



**70<sup>th</sup> Session on the Commission of the Status of Women  
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**NGO Mining Working Group  
Statement on Access to Justice for Women and Girls**

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This statement is on behalf of the NGO Mining Working Group. The rapid exploitation of natural resources has devastated the environment and adversely impacted human rights, especially those of women and girls. We see similar issues repeated globally in areas affected by extractives. Women must walk longer distances to access clean water, contend with dust-covered crops, and risk subjection to gender-based violence. Land dispossession, forced eviction, and forced labor undermine women's capacity to provide for themselves and their families. Women environmental and human rights defenders confronting mining activity face retaliation, intimidation, sexual harassment, and even rape and death.

Indeed, the rapacious extraction of natural resources throughout colonial history has long violated human rights, the right to self-determination, and the rule of law. For example, the ICJ's 2024 Advisory Opinion on the illegality of Israel's occupation underscored Israel's unlawful appropriation of natural resources. States have taken no substantive action in regard to their obligations as outlined in the opinion and subsequent General Assembly resolution. Instead, the genocide and ethnic cleansing continue. A precedent of impunity is an unacceptable norm.

We see this lack of accountability also in regard to heightened sexual and gender-based violence in extractive communities. The presence of non-local miners and security forces is linked with frequent experiences of sexual violence among women and girls living nearby, a common experience in the Amazon region of Brazil. Standing with women and girls affected by extractivism everywhere, the NGO Mining Working Group calls on States to:

- Ensure the regulation of businesses, including by instituting mandatory human rights and environmental due diligence, and related measures that hold corporations to account.
- States should further
- Promote women and indigenous representation in decision-making processes, and ensure the right to free, prior and informed consent.
- Safeguard women and girls in extractive communities by effectively addressing the differentiated risks of gender-specific abuse, as well as the structural barriers which prevent them from accessing justice in the face of such violence; establish safe reporting mechanisms, holding all perpetrators of violence accountable; and establish access to health and trauma-informed services and legal protections to all victims of sexual violence.

- Promote constructive dialogue between women heads of household and mining companies and ensure the sharing of information with women about their rights and local mining laws, as is being done in the Mwenga and Sharbunda communities of the DRC who are deeply impacted by extractivism.