

Women, Peace and Security and the MONUSCO Mandate Renewal – June, 2012

The NGOWG on Women, Peace and Security recently hosted Josephine Ngalula Kabeya, the National President of the Forum de la Femme Ménagère (FORFEM),¹ from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) at UN Headquarters for a series of discussions with policy makers on the expected renewal of the MONUSCO mandate.

In meetings with Security Council members, Member States, United Nations representatives, and NGO advocates, Ms. Ngalula Kabeya discussed key challenges facing women in the DRC, and made recommendations for the UN, the Security Council and international community on how to address these challenges.

In these meetings, including in a discussion hosted by the Permanent Mission of Finland to the United Nations, Ms. Ngalula Kabeya and Working Group members highlighted the necessity of women's participation and rights in all efforts to bring lasting peace and security to the DRC. Ms. Ngalula Kabeya discussed the consequences of the recent December 2011 irregular electoral process and outcome, and the increasing violence in the East of the country. Women and children continue to be disproportionately affected violence in the country, which has been characterized by fighting and division within the DRC armed forces and armed militias.

Ms. Ngalula Kabeya and the NGO Working Group reiterated the urgency of protection of civilians, calling on all relevant actors to take immediate action to address the ongoing conflict in the East. Ms. Ngalula Kabeya stressed the particular vulnerability of women and girls in this situation of displacement.

Ms. Ngalula Kabeya and the NGOWG remain deeply concerned at the persistent lack of accountability for violations of human rights in the DRC, including of women's rights. Actions to address this impunity include the expeditious arrest of Bosco Ntaganda and other perpetrators who remain at large, and the need for comprehensive security sector reform. Despite the existence of laws on sexual violence, Ms. Ngalula Kabeya reflected that there has been insufficient implementation in the areas of prosecution and reparations for victims. Ms. Ngalula Kabeya stressed the link between sexual violence and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, noting that sexual violence is exacerbated by armed conflict and is closely linked to the circulation of arms, and to the illegal exploitation of minerals.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNMENT OF DRC

- Implementation of the National Action Plan on 1325, including resourcing, by the Government of the DRC;
- Ensure full respect for constitutional clauses regarding gender equality;
- Continue the fight against impunity, with a particular focus on ensuring no impunity for violations of women's rights;
- Stress the importance of national cohesion and the reconstruction of state authority in building peace and security, and
- Take concrete steps to stop the arms trade and the illegal exploitation of minerals.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE UNSC REGARDING MONUSCO

- Ensure the resolution renewing MONUSCO's mandate includes strong support for civil society and capacity-building;
- Continue/strengthen human rights defender support in mandate;
- Urgently address the insecurity in Eastern DRC, including protection of women and girls who have been displaced;
- Ensure MONUSCO focuses on and supports reconstruction of state authority through national cohesion programs;
- Highlight the regional dimensions of the conflict in eastern DRC;
- Support all national efforts and obligations regarding women's rights, including full respect for constitutional clauses ensuring gender equality, and full implementation of the National Action Plan on 1325, including resourcing of the plan;

¹ FORFEM is a network of more than 300 NGOs focused on women's rights, political participation, and ending violence against women in the DRC.

- Take concrete steps to end illegal weapons flows in the country, and the illegal exploitation of minerals;
- Prioritize comprehensive security sector reform, including a vetting mechanism to remove senior officers with a record of serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law and bring them to justice;
- Support the fight against impunity, including by holding the DRC government to account for the lack of prosecution of suspected perpetrators of sexual violence, and for inadequate witness protection and service provision for survivors;
- Demand the arrest of all perpetrators for these crimes, including Bosco Ntaganda and Ntabo Ntaberi Sheka, and provide the DRC government with the support necessary to enact these arrests; and
- Ensure MONUSCO's prioritization of protection of civilians (as in previous mandate SCR 1991), and ensure this mandate is fully resourced and implemented.

NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security

The NGOWG on Women, Peace and Security advocates for the equal and full participation of women in all efforts to create and maintain international peace and security. The NGOWG serves as a bridge between women's human rights defenders working in conflict-affected situations and policy-makers at U.N. Headquarters. The NGOWG coalition members are: Amnesty International; Consortium on Gender, Security and Human Rights; Femmes Africa Solidarité; Global Action to Prevent War; Global Justice Center; Human Rights Watch; The Institute for Inclusive Security; International Action Network on Small Arms; International Alert; International Rescue Committee; Refugees International; International Women's Program of the Open Society Foundations; Social Science Research Council; Women's Refugee Commission; Women's Action for New Directions; Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

More information can be found at our website: www.womenpeacesecurity.org