

Using NewsHour Extra Feature Stories

STORY

Civil War in Congo Tied to Natural Resources and Ethnic Rivalries

11/11/08

http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/features/world/july-dec08/congo_11-11.html

Estimated Time: One 45-minute class period with possible extension

Student Worksheet (reading comprehension and discussion questions without answers)

PROCEDURE

1. WARM UP

Use initiating questions to introduce the topic and find out how much your students know.

2. MAIN ACTIVITY

Have students read NewsHour Extra's feature story and answer the reading comprehension and discussion questions on the student handout.

3. DISCUSSION

Use discussion questions to encourage students to think about how the issues outlined in the story affect their lives and express and debate different opinions.

INITIATING QUESTIONS

1. Where is the Democratic Republic of Congo? Where is Rwanda?

2. What was the Rwandan genocide?

3. What are rebels? What is a militia?

READING COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS – **Student Worksheet**

1. Why is there a conflict in the DR Congo right now?

ANSWER

Rebel leader General Laurent Nkunda and his army invaded eastern DR Congo (another neighboring country is called Congo) in late August, overrunning towns and taking up positions near the city of Goma

2. What event in the 1990s is part of the cause for the invasion?

ANSWER

The fighting in the DR Congo is tied to the 1994 genocide in neighboring Rwanda, where members of one ethnic group, the Hutu, killed hundreds of thousands of members of the Tutsis, another group.

3. What health problem has been diagnosed among Congo refugees?

ANSWER

Humanitarian groups are also warning of an outbreak of cholera, a bacterial infection caused by consuming contaminated food or water.

4. How many people have been affected by the fighting?

ANSWER

The conflict has created chaos in the country, displacing 250,000 and leaving 100 people dead, according to Agence France-Presse.

5. Why does General Nkunda claim he is invading DR Congo?

ANSWER

General Nkunda, a Tutsi, says he is invading the Democratic Republic of Congo in order to protect other minority Tutsis from Hutu militia that fled to the region after being ousted from power in Rwanda.

6. What has Nkunda threatened to do?

ANSWER

General Nkunda has threatened to take over all of the DR Congo, which is the size of the entire eastern United States, if the democratically elected leader, Joseph Kabila, refuses to negotiate with him.

7. How are the rebels funding their army?

ANSWER

Eastern DR Congo in particular has 80 percent of the world's supply of coltan, which is needed to make video games, cell phones and computers.

Militias control the areas with coltan and then sell it in Rwanda and Uganda to buy equipment for their soldiers.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (more research might be needed)

1. Why do you think the Hutu and Tutsi conflict is repeating itself? Do you think Nkunda really wants to help the Tutsis?

2. Should the United Nations do more to prevent the rebel army from invading? What are the pros and cons of UN action? Look at what the UN did in the Rwandan genocide for hints.

3. Does your cell phone or computer have coltan in it? Do you think it is a problem to buy products that have coltan in them? Why or why not?

Extension Activity

Have students write a 300-500 word essay on this topic providing clear examples. Send your completed editorial to NewsHour Extra (extra@newshour.org). Exceptional essays might be published on our Web site.