

# **JESSICA LANGE**

## **In DRC - B-roll 2003**

UNICEF Video B-Roll  
Total Running Time: 9:18

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## **Video B-Roll Script:**

### **UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador Jessica Lange in the Democratic Republic of Congo (August 2003)**

**(Fed as a VNR on Reuters WNS on Monday August 11, 2003 at 1135-1145 GMT)**

Actress Jessica Lange began her role as UNICEF's Goodwill Ambassador last week touring Congo's troubled eastern provinces.

The Oscar winning actress was appointed Goodwill Ambassador in June.

"You know, I have gotten now to a point where as my children get older I have more time to travel and do things like that. So UNICEF when they approached me it seemed like a perfect situation for me to start becoming involved with projects for them," Lange said.

On the second day of her tour, Lange arrived at the town of Bunia, which has been a flashpoint of violence as rebel groups fight for control over the region, rich in minerals, gold and timber.

The conflict in DRC has claimed an estimated 3.3 million lives since 1998 – mostly women, children and elderly. Aside from ethnic tensions, political feuds among Congolese rebel leaders and their foreign backers - Rwanda and Uganda - have also fuelled the clashes in eastern **Congo**.

Under a United Nations mandate, an international force comprising mainly French soldiers has set up a secure zone in Bunia and banned the open carrying of firearms in a town where gun-toting militiamen and child soldiers terrorise residents.

Relief workers say a Bunia secure zone could help them reach more people, but the extra assistance will still be just a pinprick on a humanitarian disaster fuelled by violence engulfing much of the east of the Democratic Republic of **Congo**.

At a camp next to the city's small airport, about 14,000 people live in tents set up by aid agencies. UNICEF says that thousands more people are expected to join the camp, fearing attacks on their villages.

Lange's visit to the region focused on sexual violence and the aid given to the survivors.

Combatants of all armed groups in the DRC are committing rape and other forms of sexual violence either to terrorise their victims, families and communities or avenge their alleged support of rival groups. These abuses are widespread and systematic in eastern DRC. Women and girls are often raped during military operations while husbands, fathers and children are forced to watch.

They are often attacked while engaged in everyday activities – cultivating fields, collecting firewood or walking to the market. For many survivors the violence was not a single event. They were abducted to serve as combatants' "wives" and then raped for months before being released or abandoned by their abusers. Many women and girls remain missing.

Closely connected to the horror of rape is the impact of HIV/AIDS . The lethal combination of high rates of HIV among the combatants and sexual violence means a possible death sentence for many girls and women.

In the town of Goma, Lange met with rape victims at the DOCS (Doctors On Call) hospital. Staff at the hospital report a sharp increase in the number of rape victims who have received both physical and psychological treatment since its opening in January last year. Today, 48 percent of the hospital's patients are victims of sexual assault.

"It was really, needless to say, extremely moving talking to them and yet you felt, in each of them, from the oldest woman who was sixty something to the youngest girl who was sixteen, that their core was made of iron really. And despite their terrible injuries, psychologically, emotionally and physically, they were finding a way to continue, and I think more than anything that was the most powerful aspect," Lange says.

The city of Bukavu with its 800,000 residents lies on the shore off Lake Kivu, bordering with Rwanda. Like other cities and villages in Eastern Congo, Bukavu's residents have been subject to violence and atrocities during fighting between various rebel militias.

Lange arrived at the Panzi hospital in Bukavu to meet survivors, doctors and counsellors. The hospital has treated hundreds of women and girls who have been raped and injured during the fighting. Aid workers in south Kivu province report that nearly 4,300 women have been treated for sexual violence in the last four months alone.

But most women who are savagely raped and sexually attacked never seek medical attention due to the stigma associated with rape and fear of retribution from their aggressors. And the attackers have so far committed their crimes with total impunity.

Doctors at the hospital say the survivors' main concern is HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. Indeed, data from the Panzi hospital indicates that approximately 27 percent of rape victims tested positive for HIV/AIDS while estimates indicate that 15 percent of eastern Congo's general population is infected.

Hearing the survivors' stories was the core of Lange's visit to Panzi hospital. 'Cecile', an 18 year-old woman from a village near Bukavu, holds on to her crutches when Lange enters the room. During a period of three months earlier this year, 'Cecile' was repeatedly raped by at least two different groups of armed militia. She became pregnant and later lost her baby. She was also left with severe leg injuries from three bullet wounds.

"But at the time two of the girls who were in the house escaped but I was taken by the three men and they tied my hands and took me out of the house," Cecile says.

The rape of women and children has a devastating impact on entire communities. Children have lost all aspects of their protective environment – with many schools closed, health care facilities non-existent and family members killed before their eyes. Many young children have lost years of schooling, are raised in camps for displaced people, are on the streets or recruited by armed groups.

Raising awareness to the issue of sexual violence and helping the victims overcome the trauma are crucial in addressing the problem. UNICEF supports counselling centers set up to give physical and psychological aid to the victims. Claudine Akonkwa of the Olame center for women in Bukavu says she and her colleagues support their applicants by showing them their own inner strength.

