

President Joseph Kabila  
Cabinet du Président  
Palais de la Nation  
Kinshasa/Gombe  
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Email: [cabinet\\_president@yahoo.fr](mailto:cabinet_president@yahoo.fr)

Your Excellency:

I am writing to you out of concern for **Justine Masika Bihamba**, who has been targeted by the military of the Democratic Republic of the Congo because of her work as the coordinator of the women's human rights organization, *Synergie des femmes contre les violences sexuelles* (SFVS). SFVS counselors have regularly been threatened and attacked because of their work.

On September 18, 2007, six army soldiers forced their way into Justine's house while she was away. They tied up her six children at gunpoint, and assaulted two of them. One soldier then tried to rape Justine's 21-year-old daughter, and failing to do so he sexually assaulted her with a knife. Justine returned home during the attack and immediately telephoned the authorities. Justine and her children identified the soldiers involved in their attack, but the military police refused to arrest the men and claimed that there was no evidence against them. On September 27, 2007, Justine lodged a legal complaint against the soldiers. More than one year on from the attack, however, the men have still not been arrested or brought to trial.

I ask you to immediately ensure the safety of human rights defender Justine Masika Bihamba and her family. Furthermore, I urge you to call for an immediate, full and impartial investigation into the attack on her family, including the sexual assault and attempted rape of her daughter, with the aim of promptly bringing the perpetrators to justice.

Thank you for your consideration of this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

*Copy to:*  
Ambassador Faida M. Mitifu  
Embassy of the Democratic Republic of Congo  
Suite 601  
1726 M Street NW  
Washington, DC 20036