



PRAYER MOVES MOUNTAINS:

A CALL FOR PROTECTION & HUMANITARIAN SUPPORT TO BANYAMULENGE IN DR CONGO

Published by:

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*The scriptures invite us to help others, especially those who are in difficulties. This call for protection and humanitarian assistance reminds us about what Jesus said in **Matthew 25:35-40**, where Jesus reiterated "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me... Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."*

1. Partnership to advance advocacy for humanitarian support

Bangor First Church of the Nazarene in partnership with the African Nazarene congregation and AAHEAD.ORG stand in solidarity with minorities and have committed to leading advocacy for humanitarian support to the needy population groups in various regions of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Through this initiative, we are inviting people to gather together representatives of churches in Bangor ME, charities and humanitarian organizations to raise voice for the voiceless.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is home to a diverse population, including the Banyamulenge¹—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.

¹

<https://theconversation.com/the-banyamulenge-how-a-minority-ethnic-group-in-the-drc-became-the-target-of-rebels-and-its-own-government-201099>

2. Background

Banyamulenge are Tutsi people living in South Kivu - Eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

2.1. 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.

2.2. History of Discrimination and Persecution

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

2.3 Recent Wave of Violence (Since 2017)

Since April 2017, there has been a resurgence of coordinated attacks against the Banyamulenge community². These assaults, often accompanied by hate speech and dehumanizing rhetoric, have been perpetrated by:

- ★ Mai-Mai militias
- ★ Wazalendo forces
- ★ Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda (FDLR)
- ★ Burundian armed forces

² <https://www.ushmm.org/genocide-prevention/blog/democratic-republic-of-congo-rising-concern-banyamulenge>

★ Elements of the Congolese national army (FRDC)

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.

2.4. **Drone strikes targeting civilians**

The Tutsi population has been targeted by the drones led by the leadership of Kinshasa. Evidence indicates that the use of drones, particularly armed ones, poses significant challenges to human rights, notably the right to life, privacy, and security. Key concerns include targeted killings, surveillance violations, and potential accountability gaps.

According to different reports and on ground population, from early 2026, the Minembwe region in South Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), has seen intense military drone activity, including targeted strikes and surveillance, causing significant civilian deaths, fear and casualties.



Reports confirm that drones, frequently described as "kamikaze" or "bomber" drones, have been utilized to attack residential areas, schools, and livestock, with particularly severe attacks reported in February and April 2026.

Civilian Impact: Local residents and advocacy groups report that drone strikes have resulted in multiple deaths and injuries, including among the Tutsi Banyamulenge community,

who report being targeted.

These drones are reported to be from the Democratic Republic of Congo's government forces (FARDC) or their allied forces as

operating these drones, targeting specifically areas populated by Tutsi population without distinction of children, mothers, elderly population groups.

Humanitarian Concerns: The drone activity has contributed to a worsening humanitarian crisis in the already isolated Minembwe Highlands, with reports of "16 months of drone strikes" by February 2026.

Recently, a drone strike was reported on March 25, 2026, targeting community radio and again on April 22, 2026, targeting Eben-Ezer University of Minembwe.

This advocacy paper highlights the call for the respect of the human rights principles and dignity of people. The civilian Tutsis are subject to human rights violations while international organizations are silent. Literature demonstrates that core Human Rights Violations include:

- ★ Right to Life: Armed drone strikes often result in unlawful killings and significant civilian casualties, violating the "supreme right" to life.
- ★ Civilian Impact & Terror: Persistent drone presence causes psychological trauma, disrupts social activities (like schooling and gatherings), and creates a "constant fear" in civilian populations.
- ★ Targeting of Non-Combatants: Recent reports from OHCHR document "hunted" civilians and deliberate strikes on civilian infrastructure in Ukraine and Sudan.
- ★ Privacy & Surveillance: Law enforcement and private use of drones for persistent surveillance can lead to unreasonable searches and violations of privacy rights.
- ★ Discrimination: Algorithmic biases in autonomous weapons systems may lead to discriminatory targeting based on race, gender, or other data points

As charity organizations [AHEAD.ORG](https://www.ahead.org) and Faith based organizations, we are, through this paper, advocating and seeking to mitigate the dangers of military and weaponized drones rather than ban the technology entirely. The primary focus is protecting civilians, ensuring aid workers' safety, and upholding International Humanitarian Law (IHL).

3. 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."

4. Health situation in DRC

The recent surge in violence since 2017 in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo has led to significant loss of life, trauma, displacement, and the destruction of critical health infrastructure, exacerbating an already dire situation for millions of people.

