

# DR Congo – the country and it's people

- ❖ Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC); capital Kinshasa
- ❖ 3<sup>rd</sup> largest country in Africa; the size of western Europe
- ❖ 2<sup>nd</sup> largest tropical rainforest, after the Amazon
- ❖ rich in natural resources - diamonds, gold, cobalt, copper, tin, uranium, coltan (essential for mobile phones)
- ❖ population of 62 million; 250 ethnic groups
- ❖ official language French; national languages Kongo, Lingala, Tshiluba and Swahili
- ❖ life expectancy under 40 years; 1 in 5 die before 5 years old
- ❖ most live on less than \$1 per day, and have no access to clean water, healthcare or education

# DR Congo – history & politics

- ❖ named after the pre-colonial kingdom of Kongo
- ❖ colonised by Belgium's King Leopold II in 1885 – the Congo Free State, a brutal slave labour regime extracting ivory and rubber
- ❖ Belgian Congo - state colony from 1908
- ❖ independent since 1960 - first elected President, radical nationalist Lumumba, ousted with support of CIA
- ❖ western-backed dictatorship of Mobutu Seso Seko from 1963, institutionalised corruption and exploitation from the top down
- ❖ renamed Zaire in 1974

# DR Congo – Africa's first world war

- ❖ a million refugees flee to Zaire after Rwanda genocide of 1994 - UNHCR supports Hutu camps under leadership of genocide perpetrators
- ❖ Rwanda's new Tutsi regime invades in 1996 to disperse Hutu refugee camps across its borders - Mobutu's regime collapses
- ❖ Rwanda invades again in 1998 – Uganda & Burundi side with Rwanda; Angola, Zimbabwe & Namibia side with Congo
- ❖ rape used as a weapon of war by all sides
- ❖ all sides sustain conflict to exploit people and resources
- ❖ 5.4 million dead as a result of war & its effects since 1998
- ❖ over a million people still internally displaced in camps

# CEEACO

- ❖ Congo Yearly Meeting - the Community of Evangelical Churches of Friends in the Congo
- ❖ active since 1988, registered in 1991
- ❖ American Quaker missionaries in Abeka from 1998-2003
- ❖ Evangelical Quakers; programmed meetings for worship
- ❖ 4,000 members, 3 quarterly meetings, 20 monthly meetings, 34 pastors – largely in North & South Kivu, Eastern Congo
- ❖ peace & development projects including:
  - Uvira Friends Peace Centre
  - Abeka community hospital
  - Trauma Clinic & Peace Garden
  - Women's projects