



GENEVA CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
ADVANCEMENT AND GLOBAL DIALOGUE

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Interactive Dialogue with the Working Group on Discrimination against Women and Girls

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BACKGROUND

There is a direct and inextricable link between the protection of women's human rights and either peace or the proliferation of conflict. According to the ICRC, **120 conflicts are affecting civilians**, communities and economies worldwide. Situations of insecurity, organized violence and armed conflicts exacerbate existing gender inequalities, placing women and girls at an elevated risk of various forms of gender-based violence. While all civilians are adversely affected by armed conflict, women and girls are primarily targeted by the use of gender-based violence, in particular sexual violence, as a tactic of war to humiliate, dominate, instil fear in, and relocate communities.

In its General Recommendation No. 30 (2013) on **women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations**, the CEDAW Committee provides authoritative guidance to States on concrete measures to ensure that women's human rights are protected before, during and after conflict, whether they are directly involved in fighting or are providing peacekeeping troops or donor assistance for conflict prevention, humanitarian aid or post-conflict reconstruction. The General Recommendation makes clear that the Convention applies in all forms of conflict and post-conflict settings and addresses challenges faced by women in these settings, including gender-based violence and limited access to justice, education, employment and health. It also



provides guidance on due diligence obligations of States parties to ensure that non-State actors, such as armed groups and private security contractors, are held accountable for crimes against women. The General Recommendation stresses the importance of women's involvement in conflict prevention, resolution and peacebuilding, in addition to highlighting the need for a concerted and integrated approach that places the women, and peace and security agenda of the Security Council within the broader framework of the implementation of the Convention.

This year marks the **25th anniversary of UNSC resolution 1325 (2000)** of 31 October 2000 on women, peace and security. This landmark document and the other subsequent resolutions on women and peace and security recognize the disproportionate impacts of conflicts on women and the pivotal role women should and do play in conflict prevention, conflict management and sustainable peace efforts, echoing international human rights norms. Resolution 1325 (2000) introduces a **framework for action** that consists of four pillars: participation, protection, prevention, and relief and recovery. Through its gender integration efforts, the UNHRC has devoted increasing attention to the implementation of the UNSC resolution 1325 (2000) by ensuring that its investigative bodies have the required expertise to investigate cases of gender-based violence, including sexual violence. More recently, OHCHR has supported these **investigative bodies** to ensure adequate attention to other violations of human rights suffered by women in conflict, post-conflict and humanitarian settings, including the denial of their economic and social rights, and the active role women play in society including as journalists, activists, bloggers, food and water distributors, organizers and politicians. Relevant thematic Special Procedures of the UNHRC have analysed the impact of conflict on women and girls from the angle of their mandates, including the Special Rapporteurs on violence against women, torture, IDPs, the WG on the use of mercenaries and many others. Moreover, at the request of the UNHRC, OHCHR presented at its 58th session a report on the **effects of illicit arm transfers that includes a gender analysis**.

Pursuant to UNHRC resolutions 6/30 and 53/27, the panel discussion aims at deepening the understanding of **the prevalence, the causes and the consequences of gender-based violence** against women and girls in conflict, post-conflict and humanitarian settings, the links between human rights and the peace and security agenda, the imperative to prevent such violence and to support survivors and the role of the UNHRC in this regard. It will provide a space for organizations to share their views, perspectives and the lived experiences of women survivors. Moreover, the panel discussion will highlight how human rights norms and principles provide a comprehensive framework to protect women and girls against gender-based violence in conflict, post-conflict and humanitarian settings and guide the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda. The meeting is accessible to persons with disabilities through both sign language interpretation and real-time subtitling or captioning.

OPENING REMARKS

H.E. Mr. Volker TÜRK, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

As conflicts grow and spread across the world, we are witnessing a **shameless repudiation of the basic rules of warfare**. Gender-based violence in conflict, post-conflict and humanitarian settings is rising. Full reporting of every case is impossible, particularly when humanitarian



human rights and NGO staff are attacked in conflict zones and prevented from accessing them. But in recent years, OHCHR and UNHRC Commissions of Inquiry have documented **thousands of horrific cases of gender-based violence** in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Myanmar, Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including both Gaza and the West Bank, and in Ukraine among many others. In Haiti, women and girls are increasingly subjected to sexual violence, including sexual enslavement. A recent decree establishing two specialised judicial units, supported by OHCHR, marks critical progress towards fighting impunity for sexual violence in the country. In Sudan, gang rape and other forms of conflict-related sexual violence are pervasive. In other areas, they have been used in ethically motivated attacks as a weapon of war.

This is abominable. Fighters are being encouraged or instructed to victimise women, often as a **deliberate weapon of warfare**, to terrorise communities and force them to flee, and to silence the voices of women who speak out against warmongering and seek to build peace. Twenty-five years ago, UNSC landmark resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) reaffirmed the important **role of women in preventing and resolving conflict** and emphasised the need to prevent gender-based violence and end impunity, particularly for rape and other forms of sexual violence in situations of armed conflict or post-conflict. Since then, many resolutions have emphasised that gender-based violence, including sexual violence, is a crime that can and must be prevented and punished, including under international law. Many reports have been commissioned. Massive efforts have been made to uncover and document gender-based violence in conflict, post-conflict and humanitarian settings, including by UNSG Special Representative Pramila PATTEN, the UNHRC and OHCHR. Important steps have been taken to reinforce and detail international norms and legal standards, notably by the CEDAW Committee.

