

**Rape in the Congo: How Culture, Warfare, and American Politics**

**Impact Women in the DRC**

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General Honors

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**Introduction**

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is home to the deadliest conflict since WWII (Prendergast 2009: 1). Ethnic warfare in the eastern part of the country, combined with violent conflict over the DRC's abundance of mineral wealth, has caused the deaths of 5.4 million people, displaced over two million, and claimed 30,000 children as soldiers. In addition, according to the United Nations, the country has become the "rape capital of the world," claiming approximately 200,000 women as the victims of brutally inflicted rape (*British Broadcasting* 2010: 1). In this thesis, I will examine cultural perceptions of women and rape to illustrate the way in which rape has become such an effective weapon of warfare in the DRC. I will then provide some possible solutions for Congolese citizens to diminish the use and effectiveness of rape as a weapon and well as possible solutions that American citizens can pursue to help bring the conflict to a close.

In order to discuss the occurrence of rape in the DRC, it is crucial to have an understanding of the major theoretical frameworks already in use to gain a better understanding of the causes of rape in general. Many of these theories are in disagreement with one another. Evolutionary biologist Randy Thornhill and evolutionary anthropologist Craig T. Palmer (2000) believe that rape is biologically based, while cultural anthropologists, such as Maria-Barbara Watson-Franke (2002) and Peggy Reeves Sanday (2007), believe that rape increases in violent situations, citing many instances in which rape has been used as a weapon of warfare, as it was in the Rape of Nanking, Darfur, and Rwanda.

In this thesis, I will first discuss the major viewpoints on the occurrence of rape including rape as a product of biology, rape as a product of culture, and gang rape as a product of warfare. I will go on to discuss the specific conditions in the DRC that make the nation especially rape-prone and the impact that rape has had on the country in the past decade of fighting. In this

thesis, I will propose that heightened levels of violence in the DRC, coupled with cultural conceptions of women, are the causal factors underlying rape in the DRC.

I will discuss possible solutions to rape including an end to the conflict and changing the discourse on women's bodies. I will also examine the efforts of Congolese women and various health organizations to put an end to rape by changing the way it is viewed in Congolese culture.

I will additionally discuss the indirect involvement of America in this conflict and the ways that American citizens can utilize to help put an end to the fighting in the DRC from within our own country. I will discuss the successes and failures of these initiatives and propose additional solutions of my own.

### **Personal Statement**

Before beginning, I feel it appropriate to address a major obstacle to the academic discourse on rape, which is a lack of accurate reporting of the crime. While this thesis certainly seeks to use the most accurate data available, finding such data is difficult. Women in the DRC are not encouraged to speak out about what has happened to them. They live in a patriarchal society that has little respect for women outside of their roles as wives and mothers. They also live in a time of war in which the crimes of pillaging and murder take precedence over crimes committed against women. Due to chaotic conditions on the ground, few women are able to make it to hospitals or clinics that produce the medical records on rape that I rely on in my own research. That being said, rape reporting is not only inaccurate in the DRC, but across the globe and in the United States as well. As a woman and as a college student, I have often been concerned by a statistic that states 1 in 4 women will be raped in college (Sanday 1996:347). My personal experience suggests it may be higher. Four out of 5 of the college-aged women in my

life have been the victims of sexual violence; none of them have reported this. Rape is designed to shame and humiliate its victims into silence, and it often succeeds in doing so. As a result, it is very difficult to gauge the extent and severity of its occurrence. I hope that by bringing this issue to the forefront, we may eventually be able to create a world in which women are no longer ashamed of themselves for the crimes of men, are able to move forward, and to heal.

### **Rape as a Product of Biology**

In 2000, evolutionary biologist Randy Thornhill and evolutionary anthropologist Craig T. Palmer published a highly controversial book, *A Natural History of Rape*. Their primary claim was that rape was a biologically motivated crime caused by the natural male impulse to increase the likelihood of reproduction by increasing their number of sexual partners, including females that would not normally be willing to procreate with them (Thornhill and Palmer 2000: 53). Thornhill and Palmer argue that rape is one way in which sexual selection can be circumvented by males. They do not need to attract a female to reproduce with her. Instead, rape becomes a behavior that perpetuates reproduction, whether or not it is deemed desirable by females (2000: 53). They refer to this phenomenon as *mate-deprivation hypothesis*. Males with an inability to acquire the resources to attract a mate must use other methods to insure their reproduction. This is especially true of low-income men who rape low-income women in their direct environment (Thornhill and Palmer 2000: 67).

Thornhill and Palmer claim that this theory was supported by statistics on victims of rape, who were primarily reproductive-aged women. They state that reproductive-aged women were the mostly likely to fight back against rape perpetrators than younger or older women because they are more likely to become traumatized by instances of rape due to the way it strips them of

their right to mate selection during a time when they might actually reproduce (Thornhill and Palmer 2000: 85).

However, statistics on the average age of rape victims do not necessarily support Thornhill and Palmer's proposal. In their own work, they state that 29% of rape victims are actually females under the age of 11 and 6% were past menopause (Thornhill and Palmer 2000: 72). These percentages indicate that rape is not committed for solely reproductive purposes. Critics Jerry Coyne and Andrew Berry (2000) have also pointed out that the theory that younger and older victims are less likely to resist forced intercourse may be incorrect simply because younger and older women are less physically fit to fight back than women in their reproductive years. Very young women may not have an understanding of what is happening to them or whether or not it is even appropriate for them to resist (Coyne and Berry 2000).

### **Rape as a Product of Culture**

"The badge of [the] female is sexual subjugation to men," or so says Alan Sinfield of Sussex University (2005: 143). However, this only rings true in some parts of the world. With the biological theory of rape effectively called into question, the theory that culture may play a crucial role in the occurrence of rape comes to the forefront. Experts in the field of cultural anthropology argue that there is such a thing as a society in which the rate of rape is almost nonexistent and that rape is therefore culturally selected, rather than naturally selected. Several notable anthropological works have been produced on the differences between rape-free and rape-prone cultures and the underlying cultural ideals that lead to higher and lower instances of rape around the world. This section will discuss the works of scholars Maria-Barbara Watson-Franke (2002), Peggy Sanday (1981, 2003, 2007), and Rageswari Sunder Rajan (2005).

There is no such thing as a culture completely free of rape (Watson-Franke 2002: 600). However, there are societies in which instances of sexual violence are so low that they are essentially statistically insignificant and therefore deemed “rape-free.” Examples of such cultures include the Apache, Iroquois, Mosuo, Ashanti, and Trobriander peoples (Watson-Franke 2002: 601). Rape-free societies are unique. Not only do they have extremely low rates of sexual violence, but they also have hierarchies in which women play equal, if not even more important, roles than men (Watson-Franke 2002: 599).

Sanday specifies the common characteristics of a rape-free society: “In the more rape-free societies, gender relations were marked by respect for women as citizens, significant female power and authority, and the near absence of interpersonal aggression in social relations” (Sanday 2003: 337). Rape-free societies are typically matrilineal, which diminishes the “significance of man’s sexual persona and thus male heterosexual authority which mitigates the potential of male dominance and rape” (Watson-Franke 2002: 599). Several other characteristics follow these cultural expectations. Women in rape-free societies are involved in the local economy. In some cultures this is shown in the way in which women are represented; in a variety of agricultural communities, women are portrayed as objects of fertility tied to the success of the land. In Ashanti culture, women are linked with the Earth Goddess, “the receptacle of past and future generations as well as the source of food and water” (Sanday 1981: 61).

Women in rape-free societies also have strong relationships with their offspring. There is a heavy emphasis on the mother-child bond, regardless of gender. Therefore, as young men mature, they feel no obligation to prove their maturity by becoming independent of their mothers. Sanday argues that this means that boys do not learn that dominance over females is a

sign of adulthood, as they do in many patriarchal societies. Thus male sexual partners are not considered authority figures over women in rape-free societies, but are regarded as equals or even secondary figures to women and this seems to lessen the likelihood of rape since rape is about power (Sanday 2007:188).

