

Civil society input on Women, Peace and Security **Mandate renewal MONUSCO, Democratic Republic of the Congo**

On March 31st 2018 the UN Security Council (UNSC) will decide on the renewal of the mandate of MONUSCO in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, DRC. Many civil society signatories of the Dutch National Action Plan 1325 (NAP1325), as well as members and partners of WO=MEN Dutch Gender Platform have a longstanding relationship with DRC. Organizations such as ZOA, CARE, CENDDOW, Cordaid, Denis Mukwege Foundation, DRCC, Women's Initiatives Network, TIYE International, YWCA-NL, Save the Children, MUCOP, MWPN, Mensen met een Missie, Stichting Misa, Mukomeze, Somba Many, Sundjata, and Tosangana support inclusive peace and security in close cooperation with Congolese women's rights organizations.

The new resolution on MONUSCO is a chance to further support inclusive peace processes. Therefore, Dutch civil society organizations and their local partners that work in and on DRC call upon the UNSC to take into account the following recommendations:

- = **Urge MONUSCO to intensify the implementation of NAP1325 by continuing the protection of politicians, candidates, activists, human rights defenders, and their access to political participation.** The NGO Working Group on WPS points out that, although women comprise 47% of the electorate, due to the security situation significant barriers to women's representation and participation in political and security processes remain ([S/2018/16](#)). Furthermore, the newly signed electoral law adopted by the parliament on 15 December, is highly problematic for it reduces the likelihood of small political parties and independent candidates to gain seats in the future legislative elections. The electoral law requires candidates to pay a non-refundable fee of \$100,000 USD for the presidential election, \$1,000 for legislative elections, \$ 625 for provincial elections, and \$ 313 for local elections, and to have a college degree or 5 years of professional experience ([WPS NGO Working Group](#)). This law obstructs women's participation in the political sphere and their chances of being elected in parliament. This has been protested by various women's organizations, and should strongly be condemned by MONUSCO and the Council.
- = **Request MONUSCO to continue and strengthen its efforts for the participation and involvement of women in peace processes** by employing more women in the mission. At the present, the dismounted patrols are carried out mostly by male peace keepers while these should include female military, police and civilian sections such as Human Rights and Women's Protection Advisors. Important herein, those appointed to the mission in DRC should have affiliation with DRC and speak the French language to enable and facilitate communication and foster trust between local women and the peace keepers.
- = **Urge MONUSCO to ensure enough capacity to protect women, children and people with disabilities (PWDs) against Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV).** The ongoing fights between militias results in violence, and internally displaced people in which women account for a significant portion of the victims. The cases of Gender Based Violence (GBV) are alarmingly high, and with the adoption of resolution 2348 in which MONUSCO comprised its military personnel, police and former police units these numbers may increase.
- = **Request MONUSCO to improve attention and efforts to protect women and girls from SGBV-related incidents.** Including an extensive internal research to prevent any case of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) where MONUSCO soldiers are involved, which is in full

compliance to the United Nations zero-tolerance policy on SEA. Furthermore, MONUSCO should encourage the national military, FARDC, to prevent sexual violence by its own troops through the application of a similar approach of MONUSCO as giving trainings and the signing of an Acte d'engagement with the commanders.

- = **Urge MONUSCO to incorporate a gender sensitive perspective when designing its PoC strategy and to maintain its military gender advisor.** Considering when, where and how are women, boys and girls the most vulnerable. For instance, activities like farming, going to the market, and fetching water should be anticipated to prevent SGBV related incidents. In general the expertise of civil and military gender advisors (GENADS) in designing gender sensitive strategies and policies is crucial. Various civil society organizations have received signals of possible cuts on GENADS in UN missions, among which the military GENAD in MONUSCO. This would be highly problematic and counterproductive to the implementation of Resolution 1325.

- = **Request MONUSCO to increase its investment in civil society engagement.** According to several women's organizations operating on the ground, the situation in the areas where the MONUSCO soldiers are present is not improving and seems to deteriorate. Citizens are killed in the vicinity of soldiers, without any consequences for the perpetrators. SGBV, in this case, raping of women and girls by militants as well as MONUSCO soldiers is ongoing and action to protect these women is lacking. As a consequence, citizens are losing trust in the UN mission and are fleeing the areas where MONUSCO is present. Therefore, it is crucial to monitor these human right violations through consultation with civil society in order to identify and prosecute perpetrators. Moreover, as the NGO Working Group emphasizes, the ongoing targeting, through judicial proceedings and other means, of civil society activists seeking to legitimately exercise their rights to freedom of expression, religion and peaceful assembly, should also be of concern to MONUSCO and the Council ([S/2017/565](#)).