

Mukwege (Interpreter) :

To the President of the University of Tokyo,

To the director of IFI, Institute for Future Initiatives,

To ASVCC members,

Distinguished guests

To all faculty members and students,

Ladies and gentlemen.

First, I'd like to thank the University of Tokyo for this opportunity. It is a real honor for me to speak at this prestigious university here in Tokyo on the issue of the peace, justice, and women's rights. I would also like to thank the IFI for the many initiatives taken, not only in the future but also on a global scale. I believe this perspective will make the World will be a much better as no one will be left behind. The IFI, Institute for Future Initiatives, are making a lot of efforts and I'm pleased with that as well. It is a great honor for me to be speaking at such a prestigious University of Tokyo. I am going to talk about the peace, justice, and women's rights. I deeply care about these related issues and they have been at the heart of my life mission.

So, these three concepts, peace, justice and women's rights are interconnected, interdependent and reinforce each other. Without peace, there cannot be justice and there cannot be respect of women's rights without peace and justice. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 rightly proclaims in its preamble that the recognition of the inherent dignity of all members of the human family and of the equal and inalienable rights is the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world. So in the wake of the adaption of many other international standards for the protection of human rights, but also and especially thanks to women who fought to bring change in attitudes and laws and thereby retaking their fundamental freedoms, the second half of the 20th Century has been characterized by tremendous advances in women's rights around the world. Ladies and gentlemen let us remember that until quite recently women had no rights to vote or rights to work or to own property, and I had to switch from the guardianship of their fathers to that of their husbands.

In the aftermath of the war, during which almost entire generation of men had fallen into combat or been wounded, women did demonstrate by their courage and added value that gender relations are not static, but on the contrary, can evolve and be changed. So, such changes and progress did take place. However, gender equality is yet to be achieved. Women have gradually acquired professional responsibilities, gained their financial autonomy, and the rights to be elected as the head of a State or a company. Clearly, some progress has been achieved. Meanwhile, this progress has profoundly changed the paradigm of male domination to embrace a more inclusive view of equality and mutual respect in many parts of the world. This disruption and transformation of relations between women and

men, both in the family sphere and in the society, has been a major factor in human and social development, in economic growth and in the strengthening of progressive democratic societies.

Ladies and gentlemen, despite this remarkable progress achieved in recent decades human rights and women's rights remain fragile. Human rights and international humanitarian law are floated, taken lightly daily on all continents. So, human rights and international human laws have been rampaged. In 2019, the erosion of human rights in general and women's rights, including sexual and reproductive rights such as the right to abortion or rights to contraception, is a disgraceful setback in our civilization and regression of one of the greatest advanced of the 20th Century.

I attended the UN Security Council to support the Resolution 2467. I was so disappointed to witness even progressive countries spending weeks and many hours debating on sexual and reproductive rights, which are considered as undisputable acquired women rights over which we should not try to deny. So, it was saddening that we had to spend so much time on these matters. So, this regression to our rights and fundamental freedoms is occurring in the context marked by a disturbing resurgence of nationalism and populism. These leveling down is best exemplified in the mitogenic words and (#####@00:28:18) policies of some country leaders who were once at the forefront of progress, and so-called strong men who use power to threaten the rights of women. So, this regression, this current trend of declining women's rights invites us to remind the World that yesterday's achievements must imperatively be reaffirmed today in order to be consolidated tomorrow.

So, the afore-mentioned trend can be witnessed everywhere around the globe. Women are yet to gain the equality that we had envisaged. In a war context, such in the Eastern Democratic Congo, the area where I am from, violence occurring in the area results from prevailing discrimination and worsening of abuse that have been going on at the society as well as family levels.

Ladies and gentlemen, The Bukavu is the capital of South Kivu province. That is the home of the Panzi Hospital that we founded 20 years ago, and unfortunately, this place has been labelled the "capital of rape". In fact, it is under the context of an economic conflict for the control of minerals imposed upon us for more than 20 years that rape as a weapon of war and as strategy of terror appeared for the first time in our region. These barbaric acts have the effect of destroying the matrix of life, the family, social and economic fabric, and of traumatizing entire communities who are then forced to abandon or flee their land, leaving it to militia groups, acting on behalf of regional leaders and multinationals, to capture mineral fields and natural resources of our region. This economic war is at root of a security and political instability that has resulted in the deaths of more than six million people. So, as pointed out by the director of Institute for Future Initiatives, the biggest tragedy after the World War II has been occurring in the DRC. We have witnessed the displacement of more than four million people and there has been a

situation where displaced people could not stay in one place for more than six months. Whenever people could flee to another place, the armed group will follow them, so people had to keep fleeing again and again. So, they cannot harvest anything as livelihood.

