



Global Ministries ADVOCACY CONTEXT

The Congo Mapping Project and the Nobel Laureate

This advocacy resource dives into the history of the 2010 Congo UN Mapping Report championed by Nobel Laureate Dr. Denis Mukwege and the calls for justice, accountability, and an end to violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

Threats Against a Nobel Laureate

Dr. Denis Mukwege is a surgeon, gynecologist and 2018 Nobel Peace Prize Winner. He received the prize for his decades of work at Panzi Hospital in Bukavu, Eastern Congo and his tireless advocacy for an end to sexual violence against women. UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, [Michelle Bachelet](#), said: “Dr. Mukwege is a true hero – determined, courageous and extremely effective. For years, he helped thousands of gravely injured and traumatized women when there was nobody else to take care of them, and at the same time he did a great deal to publicize their plight and stimulate others to try to grapple with the uncontrolled epidemic of sexual violence in the eastern DRC.”

One of the ways that Dr. Mukwege has advocated for an end to the violence is by calling for the implementation of the 2010 [Congo Mapping Report](#) by the UN Human Rights Office, [OHCHR](#), which documented hundreds of serious human rights violations and atrocities in the eastern DRC between 1993 and 2003. Even in his [2018 Nobel Peace Prize lecture](#) Dr. Mukwege again called for action on the UN report, saying: “What is the world waiting for? ... Let us have the courage to reveal the names of the perpetrators of the crimes against humanity to prevent them from continuing to plague the region.”

He continued to advocate on twitter and in July 2020 he [tweeted about a new massacre](#) in Eastern Congo, saying that as long as the U.N. mapping report is “ignored” such killings will continue. Dr. Mukwege has received U.N. security protection since an assassination attempt in 2012 but in May 2020 Dr. Mukwege’s UN security detail was revoked amid the coronavirus pandemic. His consistent advocacy has led to a series of death threats against himself and his family including what a [Physicians for Human Rights statement](#) described in August 2020 as an alarming intimidation campaign after General James Kabarebe, advisor to the president of Rwanda, denounced Mr. Mukwege on Rwandan state television.

The Mukwege Foundation called for the reinstatement for security for Dr. Mukwege and the Panzi Hospital [released a statement](#) saying: “We are encouraged by the outpouring of support that Dr. Mukwege has received from the Congolese and international community following the most recent death threats to his safety, including at the highest level of leadership. But Dr. Mukwege will only be safe when he is no longer the sole voice repeatedly calling for justice and peace.” In the following days security for Dr. Mukwege was reinstated but the calls for the implementation of the Mapping Report continue.

Digging Deeper: The 2010 Mapping Report

The 2010 [Congo Mapping Report](#) by the UN Human Rights Office, [OHCHR](#), documented hundreds of serious human rights violations and atrocities in the eastern DRC between 1993 and 2003. The mapping project was initiated following the discovery of three mass graves in eastern DRC in late 2005.

The mapping exercise had [three objectives](#):

- Map the most serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law committed within DRC between March 1993 and June 2003.
- Assess the existing capacities within the justice system to deal appropriately with such violations
- To identify appropriate transitional justice mechanisms to deal with the legacy of these violations

The mapping exercise began in July 2008 and UN staff were deployed around the country to gather documents and information from witnesses. The report was submitted to the OHCHR in June 2009 but before it could be finalized a draft was leaked to the media in August 2010 and the headlines about the leaks focused on Rwanda’s alleged role in the violence and not the proposed transitional justice mechanisms as may have been the focus of a formal rollout of the report.

Rwanda is named as a perpetrator in the Mapping Report though Rwanda’s government has objected to suggestions that its forces had any involvement in Eastern Congo during the time of the Rwandan Genocide in 1994 in which over 800,000 people were killed. Rwandan President Paul Kagame in [a nationally televised interview](#) in September 2020 said of the UN mapping report, “I don't know what that nonsense is about.”

The focus on Rwanda in the media took away from the Mapping Report’s recommendations for the implementation of its findings, including transitional justice processes. From tribunals to truth commissions, transitional justice has been a meaningful post-conflict process for examining atrocities of the past and allowing countries to rebuild. Examples include the well-known Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, the more grassroots Gacaca Courts in Rwanda or the more punitive war tribunal as utilized in the Former Yugoslavia.

UNHCR High Commissioner [Bachelet released a statement](#) in late August 2020 calling for an investigation into death threats against Dr. Mukwege and also “concrete steps to establish transitional justice processes that grant thousands of victims of successive conflicts their right to

justice, truth and reparations.” A [statement released](#) by the Mukwege Foundation in early September says: “The Mapping Report has languished in the drawers of diplomacy for the past ten years, repeated calls for the implementation of its findings have gone ignored, and those involved in the listed crimes have never been held accountable for the atrocities committed.” While Dr. Mukwege’s security detail has been reinstated the calls for implementation of the recommendations of the Mapping Report continue. As the Mukwege Foundation says: “Dr. Mukwege will only be safe when he is no longer the sole voice repeatedly calling for justice and peace.”

Discussion Questions

1. How do you think Dr. Mukwege’s advocacy has impacted the visibility of the Congo Mapping Report?
2. What would it mean to implement the Congo Mapping Report? What might justice and accountability look like?
3. What does justice and accountability mean to you in the context of the United States? What about in other contexts?

Learn

Learn More about the Congo Mapping Project from [Friends of the Congo](#) and participate in Breaking the Silence [Congo Week 2020](#) October 18-24.

Pray

Join the All Africa Conference of Churches, a Global Ministries partner, in a [Prayer Alert and Call for Action for Dr. Denis Mukwege](#)

Advocate

- Consider signing this petition calling for justice in the great lakes region: <https://friendsofthecongo.org/join-the-coalition-for-justice-in-the-great-lakes/>
- Support #protectdrmukwege
- [Join the Cell Out](#) during Congo Week

Give

Today, thriving Congolese church communities are a sign of life and hope in the face of devastations caused by war and economic exploitation. Through the promotion of human rights, educational programs, health care, support for survivors of sexual violence as an instrument of war, theological training for church leaders, and microcredit programs to support sustainable, income-generating opportunities, Global Ministries church partners in Congo are offering hope for families and communities.

Consider making a gift to support the life-changing work of Congolese partners found here: <https://www.globalministries.org/democratic-republic-of-congo>

Order a handmade [tote bag](#), [basket](#), or [set of placemats made by former mission co-worker, Sue Johnson](#), who served with her husband, Gene, with the Community of Disciples of Christ in the Congo for 14 years. The available quilted tote bags and woven baskets were made by Congolese women participating in vocational training and programs of Global Ministries partners in the DRC. Each order supports microcredit programs in the Congo and around the world, while celebrating and sharing expressions of beauty and art from partners in the Congo.