In addition to enforcing social dynamics that are much more favorable to women's status than most other cultures, rape-free communities are also much harsher about the punishment of rape perpetrators on the rare occasions that rape does occur in the community. The reproductive abilities of women provide them with high status in their community that makes them inviolable, so rape is rarely considered and heavily punished when it does occur (Sanday 2003:60-61). An example of a rape-free culture, the Minangkabau people of West Sumatra, Indonesia do not recognize brute force as a legitimate means to power. Instead they believe that the weak should be nurtured and cared for while acts of violence and brute strength should be minimized in the culture (Sanday 2003: 355). The only memorable instance of rape in this community was perpetrated by Japanese soldiers during WWII (Sanday 2003: 356). In all of the recorded instances in which rape has occurred since WWII, the perpetrator has been tried, convicted, and jailed (Sanday 2003: 357). One on occasion, a man guilty of the gang rape of a learning disabled girl was so fearful of societal retribution that he committed suicide (Sanday 2003: 355).

Rape-prone societies are almost the opposite of rape-free societies. Sanday notes that "in the more rape-prone societies, social relations were marked by interpersonal violence in conjunction with an ideology of male dominance enforced through the control and subordination of women" (Sanday 2003: 337). Sanday surveyed a total of 95 tribal cultures and found that rape was prominent in 47% of them. In these cultures, rape is not a crime, but rather an "accepted practice used to punish women, as part of a ceremony, or is clearly an act of moderate to high

frequency carried out against their own women or women of other societies” (Sanday 1981: 9). Therefore, violence against women in rape-prone societies is not only an acceptable way to establish masculinity, but an encouraged one.

A notable scholar of gender relations in the developing world, Rajeswari Sunder Rajan argues that rape and the status of women are tied to the economic conditions of the society in which they live. She claims that these women undergo two major types of oppression in their cultural environment. The first takes place “everyday” in the form of “overwork, food deprivation, medical neglect, illiteracy, and child bearing” (Rajan 2005: 121). She also notes that women in poverty are also subject to routine sexual violation (Rajan 2005: 121). The second type of oppression women of the developing world experience, Rajan calls “exceptional.” This type of violence takes place during times of violent conflict. In these times, women are punished by enemy groups through sexual violation and, as a result, so are the men of their community (Rajan 2005: 121). Rajan also points out that the sexualization of women in these societies is often supported by the state, claiming that postcolonial states may sexualize women with the intention of restoring a sense of “morality” to the state and gaining control over the family unit (Rajan 2005: 126).

### **Women in Congolese Culture**

The DRC is a rape-prone society. Congolese culture is distinctly patriarchal, and women are notably subordinate to men in terms of leadership (both nationally and communally), marriage, domestic responsibilities, and safety from violence. Women were not granted the right to vote until 1967 and gained the right to run for office in 1970 (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2006: 4). Women today continue to face legal obstacles to land ownership and bank loans. Women



can only obtain land through inheritance from men, marriage to men, or by renting the property before purchasing it from a man, whereas men may purchase property as they please. This means that it is more difficult and less expected for women to acquire land than it is for men. In fact, it is illegal for a married woman to own land without the approval of her husband (Every Culture 2010: 10). As a result, only 25% of Congolese women are land owners although women constitute 60% of the country's agricultural workforce. Women are additionally considered incapable of handling their own finances, which means that most are unable to obtain a bank loan without the assistance of a husband or male relative (SIGI: 2).

Culturally, women in the DRC are viewed as having very little value beyond reproduction. As a result, women can achieve little to no status without marrying and reproducing. Congolese law states that the minimum age of marriage for a woman is 18, whereas for a man it is 21. However, 56% of Congolese women between the age of 15 and 19 are already married, divorced, or widowed, which is a strong indicator that women marry early (SIGI: 1). Men pay a high bride price to a woman's family in order to marry her. However, if the woman is not a virgin, he may return her to her family and demand a return on the bride price. On the morning after their wedding, women from both sides of the family will visit the couple at their bedside to confirm the loss of the wife's virginity by the sight of blood on the bed sheets (Every Culture 2010: 8).

In marital relationships, women are far inferior to their husbands. They are expected to serve their husbands and often their children first, resulting in malnutrition among many Congolese women (Every Culture 2010: 8). Power dynamics among married Congolese couples weigh heavily in the favor of the husband. Men are the legal heads of households and have the right to make decisions for both their wives and their children (SIGI: 1). This is in spite of the

fact that many women are actually the primary breadwinners of their households by making and selling handicrafts such as baskets and also through agricultural labor (Every Culture 2010: 16). In many smaller Congolese communities polygyny is practiced, especially among village chieftains, emphasizing the role of women as reproductive units above all else (Every Culture 2010: 16). Congolese law does include some prohibitions of violence against women, but none of those prohibitions include domestic violence. In fact, the law assumes that it is a man's right to chastise his wife if he deems it necessary and spousal rape is not considered to be a crime (SIGI: 2).

A woman who remains unmarried will be regarded as a prostitute, regardless of whether or not she has a respectable profession with which she supports herself. Thus, having no husband to protect her, she will be more vulnerable to rape, and the expectation is that she will engage in sexual activity with multiple men to whom she is not married (Every Culture 2010: 15). While marriage is not always an ideal path for Congolese women, the dangers of remaining unmarried are even higher, ensuring that women will almost always chose a life of marital abuse over a life of social vulnerability.<sup>1</sup>

### **Rape in Congolese Culture**

Cultural perceptions that women are primarily sexual and reproductive objects with few legal rights have affected the way rape is viewed in the DRC. If a woman is raped by an enemy individual or group, she is not viewed as a victim. Rather, she is viewed as being guilty of

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<sup>1</sup> Female genital surgery, a common practice in Sub-Saharan Africa, has an estimated prevalence rate of only 5% in the DRC (World Health Organization 1998). However, there are no existing laws explicitly outlawing the practice, implying that the Congolese government and people have no real objection to the practice. The majority of surgeries are performed in the Great Lakes Region, which is the area in which conflict and rape are also the most common (Gallo 2010: 111).

bringing shame upon her husband through infidelity and if she is raped by an ethnic enemy she is viewed as a traitor to her community for crossing strict ethnic boundaries and for engaging in a sexual act with a member of an enemy group. Women who have been raped are seen as tainted and cannot be accepted by their husbands or even potential husbands. A woman who has been raped will therefore be cast aside by her husband, parents, and entire community for having brought shame on them; she rarely has anyone to turn to assist her with either physical or psychological trauma. Rape victims are forced to leave their communities and to live in exile.

### **Rape as a Product of Genocidal or Ethnic Warfare**

While the conflict in the DRC has not been named genocide, it shares many of the elements of genocidal warfare. The official UN definition of genocide has five parts: 1) Killing members of the group; 2) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; 3) Deliberately inflicting on the group the conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; 4) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; 5) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group (Power 2002: 64). Since conflict in the DRC is ethnically motivated, it shares many commonalities with this definition. The part that is most prevalent in rape in the DRC is section 4) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group. In 1998, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda became the first court to find rape perpetrators guilty of committing genocide in violation of section 4 (United Nations 2005). Now, this element of the definition specifically includes torture, apartheid, sexual slavery, and rape itself (Rummel 2002). In addition, under Article 7, the International Criminal Court (ICC) will prosecute rape if it is intended to destroy a group in whole or even in part. This law includes rape of individual and multiple victims (Rummel 2002).

Conditions promoting rape in the DRC are not only due to culture, but also to the current conditions of ethnic warfare. Sanday (1981) notes that cultures with a tendency towards warfare and violence also have higher rates of rape. Therefore, no matter how rape-free or rape-prone a given society may have been prior to conflict, sexual violence increases during times of war. Joane Nagel claims that this is primarily because sex may be used as a weapon to violate the ethnic integrity of enemy groups, and it is not uncommon for warring factions to intentionally transgress “ethnosexual frontiers” and to disrupt national or tribal order (Donnan 2010: 124). That is to say that soldiers purposefully use sexual violence against women of enemy groups with the knowledge that they will not harm only the women they are violating, but entire communities as well. In these instances, rape is justified by perpetrators by thinking of their victims as the “other,” whether for political, religious, or ethnic reasons and thus believing that they should not be subject to the same protections as regular human beings (Sinfield 2005: 144).

