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March Against Genocide and Extraction in the DRC, 16 March 2024, Cape Town CBD

PRESS STATEMENT: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

A Cape Town-based group including Congolese and South African community workers and activists have come together to organise a march on the 16th March 2024 in Cape Town, against injustice, genocide, resource extraction, and ecological devastation in the DRC. The march will take place from 9.30AM to 1PM and will begin from the CPUT parking lot, Keizersgracht Street. We invite all people of conscience to join.

The march is in protest the ongoing genocide in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The contemporary escalation of violence in the DRC occurs against the backdrop of ongoing genocide and imperial extraction. Since 1996, over 6 million people have been murdered in the DRC, and nearly 7 million people are internally displaced. Sexual and gender-based violence is devastatingly prevalent.

This genocide has its roots in the continuities of centuries of colonial genocide, slavery, occupation, dispossession, and resource extraction, which echoes today in imperial practices of mineral extraction and militarisation predominantly by Western governments and corporations that are major drivers of the conflict. Indeed, the first recorded use of the term holocaust to describe genocidal horror of major scale was used with reference to the Congo. Similarly, the first recorded use of the term 'crime against humanity' was by Black American journalist, minister, and historian, George Washington Williams to refer to King Leopold's tyrannical colonial barbarism in the Congo Free State. Reflecting the racism of Leopold's colonial violence, in 2020, a statue of him in Antwerp was spray painted by anti-racist protesters in protest of his legacy of colonial brutality in both DRC and Belgium. The statue was eventually removed.

Today, many Western states and private corporations, as well as South African ones are complicit in the genocide in DRC through their extractivism and proliferation of the arms trade. The DRC is home to a majority of what is referred to 'critical minerals' such as cobalt and copper which are components in such objects as lithium batteries, electricity networks and electric vehicles. The diamond industry is also, arguably, one of the most economic drivers of the conflict.

We know that the racist violence of imperial and colonial genocide and extractivism is connected, from the DRC to Palestine, from Sudan to Haiti to Tigray, and so too should our responses and our resistance to imperialism be connected. It is in this spirit of internationalism, solidarity and in the quest for justice and an end to the genocide in the DRC that we march.

We hope you will join us!

For media inquiries or to get more involved, contact: +27 73 576 7773

***March details: 16 March, 2024 | 9.30 AM – 1PM | Meeting point
CPUT Parking Lot, Keizersgracht Street | Route: Darling-Adderly-
Spin-Plein Street |**

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