

CPT Delegation to Democratic Republic of the Congo Report, October 18-November 4, 2006

By Wendy Lehman

A Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) delegation of 11 women traveled to the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) October 18 to November 4 to meet with women who have experienced rape and sexual assault, as well as women's organizations, human rights groups, and churches working with them. The diverse delegation included women from the U.S., the DRC, Colombia, and Kenya.

Background:

In the past decade, 4 million people have died as a result of war and conflict in the DRC—most due to preventable disease and malnutrition—the highest death rate due to any conflict since WWII. During this time, as many as 8 countries have been militarily involved in Congo's affairs. Peace talks in 2002 led to the withdrawal of the foreign armies. DRC president Joseph Kabila announced on June 30, 2003 the makeup of a transitional government, comprised of himself as president and former rebel leaders taking the positions of his four vice presidents.

Elections occurred on July 30, 2006—the first democratic elections in 45 years. As none of the candidates received a majority of the vote for president, run-off elections were held on October 29 between top contenders Kabila and former rebel leader and Vice President Jean-Pierre Bemba. The delegation was in Goma during the elections, which were peaceful, although there was some violence in the northeast and were reports of one or two people killed.¹

Despite efforts to end years of war and conflict, violence has continued since 2003. Civilians—especially women and children—bear much of the violence at the hands of militias and elements of DRC's national army. Rape is used as a weapon of war against women and girls. The number of women and girls raped is estimated from 50,000 conservatively² into the hundreds of thousands.³ The CPT delegation learned that infants as young as two months old and women in their 70s are raped.

Although women are the primary victims of these brutal attacks, the larger community is also torn apart, as survivors are often stigmatized and unwelcome back into their communities. Furthermore, women who collect water and care for the fields are afraid to do so, as often this is where these attacks occur. The community suffers significant economical losses as a result. Children who result from these rapes often became "street children" as well, creating an additional humanitarian crisis.

The international community has a responsibility in this conflict, benefiting economically through various networks from the region's destabilization. In 2000, the UN Security Council set up a panel of experts to examine how business leaders, military leaders, and others intentionally fueled the conflict in the DRC to exploit its resources, such as gold, diamonds, and 80% of the world's coltan ore,⁴ a

¹ "DR Congo votes in landmark poll," 30 October 2006. BBC. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/6095754.stm>

² "Speech to the committee of foreign affairs in the Norwegian Parliament," 13 January 2006. Christian Relief Network. <http://www.crn.no/page?id=1524>

³ For the period 1998-2002, Human Rights Watch cited a United Nations report which documented more than 40,000 cases of rape in just two eastern provinces of Congo. "Tens of thousands raped in eastern Congo, report says," 8 March 2005. CBC News. <http://www.cbc.ca/world/story/2005/03/07/congo-050307.html>. The UN Development Fund for Women reports estimates of hundreds of thousands of women who have been raped since 1998. <http://www.womenwarpeace.org/issues/violence/violence.htm>.

⁴ Vesperini, Helen. "Congo's coltan rush," 1 August 2001. BBC News, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/1468772.stm>.

mineral used in computers and cell phones. In 2002, this panel cited 85 multinational companies for violating international norms in their purchase of resources, including eight U.S.-owned companies.⁵

Overview of Delegation:

The CPT delegation was invited and hosted by CELCE (Communaute Evangelique Lutherieenne au Congo-Est—Lutheran Evangelical Community of Eastern Congo). While in country, the delegation was hosted by Rev. Ruheza Kashaba and Sister Dadah Amuli of CELCE and Rev. Butochima Luta of Church of the Brethren in Bukavu and Uvira. In Goma, the delegation was hosted by the AFPD (Association des Femmes pour la Paix et le Developpement—Association of Women for Peace and Development) and Rev. Kabaka Zenon, of BTEAD. The delegation visited AFPD and BTEAD groups in Kitshanga and Sake.

Kaluhyia Esperance, the Coordinator for Peace Education and Conflict Resolution for MIBOS (Mission Internationale du Bon Samaritain—International Mission of the Good Samaritan), whose husband Rev. Sepa Mamboleo (MIBOS) hosted the previous CPT delegation a year earlier, joined the delegation. Delegation meetings (both internally within the delegation and during meetings with groups there) were conducted in Kiswahili, French, and English.

