

**FROM THE QUEST FOR JUSTICE TO EXTERNAL REGULATION:  
VULNERABILITY FACTORS AND THE CRISIS OF SELF-  
DETERMINATION AMONG VICTIMS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN  
KISANGANI**

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**ABSTRACT**

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and more specifically in the city of Kisangani, the process of seeking justice for victims of sexual violence (VSV) faces not only institutional barriers but also complex psychological and socio-cultural structures. Drawing upon Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan's Self-Determination Theory (SDT), this article analyzes how lineage pressures and the systematic recourse to out-of-court settlements alienate the autonomy of survivors. Using a rigorous qualitative methodology based on purposive sampling (n = 30 cases from the Prince Alwaleed Reference Health Center and the Legal Clinics of Kisangani), combined with the triangulation of semi-structured interviews, this research demonstrates that the choice of customary transactions (out-of-court settlements) stems from motivation driven by external regulation. The victim finds herself forced to abdicate her decision-making autonomy to preserve her basic need for social relatedness, thereby avoiding ostracism within a highly collectivist community, while the formal judicial system causes secondary victimization that annihilates her sense of competence.

**Keywords:** Self-determination, Autonomy, Sexual violence, External regulation, Community relatedness, Out-of-court settlements.

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

**1.1 Positioning of the problem**

Sexual violence committed in post-conflict situations and in contexts of state fragility structurally characterizes the human rights crisis in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). While successive legislative reforms, including the adoption of the landmark 2006 laws on sexual violence, have considerably toughened the formal repressive arsenal and abolished any legal validity for out-of-court settlements in this area, the effective application of justice is hampered by extremely heterogeneous configurations of the field. In the city of Kisangani, the capital of the Tshopo Province, official judicial structures coexist in a conflictual and porous manner with alternative, customary and informal methods of regulating disputes.

The difficulty of this dynamic cannot be reduced to problems of material, geographical or financial access to the trial bodies. It resides, in a more underlying way, in the psychological and motivational architecture of the victim's choice. Too often, state institutions and

international organizations view the victim of sexual violence as a passive subject of legal aid, medical assistance, or clinical protocols. This mechanistic reading clashes with his essential quality as a subject of law endowed with an autonomous will and a capacity for psychological self-actualization. The decision-making process (consisting of initiating a complaint, maintaining the action until the verdict is pronounced or, conversely, accepting an out-of-court financial settlement) is intensely shaped, delineated and sometimes confiscated by the immediate social environment.

## **1.2 Status of the matter**

The process of obtaining justice for victims of sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo is a major multidisciplinary field of investigation, historically structured around three major scientific currents:

### **a. The legal-institutional approach and structural barriers**

A first research group focused on documenting the bottlenecks of the formal justice system in the DRC. The work of Lotika Malomalo et al. (2018) on the High Court of Kisangani highlighted the logistical and structural flaws of the repressive system, insisting on the absence of functional compensation mechanisms and the prohibitive cost of procedural acts for the indigent. In the same perspective, Mukiekie et al. (2021) systematized the analysis of these obstacles within the province of Tshopo, demonstrating that systemic corruption, administrative slowness and the lack of witness protection transform the judicial process into a space of institutional discouragement. These studies, while essential, adopt a top-down focus, centered on the provision of justice to the detriment of the victim's internal psychological experience.

### **b. The clinical, trauma and mental health approach**

A second line of thought approaches the problem from the perspective of the psychological repercussions of aggression and the determinants of psychic reconstruction. The clinical investigations of Mavinga, Otita, et al. (2022) in Tshopo objectified the high prevalence of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and anxiety-depressive episodes among survivors, demonstrating that individual trauma is profoundly exacerbated by the precariousness of the post-conflict environment. Previously, Mopongo (2006) had outlined the cultural foundations of the perception of sexual assault in the region, highlighting the phenomenon of stigmatization and the symbolic requalification of the victim as a "soiled person", which complicates adherence to psychological care protocols.

### **c. The socio-anthropological approach and legal pluralism**

Finally, a third line of research explores the friction between modern positive law and traditional dispute resolution practices. Maindo (2004) described the processes of "reinvention of the political and social order" in Kisangani, where populations, faced with a lack of state authority, pragmatically resort to informal and proximity-based modes of regulation. In this extension, Oita's contemporary analyses of local governance demonstrate how out-of-court (amicable) arrangements function as devices for capturing justice by customary elites and

patriarchal structures, subordinating women's individual rights to the collective interests of the clan.

