

**Deputy Assistant Secretary Sarah Troutman  
Testimony for Subcommittee on Africa  
on the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda  
January 22, 2026**

Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Jacobs, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on the United States' efforts to advance peace between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, culminating in the signing of the Washington Accords on December 4, 2025.

For more than three decades, the eastern DRC has been plagued by conflict, instability, and human suffering. The region's challenges have defied easy solutions, with cycles of violence undermining development and threatening the security of millions. The United States has long recognized the strategic importance of the Great Lakes region, both for our own interests and for the well-being of the region's people.

On December 4, at the Donald J Trump Institute for Peace, President Tshisekedi and President Kagame signed the Washington Accords—a historic step forward that marks the most meaningful advance toward resolving this conflict in decades. This achievement is a testament to the power of sustained, high-level diplomacy and the importance of American leadership on the world stage.

President Trump is the Peace President, and the landmark breakthrough achieved by the Washington Accords would not have been possible without his leadership. His direct engagement, vision, and determination to see this conflict resolved were instrumental in bringing the parties to the table and sustaining momentum throughout the process. I also recognize the leadership of Secretary Rubio and Senior Advisor Massad Boulos, whose tireless efforts were critical in forging consensus and guiding the negotiations to a successful conclusion.

The benefits of the Washington Accords are profound. For the people of the DRC and of Rwanda, the Accords offer a pathway for lasting peace, improved security,

and the opportunity to rebuild communities devastated by decades of violence. For the United States, President Trump designed the Accords to advance American interests in regional stability and promote economic growth that benefits both Americans and the region.

As a key component of the America First Foreign Policy objectives of this administration, the Accords deliver direct, concrete benefits to the American people. By stabilizing a region that is a major source of critical minerals—including cobalt and coltan, which are essential for the U.S. manufacturing and defense sectors—the Accords help secure American supply chains and reduce our reliance on competitors like China. The Strategic Partnership Agreement with the DRC is a first of its kind legally binding agreement that creates the conditions for significant U.S. investment into the DRC - in critical minerals and key strategic infrastructure – and lays out the path forward for U.S.-DRC cooperation on the Sakania-Lobito Corridor. A more stable Great Lakes region means less need for costly U.S. humanitarian interventions and peacekeeping missions, allowing us to focus taxpayer resources on priorities at home, while upholding U.S. global leadership and securing supply chains.

For the region, the Washington Accords represent a new chapter. The Accords establish clear commitments from both sides to respect territorial integrity, cease support for armed groups, and cooperate on border security and economic development. It also envisions a robust framework for monitoring and implementation, with the United States, Qatar, and the African Union working together to play a central role in future mediation and oversight.

We know that peace is fragile and our work does not end with the signing of the Accords. As we move forward, our focus remains on the difficult work of implementation. We are working closely with our partners in the African Union, the United Nations, Qatar, and other regional and international stakeholders to ensure that commitments are translated into concrete action on the ground. This includes supporting the Qatari-led talks between the DRC and the M23 armed group, strengthening the AU's mediation architecture, and mobilizing resources for post-conflict recovery while burden sharing with partners.

We will ensure that the promises made in Washington are kept, that the peace process delivers real results so that the people of the region see tangible improvements in their lives, and that the conditions for increased U.S. investment are realized. Transparency and accountability are central at every stage, and those who threaten peace will be held responsible. As Secretary Rubio said, we will “take action to ensure promises made to the President are kept.”

In closing, I want to thank the Subcommittee for its attention to this critical issue and for its support of our efforts in the Great Lakes region. The Washington Accords are an historic achievement, but they are also a call to action. With continued leadership and partnership, we can help build a future of peace and prosperity for the DRC, Rwanda, and the United States.

Thank you. I welcome your questions.