

THE JOURNAL



[Winter 2011-2012](#)

[Read past issues](#)

[SUBSCRIBE](#)

FOLLOW US



Donate to the
WORLD
POLICY
INSTITUTE

FOCUS ON

*Policy Paper: Fairly
Trading the World's
Timber*

[Home](#)

Conflict in Congo



From the Winter 2011/2012 [Faith](#) issue

To read about land issues elsewhere in Africa, click [here](#).

By Megan Camm

ITURI, Democratic Republic of the Congo—It is July 20, 2010, and Djupanyahonoré is a ghost town populated by 644 ghosts. The heaped skeletons of its dwellings lie cold, but the acrid tang of burned houses pollutes the mountain air. Bending at their hips, the women of this northeastern hamlet scoop charred beans into the folds of their colorful *pagnes*, multi-purpose swaths of waxed cotton that serve at once as clothing, baby slings, and blankets. With laden skirts, they walk barefoot over blackened thatch to add their beans to a growing heap, where grandmothers with arthritic fingers pick out the edible ones. Old men sit silently in the shade while the young men rummage through rubble, excavating the remains of their huts' wooden supports. These will fuel the evening cooking fire and protect the oldest, youngest, and weakest members of the community from plummeting night temperatures. It's the rainy season, and at an altitude of over 5,500 feet, passing the night without shelter is hazardous.

The children, gray with fine soot, are not playing. One boy sits outside the shell of his home, ankles tucked to the side, arms drawn into his shirt, hands clasped under his cheek, staring listlessly at the ground. The only manmade sounds are an occasional solitary wail and the plinking of beans into salvaged cooking pots.

UN Habitat, the United Nations body tasked with mediating land conflicts in eastern Congo, arrives in a neighboring village this morning, just a day after the attack. A small contingent of Indian UN peacekeepers and a sizeable, somber crowd of Djupanyahonoré eager to present evidence of the previous day's events are waiting for the team of three mediators. Each has already been apprised of the basics. The Djupamula, a neighboring clan that shares a grandfather with the Djupanyahonoré, and the Djuparigi, their allies, ambushed the village of Djupanyahonoré at about 7 a.m., after most able

RELATED CONTENT

- [A Stealth Engagement](#)
January 17, 2012
- [Israel's Tussle with Et](#)
January 12, 2012
- [Conflict in Congo](#)
December 20, 2011
- [How to Win an Electio](#)
December 15, 2011
- [Rwanda: France's Lor](#)
December 14, 2011
- [China vs. the US: The Love-Hate Relationsh](#)
December 14, 2011
- [Meaningful Peace](#)
December 09, 2011
- [Portfolio: Myanmar to these Rohingya?](#)
December 06, 2011
- [Gambling on Election Presidential Problem](#)
December 06, 2011
- [A Passage to Kabul](#)
December 05, 2011

Copyright © 2009 World Policy Institute. All Rights Reserved.