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Technical assistance and capacity-building

Written statement* submitted by Promotion du Développement Economique et Social - PDES, a non- governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[19 August 2021]

* Issued as received, in the language(s) of submission only.



Human rights violations against women and girls in the Democratic Republic of the Congo are a scourge for the country and for all African continent

According to a recent report by the Spanish Institute for Strategic Studies (IEEE)¹ in 2020, 43% of the men in the province of North Kivu in the Democratic Republic of the Congo belong to armed groups or the FARDC and are guilty of countless acts of human rights violations, including rape and sexual assault against women and girls.

Several NGOs present on the ground, such as Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)² and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)³, have noted that there is an average of forty cases per week of women victims of gynaecological pathologies and sexual abuse in the provinces of South Kivu, North Kivu and Ituri.

MSF recently stated in its latest report for July that it had treated an average of 11,000 victims in just 30 days, relaying a situation that is, to say the least, overwhelming and "below reality" according to the NGO.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo suffered two wars between 1996 and 2003 in which several foreign armies were involved and contributed in an inhumane manner to countless violations of the human rights of women and children, including sexual violence, practices very often linked to hierarchical orders and resulting from military strategies.

The country is currently ranked 149th out of 153 countries in the World Economic Forum's gender equality ranking,⁴ being the last African country to date, and the situation unfortunately does not seem to be improving.

In addition to the numerous health and medical pathologies linked to these rape practices (such as HIV, syphilis or hepatitis B), the NGO Solidarité féminine pour la paix et le développement intégral (Sofepadi),⁵ reports numerous cases of non-respect of voluntary interruption of pregnancy (IVG), including in cases of rape, on the part of health care providers, despite the fact that the Democratic Republic of the Congo has adhered to the Maputo Protocol, which contributes to adding major psychological trauma in many women

In view of these numerous violations of the most basic rights of women and children in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the impunity of the military, civilians and others guilty of such atrocities, we ask this Council to approach the authorities and civil society in the country in order to contribute actively and inclusively to the improvement of the living conditions of women in Central Africa.

¹ <http://www.ieee.esh/en/>.

² <https://www.msf.fr/actualites/rapport-annuel-de-medecins-sans-frontieres-2019>.

³ <https://www.un.org/fr/delegate/le-rapport-2020-d%E2%80%99ocha-est-disponible>.

⁴ http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2021.pdf.

⁵ <https://www.sofepadirc.org/>.