



Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission Briefing

Democratic Republic of the Congo: An Update

Panelists



Steve Hege is a Senior Program Officer for the U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP) and manages several security and justice reform programs in Myanmar/Burma, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Colombia. He has over 15 years of experience working with the United Nations, international NGOs, think tanks and governments on issues related to security sector reform, DDR, local governance, human rights, political dialogue and natural resource management. Prior to joining USIP, he served as the coordinator of the U.N.

Group of Experts on the DRC (2010-2012) investigating and reporting on arms embargo violations for the Security Council's Sanctions Committee, including researching military integration challenges, illicit trade in natural resources and egregious human rights violations. From 2007 to 2009, Steve worked with the Peace Appeal Foundation providing technical assistance on security reforms and transitional arrangements in support of peace processes in Nepal and Lebanon. He has also worked as field researcher and advocacy officer for the Norwegian Refugee Council focusing on the impact of organized crime on communities in Mexico and Colombia and previously managed programs on security sector reform in Central Africa and Southeast Asia with New York University's Center on International Cooperation. Steve has Masters degrees in international law/affairs and conflict resolution from Columbia University (New York), Sciences-Po (Paris) and Universidad de Los Andes (Bogotá) in addition to his undergraduate studies in theology at Boston College.



Mike Jobbins is Director of Global Affairs at Search for Common Ground, an international conflict transformation NGO working in 45 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East and the Americas. He leads Search's work with governments, NGOs, international organizations, and the private sector, with a focus on business and human rights, violent extremism, and complex emergencies. Mike was previously Search for Common Ground's Program Manager for the Africa Region, where he oversaw the development and launch of conflict resolution programs across the Sahel and Lake Chad Basin, in CAR, South Sudan, and in the wake of Cote d'Ivoire's electoral crisis. He served with Search in the Democratic Republic of Congo in Tanganyika Kinshasa and North Kivu, as well as in Burundi.

Prior to joining Search, he worked on African affairs at the Woodrow Wilson Center. He has an MA from Georgetown and a BA from Harvard.



Adotei Akwei is the Africa Advocacy Director for Amnesty International USA. Before rejoining AIUSA, Adotei was the Deputy Director for Government Relations for CARE USA where he worked on Climate Change, Emergencies, Countries in Conflict and Micro-finance in sub-Saharan Africa. He previously served as Regional Advocacy Advisor for CARE's Asia Regional Management Unit, where he supported country offices in the development and implementation of national level advocacy strategies, as well as helping develop and implement regional advocacy priorities. Before joining CARE, Mr. Akwei worked with Amnesty International USA for 11 years, first as the senior Advocacy Director for Africa and then later as Director of Campaigns. Mr. Akwei also served as the Africa Director for the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, now Human Rights First, and as the Research and Human Rights Director for the American Committee on Africa and the Africa Fund. Mr. Akwei received his Masters in International Relations from the College of William and Mary and his Bachelors from the State University of New York College at Purchase.



Aditi Gorur is the Director of the Protecting Civilians in Conflict program at Stimson Center. Her primary research focus is on preventing and responding to violence against civilians, particularly in the context of peacekeeping operations. Before joining Stimson, Gorur worked with the Indian Institute for Human Settlements in India, the Asia Foundation and the Center for Liberty in the Middle East in Washington, DC, and the Melbourne University Law School in Australia. She holds a Master of Arts in international security from Georgetown University, as well as a Bachelor of Arts in development studies and a law degree with honors from the University of Melbourne.

Moderator



Alexis Arieff is a Specialist in African Affairs at the Congressional Research Service, where she analyzes policy issues regarding North, West, and Central Africa for Members of Congress and their staff. In 2015, Alexis was detailed to the State Department as a policy advisor to the U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations. She previously completed a detail to the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy as a regional director for West Africa in 2010, and served as an international election observer in Guinea in 2010 and in Tunisia in 2011 and 2014. Before joining CRS full-time in 2009 as a Presidential Management Fellow, Alexis worked as a researcher on Africa at the Committee to Protect Journalists; as a research fellow at the International Crisis Group's West Africa field office in Dakar, Senegal; and as a contributing writer for Freedom House. In 2008-2009, she was a Fulbright Scholar in Guinea, based in Conakry. Alexis received a BA from Brown University and an MA in international relations from Yale University.