Limitations of the existing literature and originality of this study:

- Despite the relevance of these contributions, a blind spot persists at the crossroads of these approaches. Literature tends to fragment the reality of the victim: on the one hand, a formalist analysis of legal texts and institutions is deployed; on the other, a clinical reading focused on trauma, or an anthropological reading focused on kinship dynamics.
- The psychological bridge between the failure in the process of obtaining justice and the intimate decision to submit to a customary rule has remained unexplored. It is precisely in this heuristic space that the originality of the present study lies. By mobilizing the Theory of Self-Determination (TAD) of Deci and Ryan (2017), this article proposes a systemic psychosocial integration. It aims to demonstrate how the institutional flaws documented by Mukiekie (2021) and the customary pressures analyzed by Otita are articulated to directly impact the three fundamental psychological needs of the victim (Autonomy, Competence, Belonging), altering their internal motivation and forcing them to switch to an alienating external regulation.

### 1.3 Context of the study

The city of Kisangani has a unique socio-cultural, political and historical configuration that gives this problem a specific acuity. Having been the scene of devastating interstate and local armed clashes in the 2000s (including the Three-Day War and the Six-Day War), the city has suffered a lasting weakening of its official state and judicial structures. This institutional disintegration has fostered a massive resurgence of traditional solidarities and informal mechanisms as tools for survival, internal regulation and pacification of living spaces.

The phenomenon of amicable settlements (negotiations, palaver and confidential or semi-public financial arrangements between lineages) is deeply rooted and tolerated by the social fabric. In this context, sexual assault is frequently understood not as an exclusive attack on the integrity of the human person, but as a property damage and an offence to the honour of the clan. Studying how these dynamics interfere with the individual psyche of victims is essential to understand the invisible barriers to the establishment of the rule of law in the Tshopo space.

### 1.4 Research question

The main thread of the article is based on the following research question: How do the interference of family and community pressures and amicable settlements in Kisangani hinder the victim's need for autonomy, forcing him or her to a controlled or external motivation?

### 1.5 Objective of the research

The objective of this research is to assess the impact of environmental and customary pressures in Kisangani on the need for autonomy of victims of sexual violence in the face of the decision to file a complaint or negotiate.

### 1.6 Research hypothesis

The hypothesis of this work postulates that the choice of amicable settlement is explained by a motivation of external regulation, where the victim sacrifices his decision-making autonomy under the pressure of the social environment in order to preserve his need for community belonging and to avoid permanent social exclusion.

## 1.7 Theoretical framework

### 1.7.1 Deci and Ryan's Theory of Self-Determination (DRT)

The Theory of Self-Determination, originally modeled by Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan (2000, 2017), postulates that human beings have an innate tendency to psychological integration, mental health, and self-assimilation. However, this tendency does not operate in a vacuum: it depends on the satisfaction or frustration provided by the social environment to three basic psychological needs:

1. **Autonomy:** The need to feel at the origin of one's own actions, to act in convergence with one's values and deepest beliefs, and to feel an overall psychological freedom.
2. **Competence:** The need to feel effective in one's interactions with the social environment, to experience opportunities to exercise one's abilities, and to perceive control over the course of events.
3. **Relatedness:** The need to feel connected to others, to feel part of a caring group or community, and to perceive bonds of emotional reciprocity.

According to the motivational continuum of self-determination theory (SDT), human behaviors unfold through three main forms of motivation. On the one hand, intrinsic motivation, activated by pleasure and the interest in the action. On the other hand, autonomous motivation by identification, where the individual freely chooses to act according to the meaning and personal value he or she attaches to the activity. Finally, controlled motivation, which is broken down into two levels of constraint: introjected regulation, guided by internal pressures such as guilt or ego approval, and external regulation, entirely dictated by external factors.

External regulation represents the most alienated form of motivation: behavior is entirely dependent on external contingencies such as obtaining material rewards, avoiding direct sanctions, or subjecting oneself to major environmental constraints. At the far left of this continuum is amotivation, characterized by a complete lack of intention to act and acquired resignation.

