

dr. Denis
Mukwege Foundation



Annual Report 2018

www.mukwegefoundation.org

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Letter from the director

2018 was a pivotal year for the Mukwege Foundation. Not only were we able to further cement our objectives and reap the rewards of numerous ongoing initiatives, but our work and that of other organisations and individuals working to fight the use of rape as a weapon of war was encouraged at a global level through the Nobel Peace Prize which was awarded to Dr Denis Mukwege and Nadia Murad.

According to the Nobel Committee, this award highlights "their efforts to end the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war and armed conflict." Yet, despite this notable progress and recognition however, sexual violence persists in many conflict-affected countries around the world, thus, our work is far from finished.

In October, I was visiting Panzi Hospital in eastern Congo and while walking the halls of the hospital, I heard a chorus of voices and cries begin to emerge from the surrounding corridors and hospital wings.

Soon after, I learned the reason why: Dr Mukwege had just been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

The call came in while Dr Mukwege was in surgery. Once he had been told, his first reaction was to dedicate this honour to survivors of sexual violence in wars around the world. This award represents a long-awaited recognition of the suffering for the thousands and thousands of survivors that have passed through Panzi Hospital, and the thousands and thousands who have not.

Immediately after learning of this incredible recognition, Dr Mukwege spared little time in taking action. He directly addressed his patients and his staff – not only to thank them but also to directly involve them in what comes next: how to make real change. As he has always done, Dr Mukwege involved



Esther Dingemans
Director

his staff and the survivors in this question, and thus in the process of carrying this burden together.

Providing recognition for suffering is the least we can do to support survivors. In addition to the Nobel Prize, at the heart of this idea of providing recognition is the concept of reparations. Reparations are a concrete way to recognize the harm done to survivors.

Though sexual violence in war is more on the international political agenda than ever before, reparations comes usually at the bottom of that same agenda. This year has been a year of advocacy work to see this changed, together with survivors, as recognition for the harm is one of their utmost priorities and crucial in ending stigma.

We strongly believe advocacy should tap on the underused resources of the power of survivors themselves. Their voices must not be left out of the discussion. Our work in supporting and amplifying survivor movements around the world will help survivors to maintain their place at the table.

We are grateful for the support of the Dutch Postcode Lottery and other donors who are enabling us to use innovative ways towards ending sexual violence. Their trust is crucial to continue our work and achieve lasting, long-term change.



“Survivors are ready to speak out. They must be the author of their own memory.”

-Malini Laxminarayan, Programme Officer

Wartime sexual violence

Sexual violence is actively used as a weapon of war around the world. While hundreds of thousands of people are victimized, the perpetrators face no consequences, due to widespread impunity. Survivors deserve acknowledgement, justice and relief as soon as possible.

Due to underreporting, there is not enough information available to determine the exact number of victims of sexual violence around the world, yet research shows large-scale sexual violence is increasing. And in the past decades, a generally upward trend was reported. According to a global report by ACLED (Armed Conflict Location and Event Data) on sexual violence in conflict, "The total number of reported [sexual violence] events nearly doubled in the first three months of 2019 compared to the same period in 2018, largely due to an uptick uptake of violence in the DRC..."

Sexual violence is used systematically as a method of warfare to destroy and terrorize whole populations. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan, Myanmar, and many other countries, civilians face devastating consequences from gang rape, sexual slavery and torture. We also see an increased use of sexual violence as a tactic of terrorism and part of fundamentalist ideology, increasingly employed by extremist groups in countries like Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Somalia, Nigeria and Mali.

The use of sexual violence not only leaves individuals with lifelong scars, but also spreads diseases, destroys family ties and traumatizes societies, often for generations to come.

Yet, the majority of victims do not have access to the support they are entitled to. In many settings, quality healthcare, psychosocial and legal support, and reintegration into social life and work is lacking. In many cultures, victims of rape are seen as outcasts by their communities, they are unable to marry and get rejected by

their families. The systematic and deliberate use of sexual violence in conflict does not incite the international outcry and condemnation it should.

However, there *is* momentum to change this.

Until recently, the international community had remained largely passive. In the 1990s, governments started to realize the problem and reacted with the adoption of Security Council resolutions. Despite the ICC handing down the first guilty verdicts for crimes of sexual violence, unfortunately there has been no conviction at the ICC thus far. However, large international media outlets are writing stories about not just war, but also about survivors and their movements. Humanitarian actors are increasingly sensitive to the specific needs of survivors of sexual violence.

