



IT'S TIME: SURVIVORS' HEARING ON REPARATIONS

PRESS RELEASE

*****UNDER EMBARGO until Monday 22 November 2021, 8:30am – Kinshasa time*****

Over 20 Survivors of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence in Africa Meet in Kinshasa to Testify and Draft Statement seeking Reparations

Kinshasa, 22 November 2021 - The Conjugal Slavery in War Research Project, the Global Survivors Fund and local organisations from 12 African countries are organising an event entitled "**It's Time: Survivors' Hearing on Reparations**" in Kinshasa from 22 to 24 November 2021 in collaboration with the Panel for the Democratic Republic of Congo's chairmanship of the African Union.


This hearing aims to provide a platform for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence from around the world to share their testimonies, perceptions and reflections on the issue of reparations and their participation in the process leading to reparations. The hearing will also allow survivors, activists, experts and other stakeholders to draft the **Kinshasa Declaration on the Rights of Survivors of Conflict-related Sexual Violence to Participate in and Co-create Gender-based Reparations**.

On this occasion, Dr. Denis Mukwege declared: *"There is nothing more urgent today in our country the Democratic Republic of Congo and in others across this world, than to listen to survivors of conflict-related sexual violence. At this hearing, they cry out their despair, mourn their trauma and fight courageously for their right. The right to reparation is enshrined in law. Now we need to ensure that it is implemented in the best possible way by allowing them to decide what is right for them and to co-create the much-needed reparations programmes. This Hearing is a chance to hear them. Listening to them would be one of the most beautiful forms of recognition we can offer them."*

Several survivors also shared their personal experiences:

"We are survivors, everyday heroes and heroines. We want to be recognised as such. It is our right, as well as the right to education, to a decent life and to medical care to enable us to rebuild our lives. Reparations give us a glimmer of hope, they are a proof of justice. They allow us to soothe our hearts."

The hearing is expected to address a wide range of issues including the needs and expectations of survivors -, the participation of survivors in the design, implementation and monitoring of reparations, the role of civil society, survivor advocacy groups and the international community in ensuring survivors' rights are upheld, and the need for gender-sensitive and transformative reparations programmes.



Approximately 80 participants are expected to attend the survivors' hearing, including representatives of the international community, the United Nations' and African Union's agencies and bodies, diplomatic missions in the Democratic Republic of Congo, civil society organisations, experts and academics, as well as national and local authorities.

Survivors and partner organisations will be drafting and publicly presenting the Kinshasa Declaration in order to fill existing gaps in the right to reparation and to create an advocacy network to put reparations at the forefront of the agenda for current and future policymakers.

For more information, please consult the event **programme** and the **concept note** [here](#).

Country briefings on the status of and opportunities for reparations for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence in the [Democratic Republic of the Congo](#) and other countries around the world are also accessible on this [webpage](#).

Background

This event was initiated by CSiW with six local organisations in Africa, including Solidarité féminine pour la paix et le développement intégral (SOFEPADI) in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Women's Forum Sierra Leone (WFSL) Solidarité pour l'Épanouissement des Veuves et des Orphelins visant le Travail et l'Auto-promotion (SEVOTA) in Rwanda, Aiding Disadvantaged Women and Girls Association (ADWANGA) in Liberia, Development Research and Project Centre (DRPC) in Nigeria, and the Refugee Law Project (RLP) in Uganda, which invited the Global Survivors Fund to support and co-organise the event, thereby increasing the number of countries covered to include Guinea, Kenya, Mali, Central African Republic, South Sudan and Chad. This synergy also allowed the partners to continue their work on survivor participation and co-creation of transformative reparations in preparation for the publication of the Kinshasa Declaration on the Rights of Survivors of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence to Participate in and Co-create Gender-Sensitive Reparations.

For more information

The Global Survivors Fund ([GSF](#)) was established in October 2019 at the initiative of Dr Denis Mukwege, Ms Nadia Murad and survivors from around the world. GSF aims to improve access to reparations and other forms of redress for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence. It establishes interim reparations measures for survivors in countries where the authorities are unwilling or unable to take responsibility. GSF also provides support and technical assistance to governments wishing to establish reparations programmes, and advocates at national and international levels for reparations. A survivor-centred approach is at the heart of all GSF's work.

The collaborative research project "Conjugal Slavery in Wartime" aims to document cases of marital slavery and forced marriage in conflict situations, to place this information in a historical context and to influence international prosecutions for crimes against humanity as well as local reparation programmes for survivors of violence. The Project is run by an interdisciplinary team of researchers to study the social and legal meaning of marital slavery and servile marriage in wartime, pre-existing gender norms and the implications of gender violence in post-conflict situations.

For press enquiries and interviews about the event, please contact :

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On social networks, please use the following hashtags:

#SurvivorsHearing #SurvivorsFirst

We are present online at:

<https://www.globalsurvivorsfund.org/>

<https://twitter.com/glsurvivorsfund>

<https://www.facebook.com/Global-Survivors-Fund-109589947132130>

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/globalsurvivorsfund/>

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<http://csiw-ectg.org/fr/>

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