

H.E. President Joseph Kabila
Bureau du Président
P.O. Box 3862
New York, NY 10163

Dear Mr. President:

I am writing to express my concern for the use of sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo as a weapon of war and a means to humiliate and terrorize women, men, boys, and girls and entire communities. The agreements to end the war have not ended sexual violence, and the future security of women and girls remains in jeopardy.

I applaud your efforts to prevent and to end the use of sexual violence against women and girls, and urge you to take efforts in the following areas:

- **Ensure that there is no impunity for sexual violence.**

I urge you to strengthen the judicial system and to remove impediments women may face in gaining access to justice. Survivors of this crime face numerous obstacles in securing justice through the courts and receive little to no support for the psychosocial and physical consequences of rape and other forms of sexual violence.

- **Ensure that the State armed forces and police do not perpetrate sexual violence against women and girls.**

I urge you to ensure that the armed forces and the police do not commit sexual violence--and that commanders have oversight of and are held responsible for the actions of their soldiers and police force.

- **Implement national laws that protect and empower women and girls.**

I urge you to show leadership in the fulfillment of the guarantees of equality between men and women under the new Constitution and the implementation of the national law that addresses rape and other forms of sexual violence, passed by Parliament in June 2006. Also, review and reform all laws that are discriminatory towards women and girls.

I support your prioritizing the end to sexual violence in the DRC, as there can be no peace without security for women and girls.

Sincerely,



Dr. Gudrun Berger, Executive Director UNICEF Austria