

UK reaffirms commitment to peace, protection and development in the DRC

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UK Minister for Africa Jenny Chapman visited the DRC, pledging £13m for peace, aid, and support for survivors of sexual violence, while boosting clean energy, business finance, and sustainable growth.

- UK commits more than £13 million for lifesaving assistance, protection services, and support for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence
- Minister for Development and Africa Jenny Chapman hears first hand from those delivering frontline services including UN peacekeepers, aid workers, midwives and women peacebuilders.
- New UK-backed investments to drive sustainable economic growth, including expanding finance for small businesses and support for clean energy projects

Visiting the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Jenny Chapman, Minister for Africa and International Development reaffirms the UK's commitment to peace, humanitarian action, tackling conflict-related sexual violence, and strengthening the foundations for sustainable growth and stability.

During visits to the capital Kinshasa and Beni in eastern DRC, a part of the country with a long history of instability and conflict, the minister met President Félix Tshisekedi and Vice Foreign Minister Ayenganagato Noella Ayenganagato, as well as UN peacekeepers, health and humanitarian partners, women peacebuilders and civil society organisations working on the frontlines of the conflict.

During the visit the UK announced £7.3 million in extra humanitarian support to communities affected by escalating conflict in eastern DRC and the wider region.

This includes £3 million for much needed urgent help such as clean water, hygiene and protection services for families forced to flee in DRC; £2 million for the International Committee of the Red Cross providing emergency healthcare, including trauma surgery and specialist support for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence in DRC; and £2.3 million for the World Food Programme providing emergency food and nutrition assistance for up to 132,000 refugees in Burundi who have fled violence.

In eastern DRC, Jenny Chapman met UN peacekeepers serving with MONUSCO, women peacebuilders, and humanitarian organisations delivering UK-funded assistance. She visited a hospital and a centre in Beni that provide specialist care for survivors of sexual violence, which will receive a funding increase from previous years through an additional £6 million to UNFPA for sexual and reproductive health services and support for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. She also visited a nearby centre supporting survivors, where she saw first-hand the impact of ongoing UK-funded emergency healthcare, protection and psychosocial services.

Jenny Chapman, Minister for Africa and International Development, said:

“Years of conflict in the DRC have left countless survivors of sexual violence in need of specialised, dedicated support. In responding to such immense need, Congolese professionals have developed

world leading expertise in holistic care.”

“The specialist centre in Beni, and the very fact it is needed, was desperately sad, but what they are doing there is also hugely inspiring. Seeing the bravery and resilience of the survivors and the professionalism and compassion of those working with them was inspiring.

“The situation remains urgent for communities in eastern DRC – it’s vital that the international community stays engaged.

“The UK is stepping up support to save lives, protect civilians and back women and communities working for peace on the ground. At the same time, we are using our aid investment and expertise to grow economic opportunities and resilience – investing in clean energy, jobs and growth that are the cornerstones of stability.

The visit reaffirmed the UK’s support for regional peace efforts and UN peacekeeping, including MONUSCO’s role in protecting civilians. This year the DRC takes on chairmanship of the International Alliance on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict this year which works to uphold international humanitarian law, humanitarian access and accountability for abuses. The UK serves as vice-chair.

During her visit the UK also formally launched the UK-DRC Chamber of Commerce, strengthening commercial ties and supporting British and Congolese businesses to trade and invest together.

The UK also announced a \$25 million (£18.7m) British International Investment loan to Rawbank, the DRC’s largest commercial bank, expanding access to finance for small and medium-sized enterprises and non-mining corporates, and supporting jobs and inclusive economic growth.

In addition, Jenny Chapman confirmed new UK-backed investments in clean energy and agriculture, including support for capital investment in the Sustainable Energy for Africa Fund, in partnership with the African Development Bank, to support the Moyi Power, which will help deliver reliable and cleaner electricity to up to 700,000 people in northern DRC, and funding to improve access to finance for climate-smart agribusinesses.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-reaffirms-commitment-to-peace-protection-and-development-in-the-drc>