The result has been that we have many IDPs and hundreds of thousands of women have experienced sexual violence. At the Panzi Hospital, only handful of those women could receive treatment, so it's only the tip of the iceberg. This cycle of violence unfortunately continues. At the Panzi Hospital, the consequences of these cruel, inhumane, and degrading acts committed on women bodies are being treated. And over the 25 years, we have come up with a holistic care for survivors and their communities over the last 20 years. The Panzi Foundation provides such healthcare. Since 1999, we have treated nearly 100,000 patients including nearly 55,000 survivors of sexual violence. Also, 45,000 patients are with serious gynecological conditions including urogenital fistula. In the industrialized world, such gynecological conditions are no longer seen, and people do not know such conditions, but those conditions still exist in our country. Also, genital prolapse is observed as well. All women are affected. Girls, even babies. The youngest I operated was six months old who was raped by an adult male. As a result, the organs of such a baby were completely destroyed. The oldest I treated was more than 80 years old. On average, 10 women victims of sexual violence are consulted daily at the Panzi Hospital.

At Panzi Hospital we have put in place a one stop center model to meet different needs of our patients. Victims of sexual violence only need to tell their story once. For example, in the past, they had to go to one department to tell their story and then at another department, repeating their story many times. That could be quite traumatic, so we must avoid such a situation. Because of the trauma, women cannot bare to do that. Therefore, one stop center concept is quite useful in fulfilling the individual needs. Psychological care, the physical care, and medical care can be provided and economic and social reintegration and free access to justice can also be provided. And every day, we are amazed by the resilience and strength demonstrated by our patients. So, holistic support allows victims to recover first psychologically and then medically. Women sometimes are tortured and then sexually assaulted and raped. So, for such victims, psychological recovery is very difficult. So, first, they need to psychologically recover, and they also need to go through many surgical operations. Sometimes we need to remove some part of the intestines. But after this ordeal, they can acquire new skills and then reintegrate into their communities with added value that will benefit their entire community. But they go through a huge suffering, but we provide support as much as possible to transform, convert such sufferings into strengths. And we provide different types of cares. All of this turn survivors into the agents of change in their community. Ultimately, survivors become the key members of their community, agents of change, and defenders not only of their rights but those of their children as well as human rights in general. Furthermore, it is important for our patients to get educated since especially for women and girls'

education is very empowering. As women get educated, it is less likely that they will fall victims of sexual abuse and violence during the rest of their life. By providing women with holistic care, economic and education opportunities, women formerly sexual violence victims can rediscover or find their life purpose.

But we must provide support for those who experienced inhumane violence. Those women have gone through the worst of life experiences, but it is in their courage and strong will to enjoy life again that we get inspiration and determination to pursue our humanitarian mission and (#####@00:37:50) to fight for them.

Ladies and gentlemen, when we started treating the second generation of victims, children raped during their teenage years, we realized that our work could not be limited to the operating room. So, we started witnessing and treating children –born of rape themselves– being raped and destroyed, which required them to go through surgical operations. So, that’s when we started traveling around the world to alert the public to the seriousness of the situation to defend the rights of victims and to fight against the root causes of violence on women.

