



AHEAD



THE BANYAMULENGE COMMUNITY IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO.

A CALL FOR ACTION FOR HUMANITARIAN AID

Published by: Action for Health and Employment Access Development
Date: April 26, 2025

1. Introduction

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is home to a diverse population, including the Banyamulenge—a Tutsi community primarily located in South Kivu Province. Despite their centuries-long presence in the region, the Banyamulenge have been subjected to systematic violence, displacement, and discrimination. This presentation seeks to highlight the historical context, current challenges, and urgent need for national and international action to protect and support the Banyamulenge - Tutsi people in Democratic Republic of Congo.

2. Geographic and Ethnic background

The DRC, situated in Central Africa, shares borders with nine countries. The Republic of Congo, Central African Republic, South Sudan, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania, Zambia, and Angola. The country also has a short Atlantic coastline. The Banyamulenge community resides mainly in the eastern province of South Kivu. They speak Kinyamulenge, a language closely related to Kinyarwanda and Kirundi.

Historically, the Banyamulenge are Congolese of Tutsi origin, with ancestral roots in the region dating back to between the 15th and 18th centuries. Traditionally pastoralists, they have integrated into Congolese society while preserving a distinct cultural identity.

3. History of Discrimination and Persecution

3.1 Historical Attacks

The Banyamulenge have experienced repeated persecution throughout modern Congolese history. They have been the targets of repeated attacks by both state and non-state militia groups. Significant episodes of violence occurred in 1960, 1964, 1996, 1998. Notably in 2004 during the Gatumba massacre in Burundi when 166 civilians of Banyamulenge were cruelly killed, some burned alive.

3.2 Recent Wave of Violence (Since 2017)

Since April 2017, there has been a resurgence of coordinated attacks against the Banyamulenge community. These assaults, often accompanied by hate speech and dehumanizing rhetoric, have been perpetrated by:

- Mai-Mai militias
- Wazalendo forces
- Burundian rebel group (also known as the RED-Tabara)
- Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda (FDLR)
- Elements of the Congolese national army!

The toll has been catastrophic, Hundreds of villages, schools, health facilities, churches have been literally destroyed, Banyamulenge citizens pulled out into the streets and severely beaten with many being killed, often in similar horrifying circumstances.

Women and girls have been victims of horrific sexual violence including gang rape, sexual torture, and genital mutilation. These crimes have affected victims of all ages and genders, leaving deep scars on the community.

4. Current Humanitarian Situation

Approximately 90% of the remaining Banyamulenge population in the DRC are either in refugee camps or internally displaced people (IDPs). Key facts:

- Their cattle, a vital part of their livelihood, have been looted by armed groups.
- Homes have been burned, and entire villages burned to the ground.

- The remaining Banyamulenge communities are under siege by armed groups, severely limiting their mobility and access to food, water, education, and healthcare.
- Those who attempt to tend to their fields or move outside designated areas face threats or extrajudicial killings.

The community lives in constant fear. They are stigmatized primarily because of their perceived Rwandan origin due to Tutsi-like physical features, despite centuries of residence in Congo. Many are told they must either "return to Rwanda" or face death.

"Even in the face of these heartbreaking challenges, we believe with all our hearts that God is greater than this situation. He is calling His people to rise—to pray earnestly, to seek His guidance, and to stand alongside Him in compassion and action."

5. Call to Action

The Banyamulenge are Congolese citizens. They are entitled to the same rights, protections, and dignity as any other citizen of the DRC. The international community, international governments, civil society, churches and international citizens are called upon to:

- Recognize and uphold the **human rights and citizenship** of the Banyamulenge.
- **End all forms of discrimination**, hate speech, and violence.
- Promote **national unity and reconciliation** among all Congolese communities.
- Hold perpetrators of violence and sexual atrocities **accountable** through appropriate legal mechanisms and international justice.
- Call or email your Senator and congressman/or woman and inform them of what is going on. Many likely have no knowledge of the genocide against Tutsi population taking place in the Democratic Republic of Congo.
- The world has committed to never again watch Genocide - but what Tutsi population is facing in the Democratic of Congo is a Genocide against Tutsi looking human being. Let us all unit efforts to stop Genocide against, Tutsi, Banyamulenge and Hema.
- To fellow congolese, this is time to think of development indicators. It is time for reconciliation, promoting unity and stopping hate speeches.

6. Urgent Humanitarian Needs

Immediate humanitarian assistance is required in areas such as **Minembwe, Mikenke, Indondo, Rurambo, Bibogobogo** where displaced and surrounded Banyamulenge communities reside. Immediate priority needs include:

- **Shelter:** For those whose homes have been destroyed.
- **Food and Nutrition:** Emergency food aid and sustainable food security solutions.

- **Healthcare:** Medical support for physical and psychological trauma, maternal health, and prevention diseases such HIV and AIDS, tuberculosis, malnutrition as well as prevention of Gender based violences,
 - **Education:** Access to learning opportunities for displaced children, youth and adults literacy.
 - **Security:** Protection from ongoing violence and restoration of peace.
-

7. How You Can Help

Your support can make a substantial difference. Donations and advocacy efforts contribute directly to improving the lives of vulnerable Tutsi - Banyamulenge populations in DRC. Contributions will go toward:

- Rebuilding communities
 - Providing life-saving humanitarian aid
 - Supporting peacebuilding initiatives
 - Advocating for justice and human rights
-

8. Conclusion

The Banyamulenge community in the DRC faces an existential threat. Without coordinated intervention and a firm commitment to justice, peace, and equality, the cycle of violence will continue.

The international community must not turn a blind eye. By standing in solidarity and providing support.

Now is the time to act—to bring hope to the hopeless, and to affirm the dignity and humanity of the Tutsi, Banyamulenge and Hema people in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

For more information or to make a tax deductible contribution, please contact:

Developed and edited by: Ruturwa Dieudonne MPH and Humanitarian aid Specialist, Joseph Mbarusha, Sr Pastor, African Nazarene Ministries, Bangor ME and Chris Kalley, NMI, Bangor Nazarene Church

Action for Health and Employment Access Development (AHEAD)

[AHEAD WE CARE – ahead we care organization](#)

Action for Health and Employment's Access Development AHEAD

Bright Future We Care!
Bringing hope to the hopeless!
Tel. 937-344-6916

Email: actionforhealth4@gmail.com
[AHEAD WE CARE – ahead we care organization](#)



- Action for Health and Employment's Access Development (**AHEAD**) is a charity organization dedicated to help and **advocate for peace, education and bright future for all.**

AHEAD is an IRS **501 (C) (3)** nonprofit organization

- AHEAD empowers needy population to improve quality of life through education, financial literacy and facilitation to access social services
- AHEAD values partnerships with Faith based, humanitarian organizations and health institutions in order to enhance quality of life and provide a pathway that benefits both our families and our workforce.

Your donation @



Scan QR code:





Images of Banyamulenge population



Images of Banyamulenge population



Cattle



Author: Ruturwa H Dieudonne MPH and Humanitarian aid Specialist CEO of AHEAD



Joseph Mbarushamahoro Sr Pastor of African Nazarene Ministries Bangor ME



Chris Kelley, NMI, Bangor Nazarene Church



AHEAD