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Chair

Mr. Scott Reid

Subcommittee on International Human Rights of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development

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•(1315)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, CPC)): Order.

Please take your seats.

Due to a logistical error, we did not get a number of things, including gavels, so my coffee mug is going to suffice.

[Translation]

This being Thursday, October 27, the fourth meeting of the Subcommittee on International Human Rights of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development is called to order.

[English]

We have two witnesses with us today. I'll ask them to introduce themselves, and then we'll go directly to their presentations.

Another problem we have is their presentations were to be audiovisual on the monitors, but there has been a further error, so they're going to have to read their submissions into the record. I apologize to our witnesses for this. We do take this issue very seriously and we take you, as witnesses, very seriously as well.

Would you please introduce yourselves and then we'll begin?

[Translation]

Mrs. Nicole Mwaka (Member, Congo Yetu Initiative): My name is Nicole Mwaka. My colleague and I represent the Congo Yetu Initiative. I am a defender of human rights in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Mr. Desire Kilolwa (President and Founder, Human Rights, Congo Yetu Initiative): My name is Desire Kilolwa.

[English]

Actually I am a co-founder of the organization called Congo Yetu Initiative. We've been working in the Congo since 2000.

I am with Charmian.

Ms. Charmian Davi (Member, Public Relations, Congo Yetu Initiative): I'm Charmian Davi. I'm a member of the organization Congo Yetu Initiative, which has been Desire's founded organization since 2000 in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The Chair: Please feel free to begin the presentation.

Mr. Desire Kilolwa: We are trying to give our brief presentation for the country.

The Democratic Republic of Congo is located in central Africa. It is the second-largest country by area in Africa. It used to be the third-largest, but after the new country was established in Sudan, we have become the second-largest. We have a population of approximately 80 million.

We are talking about the conflict in the Congo. This conflict and war in the Congo is described by some as Africa's first world war.

There have been a number of complex reasons for this conflict, and one of them is a basic crisis, such as water, land, and access to and control of rich minerals. We have had the problem of genocide in Rwanda since April 1994.

Since the conflict began in 1994, eight million of our people have died. It has been the world's deadliest conflict since the Second World War. Some say that 45,000 continue to die each month, and the most targeted group is women and children. This is a consequence of the war we are talking about.

The Boston Globe reported that in this conflict 1,152 women are raped every day; 13% of victims are under 14 years of age; 3% die as a result of rape; and 10% to 12% get HIV.

According to the UNHCR, there are two million internal displaced persons.

Since 2006, 350,000 rape cases have been reported, and many more than that number are not reported.

The Guardian reports that 48 women are raped every hour in the Kivu region. And the Kivu region has been targeted as the worst place for women to live.

According to the Enough Project, rape is a weapon of war in the Congo.

The UN Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict declared the DRC is the "rape capital of the world".

We have 19% of our population who are children and are affected by this conflict. They account for 47% of deaths. UNAIDS estimated that 400,000 to 500,000 people were living with HIV/AIDS at the end of 2007. Why? As you may recall, most of the conflict in the Congo comes from Rwanda and Uganda, and in the 1980s these countries had a higher level of HIV. And since the conflict, because of the rape, we now observe a higher level of HIV in the population in the Kivu region.

As a result of HIV, 770,000 children have been orphaned, 2.7 million of the deaths have been children, and two in five children will die before their fifth birthday.

Sixty-seven percent of children of primary school age are currently out of school. According to UNICEF, 50% of children between six and eleven years of age are out of school.

Human rights activists and journalists have been targeted and killed, and some just disappear.

These are the consequences of the conflict in the Congo.

• (1320)

The question we have today for you as members of Parliament is does this subject merit our true attention? According to the UN, we have 48 women raped every four minutes. Will we remain indifferent until the number hits 200 rapes every hour?

The question is what are we waiting for so we can be involved in this conflict in the Congo? Are you waiting until we reach this number of 200 rapes an hour? Where precisely is the cut-off point for compassion? Where is the compassion of Canadians towards this conflict in the Congo? How many women must be raped before we start to care enough?

