



## Press release

Brussels, 04 June 2013

### **Doctors of the World alarmed by enormous inflow of Congolese chased out of Angola, often in violent conditions**

**In April, the Angolan government set an ultimatum for Congolese laborers without a residency permit, forcing them to leave the country. Their “voluntary” return often happens in violent conditions. The inflow is massive: the healthcare services are saturated by these returnees, who are in need of help. Doctors of the World urges the Angolan authorities to respect its international agreements. The organization turns to the international community to look into this violence, and to humanitarian actors to take action.**

Many Congolese people cross the border to find work in the Angolan mining sector to try to make a better future for themselves. They often end up being exploited, physically harmed and frightened. Thousands of them are arrested to be deported and thrown into jails near the Angolan border. In these jails they often suffer heavy abuse before being sent back to the DRC.

**In August 2012, Doctors of the World established a project providing medical care and psychological support** in the Luambo healthcare areas, and one month ago in the Kamonia area.

In 2012, 30,000 deported Congolese arrived in this area. In April 2013, the Angolan authorities set an ultimatum for the Congolese workers without residency permits, requiring them to leave the country. In three weeks, **52.231 people crossed the border** to Kamonia. “From April to May the number of patients in our healthcare centres has tripled, two thirds are returnees,” explains Félicité REMADJI, in charge of Doctors of the World’s border program. “We need to increase our capacity,” she says.

**Doctors of the World is alarmed by the violence that these returns often imply:** “Whether they are returning voluntarily or not, we are still receiving victims of sexual violence. Every week more than 20 people require medical and psychological care,” reports Félicité Remadji.

**The international community needs to assign more funds to the medical domain to help these returnees. The involvement of other actors specialised in water, sanitation, protection and nutrition are equally necessary:** “We need food, mosquito nets, drinking water and shelter for our patients,” says Dr. Yves MWAMBA, doctor at Kamonia.

**Doctors of the World urges the Angolan authorities to respect their international agreements on Human Rights. We turn to the international community to look into this situation and to the humanitarian actors to take charge.**

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