The delegation landed in Bujumbura, Burundi on October 20, was met by a group led by Pastor Kashaba, and traveled with them by land to Uvira, in eastern DRC. The delegation spent a couple of days in Uvira, then traveled to Buvaku, visiting several small villages between the two, including Sange and Luvungi. After spending several days in Bukavu, they traveled further north to Goma. In Goma, they were met by the APFD and Pastor Zenon. While in Goma, they also traveled to the rural villages of Sake and Kitshanga in the interior zone of Masisi, in rebel-controlled territory.

The delegation members heard incredibly painful and brutal stories of rape, but the strength and courage of the women they met was also very apparent. Amidst the horrific experiences the women had lived through, many managed to not only survive, but to join together and express joy and celebrate life. One Sunday in a small village north of Uvira (in Luvungi), the CPT delegation joined a packed congregation in a tiny, one-room church—dark, with no electricity and only two windows, partially blocked by the dozens of children crowding around its windows. The delegation was moved by the power and spirit of the congregation and the two choirs that sang, especially the youth choir.

At the same time, women told them not to be fooled by their exterior expressions, that they still had much pain inside, and struggled to overcome the horrors of rape, rejection by their families and husbands, lack of medicines and food, and the inability to take their children to school. Some women, the delegation learned, were so overwhelmed by the physical and emotional pain and damage caused by being raped that they gave up on life. Many of the women also criticized the United States and the international community for the arms flow in Africa and for siphoning off the wealth of their country.

Armed Actors:

Women, human rights groups, and associations told the CPT delegation that Hutu militias, namely the Interahamwe, largely responsible for the 1994 Rwandan genocide who had fled to DRC, have been reluctant or unable to return to Rwanda with its Tutsi-led government and continue to pillage villages in eastern Congo for food—and far worse. One human rights worker reported that the Interahamwe even compete with the “Rastas” over kidnapped women used as sex slaves. The Rastas are a splinter

⁵ Lobe, Jim. “Global Businesses Profit from Congo War, Groups Charge,” 28 October 2003. Common Dreams (from Inter Press Service). <http://www.commondreams.org/headlines03/1028-07.htm>
Carroll, Rory. “Multinationals in scramble for Congo's wealth,” 22 October 2003. The Guardian. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/congo/story/0,12292,816641,00.html>

group from the FDLR (Democratic Liberation Forces of Rwanda),⁶ which were formed from the remnants of the Hutu Rwandan army also responsible for the 1994 Rwandan genocide.⁷ The delegation heard reports of the Mai Mai as well—Mai Mai means “magic water,” and is a nationalistic, anti-Rwanda movement, which includes many child soldiers.⁸ The delegation was told that the Congolese government had made some attempts to demilitarize Mai Mai soldiers and integrate them into the national army (the delegation saw a group of such men in Bukavu).

Many women as well as human rights groups said groups including the Interahamwe, Mai Mai, the Rwanda-supported rebel-group the RCD (Congolese Rally for Democracy in Congo), the Rastas, Congolese national army soldiers, and others committed vicious gang rapes, torture, and murder of civilians, including cannibalism. The trauma on the whole family and community is magnified by the public nature of many of these rapes and other forms of torture—committed in front of husbands, children, and other community members.

Hospitals:

Panzi Hospital: The CPT delegation visited two hospitals, one in Bukavu and one in Goma, that perform surgeries to repair obstetric fistulas. Many rape victims in Congo have fistulas due to violent rapes; a fistula is a tear in the vaginal wall separating the bladder and/or rectum from the vagina. With these tears, their bodies leak urine or feces, adding to the ostracization rape survivors experience.

In Panzi Hospital in Bukavu (October 26), the CPT delegates spoke with the hospital’s medical director, a surgeon, Dr. Denis Mukwege. He reported that the hospital treats at least 10 women a day for rape and sexual assault-related injuries—3,600 last year alone and 12,000 since 1999. They performed 540 fistula surgeries last year.⁹ There are about 200 women waiting for surgery in an open air area outside. The hospital has six doctors, a psychologist, a social assistance team, a nurses team, and a pastoral team on staff to address survivor’s physical, mental, and spiritual needs.

