



# HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL - 48<sup>th</sup> SESSION

## Item 3: Interactive dialogue on the analytical report of the High Commissioner on the current state of play of the mainstreaming of the human rights of women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations

17 September 2021

### Key findings of the Report ([A/HRC/48/32](#)):

- Human Rights Council (HRC) has progressively addressed the promotion and protection of the human rights of women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations (CPCSs).
- HRC resolutions, recommendations from the UPR and reports of special procedures refer to these issues.
- Reports from investigative bodies demonstrate stronger gender analysis and an increased focus on women's human rights in the previous four years.
- The work of the HRC Advisory Committee on these issues has been more limited, despite the potential of its work to inform the Council's thematic focus areas
- Insufficient attention has been paid to issues related to human rights to food, adequate housing, education, health, including sexual and reproductive health and rights, and equal participation in economic life of women and girls in CPCSs.
- Negative impact of the diversion of arms and illicit arms transfer on the human rights of women and girls in CPCSs is an aspect that is largely unaddressed in the work of the HRC.

### Opening Remarks by Ms. Michelle Bachelet, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

**In the last five years, the HRC has contributed to increased promotion and protection of the human rights of women and girls in CPCSs** through its resolutions, UPR recommendations, Special Procedures reports and the work of investigative bodies. However, focus on the experience and human rights of women and girls in CPCSs should be enhanced.

Around 20% of country resolutions refer to the protection of the human rights of women and girls in CPCSs; about 7% of UPR recommendations to conflict affected countries address the human rights of women in CPCSs. The reports of the 13 thematic mandates stressed the need to consider the intersectional factors of discrimination faced by women and girls. Investigative bodies also analysed gender discrimination and inequality, which disproportionately affect women and girls in CPCSs.

However, essential issues affecting women and girls in these contexts are often overlooked. **The imbalance in the type of issues addressed** results in an overall narrative still mainly **reducing women's experience of conflict to victimization**. Not taking all the issues into account results in failing to provide adequate attention to matters that can determine life or death, capacity to recover after conflict. In CPCSs, **women play critical roles as human rights defenders, journalists, peacebuilders, community leaders**.

Ms. Bachelet invited the HRC and its mechanisms to consistently integrate a gender perspective in the analysis of human rights in CPCSs, particularly, analyse women's and girls' experience of conflict; to work closely with the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict; and to expand meaningful engagement with civil society organizations, including women's organizations and women peacebuilders.

### Interactive dialogue

#### Delegations that took the floor during the Interactive Dialogue (64 statements):

EU, Egypt (*on behalf of the Arab Group*), Argentina (*on behalf of Chile, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Uruguay, Argentina*), Denmark (*on behalf of the Nordic-Baltic countries*), State of Palestine, Greece,

Sovereign Order of Malta, Israel, Armenia, Indonesia, Ecuador, Slovenia, Spain, Australia, Colombia, Egypt, Iraq, Korea, Montenegro, Albania, Thailand, Venezuela, Angola, Kenya, USA, Russian Federation, Morocco, Ireland, Nepal, Namibia, China, Cyprus, Croatia, Bolivia, Libya, Malta, Pakistan, Syria, Sudan, Ukraine, Poland, Italy, Georgia, Afghanistan, Philippines, Yemen, Niger, United Kingdom, Azerbaijan, Mali, Viet Nam, Botswana, Kazakhstan, Panama, Tunisia, Malawi, Saudi Arabia, Chile, New Zealand, Cuba, Iran, France; UNICEF, UNFPA, UN Women

All the delegations welcomed the content of the report and its recommendations, highlighted that peace and security of women and girls are intrinsically linked to respect for their human rights and therefore should be mainstreamed in the HRC's and its mechanisms' agendas. However, some of the Delegations highlighted that peace and security should remain matters of concern of the **UN Security Council** (*Russian Federation, Pakistan, Cuba, among others*). Several countries referred to the situation in **Afghanistan** (*China, USA, New Zealand, among others*).

