

## **Statement by the Women’s Initiatives for Gender Justice On International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women**

25 November

The International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women is a powerful reminder of the need to renew our collective commitment to the goal of preventing sexual and gender-based violence and holding those who perpetrate such crimes accountable. Violence against women is now recognised as the most widespread human rights violation in the world, and one of the leading causes of female homelessness, injuries and death around the globe.

For the Women’s Initiatives for Gender Justice, this is a day on which we, along with our 6,000 grassroots members who are women’s rights and peace advocates in multiple armed conflicts and situations under investigation by the International Criminal Court (ICC), take stock of the successes in advancing gender justice – including through the work of the ICC - and assess the challenges that remain, especially regarding the limited prosecutions for domestic and sexual violence at the national level.

### **Statements from some of our partners**

As the World marks the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, women from the Ugandan Greater North Women’s Voices for Peace Network (GNWVPN) are calling for justice for women and girls who are still held in captivity by the Lord’s Resistance Army rebels and continue to suffer violations. Though peace is prevailing in Northern Uganda, women continue to be victims of domestic violence and of rampant land conflicts/wrangles. Our partnership with the Women’s Initiatives for Gender Justice has greatly empowered members of the network to report incidences of any form of violence, and our capacity to advocate for perpetrators to be brought to justice has been enhanced because we believe that violence against women creates misery for everyone.

***Santa Oketta, Chairperson, Greater North Women’s Voices for Peace Network, Uganda***

On the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, as Sudanese women's rights and peace activists, we want to draw attention to the Sudanese laws violating women's human rights. Specifically, the national rape law, which has forced many rape victims into not reporting their cases and has limited their access to services and justice. These women are often victimized again for “failing” to prove the violence they suffered through the testimony of four men. I would also like to say loud and clear today that by the time you read this statement, the Government of Sudan will be continuing to bomb civilians in Darfur and South Kordofan, killing women children and men, and forcing thousands to flee their homes.

***Nagat Bushra, Women's Right and Peace activists, Sudan***

On the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women we should continue working hard to ensure security that will provide safe environments for women and allow them to work with dignity. This is especially true for our sisters in conflict zones. I am also taking this opportunity to draw attention to the continuous deterioration of security and the economy in Sudan and to ask the international community to act to stop the massive violence in South Kordofan and Darfur.

***Sabah Adam, Journalist and women's human rights and peace activist, Sudan***

**Women’s Initiatives for Gender Justice**



On the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women I want my voice to reach all over the world. I want to let the world know that Libyan women suffer. Ongoing insecurity has deprived them of their right to political participation which helps to prove their existence.

***Salw Saeed, Women's right and peace activist, co-founder of Ersa forum in Derna, and member of Amazonat, Libya***

On the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women I want to draw attention to the increasing number of kidnappings of women in Libya, and to the constant threat faced by women activists, which limits the participation of women in building a new Libya.

***Hanin Bushosha, Journalist and women's human rights and peace activist, Libya***

For the League for Congolese Solidarity, 25 November is a great moment to strengthen our fight against gender-based violence. We need to hold our government accountable, forcing it to provide us with responses and to engage in women's protection and prevention of violence against women in North Kivu. We would also like to express our solidarity with women activists in the entire world who work towards the same goals and help us through difficult times. Today, we are going to recognize the violence perpetrated against women in North Kivu, and in Rutshuru particularly, and also remember women victims of all kinds of violence and intolerance.

***Josephine Malimukono, Ligue pour la Solidarité Congolaise, Democratic Republic of the Congo***

We are celebrating today the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. Yet today, women are still marginalised within their families. A woman's access to inheritance and to land still remains a taboo. She is responsible for 90% of the work of the land, yet she can't manage it or own it. Still, women don't have a public voice. Their absence from any decision-making or managing body is allegedly justified by the belief that rural women are simply unable to decide and manage. Poverty and illiteracy for women is still a consequence of traditional customs, refusing women the right to own anything. Everything belongs to her husband, or to her brother. She doesn't have the right to study, or to learn, as she belongs in the kitchen or in the maternity ward.

***Emérite Tabisha Mongelwa, Coordinatrice, Actions des Femmes pour les Droits et le Développement, Democratic Republic of the Congo***

