

9 March 2007

H.E. Ambassador Løvald
Permanent Mission of Norway to the United Nations
825 Third Avenue, 39th Floor
New York, New York 10022

REQUEST TO MEET WITH WOMEN PEACEBUILDERS IN BURUNDI

Dear H.E. Ambassador Løvald,

On the occasion of the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission's upcoming mission to Burundi, the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security (NGOWG) requests that the Mission take this opportunity to meet with leading women peacebuilders from Burundian civil society to discuss how their needs and priorities can be better addressed through the work of the PBC in Burundi. As emphasised in a letter sent by International Alert to the Norwegian government on March 8th, women's participation and gender issues must be explicitly incorporated into each of the priority areas of the PBC's work.


The NGOWG commends Norway's continued leadership on women, peace and security issues and commitment to the full implementation of Security Council resolution 1325, and urges the Norwegian government to use its position as chair of the country-specific committee on Burundi to ensure that gender issues and women's participation are fully addressed by the PBC. Regrettably, women's representatives in Burundi have, thus far, been left out of the consultative and informative processes occurring at the national level in relation to the Commission's work. In Sierra Leone, the PBC National Steering Committee is comprised of both male and female governmental and non-governmental actors, all of whom are participating members. However, in Burundi, the current composition of the PBC National Steering Committee is comprised almost entirely of men, and includes just one representative from civil society, who has only observer status.

Without the immediate inclusion of women's representatives and gender expertise in the work of the PBC in Burundi, the Commission, in their coordinating role, risks overlooking the need for gender perspectives to be incorporated into national level activities and programmes in the effort to build a truly effective, integrated peacebuilding strategy.

Women's achievements in peace consolidation and the extensive existing mechanisms established by women's organisations at the community level in Burundi are key structures through which to advance peacebuilding. As Goretti Ndcayisaba from the Burundi national women's network Dushirehamwe recently noted at a roundtable on the PBC during the 51st Commission on the Status of Women, "*The Commission and the government have, already in place, an effective, established base to start from. It is, therefore, imperative that women be involved in the process of reflection, planning and execution of the work of the Commission in Burundi - and should be viewed and integrated as central stakeholders, not just as beneficiaries.*"

We have included a list of recommended leading women peacebuilders with strong networks throughout the country that we encourage the Mission to meet with during their time in Burundi. These representatives can provide first-hand, field level expertise and recommendations that we believe will greatly benefit the Commission and help to advance its work.

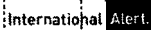
Sincerely yours,


Gina Torry, Coordinator

Signed Members of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security

Boston Consortium on Gender, Security and Human Rights
Femmes Africa Solidarité
Global Action to Prevent War
Global Justice Center
Human Rights Watch

International Alert
United Methodists Women's Division
International Women's Tribune Center
Women's Action for New Direction
WILPF/PeaceWomen Project



RECOMMENDED WOMEN PEACEBUILDERS IN BURUNDI

Dushirehamwe Association

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Deputé à l'Assemblée Nationale

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