The DRC is certainly not the first country to harbor rampant sexual violence. Rape has frequently been used as a method of ensuring that women in a specific group cannot reproduce within their own ethnicity. Three prime examples of this are the Rape of Nanking, the genocide of Darfur, and the Rwandan genocide, the latter two occurring literally on the borders of the DRC. In the Rape of Nanking of 1939, the Japanese used sex as a weapon to prevent the Chinese from successfully reproducing as a group. As many as 20,000-80,000 women were raped in northern China alone, but other victims have come forward from a variety of countries occupied by the Japanese during WWII across the Asian continent (Chang 1997).

Most often women were killed by groups of men traveling door-to-door, gang-raping their victims, and killing them by stabbing objects such as bayonets into their vaginas. Women were taken from their husbands and sometimes told that if they did not come quietly, their

families would be killed. They were forced to become sexual slaves for the pleasure of Japanese soldiers. Pregnant women that were taken into slavery could not expect the children they were carrying to live. Japanese soldiers “sometimes slashed open the bellies of pregnant women and ripped out the fetuses for amusement” (Chang 1997: 91). The occurrence of rape in Nanking is a clear indicator that rape was not perpetrated due to boredom or the sexual desires of Japanese soldiers. Instead, rape was meant to send a clear message of power and domination over the Chinese and others peoples of Asia.

In Sudan, rape has been perpetrated as a genocidal crime against tens of thousands of the Black Africans of Darfur by Arab Africans in the form of the Janjaweed militias (Totten 2009: 166). In this instance, rape was ethnically motivated in a manner similar to rape in the DRC as Arab perpetrators viewed themselves as superior to their black victims due to the comparative lightness of their skin, thus supporting Alan Sinfield’s theory that rape is justified by the perpetrator’s othering of their victims (Sinfield 2005: 144). It was additionally determined to be so clearly violently and racially motivated as to be deemed an act of genocide by the United States House of Representatives (Totten 2009: 149).

Rape was similarly used in the Rwandan genocide of 1994. In the course of three months, up to 500,000 women were raped and many of them were gang-raped. Rape was used as a weapon specifically intended to eradicate the ethnic Tutsis of the country by insuring they would birth children who were not of their same ethnicity (Mukagendo 2009: 4). As a result, an estimated 20,000 children were born to Tutsi mothers as a product of genocide (Mukagendo 2009: 2). To add to the burden of motherhood, many of the women who were sexually violated during Rwanda’s genocide were also infected with HIV/AIDS. UNICEF approximates that up to 70% of the women who were raped during this time were infected as a direct result of sexual

violence, and AIDS remains the highest cause of the death of rape victims from 1994 (Mukagendo 2009: 6). In this way rape was not only an act of violence, but also an act of genocide. Some of its perpetrators have even been tried for the crime (United Nations 2005).

The Rwandan example indicates that rape not only destroys the community at the time of its occurrence, but continues to tear it apart in the future. Offspring produced by rape will carry with them the stigma of belonging to an enemy group and will therefore divide the community into the next generation. In interviews conducted among the mothers of Rwandan children born of rape during the genocide of 1994, Jonathan Torgovnik (2009) illustrated the isolation of surviving rape victims. Most remain ostracized from their communities to this day (Mukagendo 2009: 4). Many of the women kept their children, thereby shouldering the burden of motherhood, but many of them insist that they cannot come to love their children (Mukagendo 2009: 2) and most of them were exiled from their families for deciding to keep them (Torgovnik 2009: 12). Over a decade after the Rwandan genocide took place, the wounds of genocide are still fresh for these mothers and their children, and their isolation serves as a constant reminder of the atrocities they endured (Mukagendo 2009: 2).

The Rwandan example is of particular importance to this thesis because it took place between two of the major ethnic groups that are now at war within the DRC (Prunier 1995). This has two major implications vital to the topic of this thesis. First, it means members of the Hutu Federation for the Democratic Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) and Tutsi Committee for the National Defense of the People (CNDP) are likely to engage in acts of sexual violence similar to those committed in 1994. On a more positive note, it may also be possible to utilize the precedent of reconciliation that was applied in Rwanda to bring reconciliation to the DRC.

## **Rape in the History of Congolese Warfare**

Although conditions of rape and violence in the DRC of today appear to be the result of current conflict, rape and sexual violence have a history in the country that dates back to long before the rape of some 200,000 women in this conflict. Since this is not the first occasion in which rape has played a crucial role in the DRC, it is worth examining the nature of prior conflicts to gain an understanding of the history and eventual acceptance of rape as part of warfare in the DRC.

Under colonial rule from 1885-1908, King Leopold the II of Belgium named the DRC the Congo Free State. Under his reign, Leopold enslaved, tortured, and murdered up to 10,000,000 Congolese citizens for their labor in the lucrative rubber trade (Morel 1906: 116; Dummet 2004: 1; Hoschild 2006: 225). The incredible death toll of this time was due to three main factors: 1) murder, 2) starvation, exhaustion, and exposure during slave labor, and 3) disease (Hoschild 2006:225-234). Women were often the victims of sexual violence as a form of punishment to the communities that failed to produce adequate amounts of rubber. For example, in May of 1904, the village of Nsongo Mboyo did not provide enough rubber to meet the satisfaction of the king. As a result, 83 people were killed, many women from the community were taken hostage and used as sex slaves, and male villagers were forced to commit acts of incest to save themselves and their families (Hunt 2008: 239).

From 1996-1997, the DRC underwent a civil war between the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda led by Laurent Kabila and the regime of President Mobutu Sese Seko, a corrupt and dictatorial leader. Just as in the DRC's current conflict, neighboring countries involved themselves in the fighting, predominantly forces from Rwanda and Uganda who chose to back Kabila. In addition, the conflict took place in the eastern Kivu regions of the

country, where it included tribal conflict over the region's gold mines (Turner 2007: 4, 9). The war resulted in the takeover of Mobutu's government and his subsequent exile (Turner 2007: 4-5). Here, for the second time, rape was employed as a military strategy in the punishment of enemy communities.

In 1998, conflict of a similar nature broke out again. However, this time fighting took place on an even larger scale. Rwandan and Ugandan forces and Congolese rebels calling themselves the Congolese Rally for Democracy (RCD) attempted a takeover of Kabila, who was accused of corruption just as Mobutu had been. Kabila was backed by three nations: Angola, Zimbabwe, and Namibia (Turner 2007: 5-6). In the early days of 2001, Kabila was assassinated, leaving his son, Joseph Kabila, to take over (Turner 2007: 7). Joseph Kabila oversaw the signing of the Lusaka Accords in 2002, which called for a ceasefire and the withdrawal of foreign troops. However, even after the accords were signed, Hutu and Tutsi forces remained in the region in violation of the agreement (Turner 2007: 8).

Combined, these two conflicts produced approximately 3,000 victims of rape, 52% of which were believed to be children or adolescents. Many of the women were the victims of gang rape, making it difficult for them to report who their rapists were (*New York Amsterdam News* 2002: 1). The scale of rape was so terrifying that many women and girls were forced to go into hiding to protect themselves (Turner 2007: 100).

The Congolese history of violence and rape helps us to understand how the continuance of rape as a product of warfare has impacted the Congolese worldview. In all three of the DRC's major historical conflicts, resources have played a strong role, making rubber, gold, and tantalum, the conflict mineral of today parallel to one another. They also all involved foreign military parties, which were responsible for a great deal of the violence in their quest to exploit



the natural wealth of the DRC for their own benefit (Turner 2007: 10). However, the most important element of all these conflicts in the examination of modern day rape is that they all used rape to as a method of ethnic punishment. This problem is clearly not isolated to the conflict between the DRC's currently warring factions, but is a practice that has become historically conditioned into methods of Congolese warfare.

