

Joint Press Release

44 human rights organisations advocate for the protection of Dr Denis Mukwege - 2018 Nobel Peace Prize laureate - who is facing serious threats after denouncing a massacre of civilians in Kipupu in Mwenga Territory (South Kivu Province), DR Congo.

Goma/Nairobi/Brussels, 19 August 2020 – The undersigned organisations of this press release denounce the serious threats currently directed at Dr Denis Mukwege – a 2018 Nobel Peace Prize winner – as a result of his commitment to fight impunity for human rights violations in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DR Congo).

Threats came a few days after the publication of a tweet on 26 July 2020 in which Dr. Mukwege condemned [the recent killings of civilians in South Kivu Province](#): *“These are the same people who continue to kill in the DRC. Kipupu's gruesome accounts are in the straight line of the massacres that have afflicted the DRC since 1996. As long as impunity persists and the recommendations of the UN Mapping Report are ignored, the massacres of the Congolese will continue”.*

Since then, as reported in [his appeal for peace on 30 July 2020](#), Dr. Denis Mukwege and his family members have been receiving hate messages, intimidations and death threats from unknown individuals, who accuse him of having a bias against a community in eastern DR Congo. Such threats are serious infringements to the right to defend human rights and the fight against impunity for serious crimes committed in DR Congo, and as such, the undersigned organisations strongly condemn these threats against Dr. Mukwege and his family.

Dr. Denis Mukwege is a man of peace who, as Medical Director of the Panzi Hospital, treats every human being with dignity, without discrimination. He does the same in his commitment against impunity for human rights violations. The undersigned organisations consider this a deliberate attempt to silence one of the most prominent figures in Congolese civil society, whose activism to end violence against women and the use of rape as a war weapon has won worldwide acclaim.

Despite the fact that two assassination attempts have been made against Dr. Mukwege since 2012, no legal action has been taken to identify the perpetrators and bring them to justice. We, the undersigned

organisations call on the Congolese authorities to carry out transparent and credible investigations to ensure that justice is met for the crimes committed against him and these recent threats.

These facts occur in a worrying context: according to the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office, between January and June 2020, the DR Congo recorded [4,113 human rights violations and abuses, an increase of 17%](#) compared to the period July-December 2019.

In this particularly hard time, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, human rights defenders need more protection if they are to continue to contribute to the establishment of the rule of law in DR Congo. The signatory organisations therefore remind the Congolese authorities of their obligation to protect human rights defenders, and thus also to protect Dr. Denis Mukwege.

It is for all these reasons that the signatory organisations urge the Congolese authorities:

- To reinforce the security of Dr. Denis Mukwege and his family
- To conduct a prompt investigation into the crimes committed against Dr. Mukwege, as well as the recent threats against him
- To fight against the increasing insecurity in the territories of Fizi and Mwenga in South Kivu Province.

List of signatory organisations:

1. Actions et Initiatives de Développement pour la Protection de la Femme et de l'Enfant (AIDPROFEN)- Goma, North Kivu
2. Alerte congolaise pour l'environnement et les droits de l'homme (ACEDH)
3. Amani na Tumaini Kwetu - South Kivu
4. Arche d'alliance (ARAL) - Uvira, South Kivu
5. Association Africaine de Défense des Droits de l'Homme (ASADHO) - section de Beni, North Kivu
6. Association des Femmes Juristes du Congo (AFEJUCO - Bukavu, South Kivu
7. Association des femmes pour la nutrition à assise communautaire (AFNAC) - Butembo, North Kivu
8. Association pour le développement et initiatives paysannes (ASSODIP) - North Kivu
9. Centre de résolution des conflits - Ituri Province
10. Centre international des formations et Droits humains et développement durable (CIFDH)
11. Centre pour l'éducation, animation et défense des droits de l'homme (CEADHO) - Uvira, South Kivu
12. Coalition des Volontaires pour la Paix et le Développement (CVPD) - Goma, North Kivu
13. Collectif des femmes pour le développement et la Paix (COFEDIP) - Beni, North Kivu

14. Collectif International Tournons la page
15. Consortium femme au fone
16. Debout Fille
17. Dynamique des jeunes actifs de la Tshuapa
18. Engagé ensemble pour la paix et le développement) – South Kivu

19. Femmes Juristes de Butembo - North Kivu
20. Genre Actif pour un Devenir Meilleur de la Femme (GAD)
21. Groupe d'Actions de Défense des Droits Humains et de la Paix (GADHOP) – Butembo, North Kivu
22. Groupe la Colombe – South Ubangi
23. Héritiers de la Justice (HJ) – Bukavu, South Kivu
24. Initiative Congolaise pour la Justice et la Paix (ICJP)
25. Initiatives Alpha (IA) - South Kivu
26. Institut pour la Protection et l'Apprentissage des Droits, IPAD Asbl
27. Ligue de la Zone Afrique pour la défense des Droits des Enfants et Elèves (LIZADEEL) – Kinshasa
28. Ligue pour la Solidarité Congolaise
29. Mutuelle des femmes paysannes pour le développement et la santé en Afrique (MFPDSA)
30. Nouvelle dynamique de la société civile (RDC)
31. Partenariat pour la Protection Intégrée (PPI) – Bukavu, South Kivu
32. Programme d'appui aux initiatives féminines (PAIF) North Kivu
33. Protection et Solidarité – Goma, North Kivu
34. Protection International

35. Réseau local de protection des civils - South Kivu
36. Service d'Accompagnement et de Renforcement des Capacités d'Autopromotion de la Femme) (SARCAF) – South Kivu

37. Solidarité des femmes de Fizi pour le bien-être familial (SOFIBEF) – Uvira, South Kivu
38. Solidarité féminine pour la paix et le développement intégral (SOFEPADI) - North Kivu
39. SOS information juridique multi sectorielle – South Kivu
40. Synergie des associations des jeunes pour l'éducation civique électorale et la promotion des droits de l'homme (SAJECEK) - South Kivu
41. Synergie des Femmes pour la Paix et la Recociliation des peuples des Grands Lacs (SPR)
42. Synergie Ukingo Wetu – North Kivu
43. Union chrétienne sur pour le progrès et la défense des droits de l'homme (UCPDHO)
44. Vision Sociale (VISO) - Kinshasa