

***Memorandum of Diaspora Congolese women denouncing international crimes committed in the D.R.Congo and neocolonial policies imposed on local populations.***

Recalling the UN SC Resolutions 1325 on Women, Peace and Security<sup>1</sup>; Diaspora Congolese Women stand in solidarity to express our solidarity and our concern for innocent Congolese populations, particularly women and young girls who are living in human insecurity, poverty, fear, hunger and oppression since 1997 in the D.R.Congo<sup>2-3</sup>.

We stand united to vigorously condemn the ongoing dehumanisation of the DR Congo by the ongoing war of low intensity imposed on the Congolese populations for economic reasons since 1997 by multinational corporations who have orchestrated the world's deadliest armed conflict since World War II, killing more than 5.4 million people in total international impunity<sup>2-3</sup>. We denounce and reject the ongoing racist neocolonial policies imposed on the Congolese populations in attempts to dismantle the D.R.Congo for the control of resources and to displace local populations from their lands.

We are reminded of the 1884-1885 Berlin conference that partitioned Africa map without the presence of any African individual or representative of communities<sup>4</sup>. We commemorate the 19th century genocide of Millions of Congolese, perpetuated by the members of the International African Association, under the command of Leopold II of Belgium; who used forced labor to gather wild rubber from vines and enforce quota by the cutting off of heads or hands of recalcitrant Congolese populations<sup>4</sup>.

We recall the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights<sup>5</sup>, the 1956 Convention on the Abolition of Slavery<sup>6</sup>, the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights<sup>7</sup> that recognise the right of all peoples to exist, to live in peace and dignity, to self-determination, to freely determine their political status, to pursue their economic, social and cultural goals, as well as to manage and dispose of their own resources.

We deplore the crimes committed in the DR Congo since 1997 breach Article 6, 7, 8 of the Rome Statute<sup>8</sup> defined as crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, on sexual violence, (h) on the persecution and forced displacement; and war crimes. The consecutive armed conflicts that are fought in the DRC are proxy wars sponsored by multinational corporations for the illegal access and control of coltan, cassiterite, beryllium, niobium, andesine, europium ruthenium (used in aeronautic and space industry), oil, diamonds, gold, zinc, cobalt, copper, silver, cadmium, uranium, and other rare and new metals of exceptional concentration in the DR Congo's soil<sup>9</sup>. The mining of these natural resources are often undertaken in inhuman and unsafe conditions, by men, women as well as children who are exploited, treated without human dignity and often forced into labour under the threat of guns<sup>9-10</sup>.

We cite the following reports that detail international crimes committed in DR Congo and Great Lakes Region of Africa since 1994:

-The 2012 UN Group of Experts (Hege) report on the ongoing role played by Rwanda and Uganda in directing proxy militia groups in the D.R.Congo<sup>11</sup>.

- The 2010 "Mapping Project" report by the UN HCHR on serious violations of human rights and international laws committed between 1993 and 2003 in the D.R.Congo<sup>12</sup>.
- The 2009 Mukwege & Nangini report on Rape with Extreme Violence: a weapon of war, of destruction and displacement in the D.R.Congo<sup>13</sup>.
- The 2008 report by UN experts showing the involvement of several companies in the financing of the conflicts D.R.Congo and particular the armed groups<sup>14</sup>.
- The 2005 UN SC resolution 1756 recognising the specific link between illicit trade of natural resources and the proliferation of arms trafficking in the D.R.Congo<sup>15</sup>.
- The 2006 Lutundula report on illegal mining and contracts in the D.R.Congo<sup>16</sup>.
- The 2004 UN Security Council resolution 1533, on the illicit flow of weapons in the D.R.Congo and arms embargo on all foreign and Congolese forces<sup>17</sup>.
- The 2002 Kassem report on the illegal exploitation and trade of natural resources in the R.D.Congo<sup>18</sup>.
- The 1994 Gersony report on mass killings of Rwandan civilians by the Rwandan Patriotic Front led by Paul Kagame<sup>19</sup>.