As a result of persistent conflicts in the Eastern of DRC, the population in the remote area of Haut Plateau of Uvira, Fizi and Mwenga face health related challenges including higher HIV prevalence, cancer, diabetes, hypertension, mental health and other routine services are also affected as medicines have regular run out and health workers are either absent or overburdened.

The risk of death during pregnancy and childbirth has increased from already high levels. Given the insecurity, pregnant women cannot

reach health facilities for safe delivery. Experience with conflict in the region has shown the drastic effect it has, with the rate of births attended to by skilled health workers dropping to near zero during periods of intense violence.

Due to limited access to HIV prevention services such as condoms, information on HIV transmission, Voluntary and confidential testing, prevention of HIV transmission from mother to child (PMTCT) there is a high risk of new HIV infections in the area. Also treatment of AIDS is practically nonexistent in the area.

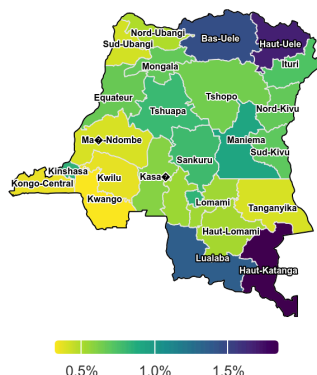
Evidence shows that currently approximately 90% of the remaining Banyamulenge population in the DRC are either in refugee camps or internally displaced people (IDPs). Such evidence calls for immediate humanitarian assistance in areas such as Minembwe, Mikenke, Indongo, Rurambo, Bibogobogo where displaced and surrounded community members reside. Immediate priority needs include:

- ★ Medical supplies,
- ★ 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,
- ★ Food and Nutrition: Emergency food aid and sustainable food security solutions.
- ★ Healthcare: Medical support for physical and psychological trauma, maternal health, and prevention of diseases such as HIV and AIDS, tuberculosis, malnutrition as well as prevention of Gender based violence,
- ★ Education: Access to learning opportunities for displaced children, youth and adults literacy.

5. HIV and AIDS in DRC

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is one of the countries most affected by HIV in the West and Central Africa region. The HIV/AIDS epidemic in the DRC is generalized, with a prevalence of 1.2% in the general population and 1.8% among pregnant women attending antenatal care services. The number of people living with HIV is estimated at 420,000, including 60,000 children under 15 years of age and 210,000 women.

HIV prevalence, 15-49, Both, December 2024

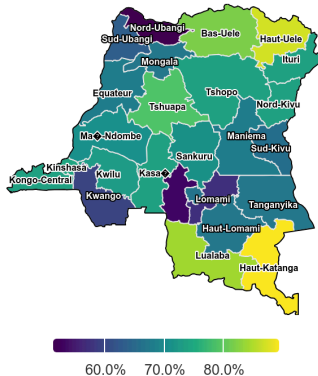


The national response has led to significant progress: 101,324 people are receiving ARV treatment, and 47% of HIV-positive pregnant women have received ARVs to reduce mother-to-child transmission.

In this same context of the HIV epidemic, young girls and women are also exposed to the risk of pregnancy. Indeed, according to the DHS II survey: More than six out of ten women (64%) and more than five out of ten men (55%) are in a union. More than one in two women (54%) reported that their last sexual intercourse had taken place recently, that is, during the four weeks preceding the DHS survey. Certainly, in

the Democratic Republic of Congo, due to its vast size, in some provinces there are localities where the local populations have never had access to information on HIV/AIDS. While in the cities, people have a real understanding of HIV/AIDS, in the villages, and even more so in the most remote areas, people tend to mystify this epidemic, attributing it to a form of witchcraft, and human lives are being lost as a result of this ignorance. In South Kivu, the locality of Minembwe, due to its inaccessibility, is one of those areas that has never received any information about HIV/AIDS. It is an area not covered by the Global Fund in this regard, yet all the major factors of HIV transmission listed above are observed there at very high levels³.

ART coverage, 15-49, Both, December 2024



6. HIV epidemic in Minembwe

Minembwe is an administrative entity governed by an administrative head. The languages spoken in this territory are: Kinyamulenge, Kifuliru, and Kiswahili (spoken by the majority of the population,

³ [UNAIDS.ORG](https://www.unaids.org)

uniting the different social strata). This area is inhabited by the Banyamulenge, Babembe, Bafuliru, Barega, Banyindu, Bamushi, Batwa, and Babangubangu, among others. Daily activities include: livestock farming, small-scale trade, public transportation (motorcycle taxis), agriculture, cinema, restaurants, and leisure activities (football).

