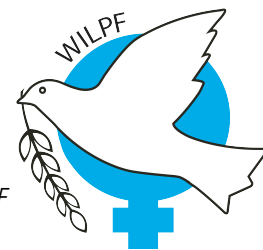


Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

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



Suggested Recommendations by WILPF for the Second Universal Periodic Review of the Democratic Republic of the Congo 19th Session of the UPR Working Group

Women, Peace and Security

The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 has a profound meaning for men and women in the world, especially for women in conflict-affected areas. The Security Council has recognised the essential role played by women in advancing peace, security, development and human rights.

The first paragraph of the Resolution urges Member States to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict.

The Congolese State has to demonstrate its support for this resolution and take into consideration issues of gender equality in relevant legislations on the situation of peace and security in the DRC to promote equality and justice.

In this context, WILPF suggests the following recommendation for the UPR of the DRC:

- Bring the complementarity of the Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women and the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 to the attention of the public institutions of the DRC.

Women's Participation in the Promotion of Peace

The participation of women is an essential element in the peace-making process. It is a necessary condition for economic growth and social progress.

The Congolese constitution provides for gender equality. Nonetheless, it must be noted that Congolese women cannot participate as much as men in the political, economic and social life of their communities. As an example, women represent only 10% of Parliamentarians i.e. the lowest rate in the Great Lakes region. Women have only limited access to education, economic and natural resources and political power. Yet, the political participation of women is essential, both to resolve the crisis in DRC and to ensure that women's interests are taken into account in all peace agreements.

The framework agreement of Addis-Abeba signed on 24 February 2013 by eleven African countries aims at re-establishing peace in the DRC. It calls for an institutional reform and the establishment of the rule of law. Further, we welcome the creation of future Commission on Human Rights, in which civil society is to play an important role.

In this context, WILPF suggests the following recommendations for the UPR of the DRC:

- Reinforce women's participation in the promotion of peace, including within the application of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework Agreement and ensure effective implementation of resolution 2098 of the Security Council.
- Accelerate the creation of the Commission on Human Rights

Arms Trade

The arms trade contributes to the suffering of millions of people, to human rights violations and to breaches of international law. It is demonstrated that arm transfers acts as catalysts in conflicts: they extend wars, make them more deadly and increase the human costs of wars. The proliferation and the excessive use of arms contribute to gender inequality and acts of sexual violence.

As for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the uncontrolled access to arms enables the Government, armed groups and armed individuals to commit acts of unthinkable cruelty in total impunity. Structural malfunctions within Congolese security services promote the improper use of arms and the diversion of arms and ammunitions on a large scale.

The Arms Trade Treaty provides for strict international norms that aim to limit the conventional arms trade. The time has come for States that provide arms to the DRC to carry out a strict evaluation of risks to avoid transferring arms to parties that will use them to commit crimes under international law.

In this context, WILPF suggests the following recommendations for the UPR of the DRC:

- Ensure that the import of arms is not used to commit or facilitate a violation of international humanitarian law or of human rights, including acts of gender-based violence, as mandated by the Arms Trade Treaty.
- Ratify the Arms Trade Treaty in order to design and implement measures aimed at harmonising internal laws on the proliferation of light weapons in the DRC and support civil society to promote the appropriation of the Arms Trade Treaty by stakeholders.
- Combat the illicit trade of arms and light weapons and strictly control the legal trade of arms.

Impact of Mining Activities on Human Rights

Mining in the DRC has a negative impact on human rights and the rule of law. Specific human rights, such as property rights and freedom of movement, are not respected by companies working within the extractive industry sector. Projects involving land acquisition sometimes require relocation or resettlement of people, thus resulting in local communities being deprived of their land and possessions and to the access to natural resources. Agreements between extractive companies and the host government should therefore specify that land acquisition and resettlement should be conducted in accordance with international standards. Moreover, the interplay between resources and armed conflicts accentuates the vulnerability of people based on resource dependence. Natural resources policies are a source of conflict that increases risks of sexual violence and looting of natural resources by armed insurgents.

In this context, WILPF suggests the following recommendation for the UPR of the DRC:

- Refrain from developing new mining projects in the Democratic Republic of the Congo until the adoption and implementation of a policy containing measures to protect the population from the negative impact of mining on the respect of human rights and the rule of law, including the access to food and the protection of the environment and effectively include civil society in this policy making process.

To contact WILPF International: María Muñoz Maraver at mmunoz@wilpf.ch or rights@wilpf.ch

To contact WILPF DRC: Annie Amat Mbambi at amatbambi@yahoo.fr