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Ida Sawyer is Central Africa Director at Human Rights Watch. She has been based in Congo since January 2008, first in Goma and, since 2011, in the capital Kinshasa. In August 2016, Congolese authorities barred Ida from continuing to work in the country, following a series of Human Rights Watch publications on political repression. She is now based in Brussels, where she oversees Human Rights Watch's work in Congo, Rwanda, and Burundi. Ida has conducted research across Congo and in areas of northern Congo and neighboring countries affected by the Lord's Resistance Army, and her research has been integral to numerous Human Rights Watch reports. She also conducts high level advocacy with Congolese officials and international actors as well as outreach with local civil society groups. Ida came to Human Rights Watch from Cairo, where she had worked as a freelance journalist. Her previous experience in Africa's Great Lakes region includes work for Care International and the Charity for Peace Foundation in Northern Uganda, as well as research in Congo on the cross-border dynamics of natural resource exploitation. Ida holds a Masters in international affairs, specializing in human rights, from Columbia University.