

Novelist Vows To Break The Silence About Congo Humanitarian Crisis

(West Harrison, NY) It is time to break the silence about the world's worst humanitarian crisis, according to Dave Donelson, author of *Heart of Diamonds*, a newly-released novel about the endless violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Donelson will be reading from the book and discussing the current situation in the Congo at numerous venues as part of Congo Week, a slate of events October 19 – 25 held on over 1,000 campuses and other venues in 100 countries worldwide.

“Nearly six million people have died in this war so far,” Donelson says. “And the violence is increasing as we speak.” The author says the media ignores the devastation, which is why he is speaking out.

Donelson will be appearing at the Harrison Public Library at 7:30 PM, Monday, October 20, and the Multicultural Living Learning Unit of Clara Dickson Hall at Cornell University, Ithaca, at 7 PM, Wednesday, October 22. He will also appear at Borders in the Pyramid Mall in Ithaca at 3 PM that day. He will also make a presentation at Barnes & Noble, White Plains, at 7 PM, Thursday, October 23.

“*Heart of Diamonds* is a work of fiction,” Donelson avers, “But it is based on actual events in the most deadly conflict since World War II.” The author says he drew heavily on news accounts of rape as a weapon of terror, child soldiers, widespread corruption at all levels of government, and the very sad plight of the hundreds of thousands of refugees from the violence that continues to wrack the nation.

In his novel, Donelson uses a diamond smuggling scheme to represent the fight for control of the DRC's gold, timber, uranium, copper, coltan, and other natural resources. An intricate plot involving an American televangelist, the President of the DRC, and the White House reflects the convoluted relationships of the factions involved in the struggle. His heroine, Valerie Grey, is a TV journalist who uncovers the scheme and fights to expose it to the world.

Donelson believes that ethnic conflicts like those between the Tsutis and Hutus that spilled over from Rwanda and between the Hema and Lindu are fronts for war lords looking to control territory in the DRC where they can exploit natural resources. Many of those militias receive support—sometimes openly—from governments or rebel factions in neighboring countries.

Donelson is a freelance writer and photographer. *Heart of Diamonds* is his third book. “Since I started writing the book, there have been glimmers of hope in the situation,” he points out. “But violence continues and hundreds of thousands of people are still suffering as refugees. Peace and prosperity are still a long way away.” He adds, “I hope *Heart of Diamonds* will help draw attention to the crisis.”

Heart of Diamonds was published by Kunati Books, named Independent Publisher of the Year at the 2008 Book Expo America.

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For more information, contact James McKinnon at Kunati Books (866) 356-2442

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High-res photos and audio clips are at www.heartofdiamonds.com/Press_Room/press_room.html