Dr. Mukwege said that rape in Congo is targeted as a “weapon of war and destroys the whole society.” The strategy of raping women in DRC is very public—in front of husbands and children—and it involves mutilation. Therefore, it breaks down the family and the community system, leaving the whole family traumatized, said Dr. Mukwege. He added that 90% of raped and sexually assaulted women are not accepted back into their families. In some cases, even if the husband does not reject his wife, the family may reject her and tell the husband to do the same.

Husbands are also psychologically damaged by rape, so Panzi Hospital’s psychologist invites husbands to come and talk, and explains to them that their wife is healed and is not sick. This is a very difficult process because of the public shame, and the fear of contracting diseases including HIV/AIDS. Some men who have witnessed their wives or daughters raped “just disappear, without leaving a trace,” said Dr. Mukwege. Doctors are unable to physically repair some women, or even if they are, those operated upon may still lose the ability to bear children or have sex. Many feel they have lost their value as a wife or potential wife.

At the hospital, the CPT delegation met numerous women awaiting or recovering from surgery in their hospital beds who seemed drained of energy and life. They met a 12-year-old girl who had been raped

⁶ <http://www.hrw.org/english/docs/2006/01/18/congo12237.htm>

⁷ Doyle, Mark. “Dangerous new phase for DR Congo peace,” 23 November 2004. BBC News. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/4035701.stm>

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Nordland, Rod. “More Vicious Than Rape,” 13 November 2006. *Newsweek*. <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/15704030/site/newsweek/>

three times. She had to use a catheter and it was unclear when she would be able to stop using it. Delegation members sat with her and others, holding their hands, praying with them, shaking their hands and greeting them in Kiswahili, trying in a small way to support them.

The delegation also met Zawade, a 20-year-old from Kamanyola, who two weeks earlier had been kidnapped from her village with 14 others by the Interahamwe. The Interahamwe beat the men, cut some with knives, and killed one of them. Zawade said that after this, the Interahamwe cooked the heart of the dead man and asked their kidnap victims to eat it. When they refused, the Interahamwe ate it. One man raped her at night. The next day, added Zawade, they killed her good friend and cooked her body with bananas and ate her. Late at night Zawade escaped, all night barely keeping ahead of her pursuers, who fired their guns periodically. When she finally made it home, her one-year-old son was very sick (he was left behind). And her husband kicked her out of the house. Her neighbors paid for her to come to Panzi Hospital, and she has been there ever since, with her baby.

Cecile Kamwanya, the psychologist on staff, related an additional story of a woman who was raped. This woman fought off her attackers and because of that, they attacked her even more sadistically—17 men raped her. After they were done, they put a type of plastic into the fire so that it started burning, and put it inside her vagina and left her to burn. She survived and made the difficult journey to Panzi Hospital—it took her two months. Her anus was burned off from the attack and because of the extent of her injuries she died in the hospital.

HEAL Africa: The other hospital the delegation visited was the hospital of HEAL Africa (November 1). HEAL Africa is a Christian organization that provides training to local doctors and social activists, as well as provides surgeries, counseling, and other services to rape survivors. Because, according to director Dr. Jo Lusi, 80% of people in Congo live in the rural areas, HEAL Africa has a roving medical team for maternal and other care. They also have an HIV/AIDS program. Dr. Lusi explained that when a person is raped, there is a 20% likelihood that they will get HIV/AIDS.

150 women are waiting for fistula surgery at HEAL Africa; the surgery lasts for three hours and is complicated, said Dr. Lusi. They have two specialists on staff to perform this surgery. Recovery time takes two months, during which time HEAL Africa provides counseling so the survivors can come to re-accept men and, if there is a baby as a result of the rape, accept the baby. They also teach the survivors how to sew, or make handicrafts they can market, as well as about their rights, how to participate in politics, etc. Last year alone, HEAL Africa performed 242 fistula surgeries.¹⁰

Women's Associations, Churches, and Human Rights Groups:

Collectif des Associations des femmes Cadres pour l'Epanouissement intégral de la Femme (C/AFECEF)—Collective Associations of Women Groups for the Empowerment of Women: On October 24, the delegation met with C/AFECEF, an association of women intellectuals that partners with rural women facing rape and other brutalization. They began in 1992 when it became apparent how few women were in government (one minister out of 20). Their goals are to: help women “blossom”; spark women’s interest in economics and business; defend women’s rights and interests.

