



**ANNOUNCEMENT
THE TRUST FUND FOR VICTIMS
(TFV)
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
DONOR APPEAL**

**REHABILITATING AND
SUPPORTING SURVIVORS OF
SEXUAL VIOLENCE**

The Trust Fund for Victim's (TFV) at the International Criminal Court (ICC) is appealing for **€10 million to assist 1.7 million victims of sexual violence**

The TFV urgently needs funding for physical and psychosocial rehabilitation and other support for the victims of sexual violence that fall under the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), northern Uganda, Central African Republic (CAR), and Darfur.

The TFV supports integrated community-based responses to ensure that those victimised by rape are able to move from victimhood to stability as survivors and thus becoming productive citizens in their communities. This support will emphasise three components: physical rehabilitation; psychosocial support, including awareness-raising

for the community and families related to stigma and discrimination; accelerated/vocational education; and economic opportunity.

Sexual violence against women and girls has been found to be the most common form of violence and the most widespread form of criminality. Rape has become a "weapon of war" used to punish communities for their political loyalties, or as a form of ethnic cleansing.

It is well known that armed conflict and sexual violence against women and girls often go hand in hand. What is less widely recognised is that armed conflict and its aftermath also bring sexual danger for men and boys. Sexualised violence against men and boys can emerge in any form of conflict. Both adult men and boys are also vulnerable during military operations in civilian areas and in situations of military conscription or abduction into paramilitary forces. In addition, to acts of individual sadism, the main overt purposes of sexualised violence against men and boys appear to be torture, initiation and integration into military/paramilitary forces, punishment of individuals and a strategy of war designed to terrify, demoralise and destroy family and community cohesion.

Individual acts of rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy and any other forms of sexual violence constituting a grave breach or serious violation of the Geneva Conventions can be prosecuted as war crimes, if they occur during either international or internal armed conflict. And for the first time in international justice, this form of crime has been included in the International Criminal Court's (ICC) definitions of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Eastern Congo right now is arguably the worst place in the world to be a woman or a girl. Sexual violence and rape exist on a scale seen nowhere else in the world. They mutilate and humiliate. Their nature is brutal and vicious; they defy both description and imagination. Often successful in its intent to destroy and exterminate, rape as a weapon of war is causing the near total destruction of women, their families, and their communities.

Although there are no comprehensive statistics from these countries, most experts estimate the number of victims to be in the hundreds of thousands. For example, in one province in the DRC alone (South Kivu) about 42,000 women were treated in health clinics for serious sexual assault in 2007. The long-term consequences of sexual violence are many - not only medical, but also

psychological, emotional, and socio-economic. Sexual violence leads to direct physical harm, emotional trauma, stigma, and social ostracism.

Health consequences may include physical trauma to the reproductive tract, such as tears, and fistulas; increased risk of sexually transmitted infections, including HIV; and increased incidence of unwanted pregnancy with subsequent unsafe abortion - which can result in pelvic inflammatory disease, infertility, and even death. Manifestations of psychosocial problems range from post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and attempted suicide, to more subtle signs of fear, anxiety, intrusive memories, difficulty sleeping, withdrawal and flashbacks.

Perhaps the most devastating consequence of rape, however, is the subsequent experience of stigma and discrimination. Those that undergo the process of medical and psychosocial healing may return to their homes only to face total rejection from their partner, family and community.

Overview: The Trust Fund for Victims (TFV)

The Trust Fund for Victims (TFV) mission is to support programmes which address the harm resulting from the crimes under the jurisdiction of ICC by assisting victims to return to a dignified and contributory life within their communities.

The Fund represents the global commitment made under the Rome Statute to support the rehabilitation of victimised individuals and communities; and to restore dignity to survivors of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. The Statute created two complementary institutions: the International Criminal Court - for prosecuting and judging those responsible for these crimes; and the Trust Fund for Victims – for providing support to victims in the form of reparations and other forms of assistance.

The Rome Statute reflects the international consensus that justice for victims of the gravest human rights crimes cannot be achieved without their full participation in the ICC judiciary process; or without their direct involvement in defining and implementing the most appropriate means of reparations and rehabilitation. Therefore, the Trust Fund for Victims has two main mandates – *to help implement reparation orders* and *support to victims* who fall within the jurisdiction of the court.

Once a reparation order has been issued by the court, the TFV can assist the relevant Chamber by working with the victims to determine the most appropriate reparation so victims may resume a normal and productive life.

There are currently four situations before the ICC, in *northern Uganda*, *Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)*, *Darfur*, and the *Central African Republic (CAR)*, which means that, with your help, the TFV can assist thousands of victims who come under the jurisdiction of the Court.

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