### **Rape as Warfare in the DRC Today**

Rape in the DRC is of the same variety described in the UN definition of genocide and in Nagel's work (Donnan 2003). With over 200 different ethnic groups present in the country (Appendix A) and 5 different nationally recognized languages spoken (Appendix B), intergroup tension in the DRC already runs high. On top of that, this conflict has its roots in the ethnic hatred that played a role in the DRC's wars of 1996 and 1998 as well as the Rwandan genocide of 1994. Out of the five groups responsible for resource exploitation, violence, and rape in the DRC, three of them have their origins in neighboring countries. They include the Federation for the Democratic Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), an ethnic Hutu group originally from Rwanda; their opposition, the Congress for the National Defense of the People (CNDP), a Tutsi group initially sponsored by the Rwandan government to weed out the FDLR; local Mayi-Mayi, indigenous groups that have sprung up to defend local rights and resources; the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), a rebel militia group from Uganda; and the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC), the DRC's own military forces (Holocaust Memorial Museum 2010; Global Security 2006; Atama 2010; Kodi 2007). The FDLR and CNDP share a deep history of violent conflict dating back to pre-colonial Rwanda that came to a head most recently in the Rwandan genocide of 1994.

The DRC is vulnerable to external forces for two major reasons. First, a lack of government authority and power in the eastern part of the country means that the eastern border is easily permeable. In addition, the DRC is home to an abundance of resource wealth that can be used in most of the world's major technology products. Rebel groups are lured into the region by the prospect of exploiting such resources for funding their military operations (*British Broadcasting 2010: 1*).

As a result of the close proximity to a multitude of armed enemy groups, women are frequently the victims of strategic sexual violation and, as noted earlier, as many as 200,000 Congolese women have become the victims of rape. The extreme violence of these rapes indicates that the rapists are using it not only to bolster their own sense of masculinity and domination, but to insure the physical and psychological destruction of their victims. The following statement by Denis Mukwege of the Panzi Hospital in Bukavu, DRC indicates is not about sex *per se*, but about sexual violence that compromises not only the sexual integrity of its victims, but their well-being as a whole:

Rape with extreme violence, as evidenced in the DRC today, is implemented in three ways: (i) gang rape, usually by three or more men, leading to a high risk of injury; (ii) genital mutilation; and (iii) intentional transmission of sexually transmitted diseases such as chlamydia and HIV. Extremely violent rape has been documented in the report of 492 REV survivors in South Kivu: 57.3% of the women were convinced that the extreme violence and cruelty inflicted on them by armed forces was 'proof that there was a plan to destroy and exterminate the Congolese people or in any

case the communities that these women belonged to.’ Seventy-two percent of women reported that they were tortured during the rape itself (beaten, wounded with machetes, genitally mutilated/burned by drops of plastic melted by flame), and 12.4% had had objects inserted into their vaginas (sticks, bottles, green bananas, pestles coated in chili pepper, rifle barrels); some women, after being raped, were killed by shots fired into their vaginas. Many women interviewed also believed that the rapes are aimed at destroying women's identity by means of ‘ethnic cleansing,’ and that spreading HIV/AIDS and impregnating women are also deliberate acts. Such a strategy was prevalent in the Rwandan genocide (Mukwege 2009: 3).

As if rape alone is not damaging enough, perpetrators of rape in the DRC make the additional point of humiliating their victims by raping them with foreign objects and torturing them during rape as well. The ethnic cleansing component of the campaign against women is also apparent in the intentional disease transmission and impregnation of the women who become its victims.

Violence against women is not merely a side effect of intense conflict, but an intentional approach to ethnic elimination. A senior researcher on the Congo, Aneka Van Woudenberg of Human Rights Watch, explained,

I think what's different in Congo is the scale and the systematic nature of it, indeed, as well, the brutality. This is not rape because soldiers have got bored and have nothing to do. It is a way to ensure that communities accept the power and authority of that

particular armed group. This is about showing terror. This is about using it as a weapon of war (Gavshon 2008).

Women for Women (2009), an NGO which provides female survivors of war and other violent conflict with the means to move towards stability and self-sufficiency, has published the accounts of several women who have voluntarily disclosed their personal experiences with sexual violence. For example, Honorata Kizende was held captive as a sex slave and frequently publicly gang raped for almost a year. Once she was able to escape, she was outcast from her community and forced to seek refuge in isolation. She was found hiding in a friend's house and was gang-raped yet again. This time her daughter was forced to watch her (Women for Women 2009: 1).

Another victim, Lucienne M'Mayori, was raped and captured while staying with her sister-in-law. She was then kidnapped with a group of women from her community and brought into the bush where she was raped again, this time in front of her brother, who was forced to hold a flashlight and watch it happen. When he hid his face to keep from seeing it, he was taken away and killed. Lucienne was then taken as the wife of one of the Interhamwe and kept as a captive. When she was finally able to escape and return to her husband, he refused to stay married to her because she had been the wife of a rebel. He subsequently banished her both from their home and from the village (Women for Women 2009: 5-6).

Some women have given accounts of being beaten or even slashed with machetes at the time that they were being raped. Sifa M'Kitambala was raped while pregnant and slashed with a machete all over her body, including her genital area (Gavshon 2008: 1).

Most commonly, women are raped in groups rather than by themselves, meaning that the rate at which rape occurs is tragically high. In 2003, 200 girls and women were raped by

FARDC soldiers under the command of Jean-Pierre Bemba (Hunt 2008: 220). In the region of Kindu between March of 2003 and August of 2005, 24,520 rapes were recorded (Hunt 2008: 237). Then, between the October of 2005 and March of 2007, MONUC received reports of 500 women being raped in a total of 218 incidences (Appendix C). Fifty-four of these reports involved the rape of multiple women at one time (Taback 2011: 1). In 2010 in the South Kivu region of the DRC alone over 8,000 cases of rape were reported. On January 1<sup>st</sup> of the year, 179 women in the village of Fizi were raped by FARDC soldiers in retaliation against villagers who had killed a soldier after he drunkenly shot and wounded a civilian (AlJazeera 2010; ReliefWeb 2011). In August, 300 women were raped over the course of three days by FDLR and Mayi-Mayi perpetrators. Over the course of only four days in July of 2010, 200 women were raped in the rebel seizure of a Congolese village (AlJazeera 2010). Instances of mass rape are often strategically planned for military purposes. In the same month, the FDLR systematically raped 179 women in Luvungi over the course of four days, coincidentally the same number as in Fizi. The rebels fled the area when peace keeping forces entered it, but returned to continue raping immediately after they had left (AlJazeera 2010).<sup>2</sup>

The spread of rape has reached even UN MONUSCO troops who, like the FARDC, are charged with the protection of the Congolese people. In 2005, ABC News revealed an internal UN investigation of peacekeeping soldiers that had “raped Congolese women and girls, run prostitution and pedophile rings, and actively consorted with prostitutes” (Turner 2007: 161). The head of MONUSCO, Ambassador Swing did not step down from his post and the UN has

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<sup>2</sup> In a less orchestrated incident, prisoners making an escape from the DRC’s central prison in Goma raped 20 female prisoners (UNHCR, 2011). While this particular situation is not an example of planned ethnosexual violence, it was still an instance in which men used sexual violence in order to prove their masculinity to their fellow escapees. Both ethnic hatred and social constructs of masculinity play large roles in the social acceptance of rape.

been accused of failing to follow the situation up beyond a memo sent to headquarters and a brief investigation that was limited to only 16 cases (Turner 2007: 162). It appears that the discourse which emphatically describes the DRC as the “rape capital of the world” has permeated the mentality of peacekeeping forces who, themselves, have come to accept rape and exploitation of women in the DRC as a given.

The voices of Congolese women are already subjugated. Since they face difficulty reporting incidences of rape both within their own communities and to their state government, there is an even more urgent need for external forces, such as the UN, to provide an arena for women to speak. Since the UN itself is guilty of sexual violence, women in the DRC have even fewer places to turn for help.

### **What does rape do to victims?**

Rape victims often suffer from severe physical trauma, commonly involving multiple perpetrators and the insertion of blunt or sharp objects into the vagina, which results in fistulas, a condition of trauma to the vulva and vaginal walls. Many women lose parts of their reproductive organs due to violent rape, and it is not uncommon for women to suffer from STIs and unwanted pregnancy (Mukwege 2009: 3). From 1999 until August of 2006, the Panzi Hospital in Bukavu treated 7,519 confirmed rape survivors, which made up 76.9% of their total patient population. Out of those, some 4,683 or 62.3%, had gynecological problems (see Appendix D) (Mukwege 2009:3). In rapes occurring in the Kindu region of the country between 2003 and 2005, 6,000 women suffered from fistulas so severe they required surgical intervention. Out of those 6,000, 260 received surgical care, but will be required to spend the rest of their lives with a urine-collecting pouch attached to their bodies (Hunt 2008: 237). MONUC reported that 96.3% of

instances of rape between 2005 and 2007 involved physical abuse beyond sexual violation (Taback 2011: 1).

