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Press release:

Launch of the new website: End the rape in Congo

<http://www.endcongorape.info>

Forty-eight women are raped every hour in the Congo. Alarmed by such statistics, a group of media colleagues launched a website shedding light on the horrors Congolese women experience daily. The team is composed of three Canadians and one German, all master's degree candidates at the University for Peace located in Costa Rica. These friends decided to combine their diverse talents in order to create a web platform and a media campaign to increase awareness of this painful subject.

The endcongorape.info site contains an array of helpful references as well as video and written messages from peace builders from Argentina, Canada, Finland, Iceland, Korea, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Puerto Rico, The Philippines, The United States, Swaziland and Thailand. This diverse body of engaged world citizens are all united in denouncing the rapes in Congo. Visitors to the website are encouraged to participate and submit relevant material on rape in the Congo in order to enrich the collection. Those desiring to contribute financially or volunteer can find a list of relevant organizations.

For the creators of the End Congo Rape campaign, Ingmar Zahorsky, Megan Herkert, Carl Kouri and Tatiana Philiptchenko, the staggering statistics and chilling personal accounts from women in the Congo gave them the impetus to act:

“We hope that in a small way this site will make a difference in raising awareness to improve the lives of women in Congo by inspiring people from all countries of the world to take action in whatever way they can.”

Background information on Congo:

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is located in Central Africa. Formerly a Belgian Colony, the francophone community reached independence in 1960. Despite its richness in natural resources, the DRC has faced conflict for many years. Following the First and Second Congo Wars in 1996 and 1998 respectively, a Peace Accord was reached in 2003, however, the fighting continues. According to a report issued in 2008 by the International Rescue Committee: the Second Congo War and its aftermath killed a shocking 5.4 million people. This conflict is the deadliest since World War II.

For women of the DRC, rape as a weapon of war is a real and daily danger. The *American Journal of Public Health* estimates that more than 400,000 women ages 15 to 49 were raped across all provinces of the DR Congo during a 12-month period in 2006 and 2007.

Website info:

Website address:

<http://www.endcongorape.info>

Download free pictures for your articles at:

<https://picasaweb.google.com/ingmarAnimation/FinalFrames?authkey=Gv1sRgCPS-8vas6NCgTQ&feat=flashalbum#5612902550820455698>

Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/EndCongoRape-wwwendcongorapeinfo/210200412352004>

Credits:

Web design, video and creative design: Ingmar Zahorsky (Germany and The Philippines)

Script and coordination: Megan Herkert (Montréal)

Script and photography: Tatiana Philiptchenko (Montréal)

Concept, Video: Carl Kouri (Montréal)