

International Alert seeks a consultant to conduct research into

GENDER, ELECTIONS AND PEACEBUILDING IN GUINEA, LIBERIA AND SIERRA LEONE

Women's political participation is a cornerstone of building a more sustainable peace in the conflict-affected countries of West Africa. Liberia made international headlines in 2005 when it elected Ellen Johnson Sirleaf as Africa's first democratically elected female head of state. Women's parliamentary participation, however, remains low in Liberia and across the region. Guinea's presidential elections are scheduled for January 2010, but there are important concerns about current levels of violence, particularly sexual violence against women protesters, and women's ability to participate in the up-coming elections.

The aim of this piece of research is to document ways in which women's participation in political processes, especially elections, can bring about positive change with respect to peace, inclusion and reconciliation in the region. It will do this in particular by surveying women and men's attitudes towards the upcoming elections, to electoral violence and to women's political participation and by documenting opportunities and barriers that exist for women's participation in elections in three West African conflict-affected countries. It will provide context-specific advice to national actors as well as international agencies active in West Africa by documenting and analysing women's voices and experiences.

The consultancy will take place between November 2009 and January 2010 and will involve field research in all three countries, depending on the security situation, during the months of November and December.

Consultant profile:

- Knowledge of current debates around gender and political participation, particularly in conflict-affected contexts
- Knowledge of West Africa – particularly Guinea, Liberia, and/or Sierra Leone
- Excellent research and writing skills
- Fluency in English; knowledge of French is desirable

Please submit an expression of interest, with rates and availability to Minna Lyytikäinen at mlyytikainen@international-alert.org.