

7. ROMPER EL CICLO DE VIOLENCIA

(FOTOGRAFÍAS 19 - 21)

Look at photograph 19, which shows some young people in a prison yard. How old do you think they are? How long do you think they will spend in the prison?

Now look at photograph 21. What can you see? Compare photographs 19 and 20. What comes to mind?

Children in the Democratic Republic of the Congo cannot enjoy a peaceful, safe childhood. As the conflict escalates, more and more young people are jailed, and sexual violence increases. Social discrimination, dropping out of school and the lack of opportunities to move forward lead more people to commit crime, including young people. The authorities imprison these people, often for arbitrary reasons and without considering whether the crime was minor or serious.

According to the UN, the prisons in the Democratic Republic of the Congo are the worst in Africa. Common problems include the overpopulation of prisoners (North Kivu prison is designed for 150 prisoners but more than 850 are estimated to be jailed there), scarcity of food and medication, and the violation of the fundamental rights that guarantee human dignity. In addition, regular prisoners and military prisoners often share cells, along



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with women (who are victims of sexual and psychological violence and suffer unwanted pregnancies), children and adults.

In this context, the creation of opportunities is vital. The cycle of violence needs to be broken and, to do this, children and young people must have the opportunity to lead a different kind of life.



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