

Declaration on the elimination of sexual violence in DRC

We, politicians across the political spectrum, members of NDI's Steering Committee, 11 candidates in the presidential election of 2011, and civil society organizations, met on November 1st, 2011 in Kinshasa;

Examining the provisions stated in the Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Congo on Civil and Political Rights, under Article 14, as well as Law No. 06/018 dated from July 20, 2006, on sexual violence;

Considering the need to strengthen political will for an effective implementation of all of these provisions;

Noting the persistence of massive sexual violence and its negative impact on victims, families and society as a whole, throughout the national territory, particularly in the East;

Recognizing the important role that political actors play at the highest levels, and their obligation to provide a leadership role in eradicating such violations of human rights in general, and sexual violence in particular;

We, politicians across the political spectrum, members of NDI's Steering Committee, the 11 candidates in the presidential election of 2011, and civil society organizations, gathered on November 1st, 2011 in Kinshasa, denounce all forms of violence against women, and solemnly pledge to:

1. Support all efforts to eliminate sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo;
2. Organize an international conference on the issue of sexual violence with national, regional and international stakeholders;
3. Support regional initiatives with neighboring countries to obtain a joint statement and to consider concrete actions to eliminate violations of human rights generally, and sexual violence in particular;
4. Call for exceptional efforts to address the causes of sexual violence which include: insecurity, illicit exploitation of natural resources in DRC, the presence of armed groups, and the absence of local institutions of good governance;
5. Demand an end to impunity and call for the prosecution of all suspected perpetrators of this violence; in particular, support the creation of a special court to prosecute and try the alleged perpetrators of sexual violence and other serious international crimes committed in the DRC since 1990;
6. Provide training, reinsertion, reparation and psychosocial care for victims of sexual violence and the children who are a product of rape, in their respective communities;

7. Require the effective implementation of the United Nations Security Council resolutions 1325 and 1820, as they relate to the involvement of women on issues of peace, security and the fight against impunity;

Finally, we, the signatories to this statement, call on all parties involved in the electoral process and on all Congolese citizens, to take ownership of this Declaration and to work for free, democratic, transparent and peaceful elections in our country.

Kinshasa, November 1, 2011