



# IT'S TIME: SURVIVORS' HEARING ON REPARATIONS

## **Survivors' Hearing for reparations for conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo 22-24 November 2021**

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1. **This is a survivors' declaration:** Female and male survivors of conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence from 12 African countries (Democratic Republic of Congo, Central African Republic, Chad, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, and Uganda) following discussions and advocacy in their home countries, convened in Kinshasa in solidarity to speak out and draft a declaration on their rights to reparation and participation – confronting stigma and refusing to accept the structures and norms that cause and sustain violations against them. Survivors were supported by civil society organizations that have walked with them the journey of change. Survivors stressed that male survivors and children of survivors have rarely been acknowledged and included in reparations processes. Survivors call for survivor-centred and gender sensitive reparations, justice, peace and guarantees of non-repetition.
2. **Survivors call for a broad definition of conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence and victims:**
  - a. Sexual violence includes not only rape but also sexual slavery, forced sterilisation, forced marriage, trafficking, imposed motherhood, forced pregnancy, sexual mutilations, among others;
  - b. Victims can be any person including men and women of any age, young and old, as well as their children, families and communities.
3. **Children** born to survivors are entitled to reparations in their own right. Reparations programs should acknowledge that sexual and gender-based violence can cause trans-generational harm.
4. **Survivors are building on the existing international, regional and national normative reparation frameworks** (e.g. African Union Transitional Justice policy 2019, UN Guiding Principles, UN Resolutions 1325 and 2467) and principles (Nairobi Declaration 2007).
5. **Survivors note the huge implementation gap and its devastating impacts:** despite the strong normative framework and efforts to set up domestic reparations programmes, survivors do not have access to reparations. This delay causes retraumatization, on-going and compounded violence, multiple vulnerabilities and complex cycles of violation.
6. **Reparations are urgent:** survivors noted the life-long health complications and disabilities and socio-economic impacts, and the importance of medical and psycho-social care, livelihood support, access to land and housing and education. Reparations ought to be sustainable, long-term, and adequately resourced. Reparations must not wait for end of the conflict and transitional justice processes to be in place.
7. **Access to reparations and other rights:** survivors expressed great concerns about discriminatory socio-cultural practices including stigmatizing taboo and beliefs about gender and sexuality and lack of identification documents, especially for their children, which hinders access to reparations and other rights such as health and education.

8. Reparation programs must **transform unequal structures** and norms that caused violations against survivors in the first place and must also not contribute to stigma. We ought to engage community, religious and traditional leaders to address these structures and stigma.
9. Survivors demand **active participation** in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all the reparation programs and institutions that impact their lives and livelihood. Survivor-centered, gender sensitive approaches require that survivors co-create reparations together with trusted networks, civil society organizations, state institutions and international bodies. Survivors call for the strengthening of their networks to allow their meaningful participation in reparations processes.
10. Survivors underscored their **resilience, leadership, solidarity and creativity** in claiming their right to reparation and shaping survivor-centered approaches to reparations. They insisted that reparations play an important role in acknowledging their humanity, status as rights holders and full and equal citizens of the state.

We humbly submit these principles to the Heads of State of the African Union. A final declaration will be presented at the Summit of the African Union in February 2022.

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Solidarité Féminine pour la Paix et le Développement Intégral (SOFEPADI), Democratic Republic of Congo ; Panzi Foundation, Democratic Republic of Congo ; Mouvement National des Survivantes de Violences Sexuelles en République démocratique du Congo ; Aiding Disadvantaged and Traumatized Women and Girls Association (ADWANGA), Liberia ; Association des Victimes, Parents et Amis du 28 Septembre 2009 (AVIPA), Guinea ; Grassroot Research Association, Nigeria ; development Research and Projects Center (dRPC), Nigeria ; Femmes Droit et Développement en Afrique (WILDAF), Mali ; Grace Agenda, Kenya ; MOSUCA, Central African Republic ; Plateforme des Associations de Victimes (AVCM-PCA), Central African Republic ; Remembering the Ones We Love (ROWL), South Sudan ; Solidarité pour l'Epanouissement des Veuves et des Orphelins visant le Travail et l'Auto Promotion (SEVOTA), Rwanda ; Women's Forum, Sierra Leone ; Refugee Law Project (RLP), Uganda ; Women's Advocacy Network (WAN), Uganda.

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