

## Democracy and values are problematic in DRC, says Denis Mukwege

**Dr Denis Mukwege, the 2014 Sakharov Prize laureate, described political problems in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and his difficulties in tackling the problem of sexual abuse of women and even small children, in a Human Rights Subcommittee debate on Thursday. MEPs discussed how the EU could best support Dr Mukwege's work, and some called for legally-binding rules on trade in conflict minerals.**

"There are attempts to intimidate us, to destroy our reputation in the press", said Dr Mukwege. The "authorities are in denial – I have never been invited to Parliament in DRC", he observed, adding that "no development is possible without changing mentalities and a population which has lost its values" and that the "pre-election climate reduces civil liberties and the opposition's rights".

Subcommittee Chair Elena Valenciano (S&D, ES) voiced Parliament's continuing support for Dr Mukwege's work, stressing that "we need to ensure the safety and security of the Panzi Hospital", which he founded.

Denis Mukwege also stressed that Sakharov Prize had "changed his life", by inspiring much positive action and mobilising citizens, and backed a call by many MEPs for legally binding rules on trade in "conflict minerals".

*You can review the live coverage of the debate [@EP\\_HumanRights](#)*

### Further information

[Recording of the debate soon available here \(click on 26.03.2015\)](#)

[Recording of the press point soon available here \(click on 26.03.2015\)](#)

[Audiovisual material: extracts of the meeting, press point](#)

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[Briefing note "Sakharov Prize 2014: Tending the scars of sexual violence in DRC"](#)

[Study: The EP's Sakharov Prize for freedom of thought 1988-2013](#)

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Subcommittee on Human Rights (DROI) of the European Parliament discussion with Denis Mukwege, Sakharov Prize Laureate 2014



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