

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Seminar: The conflict in Eastern Congo

Tuesday the 17th of March 2009.

Location: Norad (auditorium 1), Ruseløkkveien 26, 0251 Oslo.

The war in the Congo is among the deadliest since the Second World War, and the human suffering is enormous. Particularly precarious is the situation for women and children as sexual violence is very widespread. Even after a peace agreement was signed the conflict continued in Eastern Congo and North Kivu in particular. The establishment of what is currently the world's largest peacekeeping operation, the United Nation's Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC) has not been able to stop the conflict. After the 2006 Congolese elections, fighting resumed on a large scale in North Kivu. This is a complicated conflict; it is multi-layered and involves many actors with different interests. The conflict is deeply entrenched in history. It evolves around the control of land, territory and people. The soil is very fertile and the land is also rich in mineral wealth such as coltan and cassiterite. Recent developments and renewed international attention is the backdrop for why the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is organising this open seminar. The seminar aims at addressing the current situation and setting issues such as sexual violence and resource extraction in a political and historical context.

Programme

Chairperson: Kåre Stormark, Deputy Director General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

8.30-9.00	Registration
9.00-9.05	Opening remarks
9.05-9.35 The Norwegian view on the conflict in the Great Lakes (DRC). What is Norway doing? Sexual violence against women and children. Impressions from a visit to Eastern Congo.	State secretary Håkon Guldbrandsen.
9.35-10.15 Sexual violence in Eastern Congo	Leah Chishugi, director of the charity Everything is a benefit.
10.15-10.25	Comments by Randi Solhjell, NUPI

10.25-10.50	Questions and answers
10.50-11.05	Coffee and tea
11.05-11.50 The present situation in the Eastern Congo: The Consequences, dangers and potentialities of the recent Rwandese operation.	G�rard Prunier. National Centre for Scientific Research (CNSR), Paris.
11.50-12.30 Miners, Merchants and Warriors in Eastern Congo	Morten B��s, Fafo.
12.30-12.55	Questions and answers
12.55-13.00	Final remarks
13.00-13.45	Canap�s, coffee, tea and mineral water

For registration, please e-mail Karianne Quist Stig: karianne.stig@fafo.no

State secretary H kon Guldbrandsen

Leah Chishugi, director of the charity Everything is a benefit. Survived the Rwandan genocide, fled to London where she became a nurse, returned to her native Congo where she has interviewed and documented the stories of 400 women, many of whom have endured unspeakable horrors.

Randi Solhjell, research assistant on the Training for Peace programme at the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs. She is currently heading a project on measures to combat sexual violence in the eastern DRC.

G rard Prunier. National Centre for Scientific Research (CNSR), Paris. Prunier has been in and out of Eastern and Central Africa for thirty-nine years, written or edited nine books and about 170 articles or book chapters.

Morten B  s (PhD) is a Senior Researcher at Fafo - Institute for Applied International Studies. He has published widely on many aspects of African politics and development, and his work has been published in journals such as Journal of Modern African Studies, Politique Africaine, Journal of Contemporary African Studies and Third World Quarterly. His most recently published book is African Guerrillas: Raging Against the Machine (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2007), with Kevin C. Dunn.