

PRESS RELEASE

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TWELVE AFRICAN LEADERS RECEIVE RED CARDS ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS AT THE AFRICAN UNION SUMMIT IN KHARTOUM, SUDAN

Today, twelve African countries including the Summit host Sudan, received a second red card in one year for not signing the African Union Protocol on the Rights of Women. This drastic action was taken by a coalition of women's organizations during the 6th Ordinary Session of African Union Summit. The action highlighted progress on the ratification and domestication of the Protocol. Twenty-four countries received yellow cards for signing the Protocol. A further seventeen countries were honored with green cards for ratifying the Protocol.

"We have repeated this action to urge African states to ratify the Protocol without further delay. While we have seen the number of ratifying countries double since the last Summit in Nigeria, twelve countries are stuck at the stage of signing. They must move directly to ratify the Protocol before the next Summit" says Therese Nyondiko of the women's rights organisation FEMNET, one of nineteen organisations working under the banner of Solidarity for African Women's Rights (SOAWR) in several countries across Africa.

The red card reads ;"You have received a **red card** by the Solidarity for African Women's Rights, a coalition of organisations campaigning for ratification of the Protocol on the Rights of Women.

The Protocol covers a broad range of human rights issues and is a comprehensive legal framework for protecting women's rights. The Protocol came into force on November 25th 2005 after receiving the 15th ratification from Togo. Over the last year, ten countries including Benin, Cape Verde, Djibouti, The Gambia, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique and Togo joined seven others in the ratification of the Protocol on the Rights of Womens' Rights. Faiza Jama Mohamed of Equality Now noted that ***"The speed at which the Protocol entered into force on November 25 2005 is truly historic. The number of ratifying countries has doubled in twelve months. We must celebrate this achievement together while moving swiftly to implementation."***

Country Status on the ratification of the Protocol on the Rights of African Women						
	Red		Yellow		Green	
2005 Summit	20		21		7	
2006 Summit	12	Angola, Botswana, Cameroon, Central Africa Republic, Egypt, Eritrea, Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, Sao Tome & Principe, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan, Tunisia	24	Algeria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Chad, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Rep. of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Mauritius, Niger, Sierra Leone, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe	17	Benin, Cape Verde, The Comoros, Djibouti, The Gambia, Lesotho, Libya, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Togo

* Countries in bold are those that have not made progress since the 2005 Abuja summit

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Other organizations working on the Protocol in Africa

African Centre for Democracy And Human Rights Studies (ACDHRS), Akina Mama wa Afrika, Association des Juristes Maliennes, Cellule de Coordination sur les Pratiques Traditionelle Affectant la Sante des Femmes et des Enfants, Coalition on Violence Against Women, Equality Now-Africa Regional Office, FAHAMU, FAMEDEV-Inter-African Network For Women, Media, Gender and Development, FEMNET - African Women's Development and Communication Network, Foundation for Community Development, Inter-African Committee on Harmful Traditional Practices (IAC), Oxfam GB, Sister Namibia, Union Nationale des Femmes de Djibouti, Voix de Femmes, University of Pretoria Center for Human Rights, Women's Rights Advancement and Protection Alternatives, Women in Law and Development in Africa (WiLDAF)