

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 20, 2008

The Honorable Paul Kagame
President, Republic of Rwanda
c/o Embassy of Rwanda
1714 New Hampshire Ave, NW
Washington, D.C. 20009

Dear President Kagame,

We write to you to express our alarm at the belligerent rhetoric and accusations that have been traded between your government and that of the Democratic Republic of Congo in recent weeks. In particular, we are deeply troubled by allegations suggesting that your army has begun concentrating on the border with eastern Congo and that some Rwandan troops have even crossed into North Kivu province. If true, not only would this be a breach of international law, but it could also ignite another regional war that could lead to the destabilization of the Great Lakes Region. At the very least, we fear that any continued military escalation will further exacerbate the crisis in eastern Congo, putting innocent Congolese and Rwandan civilians at risk.

As you know, violence against civilians has continued in eastern Congo despite the signing of the Nairobi Communiqué in November 2007 and the Goma Peace Agreement in January 2008. The United Nations peacekeeping mission, MONUC, has reported more than 250 ceasefire violations by the warring parties over the last nine months, leaving hundreds dead and displacing hundreds of thousands. Specifically in the last month, fighting has resumed between the Congolese army and Laurent Nkunda's National Congress for the Defense of the People in North Kivu, displacing an additional 100,000 people. This fighting, if it continues, risks reigniting a full-scale war, thereby ruining the progress made through the Nairobi and Goma agreements.

In light of that violence and given Rwanda's great influence in the region, we urge you to play a constructive role in mitigating these rising cross-border tensions and establishing a renewed ceasefire by the parties in eastern Congo. We especially urge you to use any influence your government might have with General Nkunda and his forces to encourage them to cease hostilities and re-engage in the peace process. At the same time, you should know that we are also calling on President Kabila to break any ties that persist between his military and the rebels of the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR). Finally, we urge you to sit down with President Kabila and international facilitators from the African

Union, European Union, United States and United Nations to develop a renewed and coordinated strategy to implement the Nairobi and Goma agreements.

Rwanda is a good friend and partner of the United States, and our countries have worked together in the past on many important joint initiatives. In addition, your country has become a leader on the African continent in responding to mass atrocities and contributing to peacekeeping operations. We hope that this leadership will continue and look forward to working together with you and your government toward lasting peace and security in eastern Congo.

Sincerely,



Senator Sam Brownback
United States Senator



Senator Russell D. Feingold
United States Senator

CC: U.S. Ambassador W. Stuart Symington
U.S. Assistant Secretary for African Affairs Jendayi Frazer