Minembwe has three higher education and university institutions: Eben Ezer University of Minembwe (UEMI), the Higher Institute of Agro-Veterinary and Nature Conservation (ISAVEC), and the Minembwe University Center (CUM), as well as 12 secondary schools and 30 recognized primary schools. In addition, Minembwe has a health zone divided into 18 health areas, as shown in the table according to the latest data. Despite the efforts of humanitarian organizations, under the coordination of the National AIDS Control Program (PNMLS), a large part of the population of Minembwe remains unaware of this major scourge.

Evidence⁴ From the 2017 program activities implemented in Minembwe by National Network of PLHV in partnership with UNAIDS revealed that out of 265 people voluntarily tested for HIV 12 people were found HIV positive of which 7 were men and 5 were women. This indicates a higher HIV prevalence rate among men (2.6%) compared to 1.8% among women. In total, the 12 positive cases represent an HIV prevalence rate of 4.5%. This proves that the situation requires special attention to save human lives that are in mortal danger. By combining the two voluntary testing activities carried out in the Minembwe health zone (October 2016 and February 2017), we observed that the situation is becoming increasingly catastrophic and risks devastating a large population if adequate measures are not taken to curb this scourge. In terms of figures, out of a total of 565 people tested voluntarily, 29 cases tested positive, representing a rate of 5.1%.

⁴ UNAIDS.ORG

Proportions of HIV in Minembwe

	#	Negative	Positive	Indetermine	% HIV positive
Male	200	190	7	3	3.5
Female	65	59	5	1	7.7
Total	265	249	12	4	4.5

Source: UNAIDS Program report 2017

7. CALL FOR 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.
- ★ States and International organizations to publicly and unequivocally condemn all attacks against civilians in Minembwe and surrounding areas, including the reported use of drones, artillery, and other military assets against civilian populations.
- ★ Reaffirm the United States's commitment to atrocity prevention and civilian protection throughout the Great Lakes Region, including the protection of vulnerable Tutsi - Banyamulenge communities facing threats to their security and survival.
- ★ In 1948, Spledged to "Never again" watch Genocide - but what Tutsi population is facing in the Democratic of Congo is a Genocide

against Tutsi. Let us all unit efforts to stop Genocide against, Tutsi, Banyamulenge and Hema.

- ★ Fellow congolese, this is time to think of peace for everyone. It is time for reconciliation, promoting unity and stopping hate speeches.

8. 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,
- ★ 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.

9. 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

10. 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.

ANNEX

1. STATES RESPONSABILITIES TO PREVENT GENOCIDE

Genocide prevention⁵ is an international legal obligation focused on identifying, preventing, and responding to mass atrocities through early warning systems, diplomatic intervention, and addressing root causes like hate speech. Grounded in the 1948 Genocide Convention, it requires states to act proactively to protect populations.

Key Components for a Presentation on Genocide Prevention:

- ★ Definition & Legal Framework: The 1948 UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide is the foundation, defining it as **acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group.**
- ★ The 10 Stages of Genocide (Dr. Gregory Stanton): These predictable, non-linear stages include Classification, Symbolization, Discrimination, Dehumanization, Organization, Polarization, Preparation, Persecution, Extermination, and Denial.
- ★ Early Warning Signs & Risk Assessment: Tools developed by the UN Office on Genocide Prevention help detect indicators such as discriminatory policies, hate speech, political instability, and weak human rights protections.
- ★ Preventive Strategies:
 - Early Action: Addressing root causes through education, promoting diversity, and reinforcing human rights.
 - Preventive Diplomacy: Utilizing mediation, dialogue, and political pressure to stop the escalation of violence.
 - Institutional Mechanisms: Implementing government-wide strategies, such as the U.S. Elie Wiesel Act, to ensure timely responses.
 - The Responsibility to Protect (R2P): The principle that states have the primary responsibility to protect their populations from

⁵ [Presentation genocide prevention - Google Search](#)

genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity.

★ Role of Civil Society: Individuals and organizations play a critical role in monitoring, reporting, and advocating for "never again".

2. Key images about Banyamulenge and tragic journey

Genocide Emergency: The Banyamulenge of the DRC⁶



Published on September 3, 2021: *Banyamulenge men at the funeral of a herder killed by a militia. (ALEXIS HUGUET/AFP via Getty Images)*

⁶ <https://www.genocidewatch.com/single-post/genocide-emergency-the-banyamulenge-of-the-drc>

Nomadic Lives Series: The Place Called Home to a Persecuted Congolese Minority⁷



Banyamulenge refugees in Minembwe. [Image source: Amjamba Africa]

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<https://www.humanrightsresearch.org/post/nomadic-lives-series-the-place-called-home-to-a-persecuted-congolese-minority>

