alone, hundreds of thousands of people have been newly internally displaced and more than 100,000 people have fled to neighboring countries as refugees.

These displacements add to what was already one of the world's largest displacement crises, with 7.8 million internally displaced people and an estimated 1 million Congolese refugees in

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neighboring countries as of December 2024. Eastern DRC also faces multiple overlapping health emergencies, including cholera, measles, and Mpox. Respiratory infections, malaria, tuberculosis, and preterm birth complications are leading causes of death across DRC.

Meanwhile, the Administration has cut a large proportion of humanitarian and health assistance to the DRC—despite the Secretary’s assurances that life-saving programs would be exempt—and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) personnel are being recalled home and dismissed en masse. Without the resumption of aid, millions of vulnerable people in the DRC will face immediate and devastating consequences, including heightened food insecurity, increased risk of disease outbreaks and spread, increased vulnerability to sexual violence and other armed attacks, and further displacement, as critical programs are forced to scale back or shut down entirely.

If we are serious about building sustainable growth and addressing exploitation in the region, we need to address the drivers of the conflict. These include weak governance, corruption, impunity, tensions over access to land, discrimination along ethnic lines, and lack of economic opportunity. Upholding responsible mining practices and restoring humanitarian assistance are just two of many essential steps toward achieving these goals.

As you continue to engage with the DRC and Rwandan governments during the peace process, we urge that any finalized U.S. investment or resources agreements come with adherence to the highest social, governance, and environmental standards. We request that you brief interested Members of Congress to provide clarity on the Declaration of Principles and ongoing U.S. negotiations, including the terms of any U.S. economic or minerals deals. We look forward to hearing further details from you during the briefing, including the following requests:

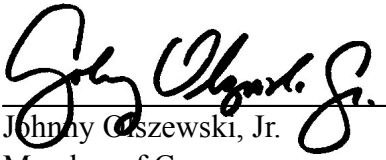
1. The specific terms and conditions under negotiation for expanded U.S. access to DRC’s critical minerals, if envisaged, and how will these be made transparent to the public and relevant stakeholders.
2. How Congolese civil society groups and local communities are being consulted during negotiations of the final peace agreement and any critical minerals deal.
3. A list of U.S. humanitarian and global health programs still active in the DRC.
4. What resources the Administration intends to commit to alleviate suffering and meet immediate humanitarian needs in the DRC, including commitments to resume humanitarian assistance that has been paused or terminated as part of the Administration’s foreign assistance review.
5. What mechanisms are envisaged to monitor implementation of a future peace agreement and any related U.S. economic investment deals.

Thank you again for your attention to this important matter. We look forward to working with you and the broader interagency team to advance peace and prosperity in the DRC and across the African continent.

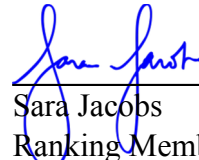
Sincerely,

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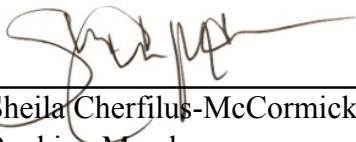
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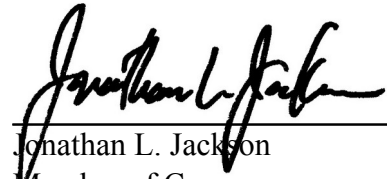
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