



EUROPEAN WOMEN'S  
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## STATEMENT FROM THE EUROPEAN WOMEN'S LOBBY ON THE HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN DRC- Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

[adopted by the General Assembly, on 8 June 2025]

We, delegates of the European Women's Lobby (EWL) General Assembly meeting in Brussels on 7-8 June 2025, strongly condemn the inefficient reaction/inaction regarding the humanitarian crisis and increasing war crimes in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and call for an immediate ceasefire, peace negotiations with adequate participation of women of DRC, to install measures to safeguard and ensure protection of civilians especially women, children and men and to recover from the long term and still increasing harm through sexual violence as a weapon of war, as war crimes, and torture. We call for the delivery of holistic humanitarian aid to ensure their survival. The peace negotiations must eliminate all forms of military and sexual violence against women and girls immediately, install and finance reconciliation measures in safe places, and work on the elimination of the root causes of the conflict, including addressing and ending the impact of colonialism.

We, the EWL are deeply concerned about the security situation in the east of the DRC, and have the ultimate duty to express our disavowal of this crisis, which has **lasted too long** and increased in war crimes against civilians, especially against women and girls and leads to femicides in the last three years **without being encountered**, stopped and prosecuted by the international mission, UNSCR and ICC.

These crimes include **cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment**, deplorable conditions for displaced persons, illegal land occupation, ongoing inter-ethnic conflicts, and the unchecked presence of national and foreign armed groups. All of this occurs with absolute impunity, dehumanising countless victims who continue to live without justice or protection, stuck in deplorable living conditions, especially the children, reducing them to a state of slavery, and considering in particular that under the terms of Article 11 of the Constitution in force in the DRC, and Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), it is understood that "*all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights and should act towards one another in a spirit of fraternity and humanism*".

According to the most recent data,<sup>1</sup> there are nearly 7 million<sup>2</sup> internally displaced people, mainly women and children and from eastern DRC in North Kivu, Ituri, South Kivu, and Tanganyika, including Goma, with 94% of victims of the widespread conflict-related sexual violence being women and girls in certain regions. It underlined that such violence was often used as a weapon of war, rooted in patriarchy and gender stereotypes, to punish rival groups and instill fear in civilians.<sup>3</sup>

As the largest umbrella organisation of women's rights groups in Europe, the EWL calls on all international actors to uphold international humanitarian law and to ensure the full implementation of United Nations

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<sup>1</sup> [UN decries sexual violence as weapon of war in DRC \(voanews.com\)](#); this [page](#) displays UN reports on DRC by the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, i.e.; and the reports of the UNSC are listed [here](#) (February 2025)

<sup>2</sup> [DR Congo emergency | UNHCR](#)

<sup>3</sup> [CEDAW's press release of Feb. 24, 2025; Concluding Observations of CEDAW 2/2025 on DRC](#) in Para 11,12 and 30, 31 which highlights the needs for a better shaped DRC and which shall be taken as measures to be supported by the EU.



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everywhere else.

Security Council Resolution 2720<sup>4</sup>, together with the UN Resolution 1325 (2000)<sup>5</sup> the UN Resolution 1820 (2008)<sup>6</sup> as its complete legally binding agenda on Women, Peace and Security<sup>7</sup> in DRC as

The EWL urges all parties to allow humanitarian actors, aid, and assistance to reach out to DRC, especially the Northern part of the country close to the border with Rwanda at Civu. We call on EU leaders, namely European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, European Parliament President Roberta Metsola, European Council President António Costa, and EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission Kaja Kallas, **Member States**, and all other relevant actors to demand an **immediate ceasefire**. We further urge them to take action against the presence of toxic masculinity within militias, armies, MONUSCO units, and other armed groups by enforcing proper control, training, and education to prevent any further acts of sexual violence against women, girls, and civilians. Perpetrators of such grave human rights violations must be prosecuted under national and international law.

