

Note on United Nations activities to prevent and respond to Sexual Violence in DRC

November 2009

The United Nations developed a Comprehensive Strategy on Combating Sexual Violence in DRC. The Strategy is integrated as the priority action plan in the governmental Strategy against Gender Based Violence. The activities to prevent and respond to sexual violence conducted by agencies and MONUC in 2009 contribute to the general objectives of the Comprehensive Strategy.

- **Prevention of Sexual Violence**

Protection monitoring was conducted in Eastern DRC and allowed to identify patterns of sexual violence, including threats, vulnerabilities, profiles of survivors and perpetrators, geographical and chronological distribution of sexual violence. Additionally, strengthened communication with communities through the deployment of Joint Protection Teams allowed to improve the situation-analysis to inform protection interventions by peacekeepers.

As part of the activities to strengthen the protection of civilians, a booklet for peacekeepers and a training including practical actions to be conducted to prevent sexual violence have been developed. Peacekeepers have put in place tactics to prevent sexual violence, such as market patrols, escorts to the fields, night and foot patrols, strategic deployments, rapid intervention. For example, in Kibua, Nord Kivu, about 16 market patrols are conducted every month.

In order to strengthen the protection of civilians, the mission has also put in place a more effective early warning system to detect potential threats against civilians through a network of contacts with the local population. Mobile numbers have been distributed to allow a rapid intervention of peacekeepers in case civilians are under threat.

Prevention of sexual violence includes advocacy, community awareness raising, and mass mobilization. Sensitization activities on sexual violence and prevention of sexually transmitted diseases and HIV are also conducted using theatre, radio sessions, cartoons, community network open discussions. A campaign against rape reached at least 260.000 people. In South Kivu, the mobile cinema reached 24 communities in Walungu and Kalehe. Community networks were established in Mwenga, Kalehe, Uvira, Fizi and Walungu. 120 community networks were trained this year. 326 community and religious leaders participated in trainings on prevention of sexual violence and HIV/AIDS. At least 38 theater shows were organized to fight against sexual violence. Several training and empowerment activities include members of women associations and committees. For example in Nord Kivu, 581 women were trained on Congolese Laws on Sexual violence and referral of cases of violence. 290 women activists were trained and supported on advocacy against rape in DRC. In Mugunga, Nord Kivu, 994 IDP women received vocational training. 75% of the women participating in the program affirmed their participation in the project has positively affected their lives.

Training sessions and support are provided to the national police on specialized sexual violence judicial procedures. In 2009, four trainings of 54 police officers were organized in IDP sites in Goma, focusing on

Congolese Law against Sexual Violence, judicial procedures and Code of conduct for those working with survivors. In 2009, 891 FARDC officers and soldiers and commanders of 11 military regions were trained on prevention of sexual violence. Trainings have also been provided to judges, lawyers and detention personnel. Approximately 580 military magistrates, judiciary personnel and lawyers were trained on sexual violence.

In order to prevent sexual violence in detention centers, prisons were rehabilitated to ensure an effective separation of men and women in Kinshasa, Kananga and Kalemie.

Sensitization campaigns on sexual violence are conducted for repatriating Rwandan refugees in transit centers. To date, more than 7.000 refugees were sensitized before being repatriated to Rwanda. Congolese refugees returning from neighboring asylum countries are part of sensitization campaigns on prevention of sexual violence.

- **Combating impunity**

The United Nations works with competent judicial authorities and NGOs to support the constitution of complaints to competent jurisdictions. Furthermore, the UN has been engaged in monitoring of Justice Administration throughout the judicial proceeding, including trial monitoring. In the last two years, the United Nations through judicial authorities, local NGOs and direct investigations supported the preliminary phase of more than 2.000 cases, filed more than 1.100 complaints to competent jurisdiction of which more than 250 judgments were delivered. The United Nations conducts capacity building and mentoring of paralegals, NGOs or bar associations providing legal assistance to survivors and support the payment of legal fees for victims wanting to access justice. Support is provided for the organization of mobile courts in remote areas.

The UN has developed a practical guide on how to accompany victims to justice including detailed instructions on how to conduct the preliminary phase of the investigation and the judicial follow up. The UN conducts advocacy and provide technical expertise to the Ministry of Justice for the implementation of quick-impact measures to advance judicial responses to crimes of sexual violence.

- **Medical assistance of survivors of sexual violence**

In 2009, more than 19.200 survivors received medical assistance in accordance with the minimum package of assistance. Related activities also include the provision of medical equipment and medicines, including emergency post exposure prophylaxis, emergency maternal care and IHV/AIDS treatment, training of medical personnel, mobile clinics to reach survivors in remote areas, repairing of fistulas. At least 40 medical facilities were rehabilitated and equipped.

- **Psycho-social support of survivors of sexual violence**

UN partners enabled more than 19.000 survivors, including 3.900 children, to receive psychosocial support. This includes capacity building of service providers and rehabilitation and equipment of centers for psychosocial support.

- **Reintegration of survivors of sexual violence**

The UN facilitated the socio-economic reintegration of survivors of sexual violence in several areas of DRC. For example, 300 families were supported in Masisi, 100 families in the spontaneous site of Kiwanja and 50 returnee families in Rutshuru, North Kivu. During the first six months of 2009, 497 children were reintegrated in school, 955 were reintegrated in families, and 2072 participated in economic reintegration activities.

Projects on reintegration of ex combatants include girls and women ex combatants or associated to armed groups, victims of sexual violence.

Prepared by ODSRSG/RoL

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