The association spoke of gang rapes, massacres, and horrific human rights violations. One C/AFECEF member reported that the Interahamwe cut open a women’s stomach and pulled out her twin fetuses before killing her. Another reported a case where a woman was forced to eat her husband’s genitals.

¹⁰ Nordland, Rod. “More Vicious Than Rape,” 13 November 2006. *Newsweek*.
<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/15704030/site/newsweek/>

In another, there were rumors that women were making reports on their attackers. The Interahamwe blamed a village of collaboration and took a group of women from the village and buried them alive.

One member of the association—the Vice President of the YWCA, and one of the candidates in the upcoming election—said that after dark in the countryside, people scatter, hiding where they can. She has even spent the night hiding in a tree. She said that the women in the rural areas “were feeling abandoned and that is why our presence is important.” In addition, she said, “peace is a right.”

Women in C/AFCECF said that men became fearful because of the violence against them and against their wives and children and did not want to speak out, so the women did. Women carried human rights documentation—people’s stories written down—on bicycles through war-torn and rebel-controlled areas to get the word out. In addition, the C/AFCECF celebrated International Women’s Day every year. In 2000, they celebrated the International Day *Without Women*—they all stayed home to protest the systematic raping of women. From their homes, they wrote reports documenting the continued repression of women and sent these stories to news stations.

Yet even though many women the delegation met spoke of rebel groups and the conflict coming from Rwanda, this group emphasized that they collaborate with women in Rwanda and Burundi. One woman said, “We know men make war so we must work together as women.”

Civil Society: In Bukavu, the CPT delegation also met with a women’s civil society coalition, on October 25, that is organizing for change for women. There, Rahmat Katunda said that their organization had similar objectives to the CPT delegation—to educate and advocate for change.

Terezita, a 42-year-old woman from Bunia-Kiri, shared her story. She said the Interahamwe killed her husband and son in front of her, then kidnapped her as a sex slave. She spent more than a year with them in the forest. She had children as a result of her rapes as well. She was finally able to get away and couldn’t even walk—she crawled to safety, but lost her uterus due to the extent of her injuries.

Other women in this civil society coalition are counseling and treating women with AIDS, teaching women trades and how to utilize their skills to earn a living, and in other ways empowering them.

Church of the Brethren: The CPT delegation also met with women from the Church of the Brethren in Bukavu on October 25. One of the women, Jeannette, had both hands amputated about mid forearm. “I’m thankful you came to listen to us,” she told the delegation. She then began her story by saying, “I used to be just like the rest of you.” The Interahamwe came to her house asking her for money. When she told them she didn’t have any, they raped her, killed her child in front of her, cut off her hands, and then hit her head with a machete. They left her for dead. She said she was lucky that people found her and took her to a hospital. But now she can’t bathe herself, can’t feed herself, can’t work. “Before the war,” she said, “we were peaceful and were able to live in our homes. . . . We really want peace.”

Francoizi then shared her story. “I was treated like an animal,” she started, and never imagined she would see internationals before her, listening to her story. She said the Interahamwe use a type of plastic that they put in the fire, and then put on your skin, and it just keeps burning (mentioned above as well). The Interahamwe put this burning plastic on her husband’s head, while he was alive, and she watched his body burn to nothing. Then she managed to flee.

The Interahamwe found her, tied her spread eagle, and four men raped her. When the fifth man came, she appealed to him “with the word of God”, but he was unmoved. He stabbed the inside of her vagina

and left her for dead. She managed to crawl to a riverside and whistle for help, and someone heard her. She spent eight months recovering in the hospital, yet still her back is injured, and she can't work.

Heritiers de la Justice (Inheritors of Justice): Inheritors of Justice, in Bukavu, is a church-based human rights and conflict resolution group. The Director of Administration and Finance Maurice Bahati Masheka Ga Namwira met with the CPT delegation on October 26, explaining that they don't consider themselves the "voice for the voiceless" but rather work to "empower people to speak for themselves," adding that "there is a big difference between the two." Many of those in the organization are lawyers, working in the court system.

