

Human Rights Watch Student Task Force
11500 West Olympic Blvd. Suite 441
Los Angeles, CA 90064

April 26, 2009

The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Madame Secretary,

As California students we are concerned with the ongoing human rights violations occurring in the Great Lakes region of Africa. We are writing to you today to ask you to work with President Barack Obama to appoint a senior level, US special envoy for the Great Lakes region of Africa – a region devastated by genocide, war and human suffering on an enormous scale over the past 15 years.

The conflict in Congo is one of the deadliest in the world today, yet it gets little attention from the press or from policy makers. In 2005, President Obama, then a senator, helped to write important legislation on the Congo and you acted as one of its key cosponsors, thereby bringing into law the *Democratic Republic of the Congo Relief, Security, and Democracy Promotion Act of 2006*.

In Section 107, this law calls for the appointment of a special envoy. It says:

Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President should appoint a Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region to help coordinate efforts to resolve the instability and insecurity in Eastern Congo.

President Bush signed the bill into law, but he never acted to appoint a special envoy. We hope President Obama will.

We believe that the appointment of a senior level special envoy for the Great Lakes region by the current administration will send a strong signal that the US is seriously engaged in ending the atrocities in the region. We recognize this is not an easy task, but we believe an experienced senior envoy dedicated to understanding the complexities of the conflict and able to coordinate the administration's efforts to respond appropriately will be of great assistance.

We look forward to action by your office to help end the atrocities in the Great Lakes Region and would welcome a reply regarding your efforts.

California High School Students

Name	School

