



AFRICA/CONGO DR – A Congolese nun wins the 2013 Nansen Refugee Award

Kinshasa (Agenzia Fides) - "She is a true heroine", said António Guterres, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, in announcing the Nansen Refugee Award to Sister Angélique Namaika, a Congolese nun who works in the north-east of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in favor of women victims of violence of the LRA (Lord's Resistance Army).

"Sister Angélique shows that a single person can change the lives of families torn apart by war", Guterres said. "The Center for the reintegration and development of Dungu, led by Sister Angélique has changed the lives of more than 2000 women and girls who had been forced to flee and mainly brutalized by the LRA" says a note from the UNHCR.

Most of the women welcomed at the Center talk of abductions, forced labor, murders, sexual violence. "It is hard to imagine the suffering of these women and girls in the hands of the LRA", said the nun on learning that she had received the award. According to Sister Angélique thanks to the award "other displaced people in Dungu will receive the help they need. I will never stop doing everything possible to restore their hope and offer the chance to live again".

In the center, created in 2008, guests can receive an education and learn a trade.

According to UNHCR figures, in the Eastern Province of the DRC since 2008, 320,000 people have been forced to flee their homes. The Nansen Refugee Award is given annually by UNHCR to individuals or groups in recognition of "outstanding service to the refugee cause". The award is named after Fridtjof Nansen, the famous Norwegian explorer, scientist and politician, who was the first High Commissioner for Refugees of the League of Nations, the predecessor of the United Nations.

Sister Angélique will receive the Award on 30 September in Geneva. On October 2, she will be in Rome where she will be received by Pope Francis. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 17/09/2013)