



Dominican Month for Peace

THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO (Zaire)

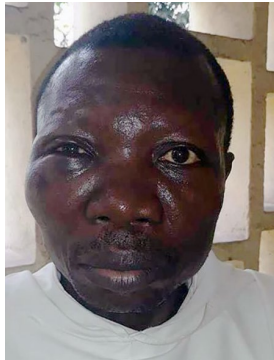
Week Four: Dominican Family to Human Rights Abuses

In our last flyer, we reflected on two aspects of Human Rights abuses in DRC: repressive actions around the upcoming elections which are taking place Sunday, Dec. 23, 2018 and the reality of children mining for colbalt for our electronic products. This week, we explore the responses of our Dominican Family. This information augments the trifold brochure – “A MULTIFACETED COUNTRY ON A LONG ROAD TO PEACE” – that was distributed in week one. (Copies are available in Chapel lobby.)

ATTACK ON THE DOMINICAN CHURCH IN KINSHASA

The Dominican brothers working at St Dominic Church in Kinshasa, DR Congo were attacked together with their parishioners on Sunday, December 31, 2017. They were attacked by security forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo made up of soldiers and the police.

The Catholic Bishops of DRC, supported by a coalition of civil society groups, had called for peaceful demonstrations after Sunday Mass on December 31, 2017, to denounce a new electoral reform law that came into effect on December 25, and to mark the first-year anniversary of the 31 December 2016 political agreement, facilitated by the Bishops.



Accusing the DRC's police and army of an unprovoked attack in the grounds of the church, St Dominic's parochial vicar, Father Jean Nkongolo, said that when he asked them to stop shooting the parishioners, he was shot in the face by a rubber bullet and injured.

As well as rubber bullets security forces fired 'stun' projectiles and tear gas at the religious procession in the church's grounds, reportedly almost killing a woman. Four other parishioners were injured by rubber bullets during the attack.

<http://www.op.org/en/content/attack-dominican-church-kinshasa-dr-congo>
<https://acnuk.org/news/drc-security-forces-accused-of-killings-in-more-than-130-church-attacks/>

The Order Identifies DRC as a Priority Country for UN

The following July, the Delegation of the **Dominican Order to the United Nations identified the DRC as a priority country for its advocacy in the United Nations in Geneva.** The Delegation, composed of Fr. Mike Deeb OP and Ms Laurence Blattmer, met with the Dominicans in Kinshasa and Isiro (Haut Uélé Province). Together, they organized two training sessions on the UN human rights system, the role of civil society, and the engagement of Dominicans in the promotion and protection of human rights. Each training session brought together some forty participants from different branches of the Dominican family, Catholic organizations and non-governmental organizations active in the field of human rights.

Objectives of the training included:

- to identify the key issues for each of the two regions as well as for the whole country,
- to familiarize participants with the United Nations human rights mechanisms in Geneva; and
- to give them the necessary tools to make effective use of the Universal Periodic Review, a human rights review mechanism that will assess the situation in the DRC in May 2019.

As a result of the interactions among the participants, the delegation was able to gather vital information on the current human rights situation in the country, which will enable it to submit a joint report to the Universal Periodic Review. Among the main concerns identified by the participants were the restriction of fundamental freedoms in Kinshasa, the prevailing insecurity in the province of Haut Uélé, the right to

health and access to free education, and the numerous violations of human rights around the exploitation of natural resources.

These training sessions in the DRC are part of a process of strengthening capacity of the grass root communities. *Dominicans for Justice and Peace* hopes to foster a long-term collaboration with Dominicans and other civil society actors in the DRC in order to reinforce their work together on the ground and to ensure an effective promotion and protection of human rights at the national and international levels.

<http://www.op.org/en/content/training-democratic-republic-congo>
<https://www.crsdop.org/Training-Sessions-in-the-Democratic-Republic-of-Congo?lang=en>

CONFLICT MINERALS, CHILD LABOR, ELECTRONICS

“...minerals and, in general, the wealth contained in the earth, the soil and subsoil, constitute a precious gift of God, which humanity has been using for thousands of years”. –

Pope Francis (July 17, 2015 to experts and investors in mining sector)

The **Dominican Delegation to the United Nations** cosigned the position statement adopted by European Commissions for Justice and Peace: *Breaking the link between minerals and armed conflicts: a mandatory European regulation is necessary!* (A copy of this position statement can be found in the Dominican Chapel Lobby.)

http://www.iupax.at/fileadmin/documents/stellungnahmen/conflict_minerals_european_commissions_for_justice_and_peace.pdf

A PUBLIC SCIENTIFIC DEBATE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF UÉLÉ IN THE HAUT-UELE PROVINCE ON THE REVIEW OF THE DRAFT TO REVISE THE MINING CODE UNDER CONSIDERATION AT THE PARLIAMENT



A panel on the review of the draft revising the national mining code was a two-day public debate, in Isiro in the province of Haut-Uele. It was the Governor of the Province, the Honorable Dr. Jean-Pierre Lola Kisanga who opened this meeting at the University of Uele, under the initiative of its rector, **Father Roger Gaise Nganzi, OP.**

All social strata of Haut-Uélé were represented at this forum, including NGOs, mining administrators, mining (artisanal and industrial) operators, political authorities, local communities, journalists, researchers, professors, and students to name just a few.

The Uélé University has already organized several workshops to analyze and formulate amendments to the mining code that is currently under consideration in Parliament. Findings from these indicate the existence of a Constitutional contradiction in that the mining royalties are paid directly to the management of large companies in Kinshasa and not to the local communities where the mines are located. With that arrangement, Haut-Uélé is the big financial loser.

<http://provinceduhautuele.cd/en/2017/11/27/a-public-scientific-debate-at-the-university-of-uele-in-the-haut-uele-province-on-the-review-of-the-draft-revised-mining-code-underway-at-the-parliament-of-the-drc/>

**NEXT WEEK: FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR THE DOMINICAN FAMILY IN DRC
CHRISTMAS DAY COLLECTION**

CONCLUDING PRAYER SERVICE: NEW YEAR'S EVE – 4pm