Ambassador for Gender and Diversity – European External Action Service of the **EU** said the effective use of the international human rights mechanisms was critical to ensure that states are held to account for their women, peace, and security (WPS) commitments. The EU stands for the full and meaningful participation of women in all spheres of social life, including the right to decide over their own lives and bodies. **Egypt on behalf of the Arab Group** said that the Arab countries were interested in participatory work to implement the agenda of WPS; the Arab League issued a guide for preparing national plans for WPS, while the Arab Women Committee adopted the "Emergency Committee for the Protection of Women during Armed Conflict" mechanism, and launched of the "Arab Network of Women Peace Mediators". **Argentina on behalf of the group of States** urged all HRC mechanisms to implement all the recommendations of the High Commissioner and to ensure that the role of women was not reduced to the role of victims. **Denmark on behalf of the Nordic-Baltic countries** asked how *the Council could further promote a holistic, multisectoral and survival-centred approach to preventing and responding to SGBV?*

**State of Palestine** said Israel continued to systematically commit crimes against Palestinian women, as of today, 37 Palestinian women, are held in Israeli detention centres including 11 mothers, without any legal basis. **Greece** prepared its first national action plan on WPS, while **Armenia** said it adopted national action plan and established mechanism to oversee the implementation, and **Iraq** launched the second national plan on WPS for the period 2020-2024. **Australia** asked *how the Council could support country mandates to mainstream sexual and reproductive health and rights in their work?* **Colombia** conducted special policy with the purpose of implementing the Peace Accords with a gender focus. **Egypt** stressed the importance of taking into account the cultural and social characteristics of each country when implementing the WPS agenda. **The Netherlands** insisted that conflict and conflict prevention **were not** a matter of the UN Security Council only. **USA** addressed the persistent discrimination of women and girls around the world—particularly women of color, LGBTQI+ women, and other women who face overlapping forms of discrimination, and expressed its deep concern about the situation of women and girls in CPCs, especially in Afghanistan. *How can the international community hold accountable perpetrators of human rights violations of women and girls during and after conflict?* **Russian Federation** insisted on using the terminology generally accepted in the UN (generally accepted concept of "sex" instead of "gender"; "equality" instead of "equity"). **Morocco** is working jointly with 8 other countries of the core group of human rights and technical operation to propose solution on women and girls in decision-making. **Ireland** as an elected member of the Security Council will work to ensure that the WPS is prioritized and mainstreamed on its agenda. **China**: said that forced democratic reforms were the root causes of humanitarian disasters in Afghanistan, and addressed the issue of the Nanjing Massacre and the forced conscription of "comfort women" committed by the Japanese military forces during the World War II. **Bolivia**: has a group of experts who work on SGBV issues, including against indigenous women. **Pakistan** requested the OHCHR and Special Procedures to continue to monitor the rights violations of women and girls in UN-recognized situations of foreign occupation. **Syria** said that one of the areas that should be given more attention is the impact of terrorism on women's rights. **Ukraine** encouraged the High Commissioner and Special Procedures of the HRC to continue paying serious attention to the violations of human rights in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine in Crimea and Donbas. **Afghanistan** asked





the international community not to allow the advances for women and girls rights in Afghanistan to be set back decades by the Taliban.

**UNICEF** highlighted girls' right to participate in decisions affecting their lives and called on States to support their participation in humanitarian and recovery efforts, including peace processes; recommending to include child rights organizations in these efforts. **UNFPA** stressed the imperative for survivor-centred approaches in the response to gender-based violence, including sexual violence. **UN Women** called for the systematic integration of gender expertise in the investigation team.

**Non-Governmental Organizations that took the floor during the Interactive Dialogue (10):**

Center for Reproductive Rights, International Lesbian and Gay Association, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counseling, Plan International, Save the Children International (*joint statement*), International Planned Parenthood Federation, Lutheran World Federation, PRAHAR, Center for Organisation Research and Education

All the NGOs welcomed the report of the High Commissioner. *Women's International League for Peace and Freedom* advocated for a radical change of the foundations of the current economic system, entrenched in capitalism, patriarchy, racism and militarism. *Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counseling* made a statement regarding Israeli policies that victimize and discriminate against the Palestinian people. *International Planned Parenthood Federation* called for uninterrupted aid to support local organizations providing lifesaving, health, and education services. *PRAHAR* advocated for the rights of Afghan women and, together with the *Center for Organisation Research and Education*, for the right of women from the North Eastern states of India.

**In her final remarks Ms. Michelle Bachelet** mentioned the importance of proper documentation of violations and crimes against women, better analysis of the root causes of the gender-based violence, the need to make country specific recommendations, of engagement with CSOs and their meaningful participation in the work of the HRC, gender-sensitive and victim-centred approach to the analysis of the human rights violations. She called on the international community to invest in women participation, including through digital technologies, partnerships with women's networks and strengthening and modernising data collection on women participation in real life, as well as systematic deployment of gender experts to commissions of inquiries and fact-finding missions.

Watch this meeting on UN WebTV ([part 1](#) and [part 2](#))