• (1325)

Ms. Charmian Davi: Can I say something?

The Chair: Please, do. Don't be shy.

Ms. Charmian Davi: I have been with Congo Yetu Initiative for the last six months, working very closely with this man, Desire Kilolwa. I just want to say in my testimony that from working with him—and he is the founder of Congo Yetu Initiative—I have really come to understand the level of suffering that is taking place in the Congo every day. Women and children are being attacked and raped.

We're talking about babies, six months-ld, being attacked by militia. I will be blunt, because this is terrible, terrible stuff. These are babies who are ending up with incontinence and they're peeing on themselves because they have had guns inserted into them. I mean, the suffering in the Democratic Republic of Congo is beyond—it is beyond....

We are asking today for the Canadian government to step up to the plate and lead the international community. I understand the Security Council resolution 1325 is a beginning for Canada. It was a wonderful beginning, leading women in peace and security toward the right peace that the Congo needs. It really is enough....

Mr. Desire Kilolwa: I'll continue to finish my presentation so I can give you an understanding that the situation is so tough for me. I am a victim of this. I lost some of my family members.

I'll say why Canada is needed in the Congo.

We said Canada has been maintaining its longstanding presence in the Congo, particularly in the Kivu region. As a co-chair country, Canada is a friend and a member of the international conference on the Great Lakes region. It has an important bilateral development assistance program with the DRC. Canada contributes, as well, to numerous multilateral initiatives in the areas of peace, good governance, poverty reduction, and humanitarian assistance.

Our recommendations today are that we would like Canada to respond to the urgent humanitarian crisis and reinforce Canada's commitment to work for peace and security in the east of the DRC in collaboration with the DRC government and local NGO partners.

We would also like Canada to provide concrete action steps to help address the challenges and the lack of security, weak governance, and lack of infrastructure in the eastern DRC.

We would also like Canada to develop tangible projects in these challenges, indicative of the range of needs that must be addressed in the Congo.

What we are trying to do, as an organization, is advance the status of women and children in the Congo and support women and children who are victims of sexual violence.

I will finish there, and I will pass to my colleague Nicole, who will address some of the issues we've been discussing.

Thank you.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Nicole Mwaka: Thank you for letting me make these remarks, Desire.

Greeting, dear friends, and thank you for welcoming us today. For us, this is not only an indication of your solidarity and compassion towards the humiliation we are enduring. It is also an indication of your commitment to respect the universal values of human rights as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, on which the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms is built.

My dear friends, a right is viable only if, when it is violated, victims have a real possibility of recourse. Practically, therefore, in countries like ours, where human rights are disregarded by those holding the power, most victims have no real recourse. I speak to you as a victim of torture. I have been in Canada for less than a year. I am Canadian. I went back to the Democratic Republic of Congo to work in the field of human rights. I was arrested, detained and subject to torture there in September 2010 and, for safety reasons, I am now back in Canada, my second country. That is what brings me here today. I have come to testify as to what is actually happening there.

As my colleague emphasized, the conflicts in the DRC have now gone beyond a national and regional scope and are becoming an international problem. As you have already been told, there are countless victims. Villages have been burned, children have been recruited to fight with the rebel forces, women have been eviscerated and raped, to tell only part of the story. Today, rape is used as a weapon of war in the Democratic Republic of Congo as a way to humiliate the population as a whole, to humiliate women and to intimidate and destabilize entire communities. Because, as you know, assaulting your women is the same as assaulting you personally. Women are the givers of life, and now they are being destroyed in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Crimes like that are crimes against humanity, war crimes, even crimes of genocide.

Given that situation, Canada, my second country, has affirmed and continues to strongly reaffirm its faith in the universal values of human rights, of justice, and of the equality of men and women. Relying on those principles that Canada has affirmed, as well as those of international cooperation, we appear before you today, before this Subcommittee on International Human Rights, to appeal to Canada. We appeal to you to help us as victims to obtain our right to justice, to reparation and to the truth. We want to know why these assaults are occurring, why women are being so brutally raped. We know of one reason, one goal: to destroy an entire community.

