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UN Women – UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (replaces UNIFEM, DAW, INSTRAW, OSAGI) (Author)

Press briefing by UN Women on the situation of women and girls in the Democratic Republic of Congo

UN Women is deeply concerned about the increased vulnerability of women and girls in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The renewed escalation of violence has resulted in a devastating humanitarian crisis, disproportionately affecting women and girls. As the clashes unfold in a country that has endured prolonged instability, women and girls are bearing the brunt of both direct and indirect consequences, with their rights, safety, and dignity increasingly under threat.

Women and girls in the DRC currently face increased levels of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), with reports of rape and exploitation becoming tragically routine. In a recent UN Women-convened meeting, women's organizations voiced urgent concerns about forced displacement, widespread sexual violence, and significant gaps in protection and basic social services. This context of increased displacement and resource scarcity, added to pre-existing gender inequalities, exacerbate the vulnerability of women and girls.

We welcome the ongoing regional political and peace initiatives and urge all stakeholders to intensify dialogue and cooperation, paving the way for

a sustainable resolution to the conflict. Our collective efforts must be focused on ensuring that the voices and needs of women are central to the response and recovery process.

UN Women calls for immediate action to:

- **End sexual and gender-based violence and impunity of perpetrators:** Strengthen prevention, protection, and response mechanisms, ensuring accountability for perpetrators and comprehensive support—medical, legal, and psychosocial—for survivors.
- **Increase humanitarian aid with a gender-sensitive approach:** Ensure women equally participate in the whole cycle of aid programming and distribution, ensuring their specific health, protection and social needs are met.
- **Support local women’s rights and women-led organizations:** Highlighting their critical role in the response to the crises, partnerships with investments in these groups should be prioritized.
- **Ensure women’s participation in peace processes:** Advocate for women’s full involvement in peace negotiations and decision-making to foster sustainable peace in the DRC.
- **Invest in long-term gender equality:** Focus on rebuilding women’s resilience through education, economic empowerment, leadership opportunities, and by addressing structural inequalities.

UN Women remains committed to supporting the people of DRC and advocating for a future where women and girls can live free from violence and oppression and contribute fully to the rebuilding and peace of their nation.

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