Some of the root causes of such violence is impunity and the fact that people can commit crimes without being held accountable, corruption and, unfortunately, the traffic of conflicts minerals. Some of these minerals are used in manufacturing mobile phones in our pockets. Without pointing fingers, as you know, according to some experts, eighty percent of the World coltan used in mobile phones comes from conflict areas, areas i where the bodies of women have been turned into battle grounds just for the sake of controlling mining sites. Therefore, I believe we bear some responsibility. Every day we need to be mindful that these smartphones or electronic devices that we use are of course clean devices and cannot be blamed. . Rather, it is silence that has become the biggest problem. It is silence that should be blamed. Our campaign to raise awareness on these atrocities started in our own country. We tried to warn our own political authorities. But soon, we realized that the problem originated at much higher international levels and that similar crimes were occurring not in a single limited place but in various places around the world. This was not just a simple humanitarian crisis. It was of a global scale and it is no longer a crisis that pertains to the female gender alone. It is a crisis of humanity because the women’s body has become a battleground. So, we cannot explain this as a limited humanitarian crisis, rather than a crisis of our won humanity. It is a suffering of the entire humanity and we have a role to play. Both near Rwanda and Sudan, rape has been used as an ethnic cleansing technique. Nigeria, Iraq, Syria, the sale of women on markets for slaves is occurring, and this is happening in the 21st century. International society and humanity, for us, it is a shame and a challenge us. And this presents questions in Columbia or the Democratic Republic of Congo. Low-level economic interests drive these activities. The protection of cocaine and the illegal exploitation of mineral resources, such as gold and coltan, are at the heart of the cycles of violence of which women and children are the first victims. To ensure that there is non-

recurrence of widespread violence against women, we decided to get involved in campaigning for gender equality, justice and peace. We strongly believe that it is through gender equality and justice that women rights can be respected and that is the road towards peace.

Ladies and gentlemen, 25 years after the World Conference on Women and the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, gender inequality is still not a history of the past. It still prevails today. It is an ongoing problem. Women are not equal with men. Under the French presidency of the G7 this year, I had the honor of co-chairing the consultative council for gender equality. With various notable personalities committed to women's rights, what we have done is to identify good practices, 79 progressive legislative measures adopted from all continents, and we have worked over a one-year period. And we have a proposed a legislative package oriented on four axes aimed at ending gender-based violence. First, regulations aiming at achieving gender-equality Second, regulations to ensure the right to education, health for all. This is the second axis. Depending on the location, women have no access to education nor to medical and public health, especially when it comes to reproductive health. Just because they're women Third, ensuring economic freedom of women. In many places, we find that women are not able to engage in their own business. They need to receive the consent of their husbands. Fourth, we need to ensure full equality between women and men in public policies. We have many constitutions, that is the case of the constitution of my country the DRC, gender equality is clearly stated, that there needs to be equal number of both genders within the government and administrative levels.

However, in many countries we find that this is not the case. Well, in many countries we have progressive legislation in place, but it is just for a public relation purpose. However, when you look at in reality often times women are left behind in public institutions. Over the recent G7, in Biarritz, Heads of States and governments, including Japan, pledged to implement our recommendations. Commitments were made, especially to ensure that there is at least one progressive law, women's human rights, by the next G7 summit. And to incorporate this into their national system and at the same time removing those that discriminate against women. Here, we are talking about G7, most progressive and most rich countries. Sadly, even among G7 countries we can still find discriminatory practices in country laws. And therefore, at the G7 consultative council for gender equality, we recommended that each Head of State reflect back on their legislative measures and ensure that discriminatory laws are removed. Meantime, progressive laws need to be adopted, especially for the most prosperous seven nations. Here, I invite you to pay attention to the fact that if the seven richest countries still have laws that are not progressive, discriminatory laws, what do you think would be the case of the poorest nations? You can draw the lesson. This call for action oriented towards laws is important. However, the most important is to bridge the existing gap between international laws and conventions and the reality. The reality which is

experienced by women around the world. As you know, when we read international conventions, we can understand that we do not need any more of these that lead us to equality. But the reality, unfortunately, as experienced by women around the world requires that we fight concretely against injustice and impunity, which are often the norm rather than the exception on the matter of sexual crimes. Ladies and gentlemen, whenever I meet survivors of sexual violence, being it in Columbia, Ukraine, or Iraq, women always urged me to mobilize the will of States and the international community to fight against impunity that has prevailed for so long, be it domestically or internationally. Such impunity has prevailed for too long. Due to lack of access to justice and because of impunity, the phenomenon persists even in areas where fighting has stopped since violence has been normalized as a metastasis in the society and persists wherever insecurity continues. Yet, human community that did not prevent this violence on women has, at the minimum, the obligation to listen to their words, the words of women, to tell them the truth, to prosecute, and try the perpetrators. And by so doing, finally grant the victimized woman a reparation. After 20 years of existence, we welcome the recent conviction of the International Criminal Court of warlord Bosco Ntaganda for various prejudices of sexual violence recognized for the first time by the court as a war crime and a crime against humanity. The latter, the warlord Bosco Ntaganda, has raped on a massive scale and his militiamen have disemboweled pregnant women and used girls as sex slaves in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. Let's hope that this precedent would help draw a red line against rape committed in times of conflict and provide incentives to States to prosecute and try the perpetrators of these heinous crimes.