As victims, we are asking you for three things. As I said earlier, the right to the truth is very important because we have to know what has happened, why the Congo is being attacked and who the attackers are. We are also asking for the right to justice. We want to be able to ask that all the alleged attackers—I used that term because nothing has yet been done and no charges have yet been laid—answer in court for their actions and for the crimes they have committed in the DRC. When they have to answer for their crimes in court, it will be the start of a healing process for us as victims. It is hard enough when your torturer is in power; it is even harder when that is the same person from whom you have to ask for justice.

To a significant extent, the justice system in the Congo is dysfunctional. Most cases involving crimes against humanity are under the control of the military justice system—which, as we all know, simply obeys its superiors. It is hard for victims to obtain justice in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

• (1330)

This is why we are asking the international community, as we are asking the Parliament of Canada today, to exert all the pressure it can on our government so that the alleged perpetrators of crimes against humanity are brought before international courts. The rape of women is no longer a national issue.

Our final request is the right to reparation. As victims, we must as a principle be compensated for the harm we have suffered. As we have told you, families have been scattered. Children roam the streets, not knowing where their parents are. Women have simply lost both their desire to live and their dignity as women. They are rejected by their own husbands and by their communities. It is hard for those women: they are destitute and do not know what to do. They need reparation.

The reparation can take several forms. As you know, I have no wish to go back over the history of the conflict in the DRC. But the

various reports by experts from the United Nations and from international organizations like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch are clear as to the real causes of the conflicts in the DRC.

So we are asking that the Canadian mining companies extracting resources in the DRC become involved in the reparation process. This is very important for every Canadian. For us, reparation is an absolute requirement, on the psychological, sociological, medical and legal levels I have described.

Thank you for your attention.

We are really counting on your committee. We are also counting on the Parliament of Canada to exert every possible pressure on our government in matters regarding the crisis in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Great Lakes region in general.

Thank you.

• (1335)

The Chair: Thank you.

Just a second, please.

[*English*]

Do you have anything separate to say to add to all of this, or are you here more for support of the witnesses?

Ms. Charmian Davi: I'm sure everyone in this room is aware of three very serious attacks that occurred in 2011. In June 2011, 250 women and children were raped in a small village in south Kivu. I have documentation on three or four other attacks this year on 50 to 100 women. I just want to make that point.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

[*Translation*]

Thanks to all our witnesses.

[*English*]

We are down to 25 minutes, so taking into account the concern we had about the way in which questions were awarded last time, I propose five-minute rounds. They will be as follows: NDP, Conservative, Liberal, Conservative, and NDP.

We will begin with Madame Pécelet.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP): Good afternoon. Thank you for coming to testify before us.

I have a number of questions for you.

When you say weapons of war, do the people committing these acts use any techniques in particular? Is this something that is organized? How is it organized? What would we see happening if we were there?

Mrs. Nicole Mwaka: As you know, when an act is committed, what matters most is the intent behind the act. Usually, after a man rapes a woman, he leaves. In the specific cases we are presenting here, it is different. Sticks and blades are inserted into the women's vaginas in order to mutilate them. These are not rapes committed to satisfy some kind of need; it is something else. That is the technique they use.

Usually, rapists commit the act and then leave. In the cases we are talking about, they do not leave. They mutilate the women's vaginas and their entire bodies. Some times they cut their breasts, they cut them right off.

I am sorry, this is so hard to talk about. The techniques really show that the intent behind the rapes that are continually being committed in the Congo is not normal. The intent is to destroy, to damage, to humiliate. They want to leave their mark, impose their decisions, show that they are stronger. They are sending the message that other men are worthless because they have touched their women. They touch the women to get to the men. They can do whatever they like, they don't care. That is what is going on.