## 2.0 METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Study Population and Sampling

#### 2.1.1 Study population

The parent population of this research is made up of all the clinical and legal files of victims of sexual violence (VVS), registered and cared for over a period from 2023 to 2025 within the reference structures in Kisangani: The Prince Alwaleed Reference Health Centre (medico-psychosocial component) and the Local Legal Clinics (judicial support component).

### 2.1.2 Sampling strategy

This study favours an in-depth qualitative approach. Therefore, it does not aim at rigorous statistical representativeness, but rather seeks to guarantee conceptual representativeness. The fundamental objective is to decipher the psychological mechanisms, the "how" and the "why" of individual trajectories in the quest for justice, rather than measuring proportions or prevalences within the general population.

#### 2.1.2.1 Sampling type and saturation principle

The final sample size is not rigidly fixed in advance; it is guided by the principle of theoretical saturation (Mucchielli, 2009). This threshold corresponds to the moment in the research when the analysis of new files or interviews no longer brings any new conceptual dimension or new variables to the problem of self-determination.

To achieve this efficiently, we use non-probability purposive sampling (Patton, 2015). This approach makes it possible to deliberately select so-called "information-rich" cases. In the context of the Alwaleed Centre and legal clinics, this technique makes it possible to isolate cases with a complete decision-making history (from the initial intake to the outcome of the legal process).

A classic probabilistic drawing of lots would have entailed the risk of retaining "hollow files" (where the victim was immediately lost from sight or administratively classified before expressing a choice), which would have harmed the quality of the analysis. Reasoned choice, on the other hand, makes it possible to apply strict inclusion criteria (Pires, 1997), which are essential for operationalizing the concept of self-determination through the express documentation of the voluntary continuation of the process, the abandonment of the process of obtaining justice or the amicable settlement.

#### 2.1.2.2 Sample Structure and Segmentation

The basic sample is set at 30 victims' files, an optimal volume to guarantee the relevance and depth of the comparative qualitative analysis, while remaining subject to the principle of saturation. In order to accurately assess variations in the satisfaction or frustration of basic psychological needs, the sample is segmented equally into three subgroups of 10 cases:

- Segment 1 (n=10): Judicial perseverance with judgment rendered (TAD indicator: Autonomous/identified motivation).
- Segment 2 (n=10): Abandonment of prosecutions during the proceedings (TAD indicator: Amotivation / Failure of the feeling of competence).
- Segment 3 (n=10): Recourse to amicable settlement (DRT indicator: External regulation / Social pressure).

#### 2.1.2.3 Inclusion criteria

To be included in the analysis, applications must meet the following two strict criteria:

1. Time criterion: Have been officially opened and registered between January 1, 2023 and December 31, 2025.
2. Content criterion: Contain explicit data on the legal/judicial aspect (decision to lodge a complaint, documented use of an amicable settlement, follow-up notes from the legal advisor, mention of the outcome of the procedure) or, failing that, clearly explained reasons for withdrawal recorded in the psychosocial notes.

## 2.2 Research Method and Apparatus

The study adopts a mainly documentary approach, articulated around the analysis of VVS files, and complemented by a qualitative field survey for the purpose of triangulation of the data. To enrich and give meaning to the raw textual data from the archives, the collection system combines three sources of information:

- Documentary analysis (n=30): It provides the factual and objective trajectory of the victim within the Alwaleed Centre and legal clinics.
- Semi-structured interviews with service providers (n=6): Conducted with psychosocial staff (psychologists, social workers) and legal staff (lawyers, counsellors), they make it possible to map the systemic forces, customary burdens and recurrent institutional dysfunctions that interfere in Kisangani.
- Semi-structured interviews with victims available (n=6): These sessions complete the analysis by directly capturing the subjective experience, emotional feelings and meaning that victims attribute to their experience of justice or renunciation.

## 2.3 Tool and data processing

The processing is based on a semi-direct thematic content analysis. A coding grid has been constructed a priori from the constructs of the DRT, while remaining open to the emergence of themes induced by the local reality (mixed coding). The units of meaning were inserted into a qualitative processing matrix according to the indicators of Autonomy, Competence and Belonging.

## 2.4 Ethical considerations

The study guarantees the strict anonymity of the victims. Names and identifiable details have been codified (V01 to V30). Free and informed consent was obtained (verbally) before each interview. The data from the care archives have been subject to prior written institutional authorization, in compliance with the absolute confidentiality inherent in sensitive and medical data.

