

13th October 2009

OPEN LETTER TO SECURITY COUNCIL MEMBERS REGARDING THE SITUATION IN GUINEA

Dear Ambassador,

As you are aware, the last two weeks have seen dramatic levels of violence in Guinea. A large part of this violence has been specifically aimed at women, particularly sexual violence. Reports tell of women being raped in public, being gang-raped, and being sexually assaulted with guns and knives, by members of the Guinean armed forces.

We appreciate the statement to the press that Ambassador Rice, on behalf of the Security Council in her role as President, delivered on 30th September, 2009 on the situation in Guinea. The urgent call to authorities to end the violence was particularly important, as was the support that the Council expressed for an international investigation, echoing a similar call made by ECOWAS. We applaud these initiatives, and hope that a thorough investigation and appropriate measures will be promptly forthcoming. We ask you to support special attention to acts of violence against women in this investigation, and in any measures subsequently taken by both ECOWAS and the African Union. Given the nature of these crimes in Guinea, advisable measures could include a cessation of military and police weapons transfers.

As a member of the Security Council, which recently voted unanimously pass SCR 1888, reiterating the cessation of the use of sexual violence in conflict; and which voted last week to unanimously pass SCR 1889, pressing for the participation of women in the resolution of conflict and rebuilding; we ask you to continue your support of the current ECOWAS and AU efforts to resolve this situation in line with the principles these resolutions embody.

Namely, these resolutions reassert and reaffirm the need for both UN and regional actors to ensure that "all reports of sexual violence committed by civilians or by military personnel are thoroughly investigated and the alleged perpetrators brought to justice" (1888 OP 7; also 1889 OP 3), and to include women in efforts to prevent and end conflict (1888 OP 16; 1889 OP 1).

With the current efforts of President Blaise Compaore of Burkina Faso, particularly in light of Burkina Faso's support of the important role women can play in conflict resolution processes, we look forward to the meaningful inclusion of women in any negotiations that take place, and the inclusion of women's rights and interests on the agenda of any efforts to resolve this situation.

As the Security Council recently affirmed, the use of sexual violence can "significantly exacerbate situations of armed conflict and may impede the restoration of international

The NGOWG on Women, Peace and Security advocates for the equal and full participation of women in all efforts to create and maintain international peace and security. Formed in 2000 to call for a Security Council resolution on Women, Peace and Security, the NGOWG now focuses on implementation of all Security Council resolutions that address this issue. The NGOWG serves as a bridge between women's human rights defenders working in conflict-affected situations and policy-makers at U.N. Headquarters.

security." (SCR 1888 OP 1) We hope that you will use the full weight of your position on the Security Council to ensure that the survivors of these acts of sexual violence receive true justice, and do all in your power to ensure that the situation is speedily resolved in line with the Security Council's statement to the press of 30 September 2009.

We urge the Security Council to remain true to its words and "continue to follow this grave situation closely," including by taking decisive action to redress the situation as appropriate and in line with all Security Council resolutions that address the rights of women in conflict situations.

Sincerely,

Sarah Taylor
COORDINATOR
NGO WORKING GROUP ON WOMEN PEACE AND SECURITY

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL
CONSORTIUM ON GENDER, SECURITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS
FEMMES AFRICA SOLIDARITÉ
GLOBAL ACTION TO PREVENT WAR
GLOBAL JUSTICE CENTER
HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH
INTERNATIONAL ACTION NETWORK ON SMALL ARMS
INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S PROGRAM AT THE OPEN SOCIETY INSTITUTE
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S TRIBUNE CENTRE
WOMEN'S REFUGEE COMMISSION
WOMEN'S ACTION FOR NEW DIRECTIONS
WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM

DECLARATION

We, members of the Network of African Women Ministers and Parliamentarians of Guinea (REFAMP GUINEA), Network of Mano River Women for Peace (MARWOPNET) and several other women's organizations, note with deep regret and bitterness the climbing violence that occurred on Monday, September 28, 2009 in Conakry, Guinea.