Perhaps my colleague has something to add.

● (1340)

Mr. Desire Kilolwa: I would just add that the weapon being used at the moment, as my colleague has just described, is the rape itself. There were rapes in Afghanistan and in Kosovo, but the rapes in the Congo are really abnormal. It even goes beyond the rape; it is something more. I do not see what interest a 40-year-old man can have in raping a little girl of 4 or 5. What feelings can he have? What pleasure can he get? What pleasure can a man, 10 men even, get from raping a 90-year-old woman? The intent goes deeper. As my colleague said, the intent is to destroy an entire community. That is why she said we need to give it a name other than raping women. For us, it is genocide because it puts an entire community in peril.

Ms. Ève Pécelet: Do I have a little time left?

The Chair: You have two minutes.

Ms. Ève Pécelet: In terms of legal recourse, you said that it is extremely difficult to go to the torturers to demand reparation. Can you tell us who are the people committing these acts, for the most part? You mentioned that the torturers are in power, and under those circumstances, legal recourse is very difficult to get. Are they policemen, or people like that?

Mrs. Nicole Mwaka: The people committing these crimes fall into a number of categories. There are the rebel forces. There are also the forces who hold power, by which I mean the security forces, the police and the army. Rapes are also committed by other people, those just passing by who cannot be found afterwards. So you cannot get justice from them because they cannot be identified. I am not even talking about regions in the east of the country where there are conflicts.

When I talk about the difficulty of obtaining justice, I am speaking more about the armed forces, military judges. Under the Rome Statute, the military justice system in the DRC presently has the authority to sit in judgment over those committing crimes against humanity. That includes rape, which is actually considered a crime against humanity. But when you go to the military justice system, which, as we know, has to obey the military command, with its very

strict rules, the judge is not independent. The judge is bound by the hierarchy. He cannot act independently. That is why we wonder how we can seek justice from the same police and military who hold the actual power.

Today, we know that rebel forces come and rape women, but we also know that, right after the talks in Sun City, forces associated with the rebels joined with the forces in power and set up a government. These are the same rebel forces who committed the crimes in the east of the DRC before coming to the table for peace talks. They have to answer for their crimes, but they now hold the power. How can we get justice from people who hold the power? A peace and reconciliation commission was set up in the DRC but it never worked because rebel forces managed to get inside the commission. It was not independent and it could not work. In a nutshell, that is the difficulty we are facing.

● (1345)

Mr. Desire Kilolwa: Let me add something to what my colleague has just said. Speaking only about the east, there are at least 22 armed groups in North Kivu and South Kivu alone. Their leaders are mostly Rwandan. They claim that they are trying to get away from the conflict, but the facts have not yet been made public. That is the one advantage we have. We are there with the people. We are the victims of the crimes too.

A lot of charges have been issued, but behind the charges there is a reality, and the reality is the border. North Kivu and South Kivu share a border with Rwanda. People there always use their military. They know that FDLR groups cross the border at night to rape our women. They use prisoners, Hutus who were involved in the genocide, and send them into the villages of North Kivu and even South Kivu to commit rape. Last March, four people revealed all that when they were arrested.

It all complicates the situation. We do not know how to control what goes on in Rwanda. Our leadership is not strong. It does not know how to control the borders. That is the problem we are living through, as I see it.

The government in power says nothing about it. They do not want to say anything about it. There is no justice because the government is looking at the situation through rose-coloured glasses. They do not want to bring the people committing these rapes to justice. That is the situation.

[English]

Le président: We have to move to our next questioner.

That went over by three minutes, in case you are wondering. Sometimes when we're getting a good response from a witness and we come to the end of our questioning—just so everyone is aware—I take that time out of the next round from the party whose question prompted the long answer. That allows for some fairness.

Mrs. Grewal, it's your turn, please.

Mrs. Nina Grewal (Fleetwood—Port Kells, CPC): Thank you, Chair, and thank you to the witnesses for their time and presentations. Sitting here, it's really very heartbreaking and very hard to listen to their testimony.

