

**JUSTINE  
MASIKA  
BIHAMBA  
DEMOCRATIC  
REPUBLIC OF  
THE CONGO**

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



**2008  
AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL  
WRITE FOR  
RIGHTS**

# PLEASE HELP JUSTINE MASIKA BIHAMB

Justine Masika Bihamba is a human rights worker in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). She and her family have been targeted by the DRC military because of her work as the coordinator of the women's human rights NGO, *Synergie des femmes contre les violences sexuelles* (SFVS). SFVS counsellors have regularly been threatened and attacked because of their work.

Justine was out of the house on 18 September 2007, when six army soldiers forced their way into Justine's home. They tied up her six children at gunpoint, and assaulted two of them. Justine's 21-year-old daughter pleaded with the soldiers to take what they wanted but not to hurt anyone. One of the soldiers replied that they had not come to steal anything, but rather were on a "well-defined mission" ("*une mission bien déterminée*"). The group searched the house. One soldier kicked Justine's 24-year-old daughter in the face, breaking her tooth. He then tried to rape Justine's 21-year-old daughter and sexually assaulted her with a knife.

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**“ALL WE WANT IS AN END  
TO THIS IMPUNITY”**



Justine returned home during the attack and immediately telephoned the authorities. In a search of the neighbourhood with the military police, Justine and her children identified the soldiers involved in their attack as those guarding an army officer. The military police refused to arrest the men and claimed that there was no evidence against them.

On 27 September 2007, Justine lodged a legal complaint against the soldiers. In the following weeks and months, senior military and civilian authorities promised Justine that justice would be done. One year on from the attack, however, the men have still not been arrested or brought to trial.

Justine regularly sees the same men in the streets that attacked her children in their home. They continue to threaten her. Justine's five-year-old son now fears he will be killed whenever he sees a soldier. Her two daughters have fled abroad.

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# ACT NOW

## 1. WRITE A LETTER TO THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO AUTHORITIES

■ Call for an immediate, full and impartial investigation into the attack on Justine Masika Bihamba's family, including the sexual assault and attempted rape of her daughter, with the perpetrators brought promptly to justice.

■ Ask for the immediate protection of human rights defender Justine Masika Bihamba and her family.

Président Joseph Kabila  
Cabinet du Président  
Palais de la Nation  
Kinshasa/Gombe  
Democratic Republic of the Congo  
Salutation: Your Excellency  
cabinet\_president@yahoo.fr

## 2. PLEASE SIGN THE PETITION

■ Support the work of the Congolese Women's Campaign Against Sexual Violence, which includes SFVS.

<http://www.rdcviolencesexuelle.org/site/en/node/58#petition>

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