



All photos by Paula Allen © 2007

# STOP RAPING

## OUR GREATEST RESOURCE



### Learn more

- Five million people have lost their lives because of the conflict.
- Hundreds of thousands of women and girls have been raped since the conflict began in DRC.
- It is estimated that 40 women are raped every day in South Kivu in eastern DRC.
- In 2007, in eastern DRC alone, UNICEF supported the recovery of more than 18,000 survivors of sexual violence and more than 60,000 survivors since 2003. Nearly 50% of survivors are children.

### Join the campaign

*Stop Raping Our Greatest Resource, Power To Women And Girls Of The Democratic Republic Of Congo* is being initiated by the women of Eastern DRC, V-Day and UNICEF.<sup>1</sup> **JOIN us by:**

- **Funding** initiatives for the social and economic empowerment of women and girls in DRC.
- **Raising awareness** about DRC and advocating for an end to the conflict and support for women and girls.
- **Supporting** local community based centers, such as The City of Joy: a safe-house to help women and girls heal from rape, rebuild their lives and reintegrate into their communities.
- **Participating** in one of the thousands of V-Day events around the world in 2008-2009 to raise awareness and funds for the women and girls of DRC.

<sup>1</sup> On behalf of UN Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict, a coalition of 12 UN Entities working to end sexual violence in conflict.

Together, we can demand that women and girls in the Democratic Republic of Congo are safe and empowered as community leaders.

Go to [www.stoprapeindrc.org](http://www.stoprapeindrc.org) and make a difference today. Also visit: V-Day: [www.vday.org](http://www.vday.org); UNICEF: [www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org), [www.unicefusa.org/vday](http://www.unicefusa.org/vday); UN Action: [www.stoprapenow.org](http://www.stoprapenow.org)



## POWER TO WOMEN AND GIRLS OF DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO





### Women and girls speak out

**“Towards midnight, I heard the crackle of gunfire all around the village...As I was trying to escape with my children, seven soldiers broke down the door to my house, threw me down to the ground and raped me. I lost consciousness till the next day...When I walk I have to hold my abdomen with my skirt, because it hurts so much. I cannot walk very far now and as the soldiers took everything, I can hardly manage to look after my children.”**

**– Pauline, Age 40, DRC**

**“They pushed open the door of my house and asked me for money. I didn’t have any, so they threw me to the ground and one soldier started to rape me. My 10 year old daughter was present, looking on. When they saw her, two soldiers took hold of her to rape her. I tried to stop them, but they shot me. I did all I could to stop them, to protect her, but they raped my little girl all the same.”**

**– Eliza, age unknown, DRC**

### About rape in DRC

Rape is used as a weapon of war to torture and humiliate women and girls in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). This systemic sexual violence not only destroys women and young girls but also entire families and communities. Survivors often suffer in silence, fearing stigma and ostracism. In addition to the severe psychological impact, many survivors are left with genital lesions, traumatic fistulae and other physical wounds, as well as unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections. Local support for survivors is hindered by a lack of resources. There is near total impunity for these crimes as perpetrators almost always walk free. V-Day and UNICEF, together with our UN and NGO partners, are working with communities to make a difference.

DRC has been called the worst humanitarian crisis in the world and the widest interstate war in modern African history. Fueled by the exploitation of the country’s rich natural resources by foreign and local armies and private enterprises, the war has directly affected the lives of 50 million Congolese. Since 1996, this conflict has caused more deaths than any war since World War II, either as a direct result of fighting or due to disease and malnutrition. Five million people have lost their lives as a result of the conflict. With your help, the women and children who bear the burden of this war can reclaim a life of safety and dignity.

**“Before I went to the Congo, I’d spent the past 10 years working on V-Day, the global movement to end violence against women and girls. I’d traveled to the rape mines of the world--places like Bosnia, Afghanistan and Haiti, where rape has been used as a tool of war. But nothing I ever experienced felt as ghastly, terrifying and complete as the sexual torture and attempted destruction of the female species here. The violence is a threat to all; young girls and village elders alike are at risk. It is not too strong to call this a femicide, to say that the future of the Congo’s women is in serious jeopardy.”**

**– Eve Ensler, Founder & Artistic Director, V-Day**

**“When you have spoken to these women and girls, and listened to their stories, you clearly understand just how devastating their circumstances are. They are exposed to grave danger simply by gathering wood or fetching water and live in constant fear in their own homes. They must be allowed to live in a secure environment.”**

**– Ann Veneman, Executive Director, UNICEF**