At the centre of all this is the **courage of survivors**, such as Ms. Grace ACHAN, one of today's panellists. Tireless work has been done by civil society groups and women's human rights defenders to assist many survivors of gender-based violence to heal. They have enabled access to medical care, including sexual and reproductive health services, and organisations like the Global Survivors Fund have advocated for reparations. A few **emblematic trials of perpetrators** have taken place for crimes in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Liberia, Syria, Uganda, and elsewhere. Some have related to universal jurisdiction. But still, those trials are few and far between. Overall, most perpetrators of gender-based violence continue to go scot-free, including men who are directly responsible for massive and brutal sexual attacks that should shock the conscience of every human being.

Meanwhile, weapons continue to flow, and recent **cuts to global aid budgets** are sharply restricting the work of women's groups. Many of these groups are close OHCHR partners, and together they work to **support survivors** from the Central African Republic and Colombia to the DRC to South Sudan and beyond. Failure to provide medical care, including for genital mutilations, sexually transmitted diseases, and unwanted pregnancy, has immense long-term impact. Failure to provide psychosocial support leaves young girls and women alone, outcast and traumatised. Cuts to humanitarian development aid by international donors are also impacting **prevention programmes**, including efforts by OHCHR and others to train police and security forces to comply with international law standards. This too has deeply harmful repercussions in the short, medium, and long term.



To his sorrow, the High Commissioner has met many victims of conflict-related gender-based violence. They often endure unimaginable physical, emotional, and social pain. A study in Kosovo found last year that 86% of survivors continued to experience post-traumatic stress disorder 25 years after the conflict. The course of their lives is forever harmed, and the fabric of their communities is torn. A **broader social impact** is also profound. Time and again, states have acknowledged that conflict-related gender-based violence damages prospects for reconciliation, peace-building, and durable peace. Yet, states are still not taking a decisive, concerted action that would put the perpetrators behind bars and deter future crimes.

We are still not addressing the **underlying discrimination**, gender equalities, and harmful gender and social norms that enable and empower the perpetrators of gender-based crimes. We are not addressing the **pain and trauma of survivors** with anything close to an appropriate level of support. We are not meeting the minimum requirements to prevent women from being silenced and support their participation and leadership, preventing and resolving conflict and building peace. It is not enough to mark every 19th of June International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence and Conflict. This needs to be our utmost priority every single day of the year.

Ms. Pramila PATTEN, UNSG Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict

The Council gathers in its shared commitment to uphold and protect the human rights of women and girls in the face of increasing gender-based violence in conflict and humanitarian settings. At a time when **women's rights are under unprecedented assault**, this annual discussion serves as an indispensable platform to guide the collective search for solutions against the rollback of progress painstakingly achieved over decades. This annual discussion is held amidst worsening trend lines on conflict-related sexual violence globally. The world is facing the **highest number of conflicts since World War II**, while the number of displaced people has reached a record of over 110 million. Rising militarization is bringing conflict across regions to boiling point, creating the conditions for unimaginable and unrelenting cruelty.

Gang rape, sexual slavery, and other brutal forms of sexual violence are being used as tactics of war, torture, and terrorism to subjugate and displace populations. The **2024 UNSG's annual report on conflict-related sexual violence**, which will be presented to the UNSC in August, records over 4,500 UN-verified cases across 21 country situations, with women and girls accounting for 91 percent of the victims. While the report conveys the severity and brutality of verified incidents, it does not purport to reflect the global scale or prevalence of this **chronically underreported, historically hidden crime**. For every woman who comes forward, many more are silenced by fear of reprisals and the paucity of services. Furthermore, stigma rooted in the harmful social norms result in socioeconomic exclusion and impoverishment of survivors.

The report highlights a number of both **entrenched and emerging issues**. Displaced, refugee, and migrant women and girls continue to face heightened risk of sexual violence, including abduction and sexual slavery in conflict-affected settings such as Burkina Faso, the DRC, Haiti, Libya, Somalia, and Sudan. In Myanmar, Ukraine, Sudan, and elsewhere, women and girls fleeing for their safety have fallen prey to unscrupulous trafficking and criminal networks, for whom forced displacement of civilians is not a tragedy but an opportunity for exploitation.



The illicit proliferation and availability of small arms and light weapons in places like Haiti and Sudan fuel the conflicts and create an environment in which sexual violence occurs and recurs with impunity. Women are exposed to **sexual violence in the course of essential livelihood activities**. In eastern DRC, women have reported carrying condoms with them while searching for food or collecting wood and water. These women face the unacceptable choice between economic subsistence and sexual violence, between their livelihoods and their lives.