In addition to physical trauma, women suffer social exile and long-term psychological damage. As if the experience of violent rape is not difficult enough to handle, women are ostracized from their families and communities and have nowhere to go for either monetary support to pay for medical needs or for psychological healing. As a result, rape victims are potentially left to suffer life-threatening illness, severe psychological instability, and social exile (Mukwege 2009: 4; The Panzi Hospital of Bukavu 2005).

### **What does rape mean for communities?**

No matter the community, the act of rape is destructive to social ties. In a study on the nature of gang rapes in France, Rose George concluded that female solidarity often crumbles in the face of machismo and sexual assault (2005: 172). Women and girls alike can be isolated from their community when their sexual virtue is questioned. The mere act of calling a girl a slut effectively ostracizes her (George 2005: 171). In addition, the solidarity of the community, and even the state, is placed in jeopardy. One victim, Annabelle, was raped by four men on board a train with 200 passengers aboard the same carriage who did nothing (George 2005: 167). Another victim, Samira Bellil, found that her family showed her no support and that her female lawyer seemed disdainful and reluctant to truly help her win her court case (George 2005: 172). George makes it clear that cultural conceptions of the feminine and their linkages to sexual virtue prevent rape victims from reintegrating into their communities. Therefore, rape is an act of destruction that reaches beyond the victim and into the family and community as well.

In the DRC, the consequences of rape reach beyond the victim, into her family unit and

community. Since women are not viewed as rape victims, but rather as unfaithful or traitorous, women are accused by their families of willingly going to bed with their enemies and are subsequently disowned (The Panzi Hospital of Bukavu 2005). Mothers are forced to leave either with or without their children, neither of which is ideal for the structure of the family as this means that children will either be raised without their mothers or with a single mother with no access to resources typically provided by the family.

The lack of solidarity of the community in the face of rape is particularly devastating in the case of the DRC in which almost all of the women in a singular community may be violated at the same time, therefore having a much more far-reaching impact than the one it already has on the victims themselves. In the DRC, Mukwege claims, rape has single-handedly undermined the moral foundations of Congolese communities.

REV has devastating consequences: it damages social cohesion and the identity of the rape survivor, which is exacerbated when rape is committed in public, searing shame into the collective memory of the community. The long-term outcomes translate into the slow death of a population incapable of reproducing. The impact of military rape on the population as a whole has far-reaching effects that ultimately undermine national, political, and cultural solidarity; it confuses the loyalties of all survivors and the identities of subsequent generations: There is more than one way to commit genocide. One way is mass murder, killing individual members of a national, political or cultural group. Another is to destroy a group's identity by decimating cultural and social bonds.



Martial rape does both (Mukwege 2009: 3).

The impact on the collective memory of a community is of particular concern because it means that the event is not only divisive at the time of its occurrence, but for years to come. Shamed by the violation of their community, Congolese communities may never recuperate after an incident of mass rape. A prominent concern among Congolese human rights activists at the Panzi Hospital in Bukavu is that the humiliation of rape is causing Congolese communities to lose sight of their Christian values and thus disintegrate the morale of those communities (The Panzi Hospital of Bukavu 2005).

### **What does rape and the way it is committed mean for perpetrators?**

Maria Baaz and Maria Stern (2009) claim that rape perpetrated by members of the FARDC has two distinctly separate motivations. One motivation is lust and the other is hatred and rage. The first motivation is justified by the discourse of what it means to be a truly brave and masculine soldier among the FARDC. Soldiers believe they must embody highly masculine qualities in order to be able to perform in their position. In order to do so, they must not be distracted by their sexual urges and must be sure to relieve them promptly when they are struggling to maintain their focus. In addition, many soldiers suffer insecurities about their wives and families at home. Since Congolese culture states that it is the primary job of the husband to provide for and protect their families, many of the soldiers are afraid their wives will cheat on them or leave them for other men if they are presented with a superior option. Men therefore turn to women in their immediate environment to fulfill several roles, including sexual roles that would normally be fulfilled by a wife (Baaz 2009: 507).

Rapes motivated by sexual desire or lust are considered by soldiers to be only “natural.”

Rapes that are motivated by hatred and rage are considered to be evil. However, soldiers have found ways to justify both in their given conditions, claiming that they are beyond their own individual responsibility (Baaz 2009: 508).

Rape is almost always a crime of power and dominance. In fact, men have testified that they have raped women for the sense of power it provided them. Only a small handful of FARDC soldiers have reported that they have raped women because they became lonely or bored out in the bush (nnger4life, 2008). As noted earlier, rape is more motivated by ethnic hatred. One Mayi-Mayi soldier stated,

We were proud to downgrade [women we raped]. It was a matter of tribes, Mayi-Mayi against Hutus and the fighting was between tribes....Our leaders would force us to rape to humiliate them, our adversaries. We would come to the villages, burn the houses, and rape the women of our adversaries (Porteous 2010).

However, there are other unique and explicitly culturally justified reasons that soldiers in the DRC engage in acts of rape. Animist Mayi-Mayi believe in the magical power of their native land, and a magical potion that can make them invincible to bullets in battle, when it is taken before the rape of a woman. Therefore, rape is considered a necessary step to be taken in order to protect themselves and to defeat their enemies. Some of the soldiers are aware of the negative impact that this course of action would have if perpetrated against members of their own family and remain adamant that they would never allow such a thing to happen to one of their loved ones. However, others are of the belief that they would gladly accept the rape of a family member to further the cause of their troops (nnger4life 2008).

The common occurrence of gang rape necessitates an understanding of the causal factors

of that behavior in addition to cultural perceptions of women and conditions of poverty and warfare. Gang rape is prominent among male groups not only because it may be culturally accepted, but also because it is a method for group members to prove their masculinity to one another and to bond with other members of the group (Sanday 2007). In Sanday's book Fraternity Gang Rape, she concluded that gang rape is an act fueled by male bonding through sexual dominance and the dehumanization of women as sexual objects (2007).

Sanday conducted research on gang rape at an American university and concluded that gang rape was not an isolated practice, noting instances of gang rape at several universities within the United States, including Notre Dame, Brigham Young, the University of Colorado at Boulder, Morehead State University, and the University of Tennessee, Chattanooga (2007: 4). Gang rape was not only present in American universities, but had also taken place in several other countries. A particularly high profile case occurred at Waseda University in Tokyo, Japan. Members of a university club provided alcohol to young women with the intention of having them drink to a state of unconsciousness and then proceeded to gang rape them as a way of showing solidarity with the group. Any member who did not participate was no longer a member, illustrating the use of rape as a method of forming solidarity among members. In each instance of gang rape that Sanday studied, she claimed that rape was a method of proving both masculinity and loyalty to other members of the group (2007: 4).

Fraternities, while nonviolent, are groups in which group members must prove both loyalty and masculinity to other members of the group in order to maintain their membership. Many of the groups that rely on precepts of masculinity similar to that of a fraternity tend to be violent. Gangs and armed groups are examples. While there have been few studies on gang rape amongst armed groups, they share commonalities with the fraternities on which such studies

have been performed. Both groups rely heavily on a sense of group masculinity and solidarity. The key difference between armed groups and fraternities is that armed groups have a declared mission that may involve violence. Since rebel groups require bonding and a sense of masculinity to maintain their members and since the culture of the DRC paints women as sexual objects, it is easy to see why gang rape might be so common and it is. Results from the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative in 2010 indicated that 60% of women who have become the victims of rape in South Kivu, one of the two main regions involved overrun by the conflict, have been the victims of gang rape as opposed to rape perpetrated by only one man (*British Broadcasting* 2010: 2).

