

## UK Foreign Secretary & Angelina Jolie attend screening of gender justice film

### Press Release

**Goma, 26 March 2013**

Today, the UK Foreign Secretary, William Hague, and Angelina Jolie met with the Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice and some of its DRC partners for a special screening of their gender justice film, [Our Voices Matter](#).

In response to the film, UNHCR Special Envoy Angelina Jolie said: "We came to the DRC to highlight issues of sexual violence and you have made our work easier - the film says it all. It is often difficult for women to speak about these types of experiences and it is incredible that they trusted the organisation and your partners to tell their stories - the film was very moving. This is just the beginning of our collaboration on these issues."

The UK Foreign Secretary, William Hague, congratulated the Women's Initiatives on its work and said that "what you are doing to promote accountability for sexual violence is very important, and I am happy to announce funding for the Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice of GBP 850,000 (US\$1.3 million) over the next three years to further support your work."

"The priority being given to this issue by the UK government is helping to mobilise a strategic response to reduce the high levels of impunity for crimes of sexual violence common in situations of armed conflict such as in Eastern DRC," said Brigid Inder, Executive Director of the Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice.

"This funding will allow us to increase our local programmes in at least five countries including the documentation of sexual violence; expansion of the Transit House project assisting victims to access medical care including surgeries for fistula repair; monitoring of local courts regarding domestic prosecutions of conflict-related sexual violence; and increasing our advocacy for justice for women within all of the Situations under investigation by the International Criminal Court," Inder said.

Following the screening, the Women's Initiatives and representatives of its 147 DRC members and partners met with the Foreign Secretary and Ms Jolie where they described some of the reactions from authorities to the film and their advocacy for gender justice.

"The Minister of Justice was very supportive. She said she will use the film to raise the awareness of the Congolese military starting with the senior commanders. This is a good idea, but much more needs to be done. We need better implementation of the Sexual Violence Act and the National Strategy," said Stella Yanda, Executive Secretary, *Initiatives Alpha*.

"There is a big contradiction between the policies and the laws and the reality in our communities, especially in rural areas," said Emerite Tabisha Mongelwa, Coordinator, *Actions de Femmes pour le Développement*.

During the meeting, other factors in relation to gender-based crimes were also highlighted including: the failure to provide compensation to victims of sexual violence despite court orders; the large number of local and foreign militias present in the DRC which requires a regional security response; the diminished legal infrastructure and a grossly insufficient number of Courts; and the high level of militarisation in the east which increases the commission of sexual and gender-based violence.

**Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice**



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The Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice is an international women's human rights organisation that advocates for gender justice through the International Criminal Court (ICC) and through domestic mechanisms, including peace negotiations and justice processes, and works with women most affected by the conflict situations under investigation by the ICC. The Women's Initiatives has extensive country-based programmes and legal monitoring initiatives in all countries under investigation by the ICC. The Women's Initiatives has offices in Cairo (Egypt), Kampala and Kitgum (Uganda) and The Hague (the Netherlands) and over 6,000 members and partners, individuals and organisations, who are grassroots women's rights and peace advocates from armed conflict or post conflict situations, victims/survivors groups, networks of women living in IDP camps, women's rights and development organisations, transitional justice networks, human rights organisations, parliamentarians, and members of the security sector.

*Our Voices Matter* is available on our website: <http://www.iccwomen.org/videos/index.php>

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