

African and EU Ministers Must Act in DRC and Darfur  
AU Citizens  
20 November 2008  
Ethiopia-Africa-EU Troika

As the 11th Africa EU Ministerial Troika is gathering in Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian capital on Thursday, leading African civil society organisations have urged the ministers and their governments to act urgently in investing more resources and using all leverages in order to tackle the ongoing killing of civilians in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo and to alleviate the suffering of Darfurians.

As the humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate, the international community must bring pressure on all the parties to the conflict to bring a definitive end to hostilities, to provide immediate protection to civilians and to ensure immediate access for impartial humanitarian organizations to deliver life-saving assistance, said a joint statement by leading African CSOs.

The AU-EU ministers will convene a joint ministerial meeting Thursday afternoon on current affairs of the continent and Africa-EU relationship.

It is time for a change in pace in the world's political engagement with the crisis in eastern DRC. It is not acceptable for human suffering to continue on this scale with a complete breakdown in the existing political processes, said: Elijah Munyuki, Chief Executive Officer of the SADC Lawyers Association.

They are lobbying at the ongoing sixth African Development Forum (ADF) being held here in Addis Ababa since on Wednesday.

A zero-tolerance position must be applied on all ceasefire violations as well as human rights abuses by any of the parties, said Mr. Allioune Tine, Executive Director of Rencontre Africaine des Droits de l'Homme (RADDHO) a leading continental human rights network based in Dakar, Senegal.

The suffering has gone on too long for the population of North Kivu. The international community must honour its **responsibility to protect** civilians before DRC falls back into another general war, said Roselyn Musa, Senior Advocacy Officer of the African Womens Development and Communication Network (FEMNET).

With regard to the Darfur crisis, the CSOs said that there are 2.7 million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and 4.7 million conflict-affected people in need of humanitarian assistance which, humanitarian agencies are finding it harder than ever to provide. Only 65% of the affected population are now accessible by humanitarian agencies, according to the CSOs.

While we welcome the government of Sudan's recently announced ceasefire, there are already reports that they broke it less than 48 hours later by conducting new bombing and attacks. The international community must ensure that it is adhered to and monitored. Previous ceasefire announcements have quickly fallen apart, said Dismas Nkunda, Chair of Darfur Consortium

and Co-Director of the International Refugee Rights Initiative (IRRI). unilateral ceasefire cannot resolve the Darfur crisis more pressure must also be put on the many different rebel factions to return to the negotiating table, he added.

Source: Unavailable