Rates of gang rape perpetrated by armed groups and other state actors, which included “collaborated attacks by other armed groups such as state military and police, civil leaders, and the Presidential Guard,” were higher than gang rapes perpetrated by any other type of group (Taback 2011: 2). A survey of violent incidences in the Kivu region (Appendix E) conducted between July and December of 2007 by the International Peace Information Service (IPIS) reported 7 incidents of rape, only one of which was perpetrated by a lone man; the rest were gang rapes (IPIS 2007). Baaz and Stern highlight the difference in masculinity in warfare compared to masculinity in everyday life. They claim that men and boys learn a different type of masculinity when indoctrinated into a violent lifestyle, such as that of Congolese soldiers. Therefore, they adopt heterosexual violent masculinity, which makes acts of violence more allowable and sometimes even embraced (2009: 499). These findings show not only that the rates of gang rape are higher than other types of rape in the DRC, but also higher amongst rebel armed groups than any other. This indicates that gang rape may be common among these groups because of their need for a sense of unity through violence and masculinity in order to uphold

their group identity.

### **How can Congolese citizens improve the conditions of women?**

In the immediate future, medical help is a major need of rape victims. Many women suffer from unwanted pregnancies, STIs, and fistulas. Some of these dire physical needs are being met. Although rape victims receive no financial support from their families, several medical facilities have opened to provide free medical care for women who have been physically traumatized. Panzi Hospital has done so for over 350 women. The mission of the hospital is to:

Improve the quality of medical care for the population; Reduce the maternal and infant death rate; Provide treatment of the survivor of sexual violence and surgical repair for women suffering from fistulas of the urogenital tract; Serve as a referral center for other health centers; Preach the gospel to the population receiving services at the center (The Panzi Hospital of Bukavu 2005).

A similar organization, HEAL Africa, provides comparable medical care to Panzi Hospital. The facility treats enormous numbers of women and claims to have hosted an average of over 400 women each month of this year alone (HEAL Africa 2011).

The DRC and the international community are finally beginning to take action to protect Congolese women. Although many of the cultural elements that make rape such a powerful weapon in the country are still in place, local court systems are beginning to prosecute rape perpetrators. The first of these trials took place in 2006 when Jean-Pierre Bemba was found guilty of leading FARDC soldiers under his command in the mass rape of 200 women and girls in the eastern Congolese village of Nsgono Mboyo. While this trial was historically

unprecedented for executing the prosecution against a Congolese rape perpetrator, it also took place three years after the occurrence of the actual crime itself and only three months before President Joseph Kabila's election to stay in power (Hunt 2008: 220). It is therefore likely that the trial was not held with the sincere intention of protecting rape victims or holding perpetrators accountable, but rather with the intention of maintaining political power. By 2007, 10 of the 11 men found guilty in the rape of Nsgongo Mboyo had fled Mbandanka prison and were not pursued by Kabila's government (Hunt 2008: 222).

In 2009, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1888 with the intention of preventing and responding to sexual violence in the DRC (Goldberg, 2010). For two years, no action was taken on this resolution, but in 2011 there is dramatic improvement. On February 21, Colonel Mutuare Daniel Kibibi was sentenced to 20 years in prison for personally raping 62 women and orchestrating the rapes of a grand total of 179 women by his men on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011. In addition to Kibibi's sentence, three of his officers received the same punishment and five others received lesser sentences. This case was the first rape trial to be held in the country, which came as a shock to the local population and set a new precedent for the legal ramifications of rape in the country (AlJazeera 2011). The effective use of the nation's court system provides hope for the future. The successful resolution of the Rwandan genocide of 1994 was highly dependent upon an effective court system so the institution of one in the DRC is likely to result in progress.

Rehabilitated soldiers have admitted to committing multiple rapes, and a few have stated that they feel differently about the morality of what they did to the women they raped now that they are no longer members of armed groups. One man in particular was convinced that the reason he had so willingly raped women was because he was desensitized to the impact of the

crime. He says that the only way to prevent rape from happening in the future is to sensitize men to the trauma felt by women (Porteous 2010). It will take quite a bit to accomplish this. In order to make more men sensitive to the trauma experienced by women, many of the cultural scripts regarding sexuality and gendered roles will need to change. Women will need to be given more power and respect before rape is viewed as a criminal act, and much discussion will be needed to establish that women are not voluntary participants in rape. In order to accomplish both of these goals, it is necessary to empower Congolese women to speak up and take control by returning to their communities and forcing them to listen.

The Congolese state capital of Kinshasa provides an example of an area in which this empowerment model has worked. Women living in an urban setting are more likely to be able to organize than women living in rural environments, which make up most of the eastern part of the country. Women in urban centers are both relieved of many of the domestic duties women are obligated to perform in rural settings and blessed with close proximity to one another, both of which make it easier for them to organize women's groups. As a result, oppression faced by rural Congolese women is diminished in the nation's state capital of Kinshasa (Every Culture 2010: 15).

Women in the eastern DRC are beginning to follow Kinshasa's model. In addition to providing physical protection and medical resources, places like the The Panzi Hospital of Bukavu 2005 Hospital and HEAL Africa also provide women with psychological rehabilitation, community support, and the opportunity to raise awareness of their plight. Panzi Hospital has a more individual and interpersonal approach to rehabilitation. They provide psychological assistance and spiritual counseling for women and also domestic reconciliation opportunities for married couples. Their goal is to convince husbands to remove blame from their wives and for

both husband and wife to reach a point of acceptance and forgiveness for their aggressors (The Panzi Hospital of Bukavu 2005). HEAL Africa, a hospital located in Goma, has also taken a communal approach to healing by providing safe houses in which victims live in self-sustaining communities and support one another. The organization additionally assists women with Fresh Start Kits that will help them to start small businesses and connect them with a safe house near their former community. Safe houses, run by Women Stand Up Together, bring other victims into the community and provide education, job training, connections to vocational and agricultural improvement, and counseling.

The members of Women Stand Up Together safe houses also form Solidarity Groups to network with the community and to network with old members as they move back into the community. These solidarity groups look after women long after they have left the safe house by providing them with micro-loans and continuing to stay in touch with them. In addition to providing direct support and resources for women, HEAL Africa is working to help rehabilitate entire communities that have suffered the ramifications of rape. They use a three-pillar approach to help communities to evaluate past events and to move forward in a compassionate way. These three pillars are:

Self-governance: All of the community based interventions work through the Nehemiah committees to empower them with the value-based approach and together define a new future for their communities.

Value-based approach: For HEAL Africa, the Bible defines the values. The HEAL Africa staff encourage village leaders to examine a) their sacred books, b) ancient cultural practices, c) proverbs, and d) the constitution. These guide the actions at the community level.



Whole-person health: HEAL Africa strives to respond to ill-health by examining the roots of the problem, as well as the symptoms, and involving the community at all levels in any implemented solutions (HEAL Africa 2011).

In HEAL Africa's community outreach, Biblical and traditional values are highly emphasized since they provide a framework that has already been accepted by Congolese culture in order to provide a healthy environment for the discourse on femininity and rape to change and for healing to take place (HEAL Africa 2011). This concept draws on the ideological framework used in the post-genocidal reconciliation efforts of Rwanda.

After the genocide of 1994, Rwandans realized that many of their traditional practices for dealing with conflict had been all but eradicated in the face of extreme violence. Previously, the Rwandan people had used a forum, called "Gacaca" to allow community members to air grievances and to resolve disputes. This forum was made impossible with the loss and disorganization of Rwandan leadership. Another traditional method was to air grievances and resolve disputes in a communal setting while drinking banana wine. However, most were hesitant to engage in this activity for fear of being poisoned out of revenge for the events of 1994 (Steward 2009: 177). The last method would have been to make blood pacts of brotherhood to reunite with one another, but with new awareness and fear of HIV/AIDS after it had been used as a weapon of genocide, this method was also discontinued (Steward 2009: 178).

As a result, new methods of reconciliation were necessary to bring communities back together. Professor Simon Gasibirege of the National University of Rwanda in Butare proposed and implemented The Personal Development Workshop (PDW) to fulfill this need. Workshops focused on reconciliation in small groups (Steward 2009: 178). They began by discussing the conflict as a whole. Then they moved on to discuss personal losses and personal feelings. Next,

participants were required to reflect upon forgiveness and to forgive those they felt accountable for the genocide (including themselves). Later, participants would reflect on the success of the workshop and how it had help them to begin healing the wounds of genocide (Steward 2009: 179). The PDW method was particularly successful when utilized in cooperation with the reinstatement of some traditional Gacaca courts. Courts were able to rely upon the PDWs to meet the psycho-social needs of the victims who required emotional reparations as well as legal ones (Steward 2009: 182). The success rate of these workshops has been so high that attendants almost unanimously agree that all Rwandans should have the opportunity to participate in them at some time (Steward 2009: 183).