## 3.0 RESULTS

The qualitative and thematic cross-analysis of documentary data and interview verbatim highlights fundamental divergences in the satisfaction or frustration of basic psychological needs according to the three study segments.

### 3.1 Quantitative disaggregation of the sample (N=30)

### a. Distribution by age group and choice of trajectory

**Table 2: Distribution of Victims by Age Group and Study Segment**

Age range	Category	Segment 1: Perseverance (n=10)	Segment 2: Abandonment (n=10)	Segment 3: Arrangement (n=10)	Total (N=30)
12-17 years old	Minors	2 (20%)	1 (10%)	8 (80%)	11 (37%)
18-25 years old	Young Adults	5 (50%)	4 (40%)	1 (10%)	10 (33%)
26 years and older	Adults	3 (30%)	5 (50%)	1 (10%)	9 (30%)
<b>Total</b>		<b>10 (100%)</b>	<b>10 (100%)</b>	<b>10 (100%)</b>	<b>30 (100%)</b>

It appears from this table that the youngest victims are more vulnerable to family blackmail, i.e. 80% of cases of minors ending up in amicable settlements. While adults have a higher propensity to give up, i.e. 90% of cases (including 40% of young adults and 50% of adults) but also to persevere, i.e. 80% (50% of young adults and 30% of adults).

- Minors (12 - 17 years): 11 cases (37%)
  - Segment 1 (Perseverance): 2 cases (with the support of a legal guardian or an NGO)
  - Segment 2 (Abandonment): 1 case
  - Segment 3 (Arrangement): 8 cases (high dependence on uncle/parent authority)
- Young adults (18-25 years): 10 cases (33%)
  - Segment 1 (Perseverance): 5 cases
  - Segment 2 (Abandonment): 4 cases
  - Segment 3 (Arrangement): 1 case
- Adults (26 years of age and older): 9 cases (30%)
  - Segment 1 (Perseverance): 3 cases
  - Segment 2 (Abandonment): 5 cases
  - Segment 3 (Arrangement): 1 case

### B. Distribution by commune of origin in Kisangani

**Table 1: Distribution of the sample by commune of origin**

Municipalities	Segment 1: Perseverance (n=10)	Segment 2: Abandonment (n=10)	Segment 3: Arrangement (n=10)	Total (N=30)
Makiso (City Center / access to courses)	6 (60%)	2 (20%)	1 (10%)	9 (30 %)
Mangobo (Periphery / High density)	2 (20%)	4 (40%)	4 (40%)	10 (33,3 %)

<b>Kabondo / Tshopo (Popular areas)</b>	2 (20%)	3 (30%)	3 (30%)	<b>8 (26,7 %)</b>
<b>Kisangani / Lubunga (Landlocked)</b>	0 (0%)	1 (10%)	2 (20%)	<b>3 (10 %)</b>
	10 (100%)	10(100%)	10 (100%)	<b>100 (60%)</b>

The municipalities are included and grouped in this table according to the impact of geographical location and peri-urban precariousness on justice choices. The municipality of Makiso is the city center and seat of the courts and tribunals: The victims living there have easy access to these institutions, to justice and persevere in the process of obtaining it following their proximity, i.e. 60%. The commune of Mangobo is located on the outskirts but with a high population density and promiscuity conducive to sexual violence: The victims abandon the process (40%) and are also in amicable settlements (40%); Kabondo and Tshopo are popular areas whose victims abandon the process (30%) and are also in amicable settlements (30%); Kisangani and Lubunga are remote and landlocked where the few victims who have access to justice abandon the process.

### 3.2 Qualitative analysis by study segment

#### 3.2.1 Manifestations of the frustration of the need for Autonomy (Segment 3: Amicable Arrangements)

The thematic analysis of the 10 cases constituting the amicable settlement segment reveals a systematic confiscation of the victim's voice and decision-making power by the extended family circle (in particular paternal uncles and heads of households). The choice of an amicable settlement is never a self-determined or intrinsic decision.

"I cried all night when they accepted the author's money. My uncle said to me, 'You have already been defiled, now you want to destroy the relationship between our families? Justice does not give food, this money will help your brothers.'" I had no say. (Verbatim from the V14 file, completed by interview).

