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Alysha Atma, Media Relations 503-901-8103 media@okongo.org

OkoNGO responds to the US Rhetoric that has continued in the face of untold Carnage inside DRC

OkoNGO strongly condemns the lack of action within the United Nation (UN) and its many allies to stop the massive bloodshed inside Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The reluctance to actively engage in protecting a country that is being ravaged daily by greed and bloodshed is disgraceful and atrocious.

Last week the newest release of numbers and circumstances were staggering; gang raping of nearly 200 women over a 21km stretch including 15 villages, over the course of five days. This occurred less than 20 miles from a United Nations (UN) Peacekeeping Base.

OkoNGO is responding with great sadness and ferocious anger, asking questions and expecting accountability on the part of the UN. *"I am troubled by the contention of mass rape in my country, that I love so much. Mass rape, what if it was in your backyard? In America, if one person is raped it becomes headline news and a massive manhunt. Why is the Democratic Republic of Congo different? Are we humans? Are we families? Are we people?"* asks Wemba-koy Okonda, President of OkoNGO

Last Year when Secretary of State Clinton visited DRC she Promised \$47 Million in Aid for the victims of Sexual Abuse. Fourteen Months and half a million deaths later, \$17 million dollars of the promised aid is reportedly still tied up in the bureaucratic process. Another source suggested the money that was promised by Madame Clinton was in fact already allocated by the Bush Administration. Why promise money that is already promised? This is a serious policy blunder!

There has been too much suffering that has occurred in Central Africa since 1994. It would be a callous act to discover that an unknown person for whatever reason has delayed these funds so that women in this region cannot receive the proper medical care that they deserve to begin the road to recovery.

"As a resident of America and a native of DRC, I am taken aback by the belief of acceptance when humanity is violated. The ability to stand aside and accept that our fellow humans are mutilated, violated and even worse, unrecognized. The value of humanity has been diminished, skewed by politics and greed. I ask, 'What is the United Nations? Does the UN have the ability to keep watch over the very basis of their cause? Politics have engulfed the UN counsel, and become a hindrance more than a value'" added Wemba-koy Okonda

Currently, the US Policy towards the DRC is seriously flawed and in danger of having a role in creating a Failed State. Public Law 109-456, Democratic Republic of the Congo Relief, Security and Democracy Promotion Act, deals with ensuring the stability of the DRC was signed into law by our previous president; this has still not been implemented. The recent Gang Rapes are a grave indicator of what ails the country, impunity runs rampant within the militias; mineral wealth and women are exploited for profit. The enforcement of Public Law 109-456 would be a beginning to restoring justice in the DRC.

It has become more troubling to learn that the UN peacekeeping officials knew rebels had entered the villages on July 30 – the same day these vicious attacks began. Reports indicate, that staff and humanitarian groups were warned to avoid the areas penetrated by rebels. Why did forces not get deployed to protect the residents?

"Where is the UN when my people are being subjected to mass rape, when the stronghold is but a few kilometers away. The UN's mission is to protect, not encourage; see me, find me, protect me; nothing less. I cannot see protection, have not felt protected, and see no outcome as my people in DRC still suffer.... How can we continue to trust them and rely on them to protect us? Enough is enough!" responds Wemba-koy Okonda

The UN Security Council is demanding peacekeeping forces in DRC *“take any and all possible measures to prevent”* the continued mass atrocities. The council is strongly demanding a comprehensive investigation into what happened, how it was allowed to happen and why peacekeeping forces were unaware for a week after the assaults.

Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, released a statement late last week in which she said *“The United States is deeply concerned by reports of the mass rape of women and children in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This horrific attack is yet another example of how sexual violence undermines efforts to achieve and maintain stability in areas torn by conflict but striving for peace.”*

The rhetoric heard by Washington does not match the actions, or lack of such to alleviate the suffering inside DRC. With the events occurring this week, and those occurring over the last decade inside the country; the lack of concrete action by the UN begs the question; when is enough, enough? When will the people of DRC be heard and why must they continue to needlessly suffer?