I have a couple of questions. What are the main impediments in the DRC for the protection of women from sexual violence? To what extent has the government of the DRC shown political will to address sexual violence against women and punish those who are responsible? Please give us some specific examples as to how sexual violence is being used as a weapon of war in the DRC.

[Translation]

Mrs. Nicole Mwaka: Thank you very much for your compassion. As I said in my little message just now, living with this every day is very painful.

I am not sure whether I fully understood your question. You would like to know what the current parliament is doing to put a stop to this violence against women. Second, you asked me to give some examples of how sexual violence is used as a weapon of war. Is that correct?

[English]

Mrs. Nina Grewal: Yes.

[Translation]

Mrs. Nicole Mwaka: Let's talk about what the DRC parliament is doing. In March 2010, I was still in the Democratic Republic of Congo. On March 8, we were celebrating International Women's Day. That year, we were supposed to be hosting a number of women as part of the World March of Women. We were supposed to meet in the DRC, in South Kivu, actually, in solidarity with the women's movements denouncing the acts of violence and urging governments to act and to take concrete measures. To launch the World March of Women—I was the DRC representative in Kinshasa—we organized a march on March 27, 2010. Our starting point was our ministry responsible for gender, family and children's issues. Then we went to the parliament where we presented a memo demanding that specific measures be taken to end violence against women, and also to end everything going on in the east because more women are victims there than men. We went right up to the parliament and presented the memo. That was in March 2010, more than one year and eight months ago, and we still have not had any reply, or any results.

With reference to the legislation requiring the implementation of equality between men and women, as recommended by the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the recommendation was that each country pass legislation implementing equality between men and women. But it was never done.

Basically, there is no responsible government in the Democratic Republic of Congo at the moment. Personally, I am disappointed because, while women are still being raped, no government that can deal with women's issues can be said to exist. Women's organizations and human rights organizations like Amnesty International are mobilizing at both international and regional levels. We are fighting to make our case internationally, because we have come to understand that nothing is happening internally, despite the recommendations of a number of organizations, including the United Nations and NGOs. That is why we are coming to the international community. We hope that we will be helped by all members of the United Nations who are in solidarity with us and who want to stand up for the values of universal human rights.

Perhaps they will be able to help us put an end to this form of violence.

Violence as a weapon of war might come to an end if the conflicts in the DRC do. Because war perpetuates this kind of violence. The problem lies with the rebel forces who are in place because the forces in power permit it. They are supposed to be halting the rebel advances, but everyone is offering up women as spoils of war. An end to the war would mean an end to the violence against women in the DRC. That is why we are asking for help to end the war that is now spreading in the east of the DRC.

I am going to proceed quickly so that my colleague can speak. I have given examples of sexual violence being used as a weapon of war. You have no idea how hard it is to live through that reality, especially when you are right there.

As I said earlier, women have been raped, and then, instead of just leaving them alone, the perpetrators have tried to destroy them, to destroy their bodies. Others have not been killed. They have been left alive, but they are no longer able to walk, to feel like women, to have children. They have been destroyed as women. That is the problem.

We have plenty of examples. We even have photos, which we can provide to your committee. We will contact your communications people and provide you with cases where violence has been used as a weapon of war, and with pictures as proof.

Thank you.

You probably want to carry on.

• (1350)

[English]

Mr. Desire Kilolwa: If you go back a little bit in the peace process in South Africa, there were some five points that we wanted to develop in that. When they went there, instead of talking about things like reunification of the country, peace in the country, and all those kinds of things, they didn't talk about that. They just went to power-sharing. That's where the problem started. Instead of seeing the problem that the country was facing, they just put it aside, and started talking about power-sharing. You know the consequence. That's the consequence of all the numbers I was mentioning here. All the women that they keep on.... The number is now 48 women a day who are raped. This is one of the consequences of the peace process that went wrong in South Africa. That's why we are here.

