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Intensified Protection for Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Dr. Denis Mukwege and an Investigation of the Recent Threats Against Him

Aside from his medical occupation, Congolese Nobel Prize Laureate and gynaecologist Dr. Denis Mukwege campaigns tirelessly for the end of the violence and rampant impunity in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Due to his commitment he was repeatedly exposed to attempts at intimidation and threats. In the past weeks, a campaign against him has started which has now escalated to open threats on his life.

This campaign started after Dr. Mukwege had criticised the recent outbreaks of violence in the province of South-Kivu and after he demanded that all persons involved should be held responsible. The seriousness of the threats against Dr. Mukwege is indicated by a tragic incident from October 2012, when a security guard and a close friend were killed during an attack against him. The offenders were never caught and never brought to justice.

The Ecumenical Network Central Africa (ÖNZ) and its member organisations support the Congolese organisations and churches appealing to the Congolese government and state security agencies to guarantee the safety of Dr. Mukwege. Furthermore, the state agencies must follow their own announcements to start credible investigations into past and current threats and attacks against Dr. Mukwege in order to identify the perpetrators and to hold them accountable.

The government of the Federal Republic of Germany – especially during the UN-Security Council presidency and the EU-Council presidency- as well as the local representatives should advocate:

- increased protection for Dr. Mukwege and his close circle and a timely investigation of the recent threats;
- measures against the increasing instability of the region as well as an investigation of the violations of human rights. MONUSCO has to comply with their mandate to protect the people;
- the possibility of bringing Dr. Mukwege temporarily outside the country if the threats against him increase.