



Réseau international des Femmes pour la Démocratie et la Paix asbl (*RifDP*)

International Women's Network for Democracy and Peace asbl (*IwnDP*)

Internationale Netwerk van Vrouwen voor Democratie en Vrede (*InvDV*)

PRESS RELEASE

As part of its mission, the International Women's Network for Democracy and Peace, the IwnDP, expresses its dismay in relation to the escalation of armed violence in the South and North Kivu region. The IwnDP unreservedly condemns this war of invasion of the Congo.

This escalation of violence has been denounced by several humanitarian organizations as well as the United Nations in these terms¹:

We note in particular this paragraph:

Ituri and North Kivu are home to nearly 65% of the DRC's displaced

"While humanitarian aid is essential to save lives and relieve the suffering of populations affected by the violence, it is not the only solution to humanitarian problems, the restoration of security and peace is badly needed," argues the UN Humanitarian Coordinator in the DRC.

This situation in North Kivu adds to an already very complex and deteriorated humanitarian situation in several provinces of the country, particularly in the East. In the neighboring province of Ituri, the persistence of violence, including numerous attacks on sites for displaced persons, has weakened many territories, leading to massive population movements, detailed the Humanitarian Coordinator.

The provinces of Ituri and North Kivu alone are home to nearly 65% of the 5.7 million internally displaced people in the country. They are also home to the largest number of humanitarian actors who work every day to bring aid to populations affected by violence.

The voice of the International Women's Network for Democracy and Peace is a cry of alarm to affirm its solidarity with the Congolese people, in particular with women and children. There's no need to remind that in these kinds of conflicts, accompanied by unspeakable violence, children are the first victims and the ones who suffer the most because they are defenseless and unarmed.

¹ <https://news.un.org/fr/story/2022/11/1129752>



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While the right to schooling is a children's right according to the United Nations Charter of the Rights of the Child, today, several thousands of children no longer attend school because they are displaced by war. Women are also frequent victims of war conflicts. We refer anybody to the eloquent speech of Dr. Mukwege Nobel Peace Prize in 2018².

Who, better than Dr. Mukwege, will plead for peace in the Congo and highlight the consequences of the war on the civilian populations and especially on women in the South and North Kivu region? Through his fight for the dignity of women, Doctor Mukwege, gynecologist-obstetrician, is today's spokesperson for millions of civilians threatened by the abuses of armed groups in Kivu, a region in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)³.

Today, the International Women's Network for Democracy and Peace recognizes that the work of Dr. Mukwege, accomplished with delicacy, love and dedication for several years, has just been jeopardized by this resurgence of violence that once again puts in distress thousands of women and children.

The International Women's Network for Democracy and Peace appeals to the common sense and to the good will of several authorities to use everything in their power to stop this suffering whose consequences are already immeasurable on the civilian populations of the Congo.

Done in Brussels, November 22, 2022.

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Gloria Uwishema, the IwnDP Coordinator in the Netherlands
Jacqueline Mukamihigo, the IwnDP in France
Pépétue Muramutse, the IwnDP in Canada.

² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=whsRdYLVmW4>

³ <https://information.tv5monde.com/afrique/denis-mukwege-prix-nobel-de-la-paix-explosion-de-joie-en-rdc->