

September 19, 2011

Dear Sirs:

The Dodd-Frank Act could be killing people in the Congo right now. See my blog post on this today:

<http://chuckb.me/xmF>

In July I went to in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the second poorest country on earth, to start a business that would lay the foundation for ending systemic poverty there.

My Congolese partner and I have committed to create sustainable economies in the Congo by exporting minerals and leaving a significant portion of the profits local, something no other company has ever done. We also will build potable water projects, clinics, and schools with the profits, and create training certifications for local business owners to learn how to run businesses. We will also fund these businesses. The net effect - we believe we can solve systemic poverty in the DR Congo in 5-10 years.

But now an obscure provision tucked into the Dodd-Frank Act could be jeopardizing much of this and is already hurting hundreds of thousands of Congolese and putting some in immediate danger of death.

We need to get in front of politicians and get to Washington for a congressional hearing asap - will you help us?

The Problem – The Dodd-Frank Act Provision 1502

The recent Dodd-Frank Act has had a terrible affect in the Congo. A provision (1502) in the bill requires all companies in America to disclose if their products use minerals from the Congo, and to create a trail of paperwork and outside audits to prove they did not create profits for criminal militias. As a result of the unintended stigma this has created, the mineral trade for central Africa has evaporated in the last few weeks, creating an effective mineral embargo of the entire region. Thousands are being devastated by Dodd-Frank.

The Negative Effect

Our private company, co-owned by a DR Congo Chief and me, has been lauded by Chiefs throughout the Congo for our commitment to export minerals above board and for our desire to build local potable water projects, clinics and schools. The express purpose of our company is to take minerals out of the hands of criminals and get them to market without a dime going to conflict, while building schools, clinics and a local economy.

Only the Criminals are Benefiting

One tribe dug and stored tons of coltan over the last two years without pay simply because they did not want to sell it to war lords. I was supposed to meet these chiefs in Africa next week to export the first of a 20 year contract for monthly shipments. But because of the stigma attached to Dodd-Frank, no buyers can be found, leaving starvation or criminalized sales as the options for these chiefs. The 20 year contract would create job stability with certain futures for people who have never had it.

The Nuclear Option is Not Acceptable

Our company was stepping into the legitimacy gap, but the U.S. government and very well-meaning activists have created what we see as a nuclear option. We call it a nuclear option because it is not targeted

specifically at the militia, but disastrously effects every man, woman and child in the mining areas in order to discourage a few militias. This Hiroshima option is untenable under any circumstance. People are dying and the militia are simply finding their revenue in other criminal ways. I would encourage you to speak of it in these terms to others.

The Main Argument Against Dodd-Frank – The Nuclear Option Is Not Acceptable

People decry the use of a drone-launched precision attack missile because it's possible at least one innocent bystander might be affected. Then why is it perfectly acceptable to employ a nuclear option in the Congo that affects 100% of all the innocents, in order to root out the militia?

This all-inclusive collateral damage strategy must be stopped. Hundreds of thousands have lost their meager living or are being forced to now sell to the very militias Dodd-Frank wants to punish. The innocent are the only ones being hurt - the militia will get their money, even if not through minerals. One woman said, "I used to tend my fields, but every woman who farms gets raped regularly by the militia. My only safe job is in the mines. I don't know what I will do now."

Hundreds of thousands of people are suffering right now in the DR Congo as a direct result of this Dodd-Frank provision. Please help us correct it immediately and stop this nuclear option. 100% collateral damage to the innocent is simply not acceptable under any circumstance.

Please drop this devastating provision from the Dodd-Frank bill. It is killing people right now.

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