

AI Index: AFR 62/006/2007; WA 005/07. 08 March 2007

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC): No justice for rape victim: Bitondo Nyumba

[Body text]

Justice has yet to be served in the case of Bitondo Nyumba, a 56-year-old woman who died as a result of injuries she suffered when she was attacked and raped by government soldiers in May 2005. But with a new government recently taking office in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), now is the time to renew calls for justice.

Bitondo Nyumba, a widow and mother of four, was beaten and raped on 11 May 2005 in her home in the village of Katungulu, South-Kivu province, by government soldiers.

The attack caused life-threatening injuries. Bitondo Nyumba died on 21 June 2005 due to an infection caused by a reported failure to properly treat her injuries.

Two soldiers were arrested in August 2005 in connection with the rape, but were released after a few weeks without explanation. Bitondo Nyumba's family filed a legal complaint and were subsequently threatened by soldiers from the same brigade as the alleged perpetrators. The family was forced to move to another village. The threats reportedly included statements such as: "You are the ones who accused us. Keep your mouths shut."

[Letter]

Dear President

I am writing to urge you and your new government to end impunity for rapes committed by the DRC armed forces and police. In particular, I wish to express concern about the case of Bitondo Nyumba, who was raped on 11 May 2005 by government soldiers. To date, no one has been brought to justice and her family has been threatened and intimidated. I urge you to demonstrate your commitment to protecting human rights by:

- Conducting a prompt, independent and thorough judicial investigation into the rape and subsequent death of Bitondo Nyumba, and bringing the perpetrators to justice.
- Protecting Bitondo Nyumba's family and witnesses from further threats or reprisals.
- Ensuring immediate access to adequate and appropriate health services for women and girls who are survivors of rape.

Yours sincerely

[Target]

SE Joseph Kabila
Président de la République
Présidence de la République
Kinshasa-Ngaliema
République Démocratique du Congo