



**To the First Secretary - Peace & Security
Netherlands Embassy
Mr. Michiel Smet
In Goma/DRC**

Reference: N°001/COMM-FP/AFC/2024

Date: March 14th, 2024

Subject: Rape allegation made on March 7th, 2024 at the offices of the Netherlands Embassy in Goma

Mr. Michiel Smet,

The AFC/M23 Directorate extends its gratitude for the tremendous contributions that the Kingdom of the Netherlands offers to the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The purpose of our letter is to address a matter of great concern that has been recently drawn to our attention. According to reports we have encountered in the media, it has been alleged that a woman claimed to have been raped by four combatants in the Territory of Rutshuru; this allegation was made during a meeting that took place in one of the offices of the Netherlands Embassy in Goma on March 7th, 2024.

Upon thorough investigation done by our Organisation's Interdepartmental Team of Human Rights, several discrepancies have emerged that cast doubt on the veracity of these claims. Hence, we wish to draw your attention to the following:

1. We have meticulously reviewed all internal reports across departments from our interdepartmental team of human rights, and not a single mention or indication of such an allegation has been found. Furthermore, local journalists and community leaders have been contacted, and none of them recall any such allegation being made.
2. Our team reached out to all medical facilities in the liberated areas, and none of them have any record of receiving such an allegation or treating a victim of such an incident. This leads us to question the credibility of the claims made during the said meeting.
3. It is important to highlight that within the Congolese Revolutionary Army (ARC), we have strict codes of conduct and sexual abuse, harassment and exploitation policies that all military personnel are expected to adhere to. We do not tolerate any misconduct, especially of such a serious nature as alleged in this case. It is highly improbable that members of our armed forces would engage in such reprehensible behaviour.
4. These allegations are part of a wider propaganda campaign orchestrated by the Kinshasa regime to undermine our well-structured and organised Movement. Additionally, some claims are economically motivated, and fabricated to elicit sympathy and handouts.

In light of these discrepancies and concerns, we believe that further investigation is necessary to ascertain the truth and to ensure that justice is served, distinguishing between fraudulent claims and those of genuine victims.

It is essential to emphasise that our Organisation prioritises and respects human rights. This allegation is the modus operandi of FDLR, FARDC and their reserve forces. We stand shoulder to shoulder with civilian populations facing ethnic cleansing, discrimination, exclusion, and arbitrary arrests, and we hereby remind the unprecedented humanitarian crisis in Masisi.

We are open to engaging in further discussions on any other issues of mutual concern.

Yours Sincerely,

For the Congo River Alliance (AFC)



Lawrence Kanyuka

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Communication Focal Point

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