



PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES: 3rd Session

**Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen members of the Permanent Forum,
dear Indigenous brothers and sisters;**

We thank you for having given us the floor, which we take in the name of several Indigenous Mbuti organizations present here.

We take advantage of this occasion to thank the UN Voluntary Fund, as well as the minority rights group, Land is Life, concerned with the situation of Indigenous peoples in general and with Indigenous women in particular, who have enabled us to participate in these sessions.

Mr. Chair,

Distinguished Assembly,

The situation with respect to the human rights violations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is quite catastrophic.

The Congo has been at war ever since 1996.

In spite of signing the global agreement and including the installation of the transitional government of a type that is unique in the entire world, the actions violating human rights continue to break records in the interior of the country where the Indigenous "MBUTI" pygmies live.

The armed groups have erected dwellings in the forests and given themselves over to performing every kind of atrocity.

We have known of and continue to be aware of violations of women and little girls, women being buried alive, genital mutilation of women, penetration of the vagina with gun barrels and sticks after sexually abusing them, and so forth.

In effect, the myth that surrounds Indigenous women causes them to be doubly vulnerable to violation: first, with regard to other Indigenous who pretend that in raping an Indigenous "MBUTI" woman they will be able to cure their back pain and second, with regard to armed groups seeking power, because it is said that Indigenous women hold magic powers.

In view of all the above, we witness the baneful consequences:

The rate of HIV/AIDS infection is very high in rural areas, unwanted pregnancies that can even lead to killing the babies born of these rape victims, breakup of families and social rejection of the victims, just to mention a few.

Mr. Chairman,

Allow us to tell you once again that the Indigenous Pygmy woman of the DR-CONGO has always been deprived of her rights, she has always been marginalized, discriminated against and has not rights to land, to education, to health care, to information.

She has always been excluded and ignored in relation to women of other communities.

We recommend as follows:

- a. To the Government:

- To ratify and apply the conventions, treaties and international agreements concerning the rights of Indigenous peoples, particularly ILO Convention 169
- To involve Indigenous Pygmies in the management of the common goods.

b. To the United Nations:

- To strengthen the effectiveness of the MONUC (Observation Mission of the United Nations in the Congo) in DR-CONGO in order to enable the MONUC to strongly apply Chapter 7 as recommended by the Security Council.
- To strengthen the capacity building of Indigenous women through their participation in the various forums.
- To become involved in putting an end to the hostilities in the DR-CONGO.
- To facilitate free and democratic elections in the DR-CONGO.

To International NGO's:

To support Indigenous organizations to carry out their grassroots activities
To support the active participation of Indigenous women in various forums.

c. To the Permanent Forum

- To follow up on Recommendation 77, concerning acts of violence against Indigenous women associated with armed conflict, made at the 2nd Session of the Permanent Forum.

-To recommend to organizations in the UN system (UNDP, PNUE, UNIFEM, etc.) to develop an emergency program specifically for the Indigenous women who are sexually affected by armed conflicts.

We cannot end this statement without also supporting the intervention of the National Assembly delegates from our country.

I thank you.

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