

Fighting the Silence Factsheet

- The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) was invaded by Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi in 1998. The ensuing conflict lasted officially until 2004, but continues to flare up today. Eventually Angola, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Sudan and Chad joined DRC in the counter attack.
- In the Democratic Republic of Congo since 1998 over 5.4 million people have died as a direct result of the war. The population of DRC is 56 million
- There are only 250 miles of paved roadway in the DRC which is the same size as Western Europe.
- The DRC has vast natural resources, including copper, tin, diamonds and coltan (important in manufacturing mobile phones).
- The diamond industry in DRC is worth \$870 million/yr. Most miners earn less than \$1 per day.
- Life expectancy is 45 years. Infant mortality is 120 per 1000 live births. (In the UK the figure is 5 per 1000).
- Over 1.2 million people in the DRC cannot return to their homes for fear of violence.
- Currently the national rate of HIV infection is 20%. In 1998, it was 5%.

Rape is used systematically as a weapon of war. Statistics are difficult to verify since social stigma and social chaos mean many rapes go unreported.

- In 2006, 27,000 women and girls reported being raped in DRC's South Kivu province.
- Fistula (destruction of the vagina) is a widespread medical problem and is reported by most doctors as a war injury.
- DRC rape victims have been as young as 3 years old and as old as 70.
- Incidents of sexual violence against men and boys in DRC are increasing.

Sources: BBC, Transafrica Forum, United Nations Food Programme, African Security Review