In the DRC, peace would not be built on mass graves and denial of truth and justice. Almost 10 years ago, the Office of United Nations Commissioner for Human Rights published the Mapping Report documenting the most serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law committed within the territory of the DRC between 1993 and 2003. The report provided evidence of serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law committed during this. There was a tally and evidence of 617 cases of international crimes, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and basis of genocide. As academics, I strongly recommend you read this report so that you can see how the international justice system is failing. In this report you can find tallies of women being buried alive in front of their families while they were screaming. And the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights report has written of such facts. Such crimes have been tallied and reported by the UN Commissioner for Human Rights and 10 years has passed but nothing has been done. Perpetrators of these 617 tallied in the Mapping Report, which I again recommend you to read, you can find it out, are currently holding , holding positions in politics or in the army of the DRC although they burn up homes and killed children as well as the elderly after burning down homes. The Mapping Report recommends the creation of transitional justice mechanisms such as the establishment of an international tribunal for the crimes in the DRC or, by default, mixed specialized chambers, the creation of Truth Commission

and reparation program and guarantees of non- repetition. These have been recommended within the mapping report.

At this very moment as I speak, however, nothing has been done to implement the recommendations put together in the Mapping Report. And therefore, we are pleading for, and I ask you to support us, fully exploiting the Mapping Report's recommendations in the interest of justice and truth. This is a prerequisite for building lasting peace in the DRC and the Great Lakes region, and I can also say for the World peace. This is so because if we allow burying women alive, grouping people in churches and burning them alive, while letting the perpetrators with impunity and rolling out red carpets for them, then it means our international and humanitarian laws have no meaning

Ladies and gentlemen, justice is not only the most effective mechanism for preventing crimes but also a crucial step in the process of healing for the victims. For many, the pursuit of justice can become the *raison d'être*. How many women I have met whose only wish was to be recognized as a victim, as not being responsible for what happened to them. Many women have said that it will be adequate if they can get a certification from the justice system establishing their innocence in what happened to them. Yet, there are still many obstacles in place, especially legal and procedural to get just an opportunity to speak out. Many women, however, have had the courage to file a complaint. However, even then most likely they will never get a reparation. In this regard, we have been pleading with my co-laureate of the Nobel Peace Prize, Nadia Murad, to establish the global fund for survivors which will officially be launched on October 30th. This innovative mechanism centered around the survivors and their needs will address the current gaps in domestic and international justice. It will consist of a fund that will provide reparations for individual and collective rehabilitation programs, and reinsertion process in countries that denied their responsibility. The Fund will also apply in cases of countries willing to support the victims but are unable to do so because of lack of technical capability and or financial assistance.

Ladies and gentlemen, sexual violence knows no social or cultural barrier. Nobody can say in this World that this issue has nothing to do with us. We cannot turn the other way. It is now a question of engaging men in the struggle for equality and human dignity. We therefore call upon men to free themselves from patriarchy and their toxic masculinity, and to mobilize along women in the interest of all. We remain confident in the future and in human nature. The liberation of the word of the survivors transfers shame and stigma to not the victims, but to the executioners, the perpetrators, and defies the patriarchal order. Global movements such as "breaking the silence" or "Me Too" show us that the paradigm shift of male dominance is within our reach if simply men can support them, if men support the idea that women break silence, we can change this paradigm. This is no fatality. The way exists for building a much better society and more equal, which promotes the wellbeing of all and where women can enjoy the same

rights as men. Let's not be indifferent to the fate of thousands of women around the world who are being killed even in G7 countries such as France where one woman is killed every three days by the hands of their partner, just by the mere fact that they have been born as women, they have been subjected to inhumane treatment. This cannot be condoned. We must stand up and say no to these assassinations and stand up to the inhumane treatment that women continue to be victims in the world. We need to work as one in the spirit of solidarity so that we can work individually and collectively, locally and globally, to build a better world free from rap and sexual violence. This aspiration can be achieved and each of us can contribute in turning this dream into a reality. Together, let us step up. Let us work together alongside women for a fair, equitable and more peaceful world. Thank you very much for your kind attention.