



Amid Ongoing Armed Conflict and a Humanitarian Crisis, Congolese Community in the U.S. Launches Demand for TPS and SSR

Worsening Conditions on the Ground Make Protection from Deportation for Community Members and Students Crucial

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 1, 2023

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Washington, DC—As the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) experiences one of the deadliest armed conflicts in modern human history, it is clear that Congolese migrants in the United States urgently need Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and Special Student Relief (SSR). A coalition of organizations, under the leadership of local Congolese community leaders in the United States, is launching a campaign calling on President Joe Biden and Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas to make these designations for the DRC.

"With a death toll of more than five million, the war in DRC is not only the deadliest since World War II but also one of the longest that the African continent has ever experienced," said Nils Kinuani, Immigration Department Coordinator and Board Director for the Congolese Community of Washington Metropolitan. "It is now time to end this war and protect the Congolese people."

As the coalition wrote to President Biden and Secretary Mayorkas in a [letter](#), the resurgence of armed conflict between government forces and non-state armed rebel group "Mouvement du 23 mars" or March 23 Movement (M23) has led to the displacement of more than 186,000 people since the end of October 2022. The recent internally displaced are facing grave atrocities, including gender-based violence as a weapon of war, the killing of civilians, abductions, machete raids, burning of homes, and looting. It is some of the worst violence in the region since rebels were chased to neighboring Rwanda in 2013.

"The ongoing conflict and worsening humanitarian crisis is causing immeasurable pain and destruction," said Dr. Yves Kaduli, a member of the Congolese Community of Washington Metropolitan and CASA, who endured and escaped brutal conditions in the DRC. "My home, Kivu, has become hell."

Relief efforts in the DRC have been severely hampered by violent attacks, thus depriving civilians of life-saving aid. Failed peace talks and negotiations reflect an emergency that makes the return of Congolese nationals from the United States life-threatening.

"Given the humanitarian crisis unfolding, and worsening, in the DRC, it is imperative that the Biden administration designate TPS for the country," said Ramya Reddy, Co-coordinator of the TPS-DED Administrative Advocacy Coalition. "The harrowing conditions on the ground make

clear that it would be extremely dangerous for Congolese living in the U.S. to be forced to return to the DRC — doing so would be intolerable.”

As advocates have [pointed out before](#), it is urgent that the administration address racial disparities in decisions regarding TPS designations for Black- and Brown-majority countries that meet the statutory requirements.

“After years of ongoing armed conflict that has resulted in DRC being one of the top five refugee sending countries in the U.S., it is time for the administration to act and designate DRC for TPS,” said Diana Konaté, Policy Director with African Communities Together. “This designation would provide necessary protections to Congolese living in the U.S., and challenge the ongoing racial disparities Black immigrants face in immigration.”

Providing TPS would mean life-saving relief to Congolese people in the U.S., allowing beneficiaries to stay in the United States during the designation period, with protection from deportation and work permits. SSR gives international students more flexibility related to their duration of status, course load, and employment eligibility in recognition of emergency circumstances occurring in their home countries.

“The Democratic Republic of Congo is experiencing ongoing armed conflict and other extraordinary and temporary conditions that makes the safe return of Congolese from the United States impossible,” the advocates said in the letter. “The country conditions in DRC meet the statutory requirements for a designation of Temporary Protected Status and Special Student Relief.”

The [TPS-DED AAC](#) is a national coalition of more than 100 organizations with deep expertise in law and policy surrounding TPS and DED. Member organizations range from community-based organizations directly serving impacted communities in the United States to international NGOs, working in and providing insight from affected countries.

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