

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

June 25, 2026

Dear Secretary Rubio:

We write to follow up on the November 2025 letter from several Senators regarding the Administration's diplomatic efforts to address the conflict between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Developments since the December 4, 2025 "Washington Accords" signing ceremony reflect many of the risks and challenges we identified at that time and warrant greater clarity regarding the Department's current assessment of the conflict and its strategy going forward.

Although the December ceremony was intended to reinforce momentum toward de-escalation, fighting intensified almost immediately afterward. Within days, Rwanda-backed M23 forces advanced operations across South Kivu, expanding clashes along key transport corridors and around major population centers. The escalation culminated in the fall of Uvira to the M23. Clashes in and around Uvira triggered civilian casualties, large-scale displacement, and severe humanitarian strain. Congolese officials reported in early January that Rwanda-backed operations had killed approximately 1,500 civilians since early December. U.N. agencies estimated that M23 advances in South Kivu in December 2025 displaced more than half a million people and drove more than 101,000 Congolese refugees into neighboring Burundi. Although the M23 withdrew from Uvira in January under reported U.S. pressure, fighting has continued in surrounding areas.

U.S. sanctions and visa restrictions demonstrate the fragility of the current framework. In March 2026, the Treasury Department sanctioned the Rwandan Defense Forces and senior Rwandan military officials for providing "direct operational support" to the M23, and the State Department imposed visa restrictions on unnamed senior Rwandan officials for "fueling instability" in eastern DRC. In announcing these steps, the Administration criticized Rwanda for violating the Washington Accords and called for "the immediate withdrawal" of Rwandan troops and weaponry from Congolese territory. That these actions proved necessary underscores the need for sustained diplomatic pressure rather than symbolic milestones. We are also concerned that continued public characterizations suggesting the conflict has been resolved risk understating the ongoing violence and humanitarian crisis, weaken the case for sustained diplomatic engagement by all parties, and diminish U.S. leverage at a moment when it remains urgently needed.

In light of these developments, we respectfully request responses to the following:

1. What is the Department's current assessment of the parties' compliance with the Washington Accords and related commitments?
2. How is the Department monitoring the withdrawal of Rwandan Defense Forces from key towns in eastern DRC? Which towns have they withdrawn from, and which towns are still being occupied?
3. How is the Department engaging with the Congolese and regional civil society organizations in assessing implementation of the Washington Accords and broader diplomatic efforts related to eastern DRC?
4. What specific diplomatic, economic, and accountability measures are the Department pursuing to secure full implementation of the Accords and reduce violence in eastern DRC?
5. How is the Department assessing humanitarian conditions and access in eastern DRC, and what steps is it taking to ensure civilians and aid operations are protected?
6. What is the status of implementation of the Regional Economic Integration Framework (REIF) and the U.S.-DRC Strategic Partnership Agreement, and what steps is the Department taking to ensure that U.S. efforts to strengthen critical mineral supply chains do not dilute U.S. leverage over parties to the Washington Accords or displace core security and civilian-protection objectives?
7. Given the zeroing out of the Peacekeeping Operations account in the President's Budget Request, is MONUSCO still a key pillar of the Washington Accords that the Department will continue to fund?
8. What commitments or assistance, if any, has the United States provided to the DRC government in connection with recent third-country deportation arrangements, and how is the Department assessing the impact of these arrangements on ongoing diplomatic efforts related to eastern DRC?
9. In light of the ongoing Ebola outbreak in Central and eastern Africa, how is the Department assessing the impact of the conflict in eastern DRC on regional disease surveillance and outbreak response efforts? What role is the Department playing in coordinating with international partners to prevent further spread of the disease, particularly in light of recent reductions in U.S. global health and foreign assistance programs?

We appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



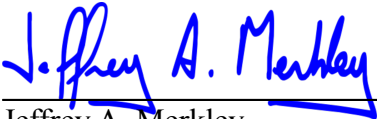
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United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
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Peter Welch
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