**m_gapara17** • [Follow](#)**m_gapara17** Edited • 19w

The 1st image illustrates the destruction of Banyamulenge villages in Mibunda/Mwenga in 2019 by MaiMai and Red-Tabara. The 2nd illustration is the destruction of a house in Kakenge/Minembwe on 01/24/2026 by FARDC drones. Pro-MaiMai and M23 supporters are going to insult me 🤬

**niils_haaaag** 19w

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January 27

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Following

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Mama Urwagasabo Tv ✓ · 5/26/26



Residents in the Minembwe area say Kalingi Hospital was set ablaze in a drone strike allegedly carried out by coalition forces allied to the Congolese government. The attack is reported to have caused significant destruction and heightened fears among civilians amid escalating clashes in eastern DRC.

[#MamaUrwagasaboTV](#)



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3. AUTHORS



Missionary Ruturwa Dieudonne serves as Board Secretary, Africa Nazarene Ministry

Mr Ruturwa, a PHD student in Counseling, holds 2 Masters degrees in Public Health Mr. Ruturwa has extensive work experience in the health sector, education and home health care. Mr Ruturwa pays attention to quality care, dignity, and respect for every human being. Convinced of the power of the creator to restore peace to the needy population groups. Leading the missionary work of Nazarene church, Mr Ruturwa reiterated the relevance of the prayer by citing the scripture: James 5:16: Praying for others is a precious *investment made in God*. *"The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective"*.



Pastor Dr Mary Paul

Since 2025, Pastor Mary is serving as Senior at Nazarene church of Bangor - ME. Dr Mary formerly pastored several churches in the Boston area, served as a professor at Olivet Nazarene University and as Vice President of Student Life and Formation at Point Loma Nazarene University. Talking about helping others, Dr Mary made a reference to the scripture: Hebrews 13:16 "And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased."



Pastor Joseph Mbarusha

Senior Pastor of Africa Nazarene Ministry, Pastor Joseph has exceptional compassion to help others through evangelism, expanding the word of God into community members, nationally and all over the World. Pastor Joseph believes in partnership development to reach the underserved population groups. Proverbs 19:17 says: "Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will reward them for what they have done".



Board Secretary/ Worship Leader

Kelly Hasselbrack is serving as church board secretary and leads in worship each week. She has an amazing singing voice and gives so much to her church through her service! Talking about the goodness of the heavenly Father and assistance to the needy population: *Proverbs 3:27 says "Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to act."*



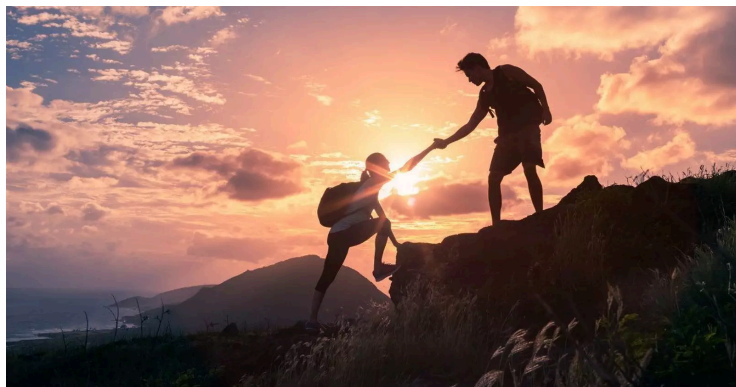
Missions President

Chris Kelley is our fearless mission leader. He has a huge heart for helping those in our community and around the world! Chris is a dedicated man of God that provides his time to help and advocate for the spread of God's goodness to reach people in difficulties. Convinced in God's mercy Chris spearheads missionary work through prayer for peace and dignity that everyone deserves. *Matthew 5:14-16 says "You are the light of the world ...In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."*



Pastor Yves Ruterera

Pastor Yves serves as Deputy Senior Pastor of Africa Nazarene Ministry in Bangor ME. Pastor Yves is passionate about helping others through missionary work perspectives. Pastor Yves leads in the country and abroad the spiritual growth of church members. *Ephesians 2:10: For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*





**Action for Health and Employment's Access
Development
AHEAD**

**Bright Future We Care!
Bringing hope to the hopeless!**

AAHEAD.ORG

- ★ 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.

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"We can't help everyone, but everyone can help someone." — Ronald Reagan
"If you can't feed a hundred people, then feed just one." — Mother Teresa
"Everyone can be a humanitarian. All it takes is one act to help someone else. That's the spirit of people helping people." — Valerie Amos, former Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs
"A single act of kindness throws out roots in all directions, and the roots spring up and make new trees." — Amelia Earhart



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