

A message from Congolese women on International Women's Day



Only Congolese will initiate and bring change in the D.R.C

Despite all local challenges and harmful international interference in D.R Congo for the past 400 centuries, the biggest courage is the one demonstrated to overcome fear of the oppression and to act for change. The courage demonstrated by grassroots Congolese women to resist and overcome the fear of their local and international oppressors will always remain marked in the history of Africa. At this moment, many Congolese women are rising and sacrificing themselves in rewriting history and to liberate themselves completely from the bondage of those who continue to oppress them, in order to give themselves and their children a chance of survival as well as a better future to new generations.

Congolese women are rejecting the victim hood stereotype that is conferred to them by many local and international NGOs. Congolese women, particularly those who have suffered from atrocious human rights violations (sexual violence), want to have some dignity and be known for their mental strength and ability to survive hardship. Congolese women refuse to be used as a propaganda tools by politicians or NGOs, and feel that the pictures of their nudity and poverty as well as that of their children should not be exposed in such as way in America and Europe to draw sympathy and money that will never even reach the recipients.

Furthermore, Congolese women deplore the fact that today many international NGOs are using the victims of sexual violence as a commercial tool to build the administrative capacity of their organisations while ignoring completely the need of Congolese women as well as undermining the effort of local grassroots women and disempowering them.

Sexual violence is not cultural or traditional in the DRC but has been used a tool if war, humiliation, destabilization and displacement of communities. They want the international community to know that that Sexual violence will only end by the restoration of peace and the application of rule of law in the DRC.

The international, communities, particularly the permanent members of the UN SC are invited to demonstrate a political will to end the conflict in the Great Lakes region of Africa. They are invited to demonstrate their commitment to peace by deligitimising armed violence, ending the militarization and the support of oppressive regimes in the Great Lakes region of Africa. The UK and US governments are particularly invited to stop double standard by following the OECD guidelines and to call for an effective interRwandan and InterUgandan dialogues necessary for Peace, Security, Good Governance, Economic Development and Regional Stability for eastern DRC, hence the Great Lakes Region. It is only by ending war and restoring the rule of law through distributive justice that sexual violence will be effectively addressed in the D.R.Congo.

In peace

Marie-Claire Faray