If the country had been able to do something, if the regime in place had been able to do something, I think we would not be here. We are here because we know Congolese are like orphans today. We don't have parents. It's like a household that doesn't have parents. We don't have parents. We don't have a government. That's why we are trying to be in touch with international organizations and with international countries, to get them involved to try to help us to find peace and security in the country.

Thank you.

• (1355)

Mrs. Nina Grewal: Thank you.

The Chair: That, unfortunately, uses up the time for that round, plus three extra minutes.

I think we are going to have to give a question to Professor Cotler. I don't think we're going to have time to do the second round for the New Democrats or the Conservatives.

Professor Cotler, please begin.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Kilolwa, you talked about a community in peril. Mrs. Mwaka, you talked about crimes against humanity in a country where the government does not protect its citizens. In fact, you might say the opposite: the government, elements of the government, are responsible for the situation.

[*English*]

As you said, Mr. Kilolwa, you feel like an orphan without a parent.

[*Translation*]

First, do you think that this is a time to use the responsibility to protect doctrine so that we get concerted international action, as we did in Libya, in order to protect and save the people?

Second, what specific recommendations would you like to make to the Parliament and the Government of Canada about this perilous situation?

Mrs. Nicole Mwaka: Thank you very much for that question.

I think that, by bringing this up today, we have told ourselves that, when you are a member state of the United Nations that has ratified agreements and undertaken commitments, you are in fact responsible.

The current problem in the DRC goes beyond national responsibility. It becomes a question of international responsibility. Under international humanitarian law, we think that it is high time Canada took some leadership in protecting civilians who are being massacred in the east of the DRC as we speak.

This is an international responsibility. Human rights are universal. Every country is affected by this. This is not about a right of interference. It is about protecting civilians in a war, in a period of armed conflict. There are documents on which Canada can base its actions.

That is why we are asking the Parliament of Canada to use all the means at its disposal and all its power to urge our government to take concrete steps to protect the people who are being slaughtered in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

We have demonstrated to you here that we are living in a lawless state where anyone can come, plunder our mining resources and leave, and where people can move in without us knowing who they are.

The Democratic Republic of Congo will be holding elections soon. The elections will be held in less than a month, on November 28. People will be able to elect their leaders by using

their democratic voice. But we feel that, at the moment, whatever the results of the elections, the Congolese people may well be worse off.

We are facing a crisis today. People who follow events in Africa see how terrible things are. So we think that it is time to protect the Congolese people. We think that the Government of Canada, which is already playing a very important role in providing development aid to the Democratic Republic of Congo, should do more.

In terms of rape, through the embassy or through CIDA, you even have clinics and hospitals caring for rape victims. But we want you to go further because, like it or not, these are displaced people and they eventually come to us here as refugees. If our policy were one of prevention, they could stay in their own country and live in peace. That is what we are asking for.

So that is how I would go about answering your question.

● (1400)

[*English*]

Mr. Desire Kilolwa: I'll try also to answer that question by saying that Canada has long been in the Congo, especially in the east. Canada is a co-chair today of the international conference on the Great Lakes region. Through CIDA, Canada is still sending a lot of money to the east. So those are really tangible actions that Canada is doing in the Congo, but we would like to see more.

That is why I'm saying we are orphaned, because you've been putting in that money, but we can't see it. It can't be seen, because peace and security is a major situation. It's not the NGOs that will bring peace or the security—it needs the leadership of the government. And you, as Canada, I think you have to bring this government to an end. If you want to deal with them or have bilateral cooperations with them, they have to observe human rights. They have to observe this. Before you give them anything or have any cooperation with this government in place really, the conditions have to be that they have to respect human rights in the Congo. That is one thing.

