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V-DAY BREAKS SILENCE ON CONGO'S BRUTAL RAPE CRISIS WITH FIVE-CITY 'TURNING PAIN TO POWER TOUR' FEATURING EVE ENSLER AND DR. DENIS MUKWEGE

The Vagina Monologues Playwright and V-Day Founder Eve Ensler Joins UN Human Rights Award-Winning Doctor in NYC, LA, SF, Atlanta and DC to Raise Awareness

New York, NY (January 14, 2009) – To combat rampant rape and mutilation in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) that has affected hundreds of thousands of women, V-Day, the global movement to end violence against women and girls, announced today a tour to raise urgent new awareness of the DRC crisis. The five-city 'Turning Pain to Power Tour' will take place this February, making stops in New York City, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Atlanta, and Washington, DC.

Events on the tour will feature Dr. Denis Mukwege, founder of the DRC's PANZI Hospital in Bukavu, and playwright/V-Day founder Eve Ensler. Honored by the UN in December 2008 for his humanitarian work, and winner of the "African of the Year Award," Mukwege joins Ensler, the founder/artistic director of V-Day, and the award-winning author of *The Vagina Monologues*, in exposing femicide and the sexual torture of women in the DRC, and relaying the stories of women survivors on the ground who are coming together and breaking the silence.

During public conversations with Ensler, Dr. Mukwege will describe his experiences treating and performing life-saving fistula surgery on thousands of Congolese women and girls destroyed by unspeakable rape and mutilation. Their conversations will also explore the causes of the brutality, ways to stop the ongoing femicide, and Congo's growing movement of women leaders.

The tour is in support of V-Day's joint campaign with UNICEF – STOP RAPING OUR GREATEST RESOURCE: POWER TO WOMEN AND GIRLS OF THE DRC - which is exposing the devastating impact of rape on Congolese women's health, their families and their communities; calling for specific measures to end impunity for perpetrators; economically and socially empowering women and girls to lead in the prevention of sexual violence and in the rebuilding of a country devastated by conflict; building and opening the City of Joy in conjunction with PANZI Hospital and Dr. Mukwege, a center where survivors will be provided with support to heal and training to further develop their leadership and life skills.

"What we're seeing in the DRC is a war being enacted on the bodies of women that is conscious and intentional - it is the systematic destruction of the female population of the Congo," said Ensler. "But after three trips to the Congo in the last eighteen months, I have seen the spirit and strength of the Congolese women translated into a burgeoning movement which is turning pain to power."

The 'Turning Pain to Power Tour' has been made possible by generous support from Open Square Foundation, which is putting a strategic focus on ending violence against women in the DRC.

'Turning Pain to Power Tour' featuring Dr. Denis Mukwege In Conversation with Eve Ensler - Itinerary is as follows:

Wednesday, February 11, 8PM – New York, NY

Dr. Denis Mukwege In Conversation with Eve Ensler, introduced by Anne Veneman, Executive Director of UNICEF

Location: 92nd Street Y - Kaufmann Concert Hall – Lexington at 92nd Street, NYC

Tickets: \$27, on sale now

For tickets and more info, visit

http://www.92y.org/shop/event_detail.asp?productid=T%2DLC5WL10

Saturday, February 14, 8PM – Los Angeles, CA

V-Day USC Performance of “The Vagina Monologues” with special guest speakers Eve Ensler and Dr. Denis Mukwege

Location: USC Campus, Bovard Auditorium, 3601 Trousdale Parkway, Los Angeles

Tickets: \$18 general admission, \$12 students – on sale now

http://www-scf.usc.edu/~vday/Vagina_Monologues.html

(Student tickets must be bought with an ID either from the Student Union Building 100, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Mon-Fri, or email: solters@usc.edu)

Wednesday, February 18, 6:30PM – Redwood City, CA

The World Affairs Council and Global Philanthropy Forum host Dr. Denis Mukwege interviewed by Eve Ensler

Location: Hotel Sofitel, Redwood City

Tickets: \$25 Members and Non-Members, \$15 Students – on sale now

<http://www.itsyourworld.org/assnfe/ev.asp?ID=2418>

Thursday, February 19, 8PM – San Francisco, CA

City Arts & Lectures “Art & Politics” features Dr. Denis Mukwege interviewed by Eve Ensler

Location: Herbst Theater, San Francisco

Tickets: \$20, on sale now

For tickets and more info, visit <http://www.cityarts.net/n.mukwege.html>

Monday, February 23, 8PM - Atlanta, GA

Dr. Denis Mukwege In Conversation with Eve Ensler, introduced by Pat Mitchell, V-Day Board Member and President and CEO, the Paley Center for Media

Location: The Carter Center

Tickets: to be announced

Wednesday, February 25 – Washington, DC

Dr. Denis Mukwege In Conversation with Eve Ensler

Location: Howard University

Tickets: to be announced

Events are subject to change

For more information about the tour and V-Day’s campaign on Democratic Republic of Congo, visit vday.org. To receive the latest tour information, sign up for V-Mail at vday.org/vmail. To read the recent The New York Times article - “Rape Victims’ Words Help Jolt Congo Into Change” October 19, 2008, visit <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/18/world/africa/18congo.html?hp>

About V-Day

V-Day is a global movement to end violence against women and girls that raises funds and awareness through benefit productions of Playwright/Founder Eve Ensler’s award winning play *The Vagina Monologues* and other artistic works. In 2008, over 4000 V-Day benefit events took place produced by volunteer activists in the U.S. and around the world, educating millions of people about the reality of violence against women and girls. To date, the V-Day movement has raised over \$60 million and educated millions about the issue of violence against women and the efforts to end it, crafted international educational, media and PSA campaigns, launched the Karama program in the Middle East, reopened shelters, and funded over 10,000 community-based anti-violence programs and safe houses in Democratic Republic Of Congo, Haiti, Kenya, South Dakota, Egypt and Iraq. V-Day was named one of Worth magazine's "100 Best Charities" in 2001 and Marie Claire’s “Top Ten Charities” in 2006. The 'V' in V-Day stands for Victory, Valentine and Vagina. <http://www.vday.org>