We, the EWL, call on all **EU and UN** actors to actively consult with women-led NGOs in the DRC, who are deeply engaged in peacebuilding and the organisation and distribution of humanitarian aid. Through **EWL's network**, the EU can connect with Congolese women's organisations ready to contribute to dialogue, offer expertise, and support coordinated international action with DRC civil society for a peaceful future.

We call on all national, regional, and international legal instruments that guarantee the protection of human rights, and most importantly, the right to life. We recall the provisions of Articles 5-8 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and Article 4 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, all affirming the equal dignity and rights of all human beings, without distinction.

Given the above, and to find a way out of this bloody crisis, our recommendations are as follows:

## 1. TO PUBLIC AUTHORITIES

### A. THE EU AND THE DRC GOVERNMENT:

- to use external diplomacy to conclude multilateral peace agreements with African States and States throughout the world, while giving priority to the principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes by the provisions of Article 2 of the United Nations Charter; and in response to the needs of the Congolese people;

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<sup>4</sup> [Resolution 2720](#)

<sup>5</sup> [UN Security Council resolution 1325 on women and peace and security \(2000\) | UN Women – Headquarters](#)

<sup>6</sup> [UNSC Resolution 1820 \(2008\)](#), which in Art 1 defines “sexual violence, when used or commissioned as a tactic of war in order to deliberately target civilians or as a part of a widespread or systematic attack against civilian populations” to be eliminated and punished since as Art 4 says it constitutes in it different forms a war crime, a crime against humanity, or a constitutive act with respect to genocide (femicide needs to be added in an ICC amendment) under the Rome Statute of the ICC. It demands Member States to comply with their obligations for prosecuting persons responsible for such acts, to ensure that all victims of sexual violence, particularly women and girls, have equal protection under the law and equal access to justice, and stresses the importance of ending impunity for such acts as part of a comprehensive approach to seeking sustainable peace, justice, truth, and national reconciliation. It demands member states for appropriate measures to prevent and protect women and girls from all this crimes.

<sup>7</sup> [In focus: Women, peace and security | UN Women – Headquarters](#)



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remain on Congolese soil.

- to evaluate for the last time the mandate of the regional force (EAC);
- to decide whether or not, after evaluation, this force (EAC) can

**B. TO EU and CONGOLESE PARLIAMENTARIANS** to cooperate in support and respect:

- to work for the restoration of peace and the security of the Congolese people whom they represent, by conducting fruitful advocacy, and by initiating new legislative proposals aimed at the repression of serious crimes, war crimes, and femicide, as well as the reparation of the prejudices suffered.

**C. THE EU TO ADDRESS AND ACTIVATE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COURTS AND TRIBUNALS:**

- intensify investigations into crimes committed on Congolese territory;
- identify the presumed perpetrators of these crimes, arrest them, and try them per the cold rigors of the law;

**2. THE EU IN COLLABORATION WITH THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY:**

- to ensure the application of Chapter 7 of the United Nations Charter, namely the maintenance of peace and international security in the world and especially in the African Great Lakes sub-region, the specific case of the eastern part of the DRC, which has been put to fire and blood for nearly three decades by the M23 terrorists, manufactured and financed by Rwanda and Uganda.
- we also call on the EU in cooperation with the international community to play an active role in the application of the rights contained in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, to make a massive and effective contribution to the reconstruction of countless homes destroyed by the M23 terrorists and enemies of peace in the eastern part of the DRC, with particular attention to the specific needs of children, women and girls who are victims of sexual and gender-based violence, as well as displaced persons, who are always vulnerable to armed conflict.

**3. THE EU TO SUPPORT AND RAISE AWARENESS AMONG THE CONGOLESE PEOPLE:**

- to remain vigilant and not allow themselves to be manipulated by anyone, especially during this election period;
- to give priority to national and African solidarity and unity in coherence with human rights and in peace, gender equality, diversity, and justice;
- to gain trust in the international community and feel safe and respected, allowing them to heal and grow in a society that can help them recover from past traumas of colonization, racism, and feel embedded in a united, peaceful, responsible, and helpful international community for a better future.



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