



Freedom from Torture

Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture

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Dear OHCHR colleagues,

Please find attached a submission from Freedom from Torture (which can be abbreviated as 'FfT') for the forthcoming Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)**, scheduled for the 19th session of the UPR working group in April-May 2014.

Freedom from Torture (formerly the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture) is a UK-based human rights organisation and one of the world's largest torture treatment centres. We are the only organisation in the UK dedicated solely to the care and treatment of survivors of torture and organised violence. Since our foundation over 25 years ago, more than 50,000 people have been referred to us for rehabilitation and other forms of care and practical assistance. We have centres in London, Manchester, Newcastle, Birmingham and Glasgow.

Specialist clinicians in our Medico-Legal Report Service use forensic methods to document physical and psychological evidence of torture. Our medico-legal reports (MLRs) are instructed for by solicitors and used in connection with survivors' claims for international protection in the UK. Through our Country Reporting Programme we contribute evidence drawn from these MLRs, presented in an anonymised and aggregated format, to UN human rights accountability processes, including the UPR process.

Our submission for the second UPR of the DRC draws on our forensic evidence of torture of women by a variety of state actors in the DRC mainly in non-conflict contexts, as documented by our doctors using the Istanbul Protocol.¹ Our evidence demonstrates the extensive use of rape and other forms of sexual torture against women detained in the DRC mostly for political reasons; a variety of other torture methods used against women; extremely poor prison conditions; and lack of access to justice, including due process, for women victims of torture in the DRC.

Please direct any inquiries relating to this submission to:

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¹ *Istanbul Protocol, Manual on the Effective Investigation and Documentation of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment*, United Nations New York & Geneva, 2004, at para. 187, <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/training8Rev1en.pdf>

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