This situation is particularly deplorable that it was sadly predictable. Therefore, from the breakdown of dialogue between the CNDD and the Forces Vives, we have made representations to the actors and all good wishes for a resumption of dialogue to avoid confrontation that led to the real blood bath.

Thus, since September 15, 2009, the representatives mentioned below met successively:

- The President of the Christian Council of Guinea
- The Board of Imams of the Faisal Mosque;
- The Permanent Secretary Ministry of CNDD,
- Representatives of the Forces Vives of the Nation
- The four regional coordinators met,
- Prime Minister Head of Government,
- The Minister of Justice and Keeper of the buckets, a member of CNDD
- Minister of Security, 1st Vice-President of the CNDD,
- The Chief of General Staff Deputy Armed
- Committee members civil-military
- El Hadj Bouna Kéïta, trader, CNDD member.

We also contacted the International Contact Group premises.

In all, we expressed our concerns about the breakdown of dialogue both at national level with the international community and its unpredictable consequences on the political, economic, and social, and security institutions of Guinea.

Today more than ever, we believe strongly that to create a climate of peace and tranquility, it is imperative to the recovery and strengthening of dialogue between the Forces Vives of the Nation on one hand and the CNDD and Government, on the other.

To this end, we women signatories of this statement, recall the various protagonists of their collective and individual responsibilities for an efficient management of the situation arising from the violence of the day September 28, 2009

Therefore, we appeal to the patriotic conscience of His Excellency Captain Daddies Moussa

Camara, President of the CNDD, Head of State and Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces, members of the CNDD and the Government, the Forces Vives and all opinion leaders to stop the physical violence, verbal and behavioral abuses in our country for a calmer transition.

For us, nothing can ever justify the atrocities suffered by the population in general, young people and women especially on September 28, 2009 in Conakry.

We remain convinced that the violence and barbarism, must be replaced with dialogue, restraint, and measurement of progress both nationally and internationally, without which nothing lasting can be built in a country.

We also remain convinced that the Republic of Guinea, 82nd member state of the UN, founding member of the OAU, ECOWAS, the Mano River Union, and many other organizations to the ideals which it has so contributed, cannot remain on the sidelines of the International Community.

We women leaders, citizens, mothers, wives, sisters and daughters, extend our most heartfelt condolences to the people of Guinea and particularly to families who lost loved ones to them during this sad day of September 28, 2009.

May God grant paradise to our regretful missing?

We witness, at the same time, our sympathy to those injured and wish them a speedy recovery.

May God the Almighty, the Merciful, the Most Merciful give the People of Guinea peace and grace. Amen

Conakry, September 29, 2009

Signed:

Network of African Women Ministers and Parliamentary Guinea (REFAMP)

Network Mano River Women for Peace (MARWOPNET)

Women Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF-FADAAF)

CLUB WOMEN OF ACTION

Guinean Association of Women Leaders (AGUIFEL)

African Association of Professional Communication (APAC)

Coordination of Women's NGOs of Guinea (COFEG)

Association for Radiation of Islam in Guinea (AFRIG)
Coordination Unit on Traditional Practices Affecting Women and Children (CPTAFE)
National Network of Traditional Communicators (RENACOT)
Guinean Federation of Women Network for Peace and Development (FEGUIREF-PD)
African Youth Initiative for Leadership (IJAL)
Coalition Nationale of Guinea for Rights and Citizenship of Women (CONAG-DCF)
Midwives Association of Guinea (ASFEGUI)
Association for Support to Development of Population Activities (ASDAP)
Association of Women Leaders for Parity in Guinea (AFELPAG)
For the African Renaissance Woman of the West Africa (RAFAO)
Association of Women Entrepreneurs of Guinea (AFEG)
Association of Women of Guinea for the Fight against Sexually Transmitted Diseases / AIDS
(ASFEGMASSI)
Groupement des Femmes d'Affaires of Guinea (GFAG)
Women of Africa-For Women of Africa Resources & Intercultural Community Advancement
(Wafrika GUINEA)
Support for Women Informal Sector (AFES)
Association of Women Lawyers of Guinea (AFJG)