



DENUNCIATION OF SEX WORKERS' AND HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS IN THE FACE OF VIOLENCE AGAINST SEX WORKERS IN THE EAST OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

We, organizations and structures of sex workers working for the respect of human rights and the promotion of human rights, note with bitterness and anger an upsurge of acts of rape and sexual violence and even physical violence against women sex workers in the East of the Democratic Republic of Congo in general in the Province of South and North Kivu in particular.

In our previous statements, we alerted the Congolese government on the consequences of the UJANA¹ decision in September 2018; we also alerted both national and international opinion on the human rights abuses suffered by sex workers in the Democratic Republic of Congo during the 72nd CEDAW². More recently, we reported and denounced the rape and sexual violence suffered by three sex workers, one of whom died as a result of her injuries³.



In spite of our cries, our petitions, our alerts, we note that women sex workers are every day victims of people in uniform (soldier, policeman), without trial or judgment condemning these acts.

Two cases of rape, sexual and physical violence have just been committed against sex workers. The reasons are either the refusal of a sexual act without a condom; or the refusal of payment of the sexual act by the beneficiary.

The most recent case is that of April 27, 2021, when a FARDC (Congolese Armed Forces) commander ordered his elements to beat up a sex worker who refused to have sex with him without a condom in a mining area in BENDERA. This event occurred in the territory of FIZI at the border between the Province of Tanganyika and South Kivu photo next to it⁴.

If we have been able to strengthen the capacities of sex workers in the fight against STIs-HIV/AIDS and human rights in Eastern DR.Congo, this constitutes a strong action in the

¹ <https://www.nswp.org/fr/resource/nswp-global-and-regional-reports/republique-democratique-du-congo-rapport-alternatif-au>

² <https://www.ecoi.net/en/document/2012413.html>

³ <https://aswaalliance.org/congolese-sex-workers-face-death-rape-and-sexual-violence/>

⁴ <https://laprunellerdc.info/fizi-pour-avoir-exige-a-un-commandant-fardc-de-porter-un-preservatif-une-professionnelle-de-sexe-tabassee-par-des-militaires-a-bendera/>



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reduction of HIV prevalence, but also a promotion of the rights to health. But with these acts of human rights abuse, there is a high risk of STI/HIV/AIDS contamination, physical aggression, rape and sexual violence by the military.

And yet, until a few days ago, we explained to the health authorities the importance of making the PREP available to sex workers, but to date nothing has been done. However, in the face of such acts and behavior on the part of men in uniform, the PREP could provide security for the victim.

In spite of all the above, the sex workers members of UMANDE and the member organizations of the Congolese Alliance for Human Rights and the sex work project, ACODHU-TS, denounce with the greatest energy the violence and human rights abuses of which the sex workers are objects; and call for a consequent support to the actions of UMANDE and ACODHU-TS through their member organizations for the protection of the sex workers in the East of the Democratic Republic of Congo especially during this period of the pandemic of COVID-19.

To this end, we demand that the Congolese state

- To protect women and transgender sex workers working in the mining area and in the mining towns;
- Social, legal, but especially humanitarian assistance must be provided to the victims;

To UMANDE's partners

- To support urgent legal and medical assistance to women sex workers;
- To support the psychosocial accompaniment of the sex worker victim;
- To reinforce and accompany the activities of UMANDE.

To sex workers:

- To avoid dangerous, risky areas and to share information through social security network groups and mapping of risky areas;
- To share, disseminate and join the UMANDE WhatsApp group;
- To reach the nearest health post within 72 hours for holistic care.

FOR ORGANIZATIONS :

1. UMANDE/RD.Congo

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