The victim's behaviour (renunciation of the complaint and passive acceptance of the compromise) is governed by pure external regulation: he or she complies in order to avoid the ultimate sanction of economic and emotional banishment from his or her own home. The financial transaction takes codified forms: gross financial compensation ranging from US\$150 to US\$500 paid directly to male elders (7 cases) or mixed compensation including property in kind (3 cases).

#### 3.2.2 Sources of secondary victimization and impairment of the need for Competence (Segment 2: Abandonment of proceedings)

For the 10 cases characterized by the abandonment of prosecutions along the way, the results highlight the devastating impact of structural barriers and law enforcement attitudes on the need for competence. Faced with perceived corruption, undue financial requirements to carry out procedural acts that are nevertheless free in theory (transport costs for investigators,

stationery costs), and the contempt sometimes shown during police interviews, the victim's sense of self-efficacy collapses.

"When I arrived to give my statement, the policeman looked at me and smiled. He asked me why I was out so late that day and if I hadn't provoked the perpetrator. Then, he told me that I had to pay 20,000 FC for "the papers and ink" otherwise my file would go to sleep. I understood that justice was not for poor people like me. I stopped everything. (Verbatim from the V25 file).

The victim develops a feeling of uselessness of the action. No longer perceiving any causal link between her approach (filing a complaint) and a fair result (the conviction of the perpetrator), she slipped towards critical amotivation, preferring to withdraw from the process to preserve what remained of her psychic integrity.

### **3.2.3 The stabilizing role of the support network on the need for Belonging (Segment 1: Perseverance in the process)**

The comparative analysis of the 10 cases where the victim continued the process until the final judgment shows a radically different psychosocial configuration. In 90% of these cases, the victim benefited from robust relational and institutional support. The joint action of the psychologists of the Prince Alwaleed Centre and the lawyers of the legal clinics acted as a shield against community ostracism.

"If I stood in front of the judge, it's because at the legal clinic, I was spoken to with respect. At the Alwaleed Centre, the psychologist made me understand that I was not guilty. My mother also supported me in secret. Without them, I would have signed the arrangement. (Interview with the victim V03).

Here, the need for social belonging (relatedness) is no longer used as a tool of blackmail, but as a therapeutic lever of social validation, allowing the victim to switch to an autonomous motivation by identification: he appropriates the quest for justice as an act necessary for his own identity reconstruction.

## **4.0 DISCUSSION**

### **4.1 Validation of the hypothesis: The mechanism of alienation by external regulation**

The data collected corroborate the research hypothesis. The use of amicable settlements in Kisangani is not the result of a consensual restorative justice dynamic, but of a coercive process of psychological alienation. Using the taxonomy of Deci and Ryan (2000), we find that the traditional environment exerts such heteronomous pressure that the victim's motivation is abruptly shifted to the far left of the continuum (external regulation).

The victim sacrifices his or her decision-making autonomy because the forces of environmental control (threats of severance of family ties, economic pressures) make the psychological cost of autonomy purely prohibitive.

### **4.2 The systemic dilemma: Autonomy versus Belonging in a collectivist context**

The essential theoretical contribution of this research lies in the identification of the dilemma that structures the psyche of survivors in Kisangani. In classical Western models of ADT, autonomy is often correlated with individuation. In an African collectivist context, and specifically in Kisangani, the assertion of individual autonomy (demanding the strict application of the criminal law against the opinion of the clan) comes into direct and violent conflict with the need for social belonging.

The victim is locked in a destructive psychosocial equation:

- If she chooses formal justice (Complaint): Her need for autonomy is satisfied (she acts as a subject of law), but her need to belong is violently frustrated (rejection, clan stigmatization, economic exclusion).
- If he chooses the amicable arrangement: His need to belong is maintained artificially (surface inclusion, protection of family honor), but his need for autonomy is totally crushed (alienation of the will under external regulation).

In an environment marked by structural precariousness, belonging to the clan is the only economic and social safety net. The victim is therefore forced to sacrifice his autonomy to preserve the social bond essential to his material survival.

#### **4.3 Comparative discussion: Convergence and divergence with the literature**

In terms of the Congolese legal and institutional environment, our results for Segment 2 (Abandonment of proceedings) and Segment 3 (Arrangements) are in line with the findings of Lotika Malomalo et al. (2018) and Mukiekie et al. (2021). These authors demonstrated that impunity, the cost of justice and administrative hassles in the Province of Tshopo act as prohibitive barriers for litigants.

