

Press Release

The Luxembourg Red Cross is mobilised against violence against women

Luxembourg, November 25, 2020 – *On the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, the Luxembourg Red Cross looks back on its work in supporting survivors of sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo.*

“Our Humanitarian Aid teams come first and foremost to the aid of the most vulnerable people in our countries of intervention, including female survivors of sexual violence,” explains Manou Hoss, member of the Luxembourg Red Cross’ Board of Directors. *“We should all care for the reduction of violence against women, and we need women and men to be part of that “fight”,* she continues.

On the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, Manou Hoss and Rémi Fabbri, Director of International Aid at the Luxembourg Red Cross, take stock of the deployment of Red Cross’ teams, who work with Dr Denis Mukwege, Nobel Peace Prize, in Panzi, Democratic Republic of Congo.

A redesigned hospital for survivors of sexual violence

In March 2019, following the hospital’s founder and Nobel Peace Prize winner, Dr Denis Mukwege’s visit to Luxembourg, the Luxembourg Red Cross committed to supporting the Panzi hospital’s renovation. *“This hospital was built almost 20 years ago, with around 120 beds. Today, more than 500 people are hospitalised there. In addition to the annexes added over the years, it had to be redesigned in order to allow patients not to be too cramped,”* explains Rémi Fabbri.

Every year, more than 1,500 women or girls who are victims of sexual violence receive health care to treat physical trauma at the Panzi hospital in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. In spite of the impressive results achieved by the medical teams on site, renovating the hospital seemed increasingly urgent in order to continue providing quality care to patients.

Around 50 new Homes for women in 2020

In 2020, the Luxembourg Red Cross’ interdisciplinary team was delighted to inaugurate 42 houses built for women receiving care following sexual violence in Panzi, in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo. *“Our support to survivors of sexual violence is based on the four pillars defined by Dr Denis Mukwege: medical, psychological, socio-economic and legal”* explains Rémi Fabbri.

Despite the quality of the medical care and psychological follow-up provided at the Panzi hospital, it appears that women survivors of sexual violence are often stigmatised or even

rejected by their communities of origin. To enable them to regain their full place in society, the Red Cross helps them to build new homes, with the support of the Luxembourg Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The women are active in the process of building their houses, a secure base from which they can start a new life.

About the Luxembourg Red Cross

The mission of the Luxembourg Red Cross is to "improve the living conditions of the most vulnerable elements in society". Thousands of volunteers and over 2,400 professionals make it a major player in the areas of health, youth, social work, and humanitarian action.

The Luxembourg Red Cross is thus involved in a variety of activities, such as emergency international humanitarian aid, home care, blood donation, rehabilitation, care for elderly or dependent people in day centres or care homes, social work, migrant and refugee reception, individual help to people in difficult situations, transition homes and youth centres, and social and family therapy services.

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