The 2018 Nobel Prize for Dr Mukwege and Nadia Murad has drawn increased attention to the subject of sexual violence in conflict, yet many survivors still wait for enforceable international legal action.

Therefore, the time to act is now. We need to use this momentum to achieve real change. The international community should take a firm stance against sexual violence, so that it does not become a common aspect of extremist ideologies and being considered as an 'inevitable aspect of war'. At the same time, prompt action is necessary to avoid a cycle of violence, anger and trauma that will fuel warfare indefinitely.

**Turning a blind eye
to this tragedy is
being complicit. It's
not just perpetrators
of violence who are
responsible for their
crimes, it is also those
who choose to look
the other way.**

Dr. Denis Mukwege

Highlights: Survivor Voices

At the Dr. Denis Mukwege Foundation, we exclusively focus on conflict-related sexual violence, with a survivor-centred approach. In order to fight sexual violence in conflict, survivors' voices must be heard. The following quotes highlight the strength, courage and leadership of survivors.

"Rapists have to be brought to justice, but how can we do this when the rapists are in power?"

-Mildred, survivor of sexual violence from Zimbabwe

"Justice delayed for sexual offenses committed during war is justice denied for women. Let the world recommit to leaving no woman behind."

-Juliet, an activist and member of SEMA

"I want to work to change the image of victims in the world. The story of survivors must change and we must start the fight."

-Mwamini, survivor of sexual violence from DRC

"Survivors want recognition and respect to rebuild their dignity..justice begins with truth. Therefore, survivors' stories should be told and heard."

-Amra, a member of SEMA from Bosnia and Herzegovina



The Dr. Denis Mukwege Foundation works at the international level in close collaboration with survivors around the world and organizations in the field. We use national and international advocacy and global campaigning in order to achieve lasting and systemic change. Our source of inspiration remains Dr Mukwege and his team at Panzi Hospital in DRC. The impact of their work in DRC motivates us to scale-up these best practices elsewhere.

Our strategy is based on promoting the following concepts:



VOICE

Wartime rape survivors speak out, organise and act



CARE

Universal access to holistic care for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence



REPAIR

Universal access to reparations for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence



HOLD TO ACCOUNT

Perpetrators of crimes are held accountable, whether individuals or states who fail to act

What we do

Expansion of holistic care worldwide

Realizing the right to medical, psychological, legal and socio-economic support

Based on their extensive experience of providing care to victims of wartime rape, the team at Panzi Hospital in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has pioneered a holistic approach which provides not only medical care, but also psycho-social support, legal assistance and socio-economic support.

This model of holistic care promotes an environment in which sexual violence is no longer tolerated and perpetrators are held accountable. Through holistic care, victims can transform into survivors, who are empowered to become agents of change within their communities.

The Panzi model is not a static concept and thus it can be adapted to different scenarios.

As this model of holistic care has proved to be an effective means of offering high quality care to survivors in DRC, and there is a wealth of established clinical and operational expertise to share. Moreover, it has demonstrated to the world what committed efforts to end sexual violence in conflict could look like. We believe that this model needs to be accessible to all victims of wartime rape.

The next logical step is to roll out this approach more widely, and to enhance and strengthen provision where it exists. In 2018, we finalised the *Handbook on Holistic Care for Survivors of Sexual Violence in Conflict* in partnership with UNHCR to provide a resource to health centres

around the world looking to implement this model (see English version [here](#) and French version [here](#)).

"Holistic care not only heals victims, it heals society at large as well." -Dr Mukwege

Furthermore, during the past year the Mukwege Foundation has worked closely with the team at Panzi to facilitate a south-to-south capacity building approach, transferring knowledge on treating survivors of sexual violence from one (post)-conflict area to another. With the Panzi team provided hands-on skills training and the Mukwege Foundation providing logistical support, we have ongoing exchanges with teams in Guinea. Furthermore, we have done several scoping visits to the Central African Republic, where we soon hope to start working as well. And Dr Mukwege himself personally visited survivors and care providers in Northern Iraq along with our director, Esther Dingemans, to evaluate the possibilities for bringing holistic care to this region.