The second thing is I know that you've been dealing with a lot of Congolese here—you send them to school here, you've been working with them—and there is still another possibility. Deal with these people and prepare them so that they can perhaps be another hand to help the government in place, or in the future—to see how they can lead this country. Because what is there—we don't know how to describe it. They don't respond as a government has to respond to its population. They don't care about the population. Those women we are talking about are sleeping in the street. No one is taking care of them. Recently they sent us a report; there are 800 children born from rape. The local community doesn't want to hear about these children. The government doesn't do anything. So where are we going to end up, with these children?

So I think you have to put some conditions on any bilateral cooperation with the government in the Congo. They have to observe human rights.

The reparation we are talking about is.... As my colleague said, there are some Canadian companies in the Congo or around the region. What we are trying to do as an organization.... We don't want to point to them, we don't want to accuse them, but we know that according to Canadian law, these companies have to donate some funding to deal with the damage they've been causing in the community. This money belongs to the community, but because of the leadership that we have this money is going into the pockets of these leaders. So the Government of Canada.... These mining companies may deal with the local NGOs so that they can repay for some things, like building a rural hospital for these women, building some rural schools for these women. It may be one of their operations that this community is waiting for, from this mining company.

Thank you.

• (1405)

The Chair: All right.

Thank you to all of our witnesses. We've allowed ourselves to run a bit over. It makes up in part, I'm afraid only in part, for the delays that were imposed at the front end. But you've given very good and very heartfelt testimony.

Our analyst drew to my attention the offer that you'd made.

[Translation]

Mrs. Mwaka, you mentioned that you could provide the committee with more information. Can I ask you to send it to our clerk?

Mrs. Nicole Mwaka: Certainly.

[English]

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan (Scarborough—Rouge River, NDP): A point of order, Chair?

The Chair: Yes, please.

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan: If I may, I would request that the witnesses make their presentation available in both languages, and submit that to the clerk, for the members of the subcommittee to have. Because they presented a lot of statistics in that presentation.

The Chair: Yes, if we can get that. The problem, of course, was that it wasn't available in both official languages. But we'll get it and translate it and make sure that the members of the committee get that as soon as possible.

Yes.

Mr. David Sweet (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, CPC): Mr. Chair, since they're doing that, may I ask that in the submission they make they keep one thing in mind? We had the

officials here last time, and they talked about our participation in MONUSCO and the education of the people in DRC around changed behaviour sociologically that the NGOs are funding regarding rape, etc. Specifically, what other things would they want Canada to do? If they wanted to think about that when they give their submission, that would be great.

The Chair: For the benefit of the witnesses, we had witnesses from the government on Tuesday. That testimony is not yet available, but we'll make sure our clerk gets that testimony to the witnesses. If you could then take a look at it and offer your commentary, as Mr. Sweet has suggested, that would actually be very helpful to us. Of course we're trying to find out what Canada can do to be of assistance, so offering a critique of what we are doing now or assert that we're doing would be very helpful.

That being said, there is one—

Ms. Ève Pécelet: Are we going in camera for business, or don't we have time? I would propose to the committee to have at least one or two other meetings to deal with this issue, because we have other witnesses we would like to hear from.

The Chair: I would suggest something here, because we are basically out of time. We have a number of suggested witnesses. They are almost entirely coming from Tom, so why don't we buttonhole him to speak on behalf of his member and we'll try and either line up witnesses related to the DRC or to the Sri Lanka issue, depending upon availability of the witnesses. Frankly, that is actually the driving criterion, whether we can get people here by next Tuesday.

Is that acceptable?

Mr. David Sweet: I want to ask before we go, Mr. Chair, if we could be supplied the list of witnesses before we give consensus on that.

The Chair: All right. So what we're saying then is that we'd like to have that list of witnesses for both places to be given to the clerk, who will then distribute it. Obviously, timeliness is helpful to other members, and then perhaps we'll leave it to the members to get back to the clerk and she'll clear them with me.

Are people comfortable with leaving the final decision with me, if we do things that way?

Mr. David Sweet: That's fine with me.

The Chair: Good, let's do it that way.

Thank you very much for your patience, everybody, in particular our witnesses. We do thank you.

The meeting is adjourned.

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