

Ending Sexual Violence in Conflict

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Yesterday many Ambassadors for Peace and friends of Universal Peace Federation were attending the Ending Sexual Violence in Conflict Global Summit in ExCel centre, London.

As well as the headline leaders of this initiative, Angelina Jolie and William Hague, thousands of UN staff, government officials and NGO representatives took part in a series of expert conferences to highlight both the importance of removing impunity for sexual violence in conflict and the best practices for investigation, documentation and bringing cases to a successful conclusion.

In several instances women panelists or delegates explained that they had been raped and described the painful process of healing both physically and psychologically. Dr Denis Mukwege shared about the work of his Panzi hospital in South Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo, to heal women from the scars of rape in what has been described as the 'rape capital' of the world. He told me of attempts on his life in 2010 that had almost stopped him from working at one stage.



The four day Global Summit brought together so many Ministers, officials, experts and activists to pool experiences, expertise and passion to end an abhorrent practice. United States Secretary of State, Senator Kerry in a keynote address said, 'Sexual violence in conflict is a stain on the conscience of the world.'

The Chief of the Australian Army, Lieutenant General David Morrison, commented from a military viewpoint that having the correct training and rule of law in armies was vital. He added to great applause that it is also vital to have more women in the armed forces of the world to tackle a predominantly male culture.



A youth perspective was promoted in the closing plenary including the moving, winning video from Mexico.

David Bull, Executive Director of UNICEF UK commented that, 'The Summit represents a watershed in the global fight against the horrors of sexual violence in conflict. The Foreign Secretary is to be applauded for his work to focus the world attention on this devastating issue, which has for far too long been taboo. If the success of the summit is now to make a real difference for children's lives, we need to see concerted practical follow-up action.'

The Summit represented a huge investment from the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office with events occurring in one UK Embassy every hour of the 84 hours the Summit was open. More than 10,000 people were registered for the Summit from more than 120 nations of the world.