

# STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF DR MUGWEGE'S FIGHT, AFRICAN NGOs DEMAND JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN DRC.

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**Lome, September 15, 2020**

In the night of July 16 to 17, 2020, armed men have, in Kipupu, the South Kivu highlands, killed at least eighteen (18) persons. Noting that if such actions continue, it is because the authors are almost guaranteed to enjoy impunity, Dr. Denis MUKWEGE, Nobel Peace Prize has, in a tweet posted on July 23, 2020, denounced the massacre in the said town. He then recalled that the killings perpetrated in this area have caused, to this date, more than six (6) million of deaths and that it was necessary to establish a criminal court to judge the perpetrators of these acts . This position cost him and his relatives intimidation and death threats.

African organizations defending human rights, the signatories of this statement, are deeply concerned by this situation. Indeed, Dr MUKWEGE has been leading for more than 20 years a remarkable and important fight against violence towards women and impunity. Its commitment has enabled thousands of women, men and children in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), in Africa and in the world caught in the stranglehold and turmoil of violence and conflict, to find a voice to defend their causes.

Our organizations therefore condemn with the greatest firmness these intimidations and death threats which are not only directed at his person but against all the actors who identify with this fight and contribute to the advent of a respectful world of human rights and free from violence. They are also directed against all the victims whose actions of Dr. Denis MUKWEGE have and can help support.

In this regard, we rejoice about of the outcry provoked by this situation and that has been manifested through different support marches, urgent appeals and statements of various actors of civil society, the politicians, the United Nations and the international

community. We welcome the recent measures taken by MONUSCO to ensure the protection of Dr MUKWEGE and his team.

This situation also demonstrates the colossal challenge of the fight against impunity in the DRC and the desire of certain actors involved directly or indirectly in these serious human rights violations to extricate themselves from the action of justice and the principles of the rule of law.

We would therefore like to denounce these malicious practices, which are detrimental to civic space and human rights, and to recommend to

**- The State of the Democratic Republic of Congo :**

- to carry out investigations into the death threats and intimidation received by Dr Denis MUKWEGE and his relatives, to identify the responsibilities and to pronounce sanctions, in accordance with the rigor of the law ;
- Continue to support the actions of Dr Denis MUKWEGE in the fight against violence against women and impunity ;
- Address resolutely the fundamental problem of the demand for justice for victims of sexual violence.

**- The United Nations and the international community :**

- Continue to strengthen the security and protection of Dr Denis MUKWEGE and his relatives ;
- to support the actions of the State of the DRC to put a definitive end to the impunity enjoyed by perpetrators of sexual violence.

Without justice there can be no peace. We would therefore take this opportunity to have a solidarity thought for all those people who, in Africa and throughout the world, lose their lives, their freedom, their security, their relatives and goods for the benefit of their struggle for a fair, equitable and democratic society. Dr. Denis MUKWEGE situation should remind us that the " right " to defend the human rights must be defended more than ever.

## THE SIGNATORY ORGANIZATIONS:

- 1) Centre de Documentation et de Formation sur les Droits de l'Homme (CDFDH), Togo
- 2) West African Human Rights Defenders Network (WAHRDN), Togo
- 3) Coalition Togolaise des Défenseurs des droits de l'Homme (CTDDH), Togo
- 4) Cercle d'Initiatives Citoyennes pour le Challenge et le Changement en Afrique (CICCA), Togo
- 5) BATIR Le Togo,
- 6) Alternative Leadership Group (ALG), Togo
- 7) Centre pour les droits civils et politique (CCPR Centre), Bureau Afrique
- 8) Association Internationale des Médecins pour la promotion de l'Education et la Santé en Afrique (AIMES-AFRIQUE), Togo
- 9) Groupe de réflexion et d'action, Femme, Démocratie et Développement (GF2D), Togo
- 10) Action Chrétienne pour le Développement Intégral de l'Enfance et de la Jeune Fille (ACDIEF), Togo
- 11) Halsia International, Togo
- 12) Association Nos Années de Vie (ANAVIE), Togo
- 13) WeWomen, Togo
- 14) Changement Social Benin
- 15) Human Rights Priority (HRP), Benin
- 16) Novox Ivory Coast
- 17) Tournons la Page, Ivory Coast

- 18) Forum de la Société Civile de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (FOSCAO-CI), Ivory Coast
- 19) Coalition Ivoirienne pour la CPI, Ivory Coast
- 20) Réseau Equitas Ivory Coast
- 21) Centre d'Information et de Formation sur les Droits de l'Homme en Afrique (CIFDHA), Burkina Faso
- 22) SemFilms, Burkina Faso
- 23) Centre d'Information et de Documentation Citoyennes (CIDOC), Burkina Faso
- 24) Centre pour la Qualité du Droit et la Justice (CQDJ), Burkina Faso
- 25) Action for Human and Social Development (ACTHUSODE), Burkina Faso
- 26) Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa (IHRDA), The Gambia
- 27) Association Democratie101, Mali
- 28) Coalition Malienne pour la CPI/CMCPI, Mali
- 29) Rencontre Africaine pour La Défense des Droits de l'Homme (RADDHO), Senegal
- 30) Ligue Africaine des Blogueurs et Cyber Activistes pour la Démocratie (AFRICTIVISTES), Senegal
- 31) Dakar Ville Créative pour la Paix l'Abondance et les ODD, Senegal
- 32) Coalition Guinéenne pour la Cour Pénale Internationale (CGCPI), Conakry-Guinea
- 33) EMERGING SOLUTIONS AFRICA(ESA), Uganda

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