

Hi-Ho-Hi-Ho  
Off to the Congo we go  
The Democratic Republic of the Congo  
Has had many, many names, you know  
The list of names is so long  
That it makes us want to sing a song  
In 1885, it was Congo Free State  
Then became Belgian Congo in 1908  
Called the Republic of Zaire, in 1971  
In 1997, the Democratic Republic of the  
Congo (DCR) had begun



What tune we should choose  
A tune that won't give us the blues  
Although this country is riddled with war  
Hardship and atrocities galore  
War and assassinations are an everyday event  
Along with oustings of the president  
We won't go through all the political ins and outs  
Causes nightmares; makes you scream &  
shout

So many presidents have ruled this nation  
Some were ousted, others received  
assassination  
President Laurent-Désiré Kabila was elected  
in 2001  
In 2019 he was assassinated; then succeeded  
by his son  
Anyone who disagreed with him suffered  
Torture, imprisonment, and 'disappeared'





Close your eyes as this you'd rather not see  
Child soldiers. Yes. they're part of the military  
Approximately 30,000 children are in armed groups  
All part of the the DRC's military troops



War, famine and corruption  
Put people's lives in disruption  
Children couldn't go to school and get educated  
Homes & farm lands all were decimated  
For their lives, people had to flee  
Becoming unhappy refugees



Human rights are so completely different there  
The 'rape capital of the world' is the DCR  
Where there's corruption  
All aspects of life, safety, families, experience interruption

Health is adversely affected by each and every war  
Dead bodies left to decompose and more  
The infant mortality rate is very high  
And in delivery, many mothers die

Primary education is neither compulsory nor  
free

Although the Congolese constitution says it  
should be

However, since the turn of the century  
Education has increased greatly



In some Congo wars, to put it bluntly  
45,000 people died monthly

These wars continue today but with not so much attention  
As the news has been more focused on Syria and Yemen

Women and children are abused during war  
In manners so unthinkable that we would abhor  
Violence continues in the Congo  
So, we need to be careful wherever we go

One war leads to another and none of it amusing  
In fact Congolese history is way too confusing  
Causing serious problems such as famine and disease  
So let's think of something else, if you please

The country is the second largest in Africa, after Algeria  
And the 4th most populated country in Africa  
Rich in natural resources is this country  
But struggles with lack of infrastructure, corruption and political stability,

Over 200 ethnic groups live in the Congo  
But French is the national language! Did you know?  
Approximately 240 different languages are spoken  
But only 4 have national status; others are a token



Maybe we should check out Kinshasa, the capital city  
Right on the Congo River. It's really quite pretty  
City hosts spectacular wealth and massive poverty  
Bring your umbrella because in May it's quite rainy  
We'll see a variety of architectural styles  
Shabby shelters, spacious villas, mansions all within a few miles  
Notice that most of the people are under 22. See their smiles



Industrial and commercial activity  
Form the basis of the economy  
So much political turmoil; hence the economy has been debilitated  
In addition, food insecurity has been exacerbated  
Running water, sanitation and electricity  
Are provided by the city  
However, rapid growth has limited the capacity  
To provide these necessities

We could hear some music in  
this town  
As Congo music is quite  
renowned  
Street art is quite expressive  
& supreme  
They illustrate contemporary  
social themes



We could have dinner then go to a  
nightclub  
Or see a movie and with locals  
elbow rub

There are museums and art galleries to visit  
Archaeological, musicological as well as ethnographic,



*Musee National Du Congo*



*Musee National De Kinshasa*

Let's venture into the country side and get an eyeful  
Scenery, flora, fauna - all so beautiful



The Nile River also runs  
along the Congo  
That's another thing I really  
didn't know  
One tributary is the White  
Nile  
And the other is the Blue  
Nile  
That'll give us something to  
ponder for a while



See the pink Egyptian Starclusters growing wild and pretty  
See the village & the country side. No wonder some prefer this to the city





Hey now! If we're still here in June  
Let's go to Goma and hear a tune  
The Annual Amani Festival for Peace  
At the Mwanga College is unique  
Singing, dancing - traditional and contemporary  
There's also a festival annually in February  
Healing peace through music and dance  
Works for all if we give it a chance.  
Pour yourself tea, coffee, beer or wine  
Put your feet up and have a good time  
<https://amanifestival.com/en/>



Family life is filled  
with love  
See how mom,  
dad & children fit  
like a glove

See the children collecting firewood  
They're never naughty. Smiling & always  
good



I know your feet are tired, and you'd like to take a train  
Unfortunately, that's not how we play this virtual stride game

Maybe we'll see one of the Congo's mines  
Cobalt, copper and diamonds are fine

*(diamond)*



Hey, what's that over there? Do you see?  
That's a type of giraffe called an Okapi



Volcanic eruptions occur every now and then  
And different challenges begin  
Add to this the constant wars  
No wonder poverty and poor health are imbedded in the core

COVID has exacerbated the problems of escalating conflict  
Creating severe food insecurity. Yes! A hunger crisis. How derelict  
That country with such beauty  
Could be swallowed in food insecurity

HIV/AIDS care, treatment and education are essential  
We all hope the SLF initiatives help some reach potential  
We're going to leave and next we'll wander  
To where life doesn't get much better: Rwanda



