

APRIL 14, 2017

URGENT ACTION PETITION

THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: APRIL 13 ATTACK, SOUTH KIVU

Women Thrive Alliance is a global feminist advocacy network comprised of 264 grassroots women's rights and gender equality organizations in over 50 countries. We received extremely concerning news today that a representative of one of our Alliance members in the South Kivu province of the Democratic Republic of Congo was brutally attacked last night. He was shot while at home with his family on the evening of April 13 and has since been hospitalized. He is alive but his condition remains unknown.

This is the second time in three months that this organization has been targeted and attacked because of their work to end child marriage. In February, the organization's lead coordinator was attacked both professionally and personally. His home was robbed by armed men, who stole his work computer, flash drives, and telephone, and brutally assaulted his wife. Thanks to the support of Frontline Defenders he and his family were evacuated from the region.

Now, the organization's focal point for early and forced child marriage in the Uvira territory of South Kivu has been targeted following their successful campaign that led to the imprisonment of 15 perpetrators of early and forced child marriage.

This news follows several incidents noted by numerous Alliance members in the Democratic Republic of Congo. **We are deeply troubled and concerned not only by the brutality but by the growing frequency of these attacks on women's rights and gender equality organizations in the country. Attacks on defenders of women's human rights are detrimental to the achievement of gender equality worldwide, as outlined in Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG5).**

To #AchieveSDG5 we need a strong, safe, and supported grassroots women's rights movement comprised of advocates such as these. The following individuals and organizations joined their names to our petition to the government of the Democratic Republic of Congo to denounce these attacks and to call on their support and protection of defenders of women's human rights.