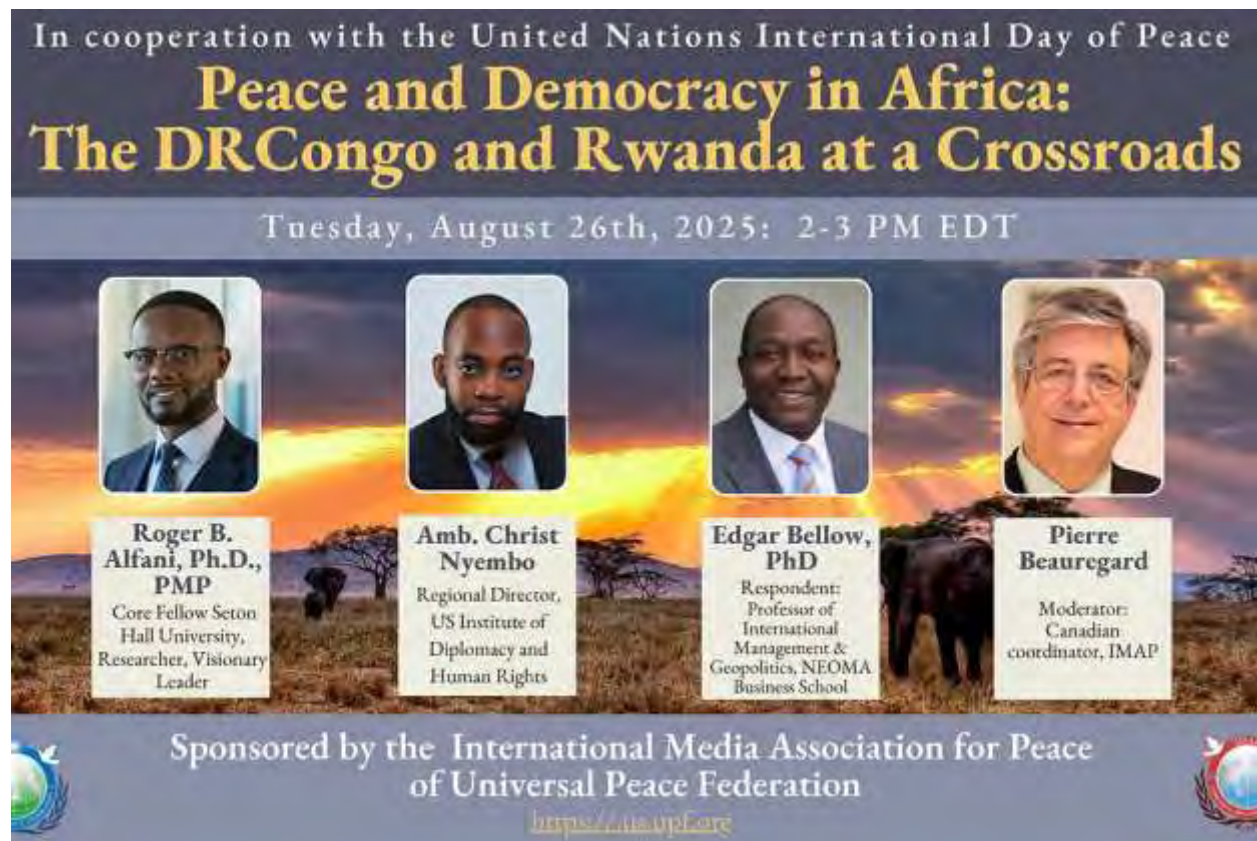


IMAP Canada: IMAP Panelists Address Peace and Democracy in Africa

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Montreal, Canada – The International Media Association for Peace (IMAP) North America organized a webinar on August 26, 2025, on the theme “Peace and Democracy in Africa: The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Rwanda at a Crossroads” with three eminent panelists.

Dr. Roger Alfani, a Congolese scholar currently working as a core fellow at Seton Hall University in New Jersey, presented a comprehensive analysis of the ongoing conflict in the DRC, highlighting its historical roots dating back to the 19th century under King Leopold II of Belgium.

He discussed the complex interplay of actors at national, regional, and international levels, including the Congolese state, non-state armed groups, neighboring countries, and great powers. He emphasized the need to understand the root causes of the conflict – including economic interests in natural resources and historical grievances – in order to achieve lasting peace. Dr. Alfani expressed skepticism about the recent peace agreements in Washington and Doha, warning that without addressing the root causes, the conflict could persist or escalate. He stressed the importance of listening to the voices of the affected populations, particularly the marginalized and displaced, in order to build trust and work towards genuine peace.

Amb. Christ Nyembo, regional director of the U.S. Institute of Diplomacy and Human Rights in the DRC, shared his personal experience of narrowly escaping death in eastern Congo. He emphasized the importance of investing in youth to build peace and sustainable development. He highlighted successful examples from Africa and Asia, including former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo's advice for youth to take action rather than waiting for government solutions, and South Korea's New Village Movement, which transformed the country after the Korean War.

Amb. Nyembo outlined the initiatives of Synergie 243, an organization he founded, to train young peace ambassadors, provide scholarships and employment opportunities, and organize economic missions, with a goal of training one million youth over the next five years to transform their communities and the country.

Dr. Edgar Bellow, a renowned expert in geopolitics and international management, also shared his insights on the complex conflict in the DRC, emphasizing the need for a multi-stakeholder approach to peacebuilding. He highlighted the importance of including local populations, religious actors, and non-state actors in peace negotiations, while also addressing the role of external actors like Rwanda, Uganda, the United States, and Qatar, who often have conflicting interests.

Dr. Bellow stressed the need for regional and international partners to foster mutual trust and economic transparency to address both security and development needs. He also discussed the potential of youth in the region to contribute to peace and development, while noting the challenges they face.

Watch the recording of the webinar: www.youtube.com/live/qGpMAZg459k?si=Ak23zAJQxV8oVXQh