

UN Watch Statement
Human Rights Council, 27th Session
UPR: Democratic Republic of the Congo
18 September 2014

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Thank you, Mr. President.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo's recent UPR, concern was repeatedly expressed over the prevalence of grave violations against the fundamental rights and freedoms of its citizens.

A great deal of the criticisms addressed the severe and large-scale sexual and gender-based violence occurring in the country. At the time of the report, around 400,000 women and men had been victims of sexual violence. UNFPA reported that over 65% of rape victims of the past 15 years were children.

Despite calls for change by the international community, the UN Refugee Agency reports an alarming rise in the systematic rape of the DRC's citizens. The UN Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict called the DRC the "rape capital of the world."

In addition, UN Watch is gravely concerned over the lack of progress in combating violence against civil society activists and journalists. We regret that the DRC has rejected key UPR recommendations in this regard. In July of this year, we saw the beating of three TV journalists covering a protest in Kinshasa by Congolese police.

It is human rights defenders who aid the victims in the DRC, and yet it is frequently Government authorities who have sought to silence them by barbaric means. Human rights activists are frequently subjected to death threats, arbitrary arrest, rape, beatings and in some cases torture or even killing by government agents or armed groups.

The magnitude of systematic sexual violence against citizens in the DRC is deplorable, as is the violence perpetrated against journalists and human rights workers. The Council must defend the rights of these brutalized victims, and uphold the principles contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Thank you, Mr. President.