

## Surgeon warns of 'unbearable atrocities' in DR Congo's east

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A leading Congolese surgeon who treats women sexually abused during conflict warned Tuesday of "unbearable atrocities" being committed in the country's east including the mutilation of babies and the disemboweling of pregnant women.

Denis Mukwege, who is the subject of an acclaimed 2015 film about his efforts to help [women](#) raped by the military and militia in the Democratic Republic of Congo, said that more than 600 people had been killed since October 2014.

"The images of these [mass atrocities](#) are unbearable: [pregnant women](#) who have been disembowelled, mutilated babies, human beings bound and butchered with knives," he wrote in a message to AFP.

Mukwege, who is director of the Panzi Hospital that he founded in 1999 in Bukavu in the east of DRC, called for "radical change of the current system".

He said that the "crimes and cruelties that have plagued the east of the DRC for 20 years had been reborn with a new intensity".

The region has suffered chronic unrest for two decades fuelled by ethnic differences and claims to land, along with bids for control over valuable natural resources and rivalry between regional powers.

New York University's Congo Research Group published a report in

March detailing a series of massacres of civilians since October 2014, claiming that soldiers from the regular army participated in the killings.

DR Congo has been in crisis since President Joseph Kabila's re-election in late 2011 in polls marred by irregularities and massive fraud.

Tensions are running high in the country amid opposition fears that Kabila, in power since 2001, may refuse to leave office at the end of his term this December.

The UN has criticised the recent wave of arbitrary arrests of opposition activists and protesters in the country.

Mukwege's intervention came on the same day as celebrations were being held to mark the 19th anniversary of the date when Kabila's father, Laurent-Desire Kabila, came to power.

Mukwege said the Congolese people feel "abandoned" but hoped that they "are mobilising to achieve the long-awaited change".

Mukwege received the 2014 Sakharov Prize for human rights awarded by the European Parliament for his commitment to women raped during conflict.

Belgian filmmaker Thierry Michel's "The Man Who Mends Women" follows Mukwege's efforts to repair the physical and psychological injuries of the victims of sexual violence.

The film was controversially banned by DRC authorities who claimed there was a "clear intent to harm and sully the image of our army".

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