The implementation of methods similar to PDWs, such as the Safe Houses run by Women Stand Up Together and HEAL Africa's community outreach appear to have some precedent for success. By focusing on new ways to allow victims of rape to come together in a place of healing and to air their grievances to their communities, these organizations are following a model similar to the PDW. In addition, a focus on forgiveness is of particular importance for rape victims who have been blamed for the crimes committed against them and in need of an opportunity to begin to process the events of their lives and to forgive themselves.

### **How can American citizens help?**

The DRC is not only a country plagued by ethnic violence and rape. It is also the African continent's most resource rich nation, producing well over \$139 million worth of minerals each year, including diamonds, gold, and a variety of minerals found in many major technology products known as the Three Ts. The Three Ts are tin, tantalum, and tungsten and all of them, primarily tantalum, are found in computers, iPods, cell phones, and a slew of other technology

products. The reserves that house these minerals in the DRC are highly susceptible to theft and, without government control in the eastern part of the county where most of the mines are located, there is little to keep rebel groups from exploiting the minerals to fund their operations (Prendergast 2009: 1).

Unfortunately, there are currently no methods in place to determine where the minerals that end in consumer products originate, so companies that produce products containing tantalum have no method of proving where that tantalum is coming from. Although there are huge alternative reserves of tantalum in Australia, the reserves of tantalum in the DRC are the largest in the world, meaning that there is a high likelihood that most of the tantalum used in consumer products is indirectly contributing to the conflict (Prendergast 2009: 1).

The movement to end conflict in the DRC has become a political battle backed by conscientious consumers. The Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, which was passed in July of 2010, will hold technology companies accountable by forcing them to publicize the source of their tantalum and other minerals potentially sourced from areas of conflict. While the bill will not force companies to source their tantalum from conflict-free mines, the hope is that it will create consumer pressure and that companies will begin to purchase their tantalum from conflict-free regions.

The bill took effect on April 1<sup>st</sup> of 2011, but prior to its enactment had already had a large impact on the purchasing practices of several major technology producers. Companies are making proactive efforts to ensure that they are purchasing conflict free minerals before the public becomes aware that they are doing anything otherwise. Rick Goss, a representative of the Information Technology Industry Council (ITIC), whose members include Apple, Dell, Hewett Packard, Nokia, and Sony stated, “We have pioneered these safe supply chain processes. There

are other sectors of the US industry which are not as well prepared to deal with this requirement as the hi-tech sector is” (Melik 2011: 3-4). China even preemptively purchased 80% of the tantalum supply of Brazil to insure that it would be able to resell the mineral to technology companies with a conflict-free guarantee. This dramatic shift away from the DRC as a mineral market may send the country into a financial crisis or it may spur a sincere effort to legitimize the mining process in the region (Montgomery 2010: 1).

Implementation of this bill may be met with resistance. It is anticipated that the DRC and neighboring Rwanda will struggle to meet the act’s requirements due to lacking infrastructure. Additional concerns have been voiced that the implementation of the bill may further the poverty of the Congolese people (Melik 2011: 4). However, this bill is one of few sincere efforts to remove funding from the rebel groups plaguing the DRC and will arguably have a greater positive impact on the Congolese people than the continued sale of illicit minerals, which primarily profit armed groups, rather than ordinary civilians. Its intention is not to prevent the Congolese people from profiting off of the mines, but rather to encourage legal mining processes in which it will be possible for them to do so.

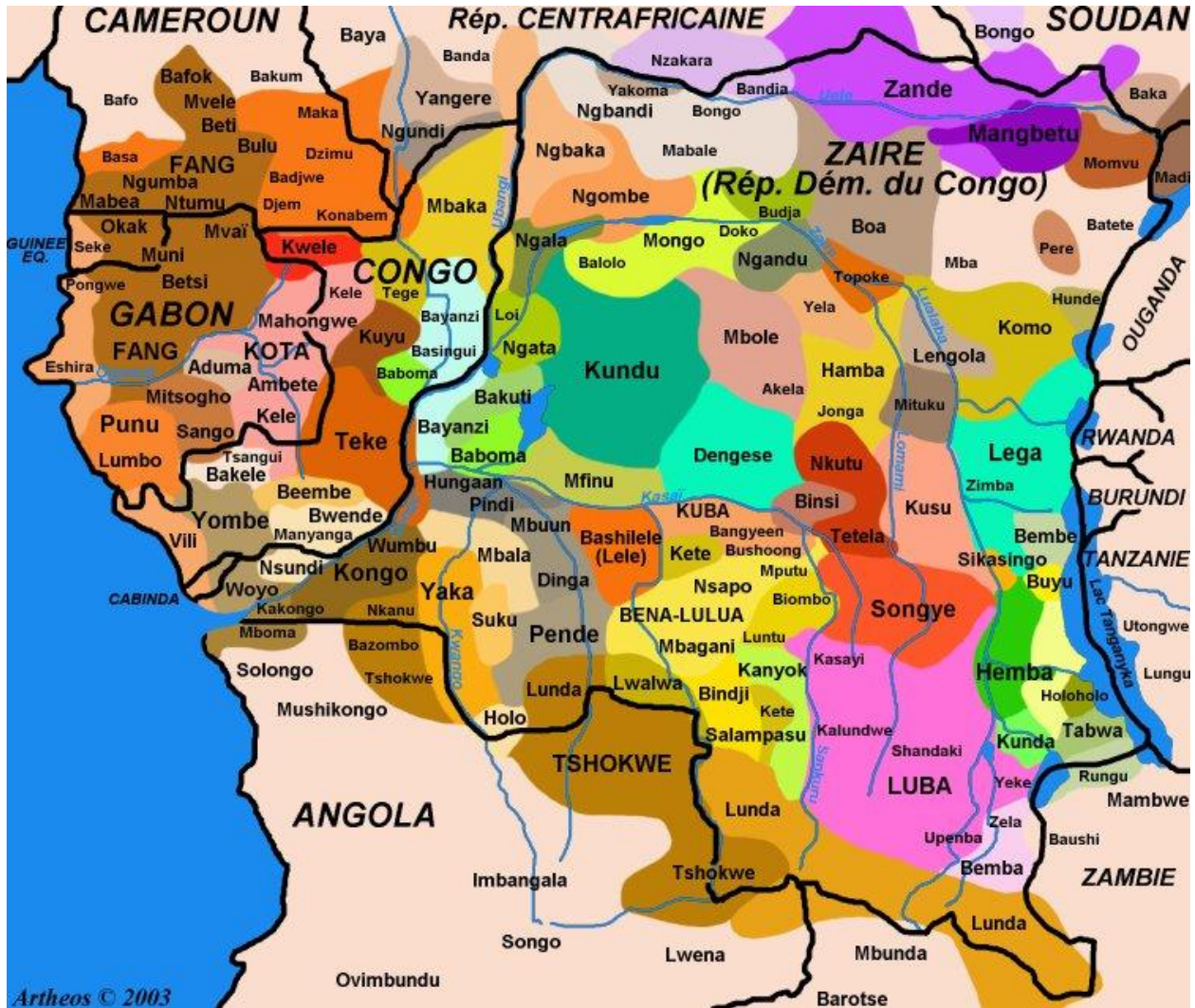
## **Conclusion**

Putting an end to the conflict in the DRC, and thus the war on Congolese women, will be a three step process requiring removal of funding from armed groups, demilitarization, and reconciliation. This process is multi-dimensional and complex. It will not be enough to simply boycott conflict minerals or to empower women to speak out. However, both of these elements in unison with an effective demilitarization strategy will help create a Congolese society that women can live in. The women of the DRC have made it clear that they are ready to take a stand

and to fight against the wrongdoings that have been committed against them. They are beginning to do so, but they will need the world's help to succeed.

