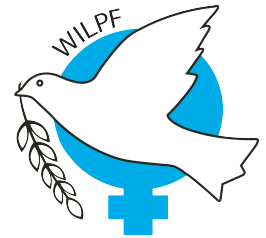


Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Ligue Internationale de Femmes pour la Paix et la Liberté

Liga Internacional de Mujeres por la Paz y la Libertad

Consultative Status with UN ECOSOC, UNCTAD and UNESCO; Special Consultative Relations with FAO, ILO, and UNICEF



« The proliferation of light arms in the DRC in light of UNSCR 1325 »

The proliferation and flow of small arms in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) feeds armed groups and perpetuates instances of sexual violence, criminality and insecurity.

According to reports on small arms and sexual violence as well as testimonies of many rape victims, perpetrators often possess a weapon at the moment of rape.

The proliferation of small arms compromises women's capacity to participate to conflict resolution, the election process, and reconstruction of the DRC. It also reveals threats to human security, violations of human rights, and contributes to the rise of the illegal natural resources trade.

The Government of the DRC bases its' peace building work on the National Action Plan for the UNSCR 1325. However, this plan will only have real impact when the State moves from a declaration of engagement to actual action.

The consolidation of peace in the DRC works around multiple initiatives, including political negotiations and reforms to establish a democracy based on the Rule of Law. However, true democracy is not possible without recognizing the rights of the entire population as opposed to only one half. Peace talks lose all credibility when they fail to follow an inclusive and participative approach which respects, in particular, the voices of those most affected by the conflict.

It is clear that the situation of women in DRC is appalling. Women are discriminated against by both the law and by practices and customs. Women are also more affected by poverty and illiteracy, increasing their vulnerability

The three pillars of UNSCR 1325 are affected by inequality in the DRC as well. Congolese women are exposed to serious difficulties regarding protection and empowerment when participating in the decision-making process.

In light of these elements, we recommend the following:

- To ensure that the import of arms is not used to commit or facilitate a violation of international humanitarian law, human rights or acts of gender-based violence as mandated in the Arms Trade Treaty,
- To ratify the Arms Trade Treaty in order to design and implement measures aimed at harmonizing internal laws on the proliferation of light weapons in the DRC.
- To combat the illicit trade of arms and light weapons and strict control of the legal trade of arms;
- To support civil society to promote the appropriation of the Arms Trade Treaty by stakeholders,
- To bring the complementarity of CEDAW and UNSCR 1325 to the attention of the public institutions of the DRC;
- To reinforce women's participation in the promotion of peace;
- To take gender into consideration when developing policies and programs.

To contact WILPF International: mmunoz@wilpf.ch , rights@wilpf.ch

WILPF DRC: Annie Matundu Mbambi, Chairlady of WILPF DRC: amatmbambi@yahoo.fr