Inheritors of Justice disseminates information about what is happening in the eastern DRC. They have a brochure, a website (www.heritiers.org) in French and English, and utilize the radio. Yet many outside of Congo don't know what is happening. "We rely on groups like yours [CPT] to spread the message" about the conflict in the DRC "and about what groups like ours are doing," said Maurice.

Their organization runs programs for adults and youth. There are adult programs on sexual violence and how to advocate for your rights. They also reach out to the Rwandan and Burundian communities, offering workshops on peace and reconciliation (they've held one in Rwanda and two in Congo). They also defend those in court unable to defend themselves, many of whom were sexually violated.

A lawyer at Inheritors of Justice, Ana, then talked about the court system. She said there are two avenues for women to bring charges—in civilian court (if the perpetrator is civilian) or in military court (if the perpetrator is military). Military court is complicated by rapes committed by militias, which are not a part of the military, and many cases in which the victims don't know their perpetrators. In cases of sexual slavery, women can often identify their perpetrators, but may not know their real names (rapists often use fake names). Survivors are also scared of testifying. Members of Inheritors of Justice have themselves faced intimidation and threats and been followed because of their work. There have been some improvements in the system, but there is still a long way to go.

One creative approach to cases has been to try perpetrators where the alleged attack occurred. For example, one member of the military raped five girls aged one and a half to 13 years old, saying he believed if he did this he would be promoted, said Ana. The fact that he was judged in the place where the attack occurred had a significant impact on other soldiers, she added.

Also, said Maurice, in partnership with other groups, they mobilized a significant effort to get the legal code changed vis-à-vis rape and sexual assault. The old law was outdated—a perpetrator could be charged with rape, and all other sexual assault went under the category of "immorality." Immorality charges only led to sentences of a maximum of 10 years—this would include sexual slavery, rape of infants, etc. They were successful in changing the code to include varying levels of sexual assault. Initially this was discussed in Bukavu but was eventually successful at the national level.

Women's Solidarity Group: The CPT delegation met with the Women's Solidarity Group, a Pygmy group, on October 24. Pygmies are indigenous to Congo. The women told CPT that they have been displaced, and don't even have medicine or clothing in the rural areas. Pygmies are horribly abused by militias and other armed actors in Congo, and face a great deal of prejudice, the women reported, as did other groups. One woman from the Women's Solidarity Group told the delegation, "We are not recognized in the way other women are recognized."

A woman from Bunyakiri said militias attacked her village, raped women, and took everything—even “the rugs we slept on.” Women feel shame, she said, so can’t ask for help. “We just want to be able to look like you—you are shining. . . . We can’t go to [our] fields without security accompaniment.”

Churches and the Election:

One pastor told the CPT delegation that the churches have many responsibilities during the elections, including monitoring polling places. This pastor told CPT that this is largely because during the war, many politicians lost legitimacy due to corruption so people turned to church leaders and others within civil society for support. The responsibility of the churches in the election process is a heavy one, he added, because if the outcome is not well-received, some may blame the church.

Visit to Kitshanga:

The level of control rebel groups have in territory outside the cities was apparent during a CPT visit to the rural area of Masisi. President Kabila has little control over eastern Congo. The CPT delegates traveled to Kitshanga in the interior, about 75 kilometers outside Goma, but due to road conditions it was a three-hour drive. The drive was made longer by repeated checkpoints. Leaving Goma they passed through one DRC military checkpoint, one UN checkpoint, then a few miles down the road a rebel checkpoint. Then, the area seemed largely under rebel control. In another 40 minutes they went through another rebel checkpoint/barracks. After that, around every bend in the road, there was a man or several men on “lookout”, some armed, some not; some uniformed, some not. Some rebels even wore the uniform of the national Congolese army (the F.A.R.D.C.). Finally, the delegation came to a checkpoint where they were told they would be meeting with a commander for permission to continue.

