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AFRICA - Girls "witches", water carriers, abandoned babies: to give dignity to children

Muhura (Agenzia Fides) - Among the initiatives of the World Day for the Rights of the Child and Adolescents, the Movement Fight World Hunger (MLFM) invites us to reflect on the violated rights of children and adolescents, in particular on the phenomenon of girls abused physically and psychologically, in Italy and in the southern hemisphere. For an ancestral tradition related to gender, girls in the world are doubly exposed. In Italy, for example, from 4,319 children who were victims of violence in 2010 it reached 4,946 in 2011, of which 61% are girls. In the world about 130-140 million girls have undergone female genital mutilation. In addition, 3 million girls are at risk each year of being subjected to this practice in 28 countries in Africa and the Middle East.
In addition, out of a total of between 300 000 and 1 million 200 thousand children subjected to trafficking each year, girls are more than half, while among the 250 000 child soldiers used in regular and irregular armies of 85 countries, 100 000 are females forced to endure horrific sexual violence. Finally, there are between 500 million to 1 billion and a half of children subjected to violence and abuse and that, while males are more prone to physical violence, females suffer mostly sexual violence especially at home on behalf of relatives or acquaintances.
MLFM denounces the constant abuse and violence Congolese girls experience, victims of endless war and where any excuse is good to subject them to torture of any kind, until slanderous accusation of being "witches", which relegates them to a life of poverty on the margins of society, among the markets of Bukavu and Goma, North and South Kivu. MLFM has been working with them for almost 15 years, with specific projects of humanitarian aid, fighting infant mortality with programs focused on the health and social care, but also awelcoming the young abandoned by their families in two facilities in Rwanda and the DR of Congo. Hundreds of girls "Never Mihogo" (water carriers) that each day try to survive in markets around Bukavu selling bags of water to passers-by, are cared for by Sister Natalina with the help of MLFM. (AP) (Agenzia Fides 20/11/2012)

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