



Invitation to a Press Conference

medica mondiale demands more protection and security for women in Congo

Against the background that this year the Right Livelihood Award will be granted to Dr. Monika Hauser the woman's rights organisation *medica mondiale* wants to point out the situation of the women in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) by means of a Lobby-Event.

Cologne, November, 28th 2008. The day before the official ceremony of the Right Livelihood Award Monika Hauser and Lena Ag from the Swedish Women's Rights Organisation Kvinna till Kvinna would like to discuss together with the Congolese women's activist Immaculée Birhaheka of PAIF, Madeleine Rees from the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights and Charlotte Isaksson (enquired) Senior Gender Advisor of the Swedish Armed Forces and former Gender Advisor of EUFOR in the DRC on how to improve protection and security measures for women and women activists in the DR Congo.

Rape, enslavement, and murder on the female population happen on a daily basis within the DRC. In the context of the current armed conflict women have to face additional massive sexualised violence. Our colleagues in Congo inform us about cruel human rights violations, pillages, and countless rapes on a daily basis by both soldiers of the government as well as members of rebel troops.

Simultaneously, many women rights defenders, included our colleagues, are badly threatened because they engage themselves for women who have survived rape and other forms of violence. Nearly every day we are informed about assaults from different militias against female employees of Congolese women NGOs by our partner organisation. Only today we were informed that the employee of a Congolese women's organisation was badly injured by an armed group.

In order to secure their precious and important work, the Congolese government and the International Community have to find ways to protect these brave women and their families. In cases of acute life threat – as currently in the DRC – these women do need rapid financial and unbureaucratic support to protect themselves and their families, and, if necessary, to leave the country. Therefore, the requirements for female human rights defenders to receive a visa in situations of thread needs to be eased; institutions may show their solidarity by means of invitations.

After the welcome and introduction of the German Ambassador in Sweden, Dr. Joachim Rücker, the panellist will give short statements and will be available for discussions. Subsequently, the guests will have the possibility to visit a photo exhibition of Cornelia Suhan. Ms. Suhan visited the *medica mondiale* partner organisation PAIF (Promotion et Appui aux Initiatives Féminines) in Goma, East Congo, in September 2008. She will accompany the exhibition together with Ms. Birhaheka.

We hereby sincerely invite the press to this event. Subsequent to the speeches and the visit of the exhibition, the panellist will be available for interviews and press enquiries (approximately from 3pm on).

**On December, 7th
1pm to 4pm
Location: German-Swedish Chamber of Commerce
Valhallavägen 185,
SE-115 53 Stockholm
Seminar room**

We highly appreciate your participation!

Please inform us about your participation:

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medica mondiale is a German-based non-governmental organisation standing up for women and girls in war and crisis zones throughout the world since 15 years. *medica mondiale* supports women and girls having experienced sexualised violence, regardless of political, ethnic or religious affiliation. Along with gynaecological help and psycho-social support and *medica mondiale* provides political human rights work. www.medicamondiale.org