

World Vision response to new rape statistics in the Congo in study published by American Journal of Public Health

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World Vision's Senior Policy Advisory on Peacebuilding & Humanitarian Affairs Jonathan Papoulidis said:

“This situation continues to be heartbreaking. The eastern DRC is often called the rape capital of the world, not only because of the pervasiveness of domestic violence, but also because rape is used as a weapon of war by armed groups actively engaged in the conflict. World Vision is pleased to see this report is heightening attention to this epidemic of sexual and gender-based violence.”

“While we are closely reviewing the study's findings, World Vision has been a lead advocate in ringing the bell on sexual violence in the eastern DRC for more than a decade. We are helping to address this horrific crisis through our programs by supporting survivors—women, young girls, as well as boys and men.”

“World Vision calls for redoubled efforts to implement the UN-led strategy to combat sexual violence. The strategy is sweeping in its coverage and what we need now is to set concrete and achievable objectives to hasten collective efforts to make the eastern DRC safe. The resilience of the Congolese people, coupled with targeted international help to meet their basic rights to safety and security, means there is hope they can get on a permanent path to lasting peace and development.”

Background:

The *Comprehensive Strategy on Combating Sexual Violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo* integrates the efforts of the UN, the DRC government, international NGOs, and DRC civil society in strengthening prevention, protection and response to sexual violence. This includes efforts to strengthen the judicial system, rebuild infrastructure and social systems which assist in prevention, demobilizing armed groups, building better services for survivors.

What World Vision is doing in the eastern DRC:

World Vision has been a lead advocate to donor countries and to the UN, including briefing the Security Council and calling for greater attention to this appalling situation. Through our own programming, and in partnership with the Government of Canada, we have worked to bring hope in this troubling part of the world.

World Vision DRC is the co-lead of the Protection Cluster for training in International Humanitarian Law and this work is part of the North Kivu Protection Cluster Strategy.

Since 2007 World Vision has trained more than 600 military personnel on the fundamentals of human rights and humanitarian law and the protection of civilians in conflict.

World Vision works has worked in the eastern DRC since 1994, principally in North Kivu, with projects in Beni, Rutshuru, Masisi territories.

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