Appendix A

An Ethnic Map of the DRC



(The Crackshot Crackpot 2011)

Appendix B

Languages of the Democratic Republic of the Congo



(Search.com)

## Appendix C

## MONUC Reports of Sexual Violence

**Table.** Reports of Sexual Violence to MONUC October 2005 Through March 2007<sup>a</sup>

	Perpetrator				Total
	State Military <sup>b</sup>	Armed Groups <sup>c</sup>	Police	Other State Actors <sup>d</sup>	
Reports, No. (%)	122 (56.0)	31 (14.2)	44 (20.2)	21 (9.6)	218
No. of abused women, total (median) [25th to 75th percentile]					
Eastern region	100 (1.0) [1-1]	157 (2.0) [1-3.5]	13 (1.0) [1-1]	22 (1.0) [1-3]	292 (1.0) [1-2]
Noneastern regions	69 (1.0) [1-1]	17 (8.5) [2-15]	71 (1.0) [1-1]	51 (1.0) [1-3]	208 (1.0) [1-1]
Total	169 (1.0) [1-1]	174 (2.0) [1-4]	84 (1.0) [1-1]	73 (1.0) [1-3]	500 (1.0) [1-2]
Events with multiple abused women, No. (%)					
Eastern region	10 (8.2)	16 (51.6)	2 (4.5)	5 (23.8)	33 (15.1)
Noneastern regions	9 (7.4)	2 (6.5)	6 (13.6)	4 (19.1)	21 (9.6)
Total	19 (15.6)	18 (58.1)	8 (18.2)	9 (42.9)	54 (24.8)
No. of perpetrators, total (median) [25th to 75th percentile]					
Eastern region	398 (1.0) [1-2]	118 (4.0) [3-10]	16 (1.0) [1-1]	44 (2.0) [1.5-10]	576 (2.0) [1-3]
Noneastern regions	115 (2.0) [1-3.5]	0 <sup>e</sup>	70 (2.0) [1-3]	25 (2.0) [1-5]	210 (2.0) [1-3]
Total	513 (1.0) [1-3]	118 (4.0) [3-10]	86 (1.0) [1-3]	69 (2.0) [1-10]	786 (2.0) [1-3]
Reports with multiple perpetrators, No. (%)					
Eastern region	27 (22.1)	16 (51.6)	1 (2.3)	6 (28.6)	50 (22.9)
Noneastern regions	18 (14.8)	0 <sup>e</sup>	17 (38.6)	4 (19.1)	39 (17.9)
Total	45 (36.9)	16 (51.6)	18 (40.9)	10 (47.6)	89 (73.0)
Perpetrator-to-abused ratio, median (25th to 75th percentile) <sup>f</sup>					
Eastern region	1.0 (1.0-2.0)	3.0 (2.2-5.0)	1.0 (1.0-1.0)	2.0 (1.0-3.3)	1.0 (1.0-3.0)
Noneastern regions	1.0 (1.0-3.0)	0 <sup>e</sup>	1.0 (1.0-3.0)	1.5 (1.0-2.5)	1.0 (1.0-3.0)
Total	1.0 (1.0-2.5)	3.0 (2.2-5.0)	1.0 (1.0-3.0)	2.0 (1.0-2.5)	1.0 (1.0-3.0)

Abbreviation: MONUC, United Nations Mission in DR Congo.

<sup>a</sup>All percentages use column totals as denominator.

<sup>b</sup>Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo, Garde Républicaine (Presidential Guard).

<sup>c</sup>Armed group, Rwandan Hutu, demobilized army units.

<sup>d</sup>Collaborated attacks by armed groups such as state military and police, civil leaders, and Garde Républicaine (Presidential Guard).

<sup>e</sup>Not all MONUC reports provided information on the number of perpetrators.

<sup>f</sup>Median value of the total number of perpetrators divided by the total number of persons abused per event.

(Taback 2011: 2)



## Appendix D

## Panzi Hospital Rape Patients: 1999-August 2006

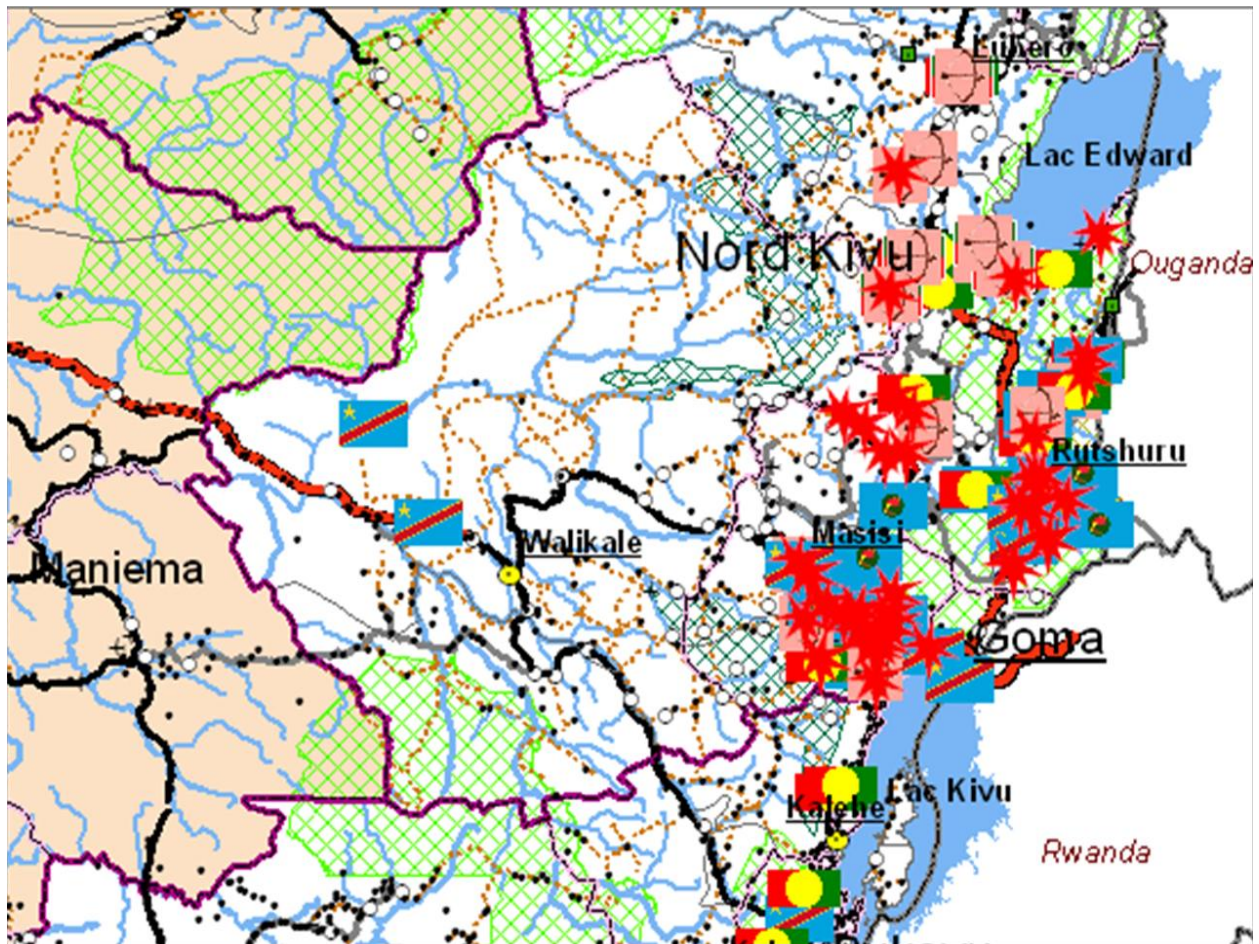
<b>Clinical Sequelae to Rape</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Gynaecological problems</b>		
With	4,683	62.3
Without	2,836	37.7
<b>Sexually transmitted infections</b>		
Vaginal trichomonas	—	8.9
Genital infection	—	21.2
Urinary infection	—	18.2
Syphilis	—	3.0
HIV	—	4.5
Candida infection	—	14.1
No infection	—	30.1
<b>Surgeries performed</b>		
Fistula	1,225	29.8
Other	2,890	70.2

doi:10.1371/journal.pmed.1000204.t001

(Mukwege 2003: 4)

Appendix E

IPIS Conflict Map: 2007



(IPIS 2007)

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