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## DISCLAIMER

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## COI QUERY RESPONSE

### DRC – TREATMENT OF WOMEN

In February 2025 the *Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights* comments on: “...deep-rooted patriarchal attitudes and gender stereotypes within society that lead to systematic gender inequality, discrimination and exclusion of women and girls, resulting in structural and systematic unequal access to opportunities, including in relation to economic empowerment, education, health services, and representation in decision-making, leading to genderbased violence against women, including conflict-related violence.”<sup>1</sup>

A report issued in February 2025 by the *United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women* states that: “Various reports from the United Nations and witness statements from survivors of sexual conflict showed that thousands of women and girls had been victims of rape, mutilation and other types of inhumane violence. These atrocities not only affected displaced persons, but were also taking place at homes, schools and in prisons.”<sup>2</sup>

*United Nations Women* in February 2025 states that: “Women and girls in the DRC currently face increased levels of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), with reports of rape and exploitation becoming tragically routine.”<sup>3</sup>

A report issued in November 2024 by the *United Nations Security Council* states that: “Continuous fighting in the eastern provinces heightened the vulnerability of women and girls to gender-based violence and conflict-related sexual violence, with potential cases of trafficking in persons for the purpose of sexual exploitation in and around sites for internally displaced persons...”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (24 February 2025) Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women: Concluding observations on the report of the Democratic Republic of the Congo submitted under the exceptional reporting procedure (Advance unedited version), p.3

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (5 February 2025) Commend the DRC on Steps Taken to Provide Healthcare to Victims of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence, Ask about Reparations for Victims and the Protection of Women in Nature Reserves, p.3).

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Women (4 February 2025) Press briefing by UN Women on the situation of women and girls in the Democratic Republic of Congo

<sup>4</sup> United Nations Security Council (29 November 2024) United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Report of the Secretary-General, p.8

In October 2024 *InterAction* states that: “The escalation of violence in the...DRC has resulted in the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people in 2024...During this time women and girls have been left particularly vulnerable to gender based violence...due to the presence of armed actors, a lack of basic resources, and unsafe living conditions.”<sup>5</sup>

*Amnesty International* in September 2024 states that: “Internally displaced persons (IDPs), particularly women and girls, disproportionately bear the brunt of...conflict. IDP camps are rife with sexual violence, exacerbated by poor security conditions and insufficient humanitarian aid.”<sup>6</sup>

In September 2024 *Medecins Sans Frontiers* states that: “Sexual violence is a major medical and humanitarian emergency in DRC.”<sup>7</sup>

In September 2024 the *United Nations Human Rights Council* notes that: “During the reporting period, the Joint Office documented 698 victims of conflict-related sexual violence (488 women, 173 girls, 8 boys, 11 children of unknown gender and 18 men)...”<sup>8</sup>

This document also states that: “Women and girls continued to be abducted, held captive and subjected to sexual slavery by non-State armed groups...”<sup>9</sup>

A report issued in August 2024 the *Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights* states that: “...discriminatory gender stereotypes concerning the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family continued to persist and that the Democratic Republic of the Congo had not taken sufficient, sustained and systematic action to eliminate adverse cultural practices, patriarchal attitudes and deep-rooted stereotypes.”<sup>10</sup>

The *United States Department of State* in June 2024 notes that: “...the deteriorating security and humanitarian situation has led to unprecedented levels of sexual violence, including sex trafficking, among women and girls and, to a lesser extent, men and boys. Perpetrators sexually exploit displaced women and girls in exchange for shelter and basic necessities. Traffickers fraudulently recruit displaced women and girls as young as 10 for employment in domestic work or restaurants, and subsequently exploit them in sex trafficking. Traffickers exploit displaced girls in commercial sex establishments operating out of bars, restaurants, and shelters in and around IDP sites with impunity.”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> *InterAction* (30 October 2024) Preventing and Responding to Gender-Based Violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo, October 2024, p.1

<sup>6</sup> *Amnesty International* (30 September 2024) DRC President Felix Tshisekedi must be held accountable for human rights violations, p.1

<sup>7</sup> *Medecins Sans Frontiers* (30 September 2024) MSF has and continues to treat more than two victims of sexual violence per hour in DRC, p.3

<sup>8</sup> *United Nations Human Rights Council* (30 September 2024) Human rights situation and the activities of the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (September 2024), p.10

<sup>9</sup> *ibid*, p.10

<sup>10</sup> *Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights* (29 August 2024) Democratic Republic of the Congo: Compilation of information prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, p.10

<sup>11</sup> *United States Department of State* (24 June 2024) Trafficking in Persons Report 2024: Democratic Republic of the Congo.p.8

A report issued in June 2024 by the *International Committee of the Red Cross* states that: “...sexual violence remains one of the main protection issues in the Democratic Republic of Congo for women and girls...”<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> International Committee of the Red Cross (14 June 2024) “I was afraid to tell anyone” – supporting survivors of sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo, p.1

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