



Oral Statement by the International Bar Association

51st Session of the Human Rights Council

Enhanced ID on Report of HC and Experts on the Democratic Republic of Congo

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The Need to Address the Issue of Conflict Related Sexual Violence

The IBA's Human Rights Institute (the IBAHRI) welcomes this opportunity to engage in the enhanced interactive dialogue on the situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

The report of the team of experts emphasises that the DRC is experiencing conflicts of an exceptionally violent nature, involving instances of rape and sexual violence. Such conflict related sexual violence (CRSV) is nothing new in the DRC and requires urgent and comprehensive response. However, similarly, more needs to be done to address historic instances of CRSV in the DRC.

Despite some investigations and prosecutions, impunity for CRSV in the DRC is rampant. Victims of CRSV must be given the opportunity to tell their stories, have their stories documented and preserved as a part of the nation's history. This is why the IBAHRI will work with Dr Mukwege and the Panzi Foundation and other local actors on establishing a truth and reconciliation mechanism focusing on victims of CRSV in the DRC. The initiative will provide a platform for survivors to tell their stories and document the crimes. The initiative will further work with States and international actors to shed light on the issue of CRSV and help to strengthen the work on Dr Mukwege's Red Line Initiative.

The IBAHRI therefore calls on:

- this Council to continue closely monitoring CRSV in the DRC;
- States to support initiatives aimed at addressing and preventing CRSV in the DRC;
- States to proactively support initiatives on justice and accountability for CRSV in the DRC.

Thank you.

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