



WOMEN IN DEFENCE OF THEIR RIGHTS

The women of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) have long suffered the scourge of living in a country fighting a war of economic interests for the control of minerals¹, a war that uses sexual violence as a weapon, degrading and condemning women to a life without rights and without justice.

It is wrong to think that this is a local problem: the issue has an international dimension beyond the RDC². The mafias that control the illegal extraction of minerals work under international trade networks that buy these minerals without requiring certificates of origin. They do so mainly for economic reasons, closing their eyes to the reality behind those raw materials that underpin the new technology industry. It is, therefore, an issue that concerns the entire international community and society as a whole, because we are the ones who potentially buy the final product.

In the DCR, women are determined to put an end to this terrible situation and **are implementing initiatives with the clear intention of seeking solutions and positively building a better future for themselves** and therefore for **their families, their communities** and the country in which they live. They work to fully eradicate the problem, **raising awareness** about sexual violence used as a weapon of war, demanding effective **justice** and reparation, involving the international community and demanding **joint responsibility** in the mineral conflict.

Congolese women have played an important role in the struggle to bring peace and security back to the DRC. They have mobilised to come to the aid of the most vulnerable and have spearheaded the defence of peace at the national, regional and international levels. They actively participated in the peace talks in Goma, North Kivu province, which led to the peace agreements between the government and the armed groups in 2009. They also fought for the earlier enactment of a national law on sexual violence³.

The **Congolese Women's Caucus** brought together a group of women's representatives during the 2002 Inter - Congolese Dialogue to develop a formal declaration and create an **action plan to help implement UN Security Council Resolution 1325**.⁴ **Their work helped to increase awareness of the greater role that Congolese women could and should play for the benefit of society, encouraging many women to mobilise.**

*The RDC has one of the largest numbers of **women's organisations** in Africa. These associations are an essential part of conflict resolution and create safe spaces where women can feel protected and welcomed.*

These spaces provide a place where women can work on various initiatives that seek to **provide comprehensive coverage of women's issues in the country**. Some of the sectors in which these women's organisations work include **health care, psychological care, education, legal advice and service, condemnation and visibility, involvement of society, mobilisation of public opinion, etc.**

At the head of these associations are courageous women who put their lives at risk in this struggle for their rights and the rights of all women. These organised women are examples of resistance. In the world's worst country to be a woman, they stand up to demand dignity and peace.

For the women in the DCR to achieve their goal of peace, justice and dignity they need the unconditional and massive involvement and support of the entire international community. How can you help?

¹ See File 1

² See File 1 and 4

³ <https://www.diagonalperiodico.net/global/21079-16-dias-contra-la-violencia-sexual-la-republica-democratica-del-congo.html>

⁴ See File 4

ACTIVITY PROPOSAL

ROLE PLAYING: ACTIVISTS DISCUSSION

After learning more about some of the women's organisations in the RDC, create a map of local women's organisations. What topics do they address?

Choose two people. One will represent a Congolese activist, and the other will represent a local activist. With the common agenda of the Beijing Platform, ask them to address these questions: What topics are you working on? What responses are you providing to specific situations? How do your responses impact the global reality? What happens in other international situations?

12 critical areas of concern Beijing Platform for Action



The environment



Women in the exercise of power and decision-making



Women and girls



Women and the economy



Human rights for women



Education and training for women



Violence against women



Women and poverty



Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women



Women and health



Women and armed conflicts



Women and the media

RESOURCES FOR MORE INFORMATION

- <http://www.peacewomen.org/>
- <http://www.beautyinthemiddle.org/>
- <http://4genderjustice.org/>
- <http://www.unwomen.org/es/news/in-focus/csw59/feature-stories>
- www.beijing20.unwomen.org
- <http://www.unwomen.org/es/news/in-focus/csw59/feature-stories#conflict>
- <http://beijing20.unwomen.org/es/in-focus/evaw1325>
- <http://www.unwomen.org/es/what-we-do/peace-and-security1325+15>
- <http://www.unw>

A project from:



www.alboan.org

For a:



www.tecnologia libre de conflicto.org

Cooperate:

