

Women's Initiatives launches gender justice film in Eastern DRC

Press Release

Bukavu, 25 March 2013

On 25 March, the Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice launched its gender justice film for Eastern DRC with a public screening in Bukavu attended by 70 representatives of the provincial government, the Congolese Army, the judiciary and human and women's rights organisations.

Speaking at the launch, Emérite Tabisha Mongelwa, Coordinator of *Action de Femmes pour le Développement* (AFD) and focal point of the Women's Initiatives in South Kivu, said: "The situation of rape and sexual violence in eastern DRC gives rise to more questions than answers. We are calling for the prosecution of perpetrators, the provision of reparations to victims and the establishment of peace as a priority."

The film, [*Our Voices Matter*](#), includes six powerful interviews with women victims/survivors of sexual and gender-based crimes from three provinces of Eastern DRC and portrays the large-scale impunity, limited access to medical services and economic support for victims/survivors and the multiplicity of perpetrators of sexual violence.

"Women we interviewed for the film identified several militia groups, including the LRA and the FDLR, as well as the national Congolese army as amongst the primary perpetrators," said Stella Yanda, Executive Secretary of *Initiatives Alpha*.

The public screening of the gender justice film followed a five-day documentation training workshop on sexual violence held last week in Bukavu by the Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice for 20 local women's rights and peace advocates from three provinces in Eastern DRC.

"The documentation training is to assist local organisations to be able to collect accurate and relevant information critical for the prosecution of gender-based crimes which will also support women to access justice," said Brigid Inder, Executive Director of the Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice.

The film, [*Our Voices Matter*](#), was co-produced by the Women's Initiatives and four of its local partners – *Action de Femmes pour le Développement*, *Centre d'éducation et de recherche pour les droits des femmes*, *Ligue pour la Solidarité Congolaise* and *Initiatives Alpha* – in collaboration with WITNESS.

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