

Empowerment of women in conflict regions, case of DRC



Monday, The 3rd December 2012

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Understanding the situation of women in conflicts regions: case of DRC

- The DRC particularly in its Eastern part: North Kivu and south Kivu provinces have been many times victim of conflicts qualified as liberations wars most of time by rebels like AFDL, RCD, CNDP etc, today it is M23. All those army groups created movements of population due to the created insecurity all over the region.

Understanding the situation of women in conflicts regions: case of DRC

- Women and young ladies are more affected by those wars and hostilities induced by those army groups: FDLR, MAIMAI, NYATURA in some cases none controlled government soldiers too are involved.
- In wars women are victims of negative acts such as sexual violences.

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- Those acts which even at this moment still continue in Kivu have to be exposed and fought so that women can get back their autonomy. Help me so all together we can call for justice and various kinds of helps to our mothers, daughters or sister of Kivu.
- Those violences and rapes are the direct causes of the poverty most importantly in the Eastern region of DRC particularly North and South-Kivu.

Understanding the situation of women in conflicts regions: case of DRC

- Due to the persistence of war and other kind of conflicts, people have no longer the sense of human right in general but the right of women is increasingly being neglected and sometimes denied. As there have never been organizations that fight against equalities among people, mostly inequalities related to gender, and no organizations implied in changing the mentalities,

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- People look like not recognizing the value of empowering women.





Evidence of facts

- From direct or indirect witnesses from our members of the community and some other local people not members, my millennium2015 DRC-Great-Lakes community's members came up with identifying the various problems that impact women in the conflicts regions.

Evidence of facts



- Women, mothers are raped in front of their children and their husbands. They are killed and sometime buried still alive because they are women (example at Makobola).
- Pregnant women are cruelly disemboweled,
- Women are victims of various kind of atrocities like killing them for no reason, they are mutilated and are victim of torture of various kind that exist
- Women are separated from members of their families, lose their assets, become refugees inside their own country then become victims of all implied consequences from wars.

(Source :Marie MBAYABU NIANGA DRC)

Dependence of women due to wars.

- Because of that women are dependant than ever
- These women are manly widowers, poor and jobless refugees from their villages, they then become subjects of different people in order to find food, clothes for themselves and for their children. Easily people with bad intend exploit them economically and in some cases they are sexually exploited.
- A typical example is the group of women I visited in Goma town, refugees from various conflicts regions that do the job of cleaning coffee at SOTRAKI.

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Dependence of women due to wars

- The problem is that they are not paid; they receive as salary, a cup of drink morning and two others cups one of beans and another of rice each evening.
- Simply to mean that they are economically exploited, they expose themselves as they have no choice. The objective for them is to survive and find minimum food for their children or for their families so kipping them surviving.
- **The challenging question is:** how can such women think about autonomy or how can they empower themselves?

Frequent problems that keep women of conflicts regions far from empowering themselves

- The national investigation followed by my survey about consequences and problems that face women list below frequent problems and/or consequences that face women in this conflict situation in DRC. In GREAT LAKES region countries (DRC, RWANDA and BURUNDI), the differences are not frequent and except some cruel cases in DRC, ITURI region. In ITURI, human being developed cannibalism; they started eating genital organs of other people. Here women were most victims of this situation of cannibalism.

Some of those frequent problems,



The consequences of conflicts on women are countless, for our region common problems are:

1. Increased number of poor widows in the great lakes region.
2. The works of women become intense as they have to support their families.
3. Planned, organized and systematic rapes of women by armed people in front of their family members including their children.
4. Increase number of children without known fathers. These are from rapes.

Some of those frequent problems



5. Many cases of prostitution of women and their daughters even married as mean of looking for money.
6. Soldiers, rebels and any other armed people take women or young girls as their wife by force.
7. Increases dissemination of sexual transmitted diseases among raped women.
8. Rural migration of women from their villages to town and provinces with security. They even migrate to other countries.

Some of those frequent problems



9. Drop out of girls from educational activities worrying being raped.
10. Incest(Mothers and their daughter or members of the same family are raped by same persons)

Image showing particularities of sexual violences in Ituri, DRC

- Through this picture not easy to exhibit by projection, a women still alive, is being mutilated by member of a given army group.



Image showing particularities of sexual violences in ITURI, DRC





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How to react to this century's tragedy

- All together, let fight against the fact that sexual violence is taken as weapon. For me this is a **“barbarous weapon »**
- All together say no to the behavior of different nations all over the world that never think about this Great Lakes tragedy, about the situation of women. In DRC, North Kivu, where the situation is more cruel than ever up to the level of being qualified as **« sexual Tsunami »**

Conclusion.



- It is true that all the society is being victim of conflicts consequences. But women and young ladies are particularly being more affected than others; only because of the place they take in the society and because they are feminine or in other word because of their sex.

*“Coming together is a beginning;
Keeping together is progress;
Working together is success.” (Henry Ford)*

- From this document we are getting together, keeping together will allow us to work together ,then the success will be found in the tangible help we will provide to those oppressed people.



- The population from the region would like you to help. For me this is the moment of moving from theories to practical help. Because beautiful speeches are now enough for us. Speeches like: "stop violence, we are against" have to be changed in doing something for these people.
- All support the idea that it is time, let's move to acts because good speakers are not needed for the moment, they will not solve the problems of our mother in this region of Great Lakes and particularly the Kivu region.

Recommendations in order to help Congolese women to empower themselves after conflicts.

- Give more chance to women in education, training in various domains in order to increase their capacity to act for the development and for their empowerment. This will give more chance to ensure the equal participation of women and man to the promotion of the social economy.
- We have to condemn and punish with the highest energy actors of various kinds of rapes.

Recommendations cn't.

- Fight against the poverty among majority of women by education, training them about their rights, we also have to support small projects to insure food security for their children, the more needed project is the extension efforts in order to change traditional thinking or mentalities. The project is read suggested and typed, it only missing the sponsors. The project is Creation of **GENDER CLUBS** in schools.

Recommendations cn't

- In the economic domain, we have to make project that aim at the development then group women into cooperative and then find sponsors for their project. This will really empower women.

NB:For any mistake, I'm sorry because this is a translation from French. But your corrections or contribution are the most welcome to the contact below :



Thank you!

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