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## **Democratic Republic of Congo: Every Delay Costs Lives**

In November and early December Amnesty International delegates took part in field missions to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), visiting North Kivu province, eastern DRC, and refugee sites along the Uganda/DRC border in south-western Uganda.

The aim of the mission was to investigate human rights abuses reported in the current conflict and raise them with senior representatives of all the parties involved. They gathered first-hand information of war crimes and serious human rights violations taking place in the conflict zone of North Kivu, with testimonies from eye witnesses to the atrocities taking place on a daily basis where the humanitarian situation continues to be desperate.

Human rights violations taking place in the DRC include:

- Unlawful killings
- Sexual violence
- Child Soldier recruitment
- Threats to human rights defenders

“We recognize that MONUC, the UN peacekeeping force, is badly overstretched but this is not an excuse for a less than robust approach to fulfil its protection mandate,” said Amnesty International. “Leaving thousands to flee without protection, or women and girls in displacement camps unnecessarily exposed to sexual violence, is not acceptable.”

“MONUC’s reinforcement is imperative and urgent. Every day of delay is costing lives.”

### *Spokespeople:*

The Amnesty International delegates from the mission are available for interview and can provide a debrief on the people they met and the realities of life in the troubled area.

- Veronique Aubert, Deputy Programme Director for Africa (English, French)
- Andrew Philip, DRC Researcher (English, French)
- Philippe Hensmans, Director of the French-speaking Belgian section of Amnesty International (French, English, Dutch)
- Manon Schick, Director of the Media and Advocacy Programme of Amnesty International Switzerland (French, German, Spanish)

### *Media Briefing:*

A comprehensive briefing document is available with initial findings from the recent mission.

To arrange an interview with any spokesperson, please contact Amnesty International Press Office on + 44 (0)207 413 5566.

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