We will continue to carry out the project in Guinea, in addition to identifying more concrete steps for CAR and Iraq in 2019. Furthermore, we are open to other possibilities of expansion and implementation in places

where there is a demonstrated need for comparable quality services for survivors.

AVIPA, Panzi Foundation DRC and the Mukwege Foundation.

Guinea

On September 28th of 2009, a politically motivated massacre took place in the stadium of Conakry resulting in 156 murders and 110 women raped, with some of them kept in sexual slavery for days by the military and government-controlled militias. Many of the victims never received proper medical care, or psychosocial assistance. In 2017, Dr Mukwege and a team from Panzi travelled to Guinea to collaborate with some of these survivors and an association of victims, AVIPA, which fights for the rights of the victims of the massacre, which led to the development of a project funded by Fondation Pro Victimis.

The project that started in 2018 aims to strengthen medical and psychological care for survivors of sexual violence but also to allow socio-economic reintegration of victims through technical support and the exchange of experiences between three organizations -

In 2018, 20 health practitioners - doctors, nurses, and psychologists - working with survivors in Guinea were trained by Panzi personnel. After receiving a training in Conakry, Guinean personnel travelled to Bukavu, DRC, to visit the Panzi Hospital, where they got first-hand experience with the One-Stop Centre method, and exchanged good practices with their Congolese counterparts (see photo below). In 2019, the trained Guineans will themselves train more health practitioners in Conakry and other provinces of Guinea where sexual and gender-based violence is prevalent.

In Conakry, our local partner AVIPA, has also facilitated the development of several groups of survivors gathering three times per week to pull efforts together and perform livelihood activities with the assistance of trained personnel. This activity not only allows them to make a small revenue for themselves and their families, but also contribute to creating a safe solidarity space where they can exchange with fellow survivors.





Global Survivor Network: uniting for survivor activism

Bringing survivors from different generations and cultures together

The Dr. Denis Mukwege Foundation facilitates **SEMA**, the Global Network of Victims and Survivors to End Wartime Sexual Violence. Survivors chose the name SEMA or "Speak Out!" in Swahili, for their network of survivors and activists from all over the world that have come together to tell their stories, exchange ideas, mobilise, and support one another. SEMA was officially initiated in March 2018 (although its roots trace back to June 2017). The group chose the name in Swahili because that is the mother tongue of Dr. Denis Mukwege, who is an inspiration for all survivors and NGO representatives working to abolish the use of rape as a weapon of war.

The network works at two different levels – nationally and internationally. At the global level, the global network has begun to take shape, drawing in new countries (e.g., Sudan) and new members. In total, there are now 21 countries and 2000 members represented.

In February 2018, the survivors came together for a strategic meeting and developed their goals for the global network. This included discussions on advocacy, structure, mission and vision, and main aims for the coming years. Working groups were established, where 5-8 women will focus on certain thematic areas

(i.e., reparations, communications, advocacy, events) to guide the network as a whole.

In between meetings and events, these members are in touch with one another through an online forum, launched at the end of March 2018 with the intention to help in the creation of a collective memory and provide a space for survivors to share their stories.



Speaking out at public events

One of the key aspects of SEMA is advocacy, and the members of SEMA continue to be quite active in this area. In March 2018, two survivors participated in large international speaking events in London, as part of the International Women's Day. The event, which was hosted by Theirworld, gathered more than 300 influential women, ranging from artists to businesswomen.

Additionally, four survivors of the global network participated in the first Memorial Day for 'Comfort Women' celebrated in South Korea on 14 August and spoke at the International Symposium where they expressed their solidarity with Korean women. On this occasion, Sylvia Acan (Uganda) was awarded the first Kim Bok-dong Peace Prize.

In addition to these two events, survivors also participated in numerous other small-scale events, as well as a high-level symposium on reparations (discussed in the following section).

National networks

There are currently five national survivor networks supported by the Mukwege Foundation: DRC, CAR, Ukraine, Nigeria and Syria. In 2018, we supported on-the-ground implementation and guidance for the networks in each of these countries. The newest networks, Nigeria and Syria, are still in the establishment phases, but networks in the other three countries are already thriving.

For example, on the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict, the national network of survivors in DRC organised an event for advocacy in Bukavu, which gathered almost 200 participants, including institutions that work with survivors and could be potential partners.

