

## From One War Zone to Another

**A young Londoner originally from Congo escaped the troubles in his own country to find himself in Hackney where he now feels just as vulnerable – but not from the militia, from other young people.**

I am from the Democratic Republic of Congo in Central Africa. I arrived in Great Britain three years ago when I was 15. I really enjoy living in London because it has the same vibrant atmosphere as in Kinshasa, the capital city of my country. I moved to London to pursue my education, to be free and not scared. Since 1998 there has been war in my country and many young people in Congo, particularly in the East, have been affected by the conflict between the different armies and the rebel militias, there are eight countries involved. Our childhoods have been stolen because of this violent conflict where there's no room for dialogue. What I find amazing and contradictory is that in my country, because of the war, only the army soldiers and the rebels carry guns and knives. But here it's the opposite: the police don't carry guns, but some young people do.

It seems as though as soon as a young boy from Africa gets here, he adopts the gang culture and starts carrying weapons, which they wouldn't do in Africa. In Congo, civilians don't carry guns, only the army and the rebels. And we don't kill our neighbours just for fun. But here, some young people get killed for nothing. At least 30 teenagers have been murdered across the country this year in absurd gun and knife crimes, 17 of them in London. These atrocities destroy the lives of the victims' friends and relatives. So why do we fight each other so much? Is it because of bad role models? Is it because we don't like the way somebody acts, walks or talks? Or is it because of jealousy and revenge?

These killers really remind me of angry children who react violently when they don't get what they want. The only difference is that these children are armed. I am working hard to pass my A' Levels in a few years so I can go to university to study Government & Politics and Economics. I would really like to work for an NGO and help others in poor countries but for myself I would like to move to a safer area like Surrey, Kent or even better Southend-on-Sea.

### About this Story

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