

DR CONGO: MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR ONE IS MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR ALL

Photo for illustrative purposes



IMAGINE A YOUNG BOY. Let's call him Joseph. Joseph is Congolese. He was 11 years old when he was forced to join an armed militia. He fought on many fronts alongside other child soldiers. Poorly treated and traumatised, he saw many of his friends die in war. Thousands of children—boys and girls—were abducted or recruited by different

armed groups in the DR Congo. Once reintegrated into civilian life, they are often seen as criminals and not as victims.

When the warlord responsible for the recruitment of Joseph and other child soldiers is finally arrested, the investigation for the trial begins. Joseph meets with lawyers from Avocats Sans Frontières (ASF). ASF explains that his former commander has been arrested and will be tried for war crimes. ASF tells Joseph that he can participate in the trial by testifying, and Joseph and other former child soldiers agree.

Avocats Sans Frontières provides Joseph and his family with the necessary assistance that will allow him to participate in the trial: the journey to the court and, most importantly, the assurance that he will be able to give his testimony as part of the court proceedings. When Joseph testifies before the judges, it is not only his story but also that of thousands of other boys and girls who experienced similar suffering. His voice is not simply a piece of evidence, but also a means to actively participate in the trial. At the end of the trial, the verdict is declared: the warlord is guilty.

This decision means that the victims' rights have been recognised and sends a clear message that war crimes will not go unpunished. Joseph is relieved by this decision. His voice has been heard and his suffering was recognised. By testifying, with the help of Avocats Sans Frontières, Joseph has not only changed his own life, but also the lives of countless other children like him.

Donate €60 to allow a victim of international crimes from the DRC to be represented by a lawyer in front of the International Criminal Court in The Hague.

If your donations total €40 in a tax year, you will be able to deduct it from your next taxable income.

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