And in December 2018, more than 500 persons, including 322 survivors of wartime rape, participated in the launch of the survivor movement in Central African Republic, called MOSUCA (see image below).



Reparations

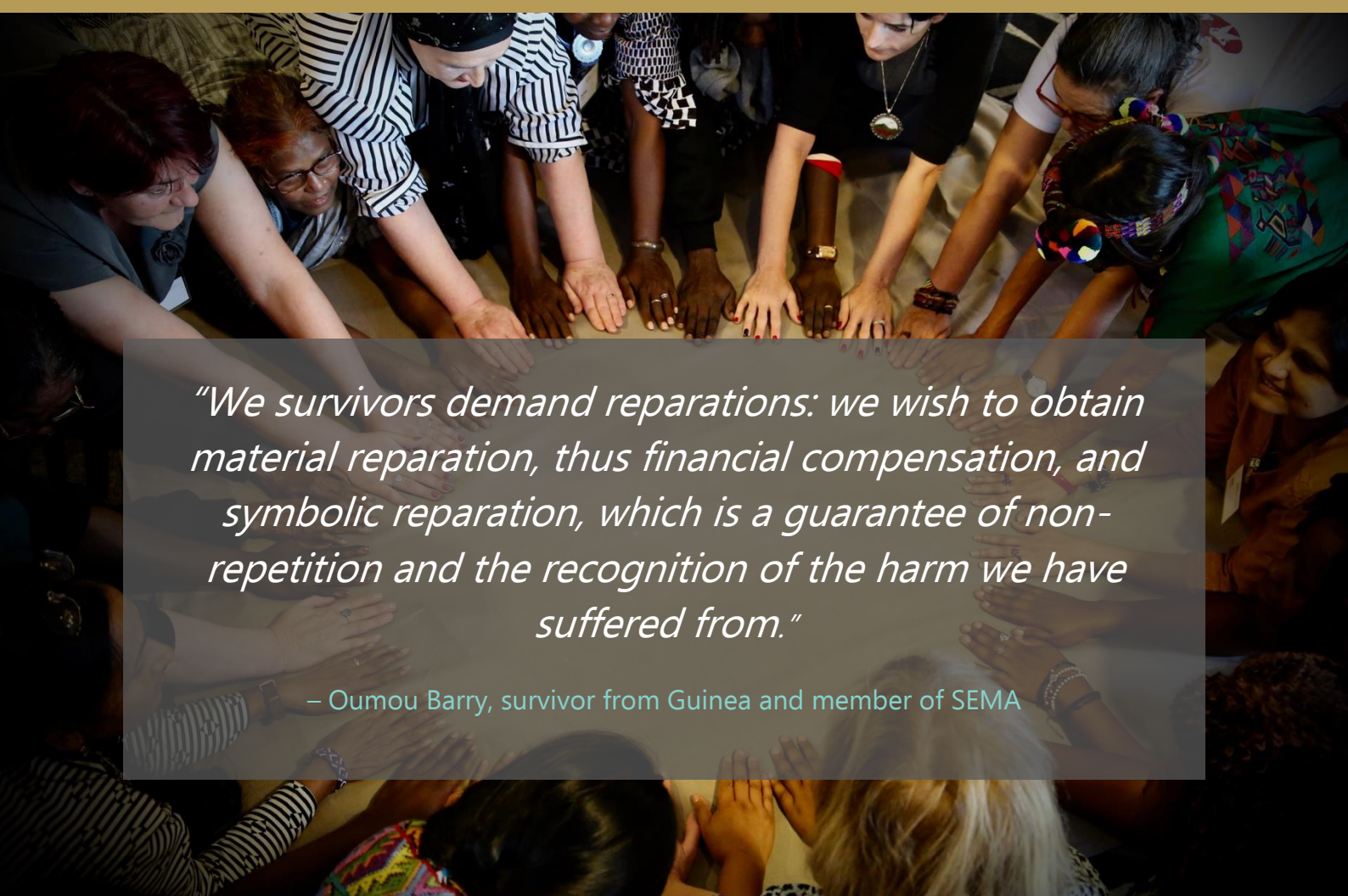
Unite governments to make the end of sexual violence an international priority

In conflicts around the world, sexual violence is used systematically as a method of warfare to destroy and terrorise societies. In Syria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, the Central African Republic, South Sudan and many other countries, women and girls, but also men and boys, face devastating consequences from gang rape, sexual slavery and torture perpetrated in times of conflict and instability.

