



Telema 2016

Morehouse College's African American Studies Faculty, Staff and Students stand in solidarity with the people of the Democratic Republic of Congo in their pro-democracy protests. We support their peaceful struggle for a constitutionally elected president who respects constitutional constraints on power, especially term limits. Congolese protesters are expressing their just demand for a regular transition of power in their country. This deserves the respect and support of all fair-minded persons.

Conversely, we condemn the brutality of the Kabila regime in killing people whose lives should be protected. Significantly, we call on President Obama to fully implement Public Law 109-456, (which he sponsored as Senate Bill 2125) and to reverse a disastrous foreign policy toward Congo that has, since the Eisenhower administration, fostered a kleptocratic government that continues to rob Congolese people of their wealth, dignity and sovereignty. We echo the call for President Kabila to stand down his gendarmes and to step down from office so that elections may be held for a new administration. We call on all friends of social justice to support the protesters' goal of building a truly democratic Republic of Congo.

As scholar-activists of the African American freedom struggle, we appreciate the historic role that students and youth have played in that fight. Morehouse College has a special connection to the Civil Rights struggle in producing mainline leaders, most notably, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., as well as, student activists like Julian Bond and Saul Williams who constantly advanced new and creative approaches within freedom movements. We also acknowledge the special ethical example evident in the life of Patrice Emery Lumumba, Congo's first democratically elected Prime Minister. By standing with our brothers and sisters in the DRC, we are evoking the best of African liberation struggles on both sides of the Atlantic.

We are connected to the DRC. In 2014, Morehouse faculty visited cities hit hard by war--Goma, Beni and Butembo in North Kivu and the capital, Kinshasa. Continuing into 2015, we made strong efforts to draw closer connections between universities in North Kivu and the Atlanta University Center (AUC). In April 2016, we convened faculty and students from the AUC and the Open University of Great Lakes at Goma (ULPGL) and in November, with Friends of the Congo, hosted Bro. Samuel Yagase of the GOVA movement. We will continue to advocate for social, economic and political justice in Congo, Africa and its diaspora.

We pray for strength to DRC's activists, their families and communities. Likewise, we pray for all power to the Congolese people whose long night of despotism deserves a new dawn of self-determination.

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