

**Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale**

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UNHCR – UN High Commissioner for Refugees, UNFPA – UN Population Fund, Office of the Special Representative on Children and Armed Conflict, Office of the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict (Author)

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**ecoi.net description:**

Statement on the impact of the conflict on women and children, particularly conflict-related sexual violence on displaced people

*Press Statement: For Immediate Release*

**New York/Geneva, 23 April 2025** – The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Ms. Virginia Gamba, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Pramila Patten, UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Management), Mr. Andrew Saberton, and the Assistant High Commissioner for Refugees for Protection, Ms. Ruvendrini Menikdiwela, raise the alarm over the devastating impact of the prolonged conflict in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), particularly on women and children, expressing grave concern over the rising risks of conflict-related sexual violence.

Recent offensives with heightened attacks by non-state armed groups in South and North Kivu provinces since the beginning of 2025, have contributed to dramatically increasing conflict-related sexual violence. Sites where internally displaced people (IDP) had been living have been destroyed, and civilians have been forcibly displaced to areas without adequate protection or support, upping their risks of violence. The looting of supplies and the restriction of humanitarian access have worsened the condition of survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, while insecurity is expanding to neighboring countries, with Congolese refugees reported in urgent need of humanitarian aid, including health and psychological support.

The DRC has a record number of more than 7.8 million IDP, while an additional 1.1 million Congolese people, who fled years of ongoing violence, are hosted by neighboring countries.

The UN Officials warn that sexual violence is widespread and systematically used by parties to the conflict, including against women and children, as a tactic of war to terrorize and punish the civilian populations. Incidents of sexual violence remain highly underreported due to fear of stigma, risks of retaliation, and limited humanitarian services and support. This horrific trend is also part of a broader pattern of grave violations against children, including recruitment and use, abduction, and other forms of violence. “In the context of this unprecedented security and humanitarian crisis, the conditions of women and children continue to deteriorate. Their lives are hanging on the countless days awaiting stronger actions by the international community,” the UN Officials said.

More than half of the refugees who fled the DRC to neighboring countries are children; many of them are likely to have endured severe violence, including sexual violence. Their plight is

**Country:**

Congo, Democratic Republic

**Sources:**

[UNHCR – UN High Commissioner for Refugees](#),  
UNFPA – UN Population Fund,  
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exacerbated by challenging reception conditions in asylum countries, largely due to the impact of reduced humanitarian funding. The UN Officials call on all parties to implement Security Council Resolution 2773 (2025) and take urgent steps to cease and prevent any form of conflict-related sexual violence, while ensuring protection and timely access to services for survivors, maintain open-door policies for forcibly displaced people from the DRC, and abide by their obligations under international law.

Survivors face limited access to essential services, including medical care, sexual and reproductive health services, case management, mental health services, and vital protection services. Ongoing hostilities further hinder service delivery with direct attacks on hospitals and shortages of medical supplies such as life-saving Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) kits. “We urge all parties to guarantee safe and unimpeded humanitarian access to those in need, particularly children and survivors of sexual violence. We further call for urgent action to strengthen accountability, implement gender-sensitive and child-centered responses, reestablish vital aid and support to the humanitarian plan to help survivors of conflict-related sexual violence regain their health and dignity,” the UN Officials concluded.

**Background info:** Before the recent hostilities erupted, the country was already on track to have record levels of grave violations against children, including sexual violence. For at least five years now, the DRC has been the country with the highest level of verified incidents of sexual violence in conflict of all the situations on the children and armed conflict agenda. DRC has been covered in the annual reports of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence, which have been compiled by the Office of the SRSG on Sexual Violence in Conflict since 2012. The DRC also remains the country situation with the highest number of UN-verified conflict-related sexual violence cases recorded year by year.

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