

Congo: 1 dead in attack on famed doctor's home

October 26 2012, by Saleh Mwanamilongo

(AP)—Gunmen killed a guard and fired at a renowned Congolese doctor who has helped thousands of women recover from violent rapes.

Four armed assailants killed a [security guard](#) and shot at Dr. Denis Mukwege at his home in Bukavu Thursday night and they stole the medic's car, the South Kivu Province Governor Marcellin Cishambo told The Associated Press Friday.

The intruders held Mukwege's family at gunpoint and waited for the doctor to return home from work, according to Physicians for Human Rights. When Mukwege arrived they forced him out of his car and shot dead the security guard who tried to intervene. Shots were fired at Mukwege but he succeeded in ducking from them. The gunmen drove off in the doctor's car, but quickly abandoned it.

Security has been increased at the doctor's home, said the governor.

Mukwege is a [gynecologist](#) devoted to the cause of women victims of rape in Congo. He founded the Panzi Hospital in Bukavu. Mukwege, 57, and his team have treated more than 30,000 victims of violent rapes during the last 10 years. Many of the women and girls were gang-raped and needed surgery for their injuries.

The attack on Mukwege's home highlights the increasingly volatile and violent situation in eastern Congo. Several rebel groups are marauding in the area.

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon quickly condemned the attack on Mukwege's home. "Dr. Mukwege's extraordinary and heroic work has saved the lives of tens of thousands of Congolese, many thousands of them women and girls who have been the victims of sexual violence in eastern Democratic [Republic of Congo](#). He continues to be a force for good, and Panzi Hospital a haven for the most vulnerable," said Ki-moon, who called on the Congo government to ensure the safety of Mukwege and his family and to make every effort to identify the perpetrators and hold them accountable.

The murder of Mukwege's security guard "highlights how deadly serious the situation is in Eastern Congo," said playwright Eve Ensler, who has crusaded for women's health. "One of the great men of the world was almost murdered ... We cannot let this continue, we must create an environment where it is safe for Dr. Mukwege and all the people of Congo to live and thrive. Let this tragedy be the call to end the war in Congo once and for all."

Physicians for Human Rights, which has been a partner with Mukwege's Panzi Hospital, said "this attempt to terrorize and possibly assassinate him may be linked to his outspoken advocacy for peace and justice. It closely follows a speech he gave at the United Nations last month in which he denounced the country's 16 years of violent conflict and called for urgent action to arrest those responsible for these crimes against humanity and to bring them to justice."

Mukwege's honors for his work with survivors of [sexual violence](#) include the United Nations [Human Rights](#) Prize, the Olof Palme Prize, and the Clinton Global Citizen Award.

The increasing violence in eastern Congo was also emphasized by an attack by rebels Thursday on the Virunga National Park in which two park rangers and an army soldier were killed. In addition, three soldiers

were wounded, one critically. The confrontation ended in a shootout and five Mai Mai rebels were killed.

Virunga Park has seen a dramatic increase in the presence of armed militias and a growing number of attacks on park staff.

Eastern Congo's growing instability "has brought an influx of militias into the park, intent on poaching and attacking the local population," said the park's Chief Warden, Emmanuel de Merode by email. "This is bringing overwhelming pressures on our small team of rangers whose duty it is to protect the wildlife and the people living in and around the park. Once again, we are deeply shocked and saddened by the deaths of our colleagues."

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