

A Monthly Newsletter of the Office of the Personal Representative



Fight to end sexual violence and recruitment of children into armed groups in the Democratic Republic of Congo



As part of the fight against impunity and to arrange standby judicial, legal experts and judges of civil and military justice have been sent to all provinces of the Democratic Republic of Congo to collect all cases relating to sexual violence. Photo: Members of the team that visited the province of Maniema.

Fight against impunity in cases of sexual assault: Tour judicial standby in the various provinces of the Democratic Republic of Congo

For the first time in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), interinstitutional missions composed of judges from the Prosecutor General, the Military High Court, the General Prosecutor of the Republic and the Office of Legal Experts of the Personal Representative, were constituted and sent to the provinces as part of the organization of the court before for records relating to sexual violence and child recruitment.

These inter-institutional missions aimed at: (1) to assess the degree of implementation of legislative instruments for the suppression of crimes of sexual violence and child recruitment; (2) to measure the difficulties faced by civil and military courts and (3) to have reliable data on the various criminal cases handled by these jurisdictions. The missions planned in all provinces of the DRC, were divided into three teams and will be held from September and the month of October 2015.

The first missions carried out from 14 to 30 September, helped to meet the heads of the various civil and military courts, to consult the registers and records in order to collect data that will facilitate the development of a directory that will organize judgments of all reported cases. Data collection done during these first joint mission helped identify and list all the cases related to sexual violence heard by the courts and civil and military courts since 2014, 2000 cases were enrolled and the following general observations :

- significant decline in cases of sexual violence committed by men in uniform;
- strict and rigorous application in the military courts to the penalties provided by law;
- sentences below the legal minimum sentences in the civil courts;
- tutorial in folders in the civil courts;
- decrease in crime due to the uniformed men in urban areas;
- good collaboration with civil courts and military, the UNJHRO and UNICEF;
- computerized databases in the military courts;
- implementation of practical measures by the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo (FARDC) to stop child recruitment.

Notwithstanding the influence of customs and religion that grow with the proliferation of amicable settlements between families of the victims and perpetrators of rape, important work was carried out in civilian and military courts. This deserves to be popularized to enhance the work of these "hero in the shadows" who perform their duties in a difficult environment. But it turns out that awareness at the grassroots remains indispensable to terminate arrangements amicably condemned by law.

Participation of the DRC in the 70th UN General Assembly

The 70th session of the United Nations General Assembly was devoted to the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by Member States. Indeed, due 2015, the Millennium Goals for Development, acronym MDGs, adopted by Member States in 2000.

The delegation of the DRC was led by the Minister of Foreign Affairs. It was composed of the Diplomatic Adviser to the Head of State, the Goodwill Ambassadors, Ambassador of the DRC to the United Nations, the National Coordinator of monitoring the Framework Agreement of Addis Ababa and the Representative personal of the Head of State in charge of sexual violence issues and child recruitment.

On the sidelines of the delegation of the DRC held meetings with several personalities including the Secretary General of the United Nations.

The Personal Representative in turn informed the various interlocutors on the recent DRC initiatives in this area, including the development of the roadmap for the delisting process in the DRC, the mission of criminal intelligence and the need to improving the coordination of interventions of all partners working in these two themes. She also had meetings with two Deputy Secretaries-General in charge of children and sexual violence in conflict and various organizations involved.

Ms. Mabunda also had meetings with private sector partners and media.

Extension of the campaign "Break the silence!" in the cities of Kinshasa, Goma and Bukavu

With financial support from **UNFPA** and **UN WOMEN**, the campaign "Break the silence!" Launched in March 2015 in Kinshasa, the Office of the Personal Representative was extended to the cities of Goma and Bukavu. The objective in this campaign is to encourage the reporting of cases of rape and enable victims to have legal or medical assistance by calling the following emergency numbers: the **089 7000 222** or **47 33 33**.

The official launch of the second campaign "Break the silence!" Was held Tuesday, September 29, 2015 and to achieve a greater impact, the campaign was accompanied by an awareness activity on land in the cities of Kinshasa, Goma and Bukavu with some NGO partners. The first reactions from the population recorded indicate general satisfaction with this approach that puts an emphasis on awareness and demonstrations on how to make the emergency call line. Indeed, it was found that this approach helped to convince the most skeptical people. The campaign was an opportunity to distribute whistles to the population, symbolic gesture to show that all acts of sexual violence must be publicly revealed to discourage the perpetrators.

A digital campaign was also launched on social networks, mainly on the Facebook page of the Office of Personal Representative **Stop DR Congo Sexual Violence**. This campaign was very well received through social networks and has received thousands of shares.



Progress made by the DRC

From 1 to September 30, 2015 - More than a hundred calls to the emergency call center, with an average age of 12-16 years for the victims and mainly from Kinshasa, Lubumbashi, and Kipushi Kalemie (Katanga), Goma (North Kivu) and Tshikapa (Kasai Occidental).

September 12, 2015 - The military garrison court of Beni-Butembo sentenced 12 soldiers to prison terms ranging from 5 to 20 years in prison for rape and murder. This verdict was reached Saturday, September 12 at Kasindi-Lubiriya, about 75 km north-east of the town of Beni (North Kivu).

From 14 to 30 September, 2015 - Joint Mission of judicial standby in the various provinces of the DRC, whose first phase has covered the following cities: Goma and Beni (North Kivu), Bukavu (South Kivu), Kindu (Maniema), Lubumbashi (Katanga), Kananga (Western Kasai), Kikwit and Bandundu city (Bandundu), Matadi and Boma (Kongo Central). The second phase will take place in turn in mid-October and will cover the city of Kinshasa province and the following cities: Kisangani (Orientale Province), Mbandaka (Equateur), Mbuji-Mayi (Kasai Oriental).

From 23 September to 1 October 2015- Participation of the DRC in the 70th General Assembly of the United Nations in New York and various meetings with United Nations officials, representatives of some UN agencies, private sector partners and the media.

September 29, 2015 - Launch of the extension of the campaign "Break the silence!" In Kinshasa, Goma and Bukavu, in partnership with UN Women and UNFPA, in an approach that combines the extension of the emergency call number and outreach.

September 30, 2015 - End of training conducted with technical support from the National Institute of Professional Preparation (INPP) for 75 learners including victims of sexual violence, demobilized and some members of the communities of the territory of Kibumba (North Kivu), with funding from the Japanese Government, through the Office of the UN Deputy Secretary General for sexual violence in conflict.

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Stop DR Congo Sexual Violence

Call center for victims of sexual violence to medical and legal assistance:

+243 897- 000 - 222 and 47 33 33

From Monday to Saturday: 8h00 – 20h00