The use of sexual violence in wars not only leaves individuals with lifelong scars, but also spreads diseases, destroys family ties and harms societies as a whole, over generations. These consequences are further exacerbated

by poverty and by stigma. Victims of sexual violence live with the double burden of being raped, and then being shunned by their communities and denied recognition for the serious crimes that they have suffered.

In many countries, survivors of wartime rape cannot rebuild their lives not can they contribute fully to society because of the lack of justice and recognition of the crime they were subjected to. This is where reparations play a key role: **by aiming to repair the harm caused by gross human rights violations, reparations are the core of survivors' demands to get back a life of dignity, respect and equality.**



"We survivors demand reparations: we wish to obtain material reparation, thus financial compensation, and symbolic reparation, which is a guarantee of non-repetition and the recognition of the harm we have suffered from."

– Oumou Barry, survivor from Guinea and member of SEMA



Over the past year, we have worked to further cement our initiatives with regard to norms building and encouraging government to act on the use of sexual violence in conflict. After close collaboration and consultation with other public, private and civil society stakeholders, Dr. Mukwege and Ms. Nadia Murad (his co-recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize) are leading the initiative to establish **The International Fund for Survivors of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence**.

We envision this initiative as a very direct way to make reparative justice a reality and change the lives of individuals, families and communities worldwide. This Initiative builds directly on the work of the Mukwege Foundation, both on the ground and at the international level. It is the outcome of a reflective process in which we engaged with the Global Survivor Network, NGOs and experts, as well as representatives of states and intergovernmental organisations.

The initiative will build upon the advocacy of the Office of the United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict ('OSRSG-SVC'), the work of the Dr. Denis Mukwege Foundation, and the voices of survivors of conflict-related sexual violence worldwide. Survivors from various conflict zones, united by the Global Survivors Network - an initiative established and supported by the Mukwege Foundation - have stated unequivocally that reparations and other forms of redress must be a priority for the international community. Since most survivors do not have access to formal justice mechanisms, their access to reparations is severely limited. Out-of-court reparations and redress can provide a pathway for healing, acknowledgement, recognition and a sense of justice. According to survivors, these types of redress are a formidable strategy to help them reintegrate into their communities and have a truly transformative impact.

In November 2018, the Mukwege Foundation participated in a high-level event called "From

words to action: repairing the wounds of wartime sexual violence". Survivors from SEMA explained why reparations are key to survivors' healing and empowerment journeys (see image below). Together, with the Mukwege Foundation and Dr Mukwege himself, SEMA called for an international reparations mechanism.



And finally, Dr Mukwege was able to speak to the benefits and advocate for reparations during his acceptance speech for the Nobel Peace Prize in December of 2018. This opportunity allowed us to promote the idea on an international stage, which has enabled numerous opportunities in 2019 to bring the idea of reparations to a reality for survivors around the globe.

Looking ahead

We have innovative ideas that have the potential to make a real change both in the lives of individual survivors and at a systemic level. In 2019 we expect a number of these initiatives to take off and yield concrete results.

Support survivors

An expected deterioration of the situation in the DRC will require full attention of Panzi and an increase in providing financial and practical support to enable the team to respond to the current crisis.

Meanwhile, the expansion of the holistic model in the Central African Republic and Northern Iraq will continue and is expected to lead to concrete implementation in 2019. In general, we seek to put the provision of holistic care for survivors of sexual violence on the agenda as an international 'standard' and a human right—one opportunity for doing so will be at the upcoming CSW event.

Global Survivor Network

In 2019, we hope to be able to support the Global Survivor Network so that it can further expand its membership, fulfil its advocacy campaign, and work towards joint calls for action. The first opportunity to capitalise on these goals will be through the 2019 survivor conference in Luxembourg, called *Stand up, Speak up, Rise up!*

Furthermore, in 2019 we hope to step up our support for national networks, namely in the



newer networks in Syria and Nigeria. We will continue to support the progress and growth of the more established networks as well.

Reparations

After having established the basis for our international reparations initiative, we hope that in 2019 we will be able to identify more concrete partnerships in order to begin the implementation of this fund. This will require both innovative and ambitious action from our team, and from those with whom we will work. Together with the Global Survivor Network, we will continue the discussion about justice and accountability.

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