



PeaceWomen Across the Globe  
FRIEDENSFRAUEN WELTWEIT  
نساء من أجل السلام عبر العالم  
Femmes de Paix Autour du Monde  
Женщины мира за мир на земле  
MUJERES DE PAZ EN EL MUNDO  
Mulheres pela Paz ao redor do Mundo  
DONNE DI PACE NEL MONDO  
ピースウーマン—国境を越え平和をつくる女たち  
全球和平妇女

## Statement on the DRC

### A call for cessation of violence and support for peace activists

**We are horrified by the recent escalation of violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and condemn the widespread attacks on the civilian population. We call upon all decision-makers in the region and the international community to respect International Humanitarian Law and human rights and to protect the civilian populations through all available means. In the meantime, we are making all efforts to support our network member in the DRC, who faces imminent danger.**

In January and February 2025, the eastern DRC witnessed a significant escalation in conflict, primarily due to the offensive of the Mouvement du 23-Mars, M23, rebel group. On 27 January 2025, M23, reportedly backed by Rwanda, captured Goma, the capital of North Kivu province. This strategic city, with a population of approximately two million, fell after intense fighting, leading to violence, widespread panic and displacement among residents.

**The capture of Goma has severe humanitarian consequences.** Hospitals in the city are overwhelmed with patients suffering from gunshot and shrapnel wounds. The United Nations report widespread violence, looting and bodies in the streets of Goma. A statement issued by UN Women on 4 February, mentions the disproportionate effect of the crisis on women and girls and the wide-spread use of sexualised violence. The risk of a potential regional war is looming, if immediate peace efforts fail.

**Last year, we supported the organisation Solidarity of Activist Women for Human Rights (SOFAD) in the Great Lakes Region through our Feminist Peace Initiatives.** A cross-border Women's Peace Table (WPT) brought together civil society organisations, peace activists, civil servants and religious representatives from the DRC, Rwanda and Burundi to encourage dialogue between the three countries. Gégé Katana Bukuru, one of the 1000 PeaceWomen nominated for the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize and a member of SOFAD, organised the WPT. Now, she, her family and fellow peace activists face a dangerous situation that is growing more worrying every day. In a phone call on 7 February, she said the M23 rebels are advancing on her town Uvira. Fear of massacres are leading people to attempt an escape to Burundi. However, she said that Burundi has closed its border. It is unclear if refugees will be allowed to enter. Without the presence of the United Nations' MONUSCO forces, which ended its mission in June 2024, the communities are without protection and assistance.

**Thanks to financial support from a non-profit organisation in Basel, we will provide Gégé, her family and other activists with the resources they need to flee Uvira. Not everyone, however, can receive such assistance.**





PeaceWomen Across the Globe  
FRIEDENSFRAUEN WELTWEIT  
نساء من أجل السلام عبر العالم  
Femmes de Paix Autour du Monde  
Женщины мира за мир на земле  
MUJERES DE PAZ EN EL MUNDO  
Mulheres pela Paz ao redor do Mundo  
DONNE DI PACE NEL MONDO

ピースウーマン—国境を越え平和をつくる女たち  
全球和平妇女

Therefore, it is of utmost importance that the international community continues to do whatever is in its power to effect a ceasefire and seek a peaceful resolution to the conflict, while increasing support for those affected by the conflict.

### **PeaceWomen Across the Globe calls on**

- the parties to the conflict to agree on an immediate ceasefire and the cessation of sexualised and gender based violence and engage in the processes needed for meaningful and inclusive peace negotiations. PeaceWomen Across the Globe stresses that the meaningful participation of women at all stages of a peace process is essential to its success and sustainability.
- all neighbouring countries to fulfill their obligations under the UN Convention on Refugees and ensure protection and assistance of the fleeing population.
- Switzerland, the European Union and the international community in general to exert influence on all involved parties, in particular the parties to the conflict, to cease hostilities immediately and provide or increase their support for and protection of refugees, internally displaced people and in general those affected by the conflict, including peace activists.

Bern, 12 February 2025

Further information:

#### **Great Lakes: securing women's contribution to peacebuilding**

<https://1000peacewomen.org/en/network/insights-into-the-network/great-lakes-fpi>

#### **Strengthening women's participation in peace processes**

<https://1000peacewomen.org/en/programmes/participation-in-peace-processes>

#### **Understanding peace processes**

<https://1000peacewomen.org/en/programmes/participation-in-peace-processes/what-are-peace-processes>

Sources:

<https://apnews.com/article/congo-rwanda-m23-rebels-peacekeepers-ccb80a43e102737dbf0ed2fc78a188d9>

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news-stories/press-briefing/2025/02/press-briefing-by-un-women-on-the-situation-of-women-and-girls-in-the-democratic-republic-of-congo>

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/feb/05/democratic-republic-congo-goma-women-raped-burned-death-prison-m23-rebels-rwanda>

[https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/dozens-runaway-congo-soldiers-face-trial-violence-charges-2025-02-09/?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/dozens-runaway-congo-soldiers-face-trial-violence-charges-2025-02-09/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

