



Women in Black London

Support Sudan and DRC – send aid not arms!

The ongoing conflicts in the Sudan and in the Democratic Republic of Congo are two humanitarian crises that tend to be forgotten. Both are having a devastating impact on civilian communities within each country and its neighbours.

Civil war in **Sudan** broke out in 2023, but the conflict in **Darfur, Western Sudan** started in 2003. Atrocities are committed by both sides, particularly by the Rapid Support Force (RSF), which uses rape, sexual slavery, torture and mutilation on women and girls, some of whom have taken their own lives as a result. Millions are displaced, both within and outside the country. Famine is now widespread. Women play a vital role as farmers, growing and providing food and saving local seed varieties selected and adapted to the region, but they have been expelled from their land. The healthcare system has collapsed. The conflict is driving a maternal and child health crisis.

While the UK Government in November doubled the aid package for the region to £113 million, the UK also has historic ties to the United Arab Emirates, formerly a British Protectorate and one of the UK's largest arms buyers, which has been providing arms and support to the RSF.

Women in Black London express solidarity with the people of Sudan and DRC suffering from the impact of ongoing conflict. We urge the UK Government to acknowledge the ongoing impact of its colonial role and review its relationships with the UAE and Rwanda, both complicit in arming the rebels in Sudan and DRC respectively, and to increase humanitarian aid, rather than selling arms, which merely weaponises the ongoing conflicts.

Democratic Republic of Congo – there has been conflict in eastern DRC for 30 years, following the Rwandan Genocide, in which ethnic Hutu extremists killed an estimated one million Tutsis plus moderate Hutus.

DRC has some of the world's largest reserves of the minerals used in advanced electronics, attracting interest from China, the US and the EU in particular, plus much illegal exploitation.

Starting in January 2025, the rebel force M23, closely linked with Rwanda, rapidly took a number of key towns in renewed fighting. More than 7.8 million people have been internally displaced due to violence and atrocities, as well as extreme poverty and mining expansion. UN data shows a 30% increase in grave violations such as execution, sexual violence, forced recruitment and abduction against children in eastern DRC. Some 28 million Congolese suffer from food insecurity; around 1.1 million nationals are seeking refuge abroad.

In June 2025 the US brokered a peace deal between the DRC and Rwanda, but it is unclear how much this is really about gaining access to resources, e.g. tantalum, essential to modern technologies such as mobile phones and a major underlying cause of ongoing conflict. It is also unclear whether this peace deal can be effective on the ground. In this context we must not forget that the UK Government has provided aid and military support and maintains a close trade and investment relationship with Rwanda, despite the genocide.



Women in Black hold vigils every Wednesday between 6-7 pm at the Edith Cavell Statue, opposite the National Portrait Gallery, St.Martin's Place, London WC2.

Our vigils are silent, women-only and if possible we wear black. We welcome all women who support our call for an end to militarism and war.

Twitter: @WIB_London

Facebook: @womeninblack.london

Website: london.womeninblack.org

Donations for leaflets welcome

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