

Check against delivery

UPR19/Democratic Republic of Congo

Statement by Slovakia

29 April 2014

Mr President,

Slovakia thanks the delegation of the Democratic Republic of Congo for the comprehensive overview of the human rights situation with an emphasis on progress since the first UPR cycle. While taking note of the Congolese Government's efforts to address main human rights challenges, progress remains unsatisfactory. To achieve positive results, national authorities should pursue more targeted human rights approach.

There are several issues which continue to raise serious human rights concerns. The justice system would require comprehensive reform to fight impunity, increase independence and impartiality of judiciary and to ensure equal access to justice. We encourage the Congolese authorities to thoroughly investigate all cases intimidation, threats and attacks against human rights defenders and civil society representatives. Reports on violations of children's rights such as sexual violence, recruitment and use of child soldiers and early marriages need to be addressed by relevant national bodies.

Situation of women is of particular concern. Discriminatory laws and practices and impunity remain among root causes of violence against women. Also, the number of women facing sexual violence in DRC is alarming.

We would like to make two recommendations to the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo:

1. **Develop appropriate mechanisms to prevent all forms of violence against women; to effectively prosecute perpetrators of such violence and to provide adequate redress for victims.**
2. **Take all necessary steps to ensure freedom of media and to duly address all cases of restrictions on media.**

Thank you.