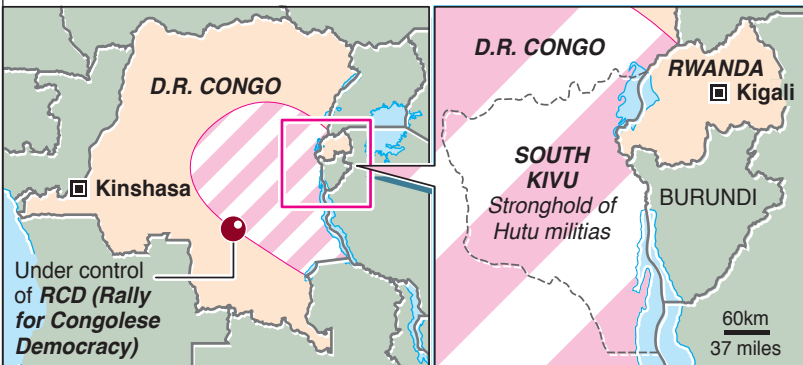


Hopes rise for end to "Africa's world war"

A peace deal to end a conflict in central Africa that has cost up to three million lives may be signed within days. Rwanda has agreed to withdraw 30,000 troops from eastern Congo if ethnic Hutu militias operating there are disarmed. South Africa and the UN have agreed to guarantee the deal



Conflict timeline

1994: Hutus slaughter up to a million Tutsis in Rwanda. Exiled Tutsis invade from Uganda, driving killers into D.R. Congo, then named Zaire

1997: Rwandan-backed rebels topple Zaire dictator **Mobutu Sese Seko** for aiding Hutu militias. **Laurent Kabila** installed as president

1998: Kabila rearms Hutus. Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi send troops to aid rebels trying to topple Kabila. Troops from Zimbabwe, Namibia and Angola intervene in support of Kabila

1999: Lusaka ceasefire accord signed but violated repeatedly

2001: Kabila assassinated. Son **Joseph** sworn in as president.

Rwanda and Uganda accept UN-brokered disengagement plan and begin pulling back troops.

UN experts say warring factions deliberately prolonging conflict to plunder Congo's vast mineral wealth

Jul 22, 2002: Negotiators from Rwanda and D.R. Congo agree peace deal in South Africa – but needs signatures of **Presidents Kabila and Kagame** to be validated. RCD rebels – omitted from earlier negotiations – warn