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Media Release

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Obhrai welcomes Congo efforts to prosecute recruiters of child soldiers

(OTTAWA) Deepak Obhrai, M.P. and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs today made the following statement in the House of Commons:

As outlined in the 2006 Annual Report on Children and Armed Conflict issued by the UN Secretary General, the severity of continued acts of violence against children, particularly in the Democratic Republic of Congo, in violation of human rights and international humanitarian law, cannot be ignored.

This is why Canada welcomes the decision of the International Criminal Court to try Thomas Lubanga, the former DRC militia leader charged with recruiting children. I welcome this important first step in combating impunity and congratulate the DRC for the prosecution of Jean Pierre Biyoyo, a former forces commander, as the first national-level prosecution for recruitment of child soldiers.

During an open debate at the UN Security Council this week, Canada called on the international community to support the work of the ICC and national courts as they bring to justice those who perpetrate serious international crimes, including those committed against children.

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