We decry the neocolonial and paternalist visions imposed upon the populations of the D.R.Congo, under the 2013 signed Framework for Peace, Security and Cooperation Agreement<sup>20</sup> drafted without any national consultations in the D.R.Congo and based on policies that favors the international economic interests of multinational corporations.

We demand the accountability of the five permanent members of U.N Security Council for the 1994 UN SC Operation Turquoise<sup>21</sup> and to demonstrate a political will to end the armed conflicts in the Great Lakes Region of Africa, by organising effective interRwandan and interUgandan dialogues necessary for peace, security, good governance, economic development and stability in the region.

We call for an end to the legitimisation of armed violence as the only accessible route to power in the Great Lakes Region of Africa. We call for increased international efforts to promote regimes that will build strong institutions to end impunity for perpetrators of violence against civilians including rape of women in the D.R.Congo. We call for international sanctions to ensure that multinational companies buying minerals imported from the D.R.Congo should carry out due diligence to international standards to ensure they aren't supporting armed groups and oppressive regimes through their purchases.

It is time for reason, morality and human dignity to prevail over financial profits and injustice to enable restoration of peace, human rights, human development and sustainable environment in the D.R.Congo.

In peace and solidarity,

***Diaspora Congolese Women immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers from Belgium, Canada, France, South Africa, United Kingdom and United States of America.***

*Our existence begins to end the day we become silent about things that matter for humanity. As long as injustice will continue to constitute the "international agenda and policies", resistance will continue to be the duties of Congolese populations in the DR Congo and the diaspora.*

**For further information**, please contact the following: [yabisomag@yahoo.fr](mailto:yabisomag@yahoo.fr), [commoncauseuk@gmail.com](mailto:commoncauseuk@gmail.com), [fondshalupe@yahoo.fr](mailto:fondshalupe@yahoo.fr).  
**For Diaspora Congolese Women in the U.S.A:** *Jeanne Kasongo (FondShalupe -Boston)*, *Marie-Jeanne Luyinda Georges (Victory Women-New Hampshire)*, *Bibiane Tshefu (WILPF-New York)*, *Leontine Daliga Lanza (Activist Congolese Woman- Los Angeles)*, *Marie-Jeanne Kirby- Lanza (Atlanta)*, *Jacky Kalonji (Catholic Mothers-Boston)*, *Anne M. Kalonji (Dallas)*, *Claude Kabuya (Boston)*, *Nita Evele (Congo Global Action-Washington)*, *Marie-Claire Ghonda-Mpanu Mpanu (Washington)*.  
**For Diaspora Congolese Women in the U.K:** *Marie-Louise Pambu (COMMON CAUSE UK -London)*, *Maguy Mayanda (COMMON CAUSE UK -London)*, *Kongosi Onia Mussanzi (COMMON CAUSE UK-Bradford)*, *Nzita ngma (COMMON CAUSE UK-Manchester)*, *Mina Munga (WILPF Scotland Glasgow)*, *Liliane Mbiki Lando (COMMON CAUSE UK-London)*, *Francoise Lutala Kabe (COMMON CAUSE UK-Cardiff)*, *Esther Muloway (COMMON CAUSE UK-Essex)*, *Carine Mushigo (COMMON CAUSE UK-London)*, *Christine Lilley (UK)*, *Marie-Claire Faray (COMMON CAUSE UK-WILPF UK-London)*. *Me Marie-Thérèse Nlandu (London)*. **For Diaspora Congolese Women in Belgium:** *Stella Kitoga (FIREFEC Bruxelles)*, *Juliette Kimpiabi (FIREFEC Bruxelles)*, *Marceline Mundela (Bruxelles)* and *Elena Matundu (GFAIA-Bruxelles)*. **For Diaspora Congolese Women in the UK France:** *Elza Vumi (Congo Actif-Paris)*. **For Diaspora Congolese Women in the UK South Africa:** *Me Lola Miteu (Johannesburg)*

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