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Series
Women's
rights and
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equality in
focus

Taking action against sexual violence in the Democratic

Republic of the Congo - in pictures

Women in DRC are experiencing increasing levels of sexual violence, often as a result of conflict, but support networks are being established and the perpetrators are beginning to be brought to justice, including ranking officers of the army





Photograph: Pete Muller

Friday 13 June 2014 14.42 BST

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A multimedia exhibition at the Ending Sexual Violence in Conflict summit this week showed the important work of grassroots women activists in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo in responding to sexual violence in conflict.

It was produced by the

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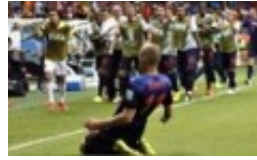
International Campaign to Stop Rape and [Gender Violence](#) in Conflict. The award-winning photographer Pete Muller and filmmakers travelled to DRC to capture the work of the activists in pictures and video. The exhibit will be available online in September.



Photograph:
Pete Muller

A survivor of a mass rape campaign in the town of Fizi, DRC. Her identity has been

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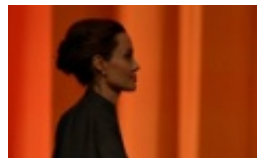
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Angelina Jolie made dame in thousand-strong Queen's birthday honours list

concealed
for security
reasons and
because
rape carries
strong social
stigma. She
was among
nearly 50
women who
were raped
by
Congoleses
soldiers on
the night of
1 January
2011.
Eleven
soldiers
from the
accused unit
were tried in
a military
tribunal for
crimes
against
humanity
and rape.

In
discussing
her decision
to testify
against the
soldiers who
raped her,
another
survivor

said: 'Yes,
it's
dangerous,
but
everything
is
dangerous.
If we go to
the fields to
get food, we
get raped. If
we go to the
river to get
water, we
get raped.
Now we get
raped in our
own homes'



📷 Photograph: Pete Muller

The soldiers
accused of
rape and
crimes
against
humanity
slouch in
their chairs
in the hot,
makeshift

courtroom
during the
military
tribunal in
Baraka in
February
2011



📷 Photograph: Pete Muller

Colonel
Kebibi
Mutware
leaves the
military
tribunal in
Baraka, in
February
2011, after
being
convicted of
crimes
against
humanity.
Ten of the
11 accused
soldiers were
found guilty
of crimes
against
humanity,

including
Mutware,
who was
sentenced to
20 years in
prison.
Kebibi is the
highest
ranking
Congoese
army officer
to have been
convicted of
crimes
against
humanity



📷 Photograph: Pete Muller

Children
watch a rape
trial that is
open to the
public, in
the village
of Mangina
in DRC's
eastern Beni
territory in
March 2014



📷 Photograph: Pete Muller

A police officer stands guard over community members accused of robbery, rape and other crimes during the tribunal in Mangina



📷 Photograph: Pete Muller

During the tribunal in Mangina, a woman points to a man she

accuses of raping her



📷 Photograph: Pete Muller

Adeline Nsimire (third left), director of the organisation SAMWAKI, works with a group of sexual violence survivors as they plant crops in Walungu outside Bukavu, near the border with Rwanda in February this year.

[SAMWAKI](#)
(Sauti ya Mwanamke)

Kijijini),
means 'A
Voice to
Rural
Women' in
Swahili. It
provides
access to
information
and training
for rural
women
through
community
radio. The
group has
formed
listeners'
clubs,
allowing
women to
broaden
their
knowledge
and capacity
on
everything
from health
to
farming – an
d provides
women a
safe space
for sharing
their
experiences
of sexual
violence



📷 Photograph: Pete Muller

Kahindo Siherya Alphonsine (centre), an activist from [SOFEPADI](#), meets with women inside a makeshift sewing studio in the village of Mangango, in North Kivu, in March 2014.

In many cases, survivors of rape are stigmatised and rejected by their families – leaving them unable to care for

their
children.
SOFEPADI
initiated
sewing
workshops
as part of its
support for
survivors of
sexual
violence,
providing
women with
a positive
space to
learn a new
trade while
creating a
new
community



📷 Photograph: Pete Muller

Young girls
gather to
bathe and
wash
clothes at a
river near
Beni.

[Women](#) and

girls often have to travel long distances to collect water, and find themselves vulnerable to attack by rebels, soldiers or other armed men. This area of DRC's North Kivu province is the site of ongoing battles between Congolese forces and rebels, known as ADF-NALU. Many of the inhabitants in the region were displaced late last year due to the fighting, with local women's groups

reporting an increase in sexual violence



📷 Photograph: Pete Muller

Women and children from Beni line up at a grinding mill at dusk. A 2010 report by Oxfam International and the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative found that rape perpetrated by civilians had dramatically increased and there was a 'normalisation' of sexual

violence within communitie s



Photograph:
Pete Muller

A woman survivor and her family outside their family home in Beni, in March 2014. The young daughter (second right) is also a survivor of rape. SOFEPADI has provided them with a range of support services



📷 Photograph: Pete Muller

Chouchou Namegabe conducts journalism training at a community centre in Walungu, outside Bukavu, in February 2014. A young journalist, Namegabe was inspired to provide opportunities for other women to be a voice for survivors of sexual violence and founded AFEM (L'Association des Femmes des

Médias du Sud Kivu). The group works to increase women's representation in the media



📷 Photograph: Pete Muller

Women journalists prepare the script for a radio programme, which aired on International Women's Day this year, at a community centre in Walungu. Community radio is widely used throughout

eastern DRC
to share
information
about
women's
health,
rights and
violence –
breaking the
stigma
associated
with rape



📷 Photograph: Pete Muller

Residents
gather
inside a
sewing
studio in
Mangango,
in March
2014.
SOFEPADI
initiated the
sewing
workshops
to provide
psychosocial
and
economic

support in
an area of
North Kivu
where
sexual
violence had
been on the
rise due to
armed
conflict
between the
Congolese
forces and
rebels



📷 Women of Congo by Pete Muller

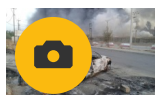
Women
gather in
Bunia, in
DRC's north-
eastern
Orientale
Province, in
February
2014 at a
meeting of
women's
representati
ves from the
local and

provincial government s, police and justice sector and grassroots organisations. The meeting aims to make women's voices heard by the country's authorities

Tags: [Ending sexual violence in conflict summit](#), [Conflict and development](#), [Rape](#), [Democratic Republic of the Congo](#), [Africa](#), more...



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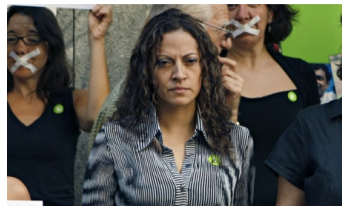
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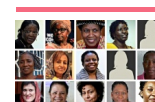
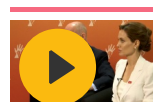
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