Association of Concerned Africa Scholars

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For Immediate Release:

December 11, 2012

**More than 200 Africa Scholars in the U.S. petition President Obama to protect civilians**

**in the Democratic Republic of the Congo**

More than 200 academic specialist scholars of Africa have called on President Obama to take action through the United Nations to protect civilians in the conflict zone of eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The petition was released today by the *Association of Concerned Africa Scholars* (ACAS), since 1977 a national organization of professors and other specialists on Africa.

“According to the International Rescue Committee, with more than 5 million killed in this disordered nation in the last 14 years, the conflicts there are the world’s deadliest documented conflict since WW II, yet it has not had the attention it needs,” said Noah Zerbe, political scientist at Humboldt State University and co-chairperson of ACAS.

David Wiley, sociologist at Michigan State University and chair of the ACAS Demilitarization Task Force explained, “We are calling on President Obama to give the Congo the same attention as Israel and Palestine. We want him to enforce U.S. laws against violence there, including his own “Obama Law” of 2006. Then we call for ther U.S. to empower and supply the UN troops in the Congo to stop the rapes, the atrocities, the recruiting of child soldiers, and the disruption of life there by a dozen different violent militias and the national armies of the Congo, Rwanda, and Uganda.”

“We in the U.S. and Belgium precipitated this horrendous violence 50 years ago,” Wiley noted, “when the CIA helped assassinate the Congo’s president and installed our Cold War dictator ally General Mobutu, who plundered and disordered the country for 32 years. Now, the people of the Congo deserve our attention and the best effort of the world’s nations to end this maelstrom.”

The ACAS petition calls for President Obama to “…to lead the international community in taking forceful action to seek to end the human rights violations that are being committed and to press all involved parties to ensure the protection of civilians.” ACAS also calls on Obama to:

- Press the Security Council to ensure protection of civilians from further abuse and ensure support for the UN peacekeeping mission in the DRC (MONUC) so that it has adequate resources and mandate to fulfill its protection role.

- Support a Security Council resolution requiring Rwanda and Uganda to immediately withdraw any support to the M23 armed group.

More…

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- Publicly recommend to the UN Security Council that officials within the Rwandan Ministry of Defense be added to the list of designated individuals targeted by the UNSC Sanctions Committee.

- Mandate the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) to fully implement the Sec 1502 disclosure requirement of the *Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act* requiring U.S. companies to disclose any products they manufacture using conflict minerals sourced from the Democratic Republic of Congo or contiguous countries.

- Press the Congolese government to stop violations being committed by the Congolese army as well as entering into alliances with armed groups, and fully implement the Public Law 109-456: The DRC Relief, Security, and Democracy Promotion Act of 2006 (Obama Law).

- End the waiver of Child Soldier sanctions on the Congolese Government and extend the sanctions to include nations that support guerilla movements like M23 that recruit child soldiers.”

The *Association of Concerned Africa Scholars,* founded in 1977, is a voluntary organization of scholars of Africa in the United States that provides analysis and action to seek U.S. policies that are more supportive of the broad interests of the people of Africa and the United States.

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