"So after they told their story we showed them that the strength they had to get through what they have experienced - we use that strength to show them how to get back on their feet", Akonkwa says.

One of Claudine's patients is 17 year-old "Goreti," who was raped for months by armed men. Her message to other girls who have lived through similar atrocities and trauma is clear:

"The message to some girls in the same situation as me is that it's not good to keep this event in the heart and (we need to) explain what happened because we have to tell everybody what happened to us, what we girls thought is impossible, happened to us and we have to talk to everybody and tell them that this happened to us," she says.

The conflict in DRC has shattered the lives of countless children and their families. Tens of thousands of children have been recruited and are used as combatants by all armed groups. The conflict has also caused a massive breakdown in the economy- causing families to live in conditions of extreme poverty. 70 percent of the population does not have access to even the most basic health care either because they are too poor to pay for services or unable to access facilities. Over 12 percent of children in DRC die before their first birthday.

At the general hospital in Bunia around 60 infants are being treated for malnutrition. They stay at the hospital for a few weeks, where they are fed and vaccinated, while their families receive food and advice on how to continue improving their nutritional status.

"We are all citizens of a troubled world so it seems to me, again, what I can do is be some sort of emissary for them in a sphere that may perhaps be able to, if they decide to, make a difference in their lives," Lange says.

TC	Location/Date	Shows
00:00:00	Bunia (7/8/03)	IDP (Internally displaced people) walking past the UN compound in Bunia/UN Vehicle driving past
00:00:08	"	Tents at the IDP camp next to the UN compound in Bunia
00:00:26	"	Lange touring the camp with UNICEF staff
00:00:58	"	Children posing for camera/Lange listening to briefing about the camp/Lange with children telling child: "You need to pull your pants up buddy"/Lange shaking hands with children
00:01:42	"	More Lange shaking hands with children/walking in camp surrounded by children.
00:02:13	Bukavu (9/8/03)	SOUNDBITE (English) Lange saying: "You know I have gotten now to a point where as my children get older I have more time to travel and do things like that. So UNICEF when they approached me it seemed like a perfect situation for me to start becoming involved with projects for them"
00:02:34	Goma (6/8/03)	Exterior DOCS (Doctors on Call) hospital/construction at the hospital
00:02:52	"	Lange listening to girl describing rape and sexual assault/ (SOUNDBITE/Swahili with English translation) girl saying: "her father was killed but they don't know whether her

		mother was killed or not. When they finished raping me they took a stick and introduced the stick inside"/Girl crying/Lange holding her hand.
00:03:25	Bukavu (9/8/03)	(soundbite) (English) Lange saying: "It was really, needless to say, extremely moving talking to them and yet you felt, in each of them, from the oldest woman, who was sixty something, to the youngest girl, who was sixteen, that their core was made of iron really. And despite their terrible injuries, psychologically, emotionally and physically, they were finding a way to continue, and I think more than anything that was the most powerful aspect."
00:04:12	Lake Kivu (8/8/03)	Shows from speedboat on Lake Kivu/fishing boats /Lange on speedboat/people in Bukavu harbour
00:04:38	Bukavu (8/8/03)	Traffic and people in streets of Bukavu
00:04:48	"	Lange meeting Dr. Denis Mukwege, Director of the Panzi hospital in Bukavu.
00:04:57	"	Lange entering a meeting "Cecile," a victim of sexual violence/victim's hand on her crutches.
00:05:15	"	(SOUNDBITE)(Swahili) "Cecile" saying: "But at the time two of the girls who were in the house escaped but I was taken by the three men and and they tied my hands and took me out of the house."
00:05:33	"	Lange listening to girl.
00:05:42	"	Women at the hospital waiting for medical and psychological treatment
00:06:06	"	(SOUNDBITE) (French) Claudine Akonkwa, counsellor at the center Olame for women saying: "so after they told their stories we showed them that the strength that they had to get through what they have lived we use that strength to show them how to get back on their feet"
00:06:27	"	Claudine walking with "Goreti," a victim of sexual violence.
00:06:45	"	(SOUNDBITE)(Swahili) "Goreti" saying: "The message to some girls in the same situation as me, that it is not good to keep this event in the heart and explained what happened because we have to tell everybody what happened to us, what we girls thought is impossible, happened to us and we have to talk to everybody and tell them that this happened to us."
00:06:57	Bunia (7/8/03)	Women waiting outside the Bunia hospital/Girl standing
00:07:15	"	Children and families at the hospital/Lange at the hospital with malnourished children
00:08:09	Bukavu (9/8/03)	(SOUNDBITE) (English) Lange saying: "We are all citizens of a troubled world so it seems to me, again, what I can do is be some sort of emissary for them in a sphere that may perhaps be able to, if they decide to, make a difference in their lives"
00:08:09	Bunia (7/8/03)	Child holding a notebook as other children sing/Lange listening to children singing/various children singing/Lange thanking children in Swahili.

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