



## General Assembly

Distr.  
GENERAL

A/HRC/6/NGO/27  
4 September 2007

ENGLISH ONLY

---

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL  
Sixth session  
Item 10 of the provisional agenda

### TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND CAPACITY BUILDING

**Written statement\* submitted by Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPK), a non-governmental organization in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[30 August 2007]

---

\* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

**WILPF Statement in response to the Report of Mr. Titinga Frédéric Pacéré, the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Democratic Republic of the Congo**

WILPF welcomes the Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Democratic Republic of the Congo which draws attention to the ongoing human rights atrocities and violations committed with impunity by national and foreign militias, as well as the Mai-Mai and the armed forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

WILPF expresses serious concern about the perpetuation of arbitrary arrests, illegal detentions, ill treatments, tortures, sexual violence and murders that remain unpunished in the DRC, in particular crimes committed by members of the DRC armed forces who were allegedly responsible for 70 per cent of 3000 rapes reported in Katanga from 21<sup>st</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> of September 2006, as cited in paragraph 30 of the independent expert's report. Furthermore WILPF is concerned by the prevalence of sexual violence and culture of impunity which also appears to have infiltrated police forces.

In addition to placing women's human security at risk this also limits women's ability to participate as actors in the development of DRC.

In the report of Mr. Titinga Frédéric Pacéré, local sources reported that in Bolongo-Loka, situated 530 km north-east of Mbandaka, at least 37 women and young girls had been victims of systematic rape and sexual assault by 12 policemen. According to the report issued by the independent expert, nine of those allegedly responsible, namely seven PNC agents and the two civilians, were arrested and are currently detained in the military prosecutor's office in Lisala. WILPF would welcome further updates by Mr. Titinga Frédéric Pacéré on the progress of this case.

In light of our concerns we urge the government of the DRC to address impunity within the police, armed forces, republican guards and national intelligence agencies/ security services, by strengthening the judicial system in order to hold all actors to account.

With reference to the DRC being a post-conflict country, WILPF draws attention to Paragraph 11 of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women and peace and security:

*Emphasizes* the responsibility of all States to put an end to impunity and to prosecute those responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes including those relating to sexual and other violence against women and girls, and in this regard *stresses* the need to exclude these crimes, where feasible from amnesty provisions.<sup>†</sup>

WILPF further urges the government of the DRC to fully respect international legal provisions, particularly the DRC's obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). In particular, WILPF draws

---

<sup>†</sup> Paragraph 11, UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women and Peace and Security S/RES/1325 (2000)

attention to provisions (a) to (d) under Article 2 on non-discrimination which underpins CEDAW:

‘States Parties condemn discrimination against women in all its forms, agree to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating discrimination against women and, to this end, undertake:

- (a) To embody the principle of the equality of men and women in their national constitutions or other appropriate legislation if not yet incorporated therein and to ensure, through law and other appropriate means, the practical realization of this principle;
- (b) To adopt appropriate legislative and other measures, including sanctions where appropriate, prohibiting all discrimination against women;
- (c) To establish legal protection of the rights of women on an equal basis with men and to ensure through competent national tribunals and other public institutions the effective protection of women against any act of discrimination;
- (d) To refrain from engaging in any act or practice of discrimination against women and to ensure that public authorities and institutions shall act in conformity with this obligation.’<sup>‡</sup>

In the DRC’s combined fourth and fifth report of States parties under Article 18 of CEDAW, widespread discriminatory practices against women and gender-based violence were acknowledged.<sup>§</sup> While WILPF welcomes this open acknowledgement, we request that the DRC provide an update on the report’s proposed recommendation to ‘set up, as a matter of the utmost urgency, a national programme to combat sexual violence against women and young girls,’<sup>\*\*</sup> with an indication of how this programme is working in practice. We request that the DRC to ensure that there is no impunity for sexual violence.

WILPF urges the government of the DRC to support V-day and UNICEF’s campaign to end rape and sexual torture against women and girls in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. ‘UNICEF estimates that hundreds of thousands of women and girls have been raped since the conflict began in DRC.’<sup>††</sup> Sexual violence leaves both physical and psychological scars placing women at risk of sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, unwanted pregnancies and traumatic fistulae.

At present, discriminatory practices, high levels of sexual violence and a culture of impunity all impede women’s ability to participate as actors. WILPF encourages the government of the DRC to work together with local women’s groups and civil society to develop gender-sensitive training for military and civilian personnel. WILPF urges the DRC and all other Member States, particularly those experiencing conflict to take ownership of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 by adopting National Action Plans

---

<sup>‡</sup> Article 2 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

<sup>§</sup> Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women Combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of States parties Democratic Republic of the Congo CEDAW/C/COD/4-5 30 November 2004

<sup>\*\*</sup> Ibid p.50

<sup>††</sup> For further details of the campaign see <http://www.vday.org/contents/drcongo>

to aid implementation of provisions, as recommended by the Secretary-General.<sup>††</sup> WILPF recommends that National Action Plans be viewed as ‘living’<sup>§§</sup> documents which help to strengthen women’s role as actors by mainstreaming a gender perspective in all aspects of peace and security operations and policymaking.

-----

---

<sup>††</sup> ‘The Security Council held three open debates in 2002 and 2003 at which progress and challenges in implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) were discussed. Two presidential statements[S/PRST/2001/31 and S/PRST/2002/32] were issued calling on Member States, entities of the United Nations system, civil society and other relevant actors to develop clear strategies and action plans with goals and timetables, including monitoring mechanisms on the integration of gender perspectives in peace support and humanitarian operations and in post-conflict reconstruction.’ For further details see Women and peace and security Report of the Secretary-General 13 October 2004 S/2004/814 p.2

<sup>§§</sup> ‘Living’ implies that National Action Plans will be regularly evaluated, revisited and developed.