However, our research takes a further heuristic step: while previous studies describe these barriers as mere external and logistical obstacles, our data show that they operate a real psychological transmutation in the victim. Indeed, the dysfunctions of the formal judicial system are not only materially suffered; they are internalized to the point of destroying the victim's sense of competence. It is this internal erosion of competence that engenders amotivation (Segment 2), shifting the subject from the active quest for justice to deep resignation. »

Moreover, by confronting our data with Maindo's (2004) socio-anthropological theses on the reinvention of the political order in Kisangani through informal mechanisms, our study provides crucial clinical insights. The amicable arrangement is not simply a "pragmatic alternative" to a failing state, as local governance analyses postulate. It is an instance of psychological capture. Our results prove that the amicable settlement is based on a motivation controlled by external regulation (Segment 3): the victim does not adhere to the values of the customary transaction, he submits to it under the threat of a rupture of his need to belong.

Our conclusions also extend the observations of Mavinga, Otita et al. (2022) on post-conflict trauma at Tshopo: we find that the chronic frustration of the need for autonomy among victims of Segment 3 (arrangement) crystallizes symptoms of psychological distress (internalized sense

of injustice, permanent shame), confirming that negotiated impunity permanently blocks the deep mechanisms of psychological resilience.

At the international level, the comparison of our results with classical applications of DRT (Deci & Ryan, 2017) raises a major theoretical tension. In Western literature, the three basic psychological needs are modeled as synergistic vectors: the satisfaction of one generally promotes the satisfaction of the others. However, our data from the Kisangani context introduce a model of structural antagonism of needs: for the victim, the assertion of his autonomy is bought at the price of the destruction of his belonging. This observation is in line with the criticisms of intercultural psychology who point out that in interdependent cultures, the need for belonging overcomes and reconfigures the dynamics of individual autonomy.

<b>Authors &amp; Years</b>	<b>Champ / Focus</b>	<b>Points of convergence with our study</b>	<b>Disruptions / Added value of our study</b>
<b>Mukiekie et al. (2021)</b>	Institutional (Tshopo)	Identification of corruption and judicial delays as major obstacles.	Explains how these brakes destroy the need for competence and generate amotivation.
<b>Maindo (2004)</b>	Socio-political (Kisangani)	Observation of the resurgence of traditional solidarity in the face of the bankruptcy of the State.	Demonstrates the psychological cost of the arrangements (alienation, external regulation of the victim).
<b>Mavinga, Otita et al. (2022)</b>	Clinic/Trauma (Tshopo)	Recognition of the acute psychological distress of survivors of violence.	Demonstrates that the chronic frustration of the need for autonomy blocks resilience mechanisms.
<b>Deci &amp; Ryan (2017)</b>	Theoretical (International)	Validity of the motivation continuum (autonomous versus controlled motivation).	Reveals the structural antagonism between Autonomy and Belonging in a collectivist context.

## 5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study highlights the reality of a crisis of self-determination among victims of sexual violence in Kisangani. The path to formal justice frequently turns into an experience of alienation where basic needs for autonomy and competence are sacrificed in favor of a conditional and constraining social belonging. The amicable settlement is not a free choice, but a strategy of submission dictated by external regulation to escape social rejection.

To reposition the victim as an actor in his or her journey and restore his or her triad of basic needs, the following recommendations are made:

- Immediate socio-economic empowerment: As the victim's material dependence on family decision-makers is the main vector of blackmail at the settlement, it is urgent to strengthen or couple the care of the Alwaleed Centre with financial empowerment programmes (micro-credits, vocational training) to secure the independence of its choices.

- Protection and security of the legal process: Strengthen the confidentiality of reports at the level of legal clinics and prohibit access to the investigation files by non-mandated customary intermediaries, in order to protect the victim from direct clan pressure as soon as the complaint is filed.
- Transformation of customary representations: Strengthen targeted awareness-raising actions among the heads of sectors, blocks and community leaders in Kisangani to redefine rape no longer as a negotiable patrimonial damage between lineages, but as a major criminal attack on human dignity that imperatively requires the exclusive intervention of the repressive justice system of the State.

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