They passed through one checkpoint, then, at the second, were told to surrender their passports to be held while they met the commander. At the third, they were at a military camp, and were directed to a small hut/gazebo where they spoke with the security chief of a rebel group. This man spoke to them about the work of the rebel group to—supposedly—bring peace to the 2,200 square kilometers (about 1,200 square miles) that they controlled, even though the delegation was well aware of the atrocities attributed to this group and its soldiers. He was clearly trying to provide positive public relations for his group, and wasn’t visibly armed (although many other soldiers in the camp were). He was also very open in allowing them to take photos of him and anywhere in the camp. He called his group the “National Congress for the People’s Defense” (research later indicated that this group was formed as a political and military party by General Laurent Nkunda on July 25, 2006).¹¹

To the surprise of the delegation, General Laurent Nkunda then came to meet with the delegation—he is one of seven leading warlords the U.S. government issued sanctions against on October 31, 2006 (the delegation met with him on October 30). Shortly before the delegation left for Congo he was interviewed by CNN’s Anderson Cooper (the transcript is available).¹² He has been cited for numerous war crimes, and is wanted for arrest by the UN and the Congolese government (an international warrant was issued for his arrest in September 2005). Although he also was not visibly armed, the delegation and he—in the small hut—were surrounded on all sides by a total of about four or five soldiers armed with automatic weapons.

After meeting with Nkunda, the CPT delegation was able to continue on to their visit in Kitshanga without incident or further checkpoints—and far fewer visible men on “lookout” on the road. Kitshanga is a small refugee village, comprised of families who have fled the conflict from neighboring areas—very isolated due to poor road conditions.

¹¹ Human Rights Watch, <http://hrw.org/english/docs/2006/07/27/congo13843.htm>

¹² <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0610/08/cnr.03.html>

Final Notes:

When repeating the details of these very brutal stories of rape, there is the danger of proliferating the racist stereotype of “savage Africa,” or the notion that Congo is nothing more than conflict, war, and bloodshed. Congo is a very rich country in the diversity and strength of its people, languages, culture, history, and landscape, and certainly cannot be distilled down to nothing more than violence and warfare. But hearing people’s stories can provide a window to a larger, more complex war over resources in which people are caught in the middle and in fact being used as pawns. The women the CPT delegates met wanted these stories told to help lead to a change in international policy toward the DRC, to stop the flow of arms into their country, and to allow them to control their natural resources, holding multinational corporations responsible for their culpability in the conflict.

The CPT delegation also encountered many requests for support for education, for doctors, for food, for medicine. Others hoped that when the delegates returned to their home countries, they could tell other groups to go to Congo and provide this much-needed economic support. These requests were a challenge for the delegation members, who saw a great deal of need as a result of the ongoing conflict, yet knew that it is not CPT’s mission to give material aid, nor does CPT have the capacity to do so.

Yet many women also emphasized the need for peace. Women told the CPTers if they had peace, they would not need outside help—they could go to their fields and gather the harvest, collect water, take their children to school. They could control their own resources without having them siphoned off by other countries and multinational corporations. They could create their own future. One woman in the village of Sange, north of Uvira, told the delegates, “It is really a joy to see women coming to work with other women to find peace.”

CPTers met together at the end of the delegation and committed to taking a number of actions to get the stories they heard into the press and to speak to their home congregations, in schools, and in other community settings about what they heard and learned. Some examples of coverage so far has included an article and photos in an independent news online website that covers Africa based in Norway, an interview with two delegates on a national public radio based in Chicago, several articles in church-related press and interests in more, articles in local newspapers from the home communities of delegates, numerous presentations, and the production of a DVD of the trip.

Delegates are also involved with a larger network of activists in support of Congo who are building an exhibit of photos of Congolese women, along with some of their stories, to be placed outside of Congressional offices. One delegate spoke to representatives in Washington, DC about her experience, and others have faxed letters to their representatives. These efforts make up just a small contribution in the slow and long-term work of raising awareness about Africa generally and Congo specifically in the delegates’ home communities and building the public consensus that may lead to needed changes.

Members of CPT’s October 18 to November 4 delegation were Fatuma Alinoti (Ypsilanti, Michigan), Nancy Almquist (Mt. Ranier, Maryland), Judy Amunga (Nairobi, Kenya), Sharon Gossom (Wheaton, Illinois), Tracy Hughes (Tiffin, Ohio), Unjin Lee (Seattle, Washington), Wendy Lehman and Sara Reschly (Chicago, Illinois), Mawazo Kaluhya Esperance (Uvira, DRC), Sandra Rincon (Bogota, Colombia), and Aningina Bibiane Tshefu (New York, New York).