**Report on promoting and protecting the human rights of women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000)**

This contribution to the report in subject builds on our assessment findings of the first Cameroon National Action Plan (NAP) for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 (2000) of women peace and security and supplementing resolutions.

**1.a** whereas there exists Legal and normative frameworks, policies and programmes to ensure the respect of the human rights of women in conflict prevention, conflict and post conflict, participation in decision-making, the right to education, health, and to live free from violence and discrimination at the level of the council, this has not been palpable in conflict resolution and peace building initiatives at country level. The provisions of UNSCR 1325 and supplementing resolutions; the United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement; continental instruments including the African Union Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, (Maputo Protocol); African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention) and others have not been translated in to conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes. This has resulted to untold atrocities against women and girls either without redress or mediocre sanctions. The impact on the mental and psychosocial health of these victims has equally not been addressed.

Grey areas and gaps in implementation in Cameroon for example include the deliberate and systematic exclusion/ underrepresentation of women in peace initiatives. The protection of women and prevention from gender- based violence in crisis; equal and meaningful participation of women in decision making at all levels; supporting local women’s peace initiatives and conflict resolution processes; and strengthening their rights under national law has remained unaddressed or inadequately addressed. Furthermore, prosecution of those responsible for committing crimes against humanity has been mediocre. For instance, out of the seven Cameroonian soldiers who shot dead two women and two children on their backs in the Far north Region of the country and put on trial by the military court, two were acquitted, four soldiers received 10-year sentences for carrying out the killings or being complicit in them and a fifth soldier was sentenced to two years for filming and sharing the footage of the incident. The same mediocre sentence is equally expected of atrocities committed by the military including the Ngarbuh massacre and others whereas others including, the Kumba school killings, decapitation and desecration of body parts of women and girls, burying alive of women, burning of civilians particularly the elderly and disabled by both the military and non-state armed groups may never be addressed.

**1.b** women’s groups, WHRDs, women humanitarian, women peacebuilders and girls play a crucial role in the implementation of the main pillars of resolution 1325. In a survey conducted for this role in Cameroon, it emerged that, whereas 62.5% of women led organisations engage in the prevention; 66.7% protection; 83.3% participation and 33.3% relief and recovery pillars of UNSCR 1325, they lack protection from attacks and threats from both the military and non-state armed groups, lack resources and collaboration with government. The lack of political will by government to create humanitarian corridors for actors to penetrate the worst hit areas especially with the outbreak of the COVID-19 global health pandemic has only worsen the situation for women and girls who bear the brunt of all the crisis and atrocities.

The failure to mainstream gender in national policy development, peace building and emergency strategies in Cameroon notably in the:

➢ National Committee on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (NCDDR) November 30, 2018;

➢ Major National Dialogue (MND) September 10, 2019;

➢ Humanitarian Action Plans (2018);

➢ Elections and Appointments (2018-2020);

➢ COVID-19 management;

➢ National Development Strategy 2020-2030 (SND30) and others are only a tip of an iceberg.

**1.d** the denial of some states to ratify the Rome statue, coupled with the absence of national instruments to protect and provide remedies to women and girls victims and survivors of human rights violations vilifies the accountability mechanism in most countries .

**3 Recommendations**

We urge the Human Rights Council and the High Commissioner to encourage member states to:

* reinforce the mainstreaming of gender in policies at country level to integrate the different needs of women and girls in conflicts and other crisis situations.
* expressly reserve seats for women’s participation in decision making at all levels with immediate effect if they have not yet done so
* Provide resources and capacity building to support local women’s peace initiatives and conflict resolution processes
* Effectively prosecute and punish those responsible for committing SGBV, genocide and other crimes against humanity
* Legislate on the prevention, protection and remedy needs of women’s groups, WHRDs, women humanitarian, women peacebuilders and girls
* Encourage countries which have not yet ratify the Rome Statue of the International Criminal Court to do so immediately and pave the way for the objective and effective prosecution of all offences linked to the ICC mandate.

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