Press Release

**West African women converge in Abuja to call for an end to the killings in Cote d’Ivoire.**

Women from different West African countries are in Abuja for the ECOWAS Heads of State Summit to advocate for immediate intervention in the escalating Ivorian conflict.

The women are continuing a long tradition of women across the region using their moral authority to urge interventions in conflict situations that result in targeted mass killings and destructions. We recall that women-led interventions caused the ousting of President Charles Taylor in Liberia.

The women’s statement to the Authority of ECOWAS Heads of State and Government is simple: “**Do not allow** Cote d’Ivoire drop off the attention of the West Africans as other areas of the world heat up. West Africa has suffered too many violent conflicts. The region cannot revert to its dark past of civil wars”.

The organisations leading this initiative are the Women Peace and Security Network (WIPSEN)-Africa, West African Civil Society Forum (WACSOF) and West African Women’s Associations (WAWA).

Series of actions will be undertaken after the Summit for the deployment of a women-led mediation mission to Cote d’Ivoire with a view to seeking a peaceful solution to the crisis.

The women of West Africa are therefore calling on the following actors/institutions to take action:

- **All parties in the Ivorian conflict**: We strongly urge all parties in the conflict to prioritize human life and security above political agenda and mandates;

- **ECOWAS**: ECOWAS should take a more decisive stance in intervening in the situation in Cote d'Ivoire. ECOWAS' inaction on this issue will contradict it's commitment of moving to an "ECOWAS of Peoples" where citizens in the region have security, freedom of movement and expression;

- **Civil Society**: National, continental, and international civil society actors should actors petition their government to take a vocal stance on this issue; they should monitor investigation.