



# General Assembly

Distr.: General  
14 March 2024

English only

---

## Human Rights Council

### Fifty-fourth session

11 September–13 October 2023

Agenda item 10

### Technical assistance and capacity-building

## **Written statement\* submitted by Elizka Relief Foundation, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[23 August 2023]

---

\* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



## **Human Rights Situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo**

### **Background:**

Despite the state of instability and security turmoil witnessed by many countries of the African continent, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), is more affected by terrorism than any other African country in the region; it is a hotbed for over 100-armed terrorist groups of various affiliations, thus human rights violations resulting from targeting civilians became a widespread phenomenon in the country.

At the same time, the imposition of martial law in the Democratic Republic of the Congo contributed to a greater number of human rights violations by government security forces, which, along with terrorist groups, may lead to various human rights violations such as rape and sexual violence against women and children, killing civilians, torture, children recruitment with complete impunity.

The Congolese government should continue its work to improve the human rights situation in the country to implement systematic reforms to promote the living reality of its people. In this light, Elizka Relief Foundation seizes the opportunity to discuss the most prominent human rights crises in the state and to offer a set of procedural recommendations to support the improvement of human rights conditions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

### **Top Human Rights Violations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo**

For many years, DRC has been experiencing a wide range of human rights violations resulting from the activity of terrorist groups, in addition to the climate of widespread impunity dominating the police sector in the country. Nevertheless, the violation of the right to life tops the list of violations, as it causes hundreds of deaths every year, and gender-based violence.

#### **1. Violation of the Right to Life:**

On January 16, 2023, 10 citizens were killed, while 39 more were injured during a terroristic attack that targeted a Congolese church, in North Kivu eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, which the "Islamic State" organization claimed responsibility for later.(1)

On March 8, 2023, 40 civilians were killed in 2 different attacks by gunmen in neighboring villages in North Kivu, while on March 12, 2023, 17 people were killed by gunmen suspected of being from the Allied Democratic Forces.(2)

On February 2023, 32 persons were killed during violent acts that targeted civilians in the hands of the M23 armed group, while in March 63 people reportedly been killed by The Allied Democratic Forces, which claims affiliation with militant group Islamic State. (3)

During April 2023, as a result of their attacks targeting civilians, 60 persons were reported to be killed in Rutshuru according to local authorities.

On May 5, 2023, one UN peacekeeping soldier was killed while another was injured after the UN helicopter was targeted by guns while being in the air in the eastern part of the country.(4)

On June 11, 2023, 7 people were killed (5 children and 2 women) by the hands of a militia that attacked a military post in the Djokuth area of Mahagi town in Ituri province.(5)

On August 7, 2023, not less than 9 persons were killed, while 4 Others were injured during clashes that erupted between members of the "March 23" rebel movement and self-defense groups in the village of "Marangara" in North Kivu province.(6)

On August 12, 2023, 14 citizens were killed with gunshots or machete strikes in a bloody attack that targeted Ibungi village in the southwest of the country near the borders with Angola.(7)

## 2. Gender-Based Violence (GBV):

Across North Kivu, where the M23 militia and a number of other militias are active, there has been a 37% increase in gender-based violence in the first three months of 2023 compared to the same period last year.(8)

On January 28, 2023, women and girls were reportedly flogged by militiamen of an armed group called “Angles” that targeted women who wear shorts or trousers in the provinces under their control, the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.(9)

On February 2023, a 22-year-old woman who fled from Kitchanga village reported being kidnapped at the hands of 5 rebels from M23 armed men that are active in the village.(10)

On February 25, 2023, a 46-year-old mother and her 70-year-old mother who fled Mushaki, were faced by a group of 10 rebels of the M23 movement, later the daughter was raped by 4 of the armed men after killing her mother.(11)

On April 13, UN officials and a Congolese doctor reported that many women and children were victims of raping and other kinds of sexual violations in the process of the deportation of expatriate workers, according to local clinics that reported 123 rape cases of Congolese women from the beginning of 2023.(12)

On June 14, 14 Congolese women were reportedly raped by M23 fighters.

### Recommendations:

1. Within the framework of supporting transitional justice in the country, Elizka Relief Foundation recommends the government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to cooperate with HRC to establish an office responsible for following up on the transitional justice in the country to support the role of the justice mechanism that has been established;
2. In the context of strengthening the decentralization of the process of obtaining justice for victims of human rights violations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Elizka Relief Foundation recommends the government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to launch an initiative in the eleven provinces to enhance the roles of judges working in the Congolese provinces so that the initiative includes training and a workshop aimed at raising the awareness and skills of judges in the field of applying the principle "Justice and reparation" for the victims, and raising their capabilities to handle cases of human rights violations;
3. As for supporting women who are victims of sexual and gender-based violence, Elizka Relief Foundation recommends the Congolese government to establish a multisectoral support fund for Congolese women, so that the fund provides material, psychological, and social support to women affected by the state of terrorism and insecurity prevailing in the country.
4. In the context of the high rates of human rights violations in recent years, and the increase in the percentage of victims of violations in all provinces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Elizka Relief Foundation recommends that the Congolese government establish judicial bodies specialized in adjudicating human rights cases and violations, separate from the main judicial track of the state so that these bodies are specialized in considering cases and reports of human rights violations only.

---

1- Voanews Islamic State Claims Responsibility for DR Congo Church Bombing , <http://bitly.ws/SNVu>

2- Channelstv, ADF Rebels Kill 17 In East DR Congo, March 12, 2023, <http://bitly.ws/SNWd>

4- Voanews, UN Peacekeeper Killed in Attack on Helicopter in DR Congo, February 06, 2023, <http://bitly.ws/SNWv>

- 5- Guardian, Militants kill 7 in eastern DR Congo, 11 June 2023, <http://bitly.ws/SNWX>
- 6- Barrons, Nine Killed In Attack On Eastern DR Congo Village, August 6, 2023, <http://bitly.ws/SNYe>
- 7- Barrons, 14 Killed In Attack On Southwestern DR Congo Village, August 12, 2023, <http://bitly.ws/SNYC>
- 8- Sexual violence plagues women displaced by DR Congo's M23 conflict, The new humanitarian, <http://bitly.ws/RZKM>
- 9- Ripplesnigeria, Condemnations trail flogging of women wearing short skirts, trousers in Congo, January 29, 2023, <http://bitly.ws/SNZe>
- 10- 'We've come from Rwanda to destroy you': Horrific rape stories from the DRC emerge in report, News 24, <http://bitly.ws/RZPA>
- 11- Ibid
- 12- Reuters, Dozens of children and women are victims of abuse and rape during the deportation of migrant workers from Angola to the Congo, Apr 12, 2023, <http://bitly.ws/SP26>