

## Congolese Man Self-Immolates to Highlight Overlooked Genocide in Congo

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A video of a Congolese man who set himself on fire to protest the ongoing genocide in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has gone viral on social media, sparking outrage and sympathy from viewers around the world.

The video, which was posted on Twitter on November 8, shows the man, who has not been identified, standing in front of a crowd in Kinshasa, the capital of the DRC, holding a sign that reads “Stop the genocide in Congo”.

He then pours gasoline over his body and lights a match, engulfing himself in flames. The crowd screams and tries to help him, but he pushes them away and falls to the ground.

The video ends with the man lying motionless on the pavement, surrounded by smoke and fire.

The man’s condition and fate are unknown, as well as his motives and background.

### **A brutal conflict**

The man’s self-immolation is a desperate attempt to draw attention to the genocide that has been taking place in the eastern provinces of the DRC for more than two decades, claiming millions of lives and displacing millions more.

The conflict in the DRC is fueled by the competition for the rich natural resources of the region, such as gold, coltan, and cobalt, which are used in various industries and technologies.

The region is controlled by dozens of armed groups, some of whom are backed by neighboring countries, such as Rwanda and Uganda, who seek to exploit the resources and influence the politics of the DRC.

The armed groups terrorize the civilian population, committing atrocities such as rape, murder, looting, and kidnapping. They also recruit child soldiers and force people to work in the mines under harsh conditions.

The conflict has also caused a humanitarian crisis, as the DRC’s infrastructure, health-care system, and economy have collapsed, leaving millions of people in need of food, water, medicine, and shelter.

According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the DRC has the largest number of internally displaced people in the world, with 6.9 million people uprooted by the violence as of October 2023.

The IOM said that the conflict has worsened in recent months, with more people displaced in less time than ever before.

### **A failed intervention**

The international community has tried to intervene in the DRC’s conflict, but with little success and much controversy.

The United Nations has deployed a peacekeeping mission in the DRC since 1999, with the mandate to protect civilians and support the political process.

However, the mission, known as MONUSCO, has been criticized for being ineffective, corrupt, and abusive. It has also faced resistance and hostility from the Congolese government and some of the armed groups.

Earlier this month, the Congolese government ordered the East African regional force, which was deployed in 2022 to help MONUSCO fight the armed groups, to leave the country by December, accusing it of failing to deliver results.

The UN has also imposed sanctions and an arms embargo on some of the parties involved in the conflict, but these measures have been violated and evaded by various actors.

The UN has also supported the efforts to bring justice and accountability to the perpetrators of the genocide, but these efforts have been hampered by the lack of cooperation and security in the region.

### **A call for action**

The video of the man who set himself on fire has sparked a call for action from various groups and individuals, who have expressed their solidarity and support for the Congolese people.

Some have called for a boycott of the products that use the resources from the DRC, such as smartphones, laptops, and electric cars, to pressure the companies and governments that benefit from the exploitation of the region.

Some have also called for a stronger and more effective intervention from the international community, such as a diplomatic and humanitarian initiative to end the conflict and address the root causes of the violence.

Some have also called for a recognition and a commemoration of the genocide, as well as a compensation and a reconciliation for the victims and the survivors.

The video of the man who set himself on fire has also raised awareness and compassion for the plight of the Congolese people, who have suffered and endured one of the worst tragedies in human history.