



Delegates Call for More Women in Peace Missions

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Delegates at the just-concluded regional workshop on gender-based violence in Kigali have called for more involvement of women in peacekeeping operations.

Speaking on behalf of participants, Rwanda's Brig. Gen. Frank Mushyo Kamanzi said that there should be special recruitment and training programmes designed to increase women representation in peacekeeping missions.

He was reading out a declaration from the March 28-29 conference at Hotel Novotel Umubano held under the theme "Peace Keeping Operations (PKO): Towards Preventing Sexual and Gender-based violence (SGBV)."

The conference aimed at identifying key issues in the prevention of sexual and gender based violence in PKOs, and to come up with key recommendations to addressing the existing gaps.

Delegates observed that there was need for thorough preparations on gender aspects of peacekeeping programmes ahead of deployments.

They also called for "Re-affirmation and strengthening of the zero tolerance policy for acts of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA)."

The declaration calls for strong advocacy in public education on the scourge of SGBV and to eradicate crimes of SGBV, information sharing among peacekeeping contingents and Troops Contributing Countries to promote best practices and stronger visibility and publicity for good practices and positive outcomes of PKOs.

The Army Chief of Staff, Lt. Gen. Charles Kayonga thanked Unifem and DFID for helping the Rwanda Defence Forces organize the workshop, saying it had helped participants share experiences.

He said the workshop was timely for Rwanda since it came just after events to mark the International Women's Day, and days ahead of the 14th commemoration of the 1994 Genocide.

Kayonga said rape was used as a weapon during the Genocide, adding that the RDF would continue to protect women in conflict-torn regions.



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