



HAUT-COMMISSARIAT AUX DROITS DE L'HOMME • OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
PALAIS DES NATIONS • 1211 GENEVA 10, SWITZERLAND
www.ohchr.org • TEL: +41 22 917 9000 • FAX: +41 22 917 9008 • E-MAIL: registry@ohchr.org

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23 August 2021

Dear Ms. Hayles and Ms. von Heydebrand,

I write to thank you for your letter dated 10 August 2021, concerning abductions of children in the province of South Kivu, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I share your deep concern about these ongoing abductions. My Office in the DRC reports that the security situation remains volatile in most of the territories of Fizi and Uvira and has documented numerous human rights violations and abuses, including increasing cases of abductions for ransom.

My Office received information of four cases of abductions and one case of attempted abduction of children from June to July 2021. Two of the children are reported to have died during captivity. However, my Office regrettably does not have any information of the specific case of the 12-year old girl referred to in your letter.

In response to these abductions, my Office has conducted advocacy together with civil society organizations to urge the authorities of Uvira to undertake measures to fight against these violations and abuses. The authorities responded by setting up a commission of inquiry in June 2021, which is composed of members of security forces, the Department for Migration, judicial authorities and the city mayor, in order to investigate these abductions.

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Ms. Cheryl Hayles
President, International Alliance of Women
E-mail: cherylhales@sympatico.ca

Dr. Sybille von Heydebrand
UN Main Representative in Geneva of the International Alliance of Women
E-mail: svh@gmx.ch



I have been informed that the investigations led to the arrest of 20 suspects, of whom 15 were released due to lack of evidence. The remaining five suspects are to be tried this month. A member of the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC) was also subsequently arrested in connection with these cases. My Office will continue to advocate with the authorities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to continue the investigations towards ensuring that the perpetrators of these human rights violations and abuses are brought to justice.

Allow me to recognize the important work undertaken by the International Alliance of Women for the promotion of women's human rights, equality and empowerment of women.

Yours sincerely,

Michelle Bachelet
High Commissioner for Human Rights

cc: Mr. Abdoul Aziz Thioye
Director of the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office, and Representative
of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
Kinshasa, DRC