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Lord Malloch-Brown
Minister for Africa, Asia and the UN
Foreign & Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
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Dear Mark,

We were only able to have the briefest of words, when we met in the margins of yesterday's RUSI/UNA-UK meeting, about the appalling situation around Goma and elsewhere in the eastern parts of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

I am therefore taking this opportunity to write to you as Chair of the Board of UNA-UK to urge that the British government does everything it can, both as a member of the UN Security Council and as a member of the European Union, to reinforce and underpin the UN's peacekeeping operation in the DRC which on its own – and with its present resources – is unable to master the situation and bring about stability and law and order in that region of the country.

This surely is a clear cut case where the international community has a responsibility to protect the population in that part of the DRC in circumstances where the government of the DRC is simply unable to do so; and it is a case which does not raise the tricky issue of consent since it seems that the government of the DRC is willing to support some reinforcement of the international presence there.

We would like also to suggest that the government use all the influence it can bring to bear with the government of Rwanda to persuade the latter to play a constructive part in ending the violence, and to ensure that their territory is not used to reinforce the rebels who are wreaking such havoc in and around Goma.

If and when the situation on the ground is stabilised, there will surely be a need to put in place a much strengthened process designed to ensure that the countries of the Great Lakes region cooperate with each other in avoiding any further outbreaks of violence in the future. We would hope that the government would lend its support to any such efforts.

Lord Hannay of Chiswick
Chair, UNA-UK