

A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO SUPPORTING VICTIMS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Side Event Program

WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

Minister Nathalie MUYLLE, Federal
Minister of Equal opportunities, Belgium

TESTIMONIES - SURVIVORS

Ayke GUBBELS, Belgium
Tatiana MUKANIRE, Democratic
Republic of the Congo

GOOD PRACTICES

• SEXUAL ASSAULT REFERRAL CENTRES

Liesbet STEVENS, Institute for the
equality of women and men, Belgium

• PANZI HOSPITAL

Maud-Salomé EKILA, Mukwege
Foundation, DRC

CLOSING REMARKS

Johanna NELLES, Head of the Violence
against Women Division and Executive
Secretary of GREVIO, Council of Europe



KINGDOM OF BELGIUM
Federal Public Service
Foreign Affairs,
Foreign Trade and
Development Cooperation

NATHALIE MUYLLE, BELGIAN MINISTER OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES, INVITES YOU TO THIS SIDE EVENT WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF THE MUKWEGE FOUNDATION AND THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

The **Belgian government** ratified the Istanbul Convention in 2016 which declares that each country must provide sufficiently adapted and accessible reference centers for sexual violence where victims of sexual violence can find access to medical and forensic examination, trauma support and counselling for victims.

Subsequently, Belgium has developed the model of the **sexual assault referral centers (SARCs)**. These centers operate by means of an evidence-based approach and (inter)national guidelines were applied in creating them. The SARCs are large scale, innovative projects with a holistic, multidisciplinary, victim-oriented approach:

- **Holistic:** forensic, medical and psychological care are offered at the same time and maximally concordant. This leads to a better quality of care, as well to quicker, improved chances of sustainable recovery and decreased risks for victimization.

- **Multidisciplinary:** the SARCs are a unique cooperation between hospital facilities, police authorities and the Public Prosecution Service. Besides this important partnership, a lot of other stakeholders are involved, such as DNA-laboratories and social services.

- **Victim-oriented:** one of the central objectives of the SARC is to take victim-oriented approaches to addressing sexual violence. This leads to the victim having full agency of every step taken in the care offered.

Dr Denis Mukwege and his team at Panzi Hospital in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) have pioneered a holistic approach to health and humanitarian services which integrates psychological, legal, and socio-economic reinsertion support with medical care for survivors of sexual violence in conflict. Centralised access to these services reduces stigma and shortens paths to healing, while support such as vocational training enables survivors to reintegrate in society. Altogether, the **holistic approach** better ensures the well-being and increased resilience of individuals, which directly benefits their communities and society as a whole.

The **Mukwege Foundation** amplifies the voices and needs of survivors, supporting their advocacy efforts against wartime sexual rape through the **SEMA global network**, and promoting the holistic model of care for survivors of sexual violence in health facilities the world over, in order to end wartime rape and impunity.



INSTITUTE
FOR THE EQUALITY
OF WOMEN
AND MEN

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



dr. Denis
Mukwege
Foundation

UN – Conference Room 8, Wednesday 11th of March 2020, 11.30 am – 12.45 pm
RSVP required: Marjolein.VanDooren@diplobel.fed.be

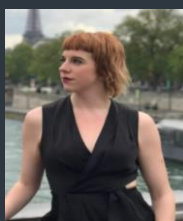
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A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO SUPPORTING VICTIMS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

A SIDE EVENT TO THE CSW64 BEIJING+25 ORGANISED BY BELGIUM WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF MUKWEGE FOUNDATION AND THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE



Nathalie MUYLLE, Federal Minister of Employment, Economy and Consumers, in charge of the Fight against Poverty, Equal Opportunities and Disabled People (Belgium). She started her political career both at a local level and at a national level. Nathalie Muylle has been a member of the Chamber of Representatives since 2007 and a permanent member and president of the Committee on Public Health and the Environment. Last year, she became Minister and has since then committed herself to the fight against all forms of discrimination. She pays particular attention to the support of victims of sexual violence. To this end, among other things, she has promoted the expansion of sexual assault referral centers (SARC's) and developed chat lines for victims as to facilitate their access to specific help.



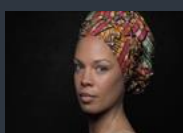
Ayke Gubbels is a therapist and activist. Victim of sexual assault at a young age, she founded the non-profit organization PUNT. In the debate on tackling sexual violence, the non-profit organization pointed out that victims of sexually transgressive behavior's demands for support often still fall on deaf ears. The most important need for victims is recognition. The effects of trauma on daily functioning is a theoretical knowledge for many therapists, but for victims a daily reality. The association is committed to various areas: awareness-raising and education, low-threshold assistance, contact with others who face similar trauma and lobby for political change. The cooperation of professional care providers and experience experts can be an added value as well as the combination of theoretical knowledge and the professional framework of a care provider creates an optimal safe and accessible environment.



Tatiana Mukanire is the national coordinator of the National Movement of Survivors of Sexual Violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and a member of SEMA, the global network of survivors. She has been fighting since 2017 against rape being used as a weapon of war in her country or anywhere. Despite the atrocities she experienced, she is a leader in her community, and today she is one of the most active members of civil society on the rights of women who have been sexually abused. The 36-year-old mother has already spoken at the UN and other international forums about the importance of reparations, holistic care, and the impact of rape and stigma on society. She represents a generation of tireless women who raise awareness on the ground in war zones, and in so doing, raise their voices for the voiceless.



Prof. Dr. Liesbet Stevens obtained a baccalaureate degree in philosophy at KU Leuven in 1993, and in 2002 she was awarded a doctorate in law. She has been committed throughout her career to an equal society and the protection of vulnerable people. In her publications, she mainly focuses on the criminal law framework regarding the integrity of individuals. Since 2002, she has been teaching the subject of "sexual criminal law" at KU Leuven. She is affiliated with the Interfaculty Institute for Family and Sexuality Sciences. From 2004 to 2009, she worked as an equal opportunities adviser for the Flemish Minister for Equal Opportunities. In 2008 she became a member of the Board of Directors of the Interfederal Equal Opportunities Center. Since September 2014, she has been Deputy Director of the Institute for the equality of women and men which coordinates the sexual assault referral centers (SARC's).



Maud-Salomé Ekila is a Congolese journalist and documentary-maker. She has worked as a TV host for daily news programs in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and was the editor-in-chief of the channel "Tele Haiti" in Port-Au-Prince. Most of her documentary work focuses on the history of Africa and people of African descent. In 2009, her documentary "Kongo's of Martinique" was released. She is an activist, fighting impunity and the marginalization of Africans worldwide. She has been working for Dr. Denis Mukwege since 2012, producing the documentary "The Hospital of Doctor Mukwege " that same year. The communications officer for Dr. Denis Mukwege and the Panzi Foundation in DRC, she joined the international Mukwege Foundation team in 2018.

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Johanna Nelles, Head of the Violence against Women Division and Executive Secretary of the monitoring mechanism of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (GREVIO).

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