


<b>AFRICAN UNION</b>		<b>UNION AFRICAINE</b>
<b>الاتحاد الأفريقي</b>  <i>African Commission on Human &amp; Peoples' Rights</i>		<b>UNIÃO AFRICANA</b>  Commission Africaine des Droits de l'Homme & des Peuples
<p><i>31 Bijilo Annex Layout, Kombo North District, Western Region, P. O. Box 673, Banjul, The Gambia; Tel: (220) 4410505 / 4410506; Fax: (220) 4410504; E-mail: <a href="mailto:au-banjul@africa-union.org">au-banjul@africa-union.org</a>; Web <a href="http://www.achpr.org">www.achpr.org</a></i></p>		

## Solidarity Statement

By:

**Hon. Commissioner Janet Ramatoulie Sallah- Njie, Special  
Rapporteur on the Rights of Women in Africa, African Commission  
on Human and Peoples' Rights**

**A webinar on "Solidarity with the women of Guinea: African  
Feminists Demand Justice For Survivors of Sexual Violence in  
Guinea."**

**Organised by Women in Law and Development in Africa-AFRIQUE  
DE L'OUEST (WiLDAF-AO)**

**5 December, 2022.**

May I express gratitude to the Women in Law and Development in Africa- WEST AFRICA (WiLDAF-AO) for organising this event and extending an invitation to the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, through the Mechanism of the Special Rapporteur of the Rights of Women in Africa, to convey a solidarity message to the women of Guinea, especially the survivors of Sexual Violence against women during the notorious stadium massacre in September 2009, when 109 women participating in demonstrations against the government were raped by the military and security forces in Guinea. This Solidarity forum is indeed timely, as is taking place within the context of the 16 days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence. Whilst commending the convening, we must also note, with a heavy heart, that the trial of the perpetrators only commenced on the 28<sup>th</sup> of September 2022, more than 13years after the heinous and vicious acts were committed.

As we take note of this unduly long interregnum, Amnesty International in their Report on the situation in Guinea have confirmed that **“victims of sexual violence in Guinea face social stigmatisation, a lack of accessible medical care and serious barriers to justice”** The Report therefore demand that, **“shame must change sides, ensuring rights and justice for victims of sexual violence in Guinea.”**

The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (The Maputo Protocol), which the Mechanism of the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Women in Africa is entrusted with, requires State parties to take steps to ensure that women are protected from sexual violence and its consequences. The African Commission has also raised concern over sexual violence being used as a weapon of war through several initiatives including the development of Resolutions with the latest being Resolution ACHPR/Res. 492(LXIX) 2021 on Violence Against Women during Armed Conflicts in Africa. This Resolution amongst other things, mandates State parties to ratify and domesticate the Maputo Protocol and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol; as well as ensure its effective implementation and monitoring at the national level.

Additionally, the African Commission has in the past conducted a study to measure the impact of armed conflicts on the rights of Women and Children in Africa. This study reinforced that to prevent sexual violence in conflicts, **we must send a strong message that impunity will not prevail.** At the same time, we must continue to campaign during peace time to contest and confront harmful cultures and traditions and to educate boys and men and also women who tend to be custodians of some of these harmful cultures. Without men saying no, we will not end the circle of sexual violence. We need men to commit to fight with us to commit to not look the other way, when atrocities are being committed and to commit to educate boys and other men.

As the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Women in Africa, I feel obliged to stand here today to deliver this solidarity message because of the commitment of the Commission in working towards ending all forms of Sexual Violence against women, especially those that occur in times of conflict. Also, because the Commission remains deeply concerned that multiple forms of human rights violations continue to take place in the context of crisis and conflict, in particular rape, sexual slavery, sexual mutilation of women, amongst others. Perpetrators are hardly held accountable for their actions. Instead, survivors carry the burden of stigma and trauma throughout their lives, and often doubly brutalised by harmful social norms and victim-blaming.

On this day, In my capacity as the SRRWA, I stand in solidarity with survivors and commit to supporting the most vulnerable i.e women and girls as they struggle to live in dignity and peace in the midst of conflicts. This includes increasing support for victims and displaced women and girls who are vulnerable to sexual exploitation, and those from marginalised, remote and rural areas where justice and protection systems are weak.

**I stand in full solidarity with our Guinean sisters, and call and demand for full justice for all the victims and survivors of GBV during the Crisis in Gunea!**

To stand in solidarity with these survivor means;

- Bolstering national justice systems and Rule of Law capacities so that perpetrators are held accountable for their crimes and victims receive timely and psychological support;
- Upholding the rights of survivors, and treating them with respect and understanding, while giving them the opportunity to mend their fragmented communities.
- Supporting women led Civil Society Organisations like WiLDAF-AO that work to break down the social, economic and cultural barriers that deny women and girls their rights to protection, equality and justice;
- Addressing the underlying causes of sexual violence in conflict- from inequalities to institutional weaknesses and militarisation, and strengthening early warning systems to prevent these crimes from happening in the first place.

I am convinced that with increased political resolve, we can match words with action and end the scourge of sexual violence in conflict, once and for all. The mechanism of the SRRWA and I personally commit to work with all of you here to end sexual violence during conflict. Let's all commit to end this brutality and let today be the beginning of the end of sexual violence during conflict.