It cannot be underestimated how **food insecurity increases the risk of sexual violence**, and how conflict and hunger are linked in complex spirals of cause and effect. Sexual violence continues to be a persistent feature of the political economy of war, with armed and terrorist groups using it strategically to assert control over territories and lucrative natural resources, and to incentivise the recruitment of fighters through forced marriage and the sale and trafficking of women and girls in regions like the south. The unprecedented scale and severity of attacks, harassment and threats against healthcare facilities and frontline service providers in conflict settings, including Haiti, Mali, Myanmar, the state of Palestine, Sudan and Ukraine, has severely hampered access to life-saving assistance for survivors. Services are least available at the very moment when survivors need them most.

While conflict-related sexual violence is a great breach of international humanitarian law, amounting to a war crime, crime against humanity and or constituent act of genocide, **impunity remains the norm** and accountability the rare exception. In a world scarred by conflict and instability, we must use all the tools at our disposal to confront the persistent scourge of conflict-related sexual violence.

Since the Special Representative took office in 2017, one of her strategic priorities has been to address the root cause of this violence with **gender inequality and discrimination as its invisible driver**. Rape is not an inevitable byproduct of war. It can be prevented through a concerted and strategic approach. Through her UNSC mandate, the Special Representative will continue to prioritise prevention and deterrence through justice and accountability, driven primarily by her team of experts on the rule of law, which support national institutions to strengthen investigations and prosecution for these crimes.

Her Office also launched **model legislative provision** and guidance on investigation and prosecution of sexual violence to assist states to harmonise domestic laws with international standards, given the importance of a comprehensive legislative framework. Since 2022, the UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict Network, chaired by the UNSG Special Representative and comprised of 26 UN member entities, has been rolling out a prevention framework, including in Ukraine. This framework outlines measures to address the root causes of sexual violence, in addition to mitigating the secondary harms, such as stigma, trauma, and reprisal. Indeed, if left unaddressed, the harms compound and multiply over time.

The UNSG Special Representative has also signed a number of frameworks of cooperation, including with the CEDAW Committee, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and religious leaders from across the spectrum of faith, amongst others. Through cooperation, member states such as the DRC and Myanmar have been requested to submit exceptional report on measures taken to address conflict-related sexual violence. The promise expressed by the UNSC through its sixth



dedicated resolution on conflict-related sexual violence is **prevention**. We owe survivors more than solidarity. We owe them effective and decisive action to prevent and eradicate these crimes. We must reassure population at risk, especially women, that they are not forgotten and that international law is not an empty promise. At a moment of backlash and regression, a failure to sustain progress would not only betray the survivors, but further embolden the perpetrators.

STATEMENTS BY PANELLISTS

Ms. Grace ACHAN, Co-Founder, Advocacy Network for Women, Uganda

In its various forms and contexts, sexual violence in conflict zones remains a grave violation of human rights, inflicting long-lasting trauma on individuals, families, and communities. It is a **weapon of war** used to terrorise, dominate, and destabilise populations. As a result, victims and survivors face social issues like stigmatisation, segregation, rejection by family and community members, and rapid breakage in marriages. Children born as a result of conflict remain a great burden to these mothers. The lack of sufficient resources like protection, healthcare, and justice is an additional plague.

Sexual violence in conflict **zones disrupts societal norms** like the culture of peace, country resolution, and marriage. Security and political challenges hinder interventions, health issues, and many others. Addressing sexual violence in conflict needs urgent action, as one in three women in conflict zones experience sexual violence, which is often used as a weapon of war, and yet millions of survivors remain invisible and unsupported. This requires a collective effort at local level, at national and international levels. Ms. Grace ACHAN proposes an array of targeted recommendations at the attention of the:

UN Security Council

- Raise awareness on the prevalence and impact of sexual violence in conflict settings.
- Use social media, community events, and advocacy campaigns to amplify the voices of survivors and highlight the need for action.
- Support and promote survivor organisations and organisations that provide medical, psychological, legal, and social assistance to survivors.
- Advocate for survivor-centred approaches that prioritise dignity, confidentiality, and empowerment, and above all, reparations for survivors that should be inclusive from the beginning in its inception, implementation, monitoring, and everything. It should involve survivors because survivors themselves know what exactly they need for their lives to be repaired.

UN Security Council, governments, international organisations, and policy-makers

- Strengthen and enforce laws against sexual violence in conflict and support initiatives that promote accountability, justice and reparations.
- Encourage the integration of sensitive strategies in conflict prevention, peace-building, and post-conflict reconstruction efforts.
- Support programmes that empower women and girls and address root causes of violence.



- Hold perpetrators accountable by supporting investigative efforts and strengthening international justice mechanisms such as the International Criminal Court.
- Promote gender equality and challenge harmful norms that perpetuate violence, encouraging men and boys as allies in preventing sexual violence.

In a nutshell, echoing the worlds of a network of survivors of sexual violence – ‘*nothing about us without us*.’ Every voice matters. By standing together, we can help and end sexual violence in conflict and build a world where all individuals are safe, respected, and empowered.

Ms. Nahla HAIDAR, Chair, United Nations Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee)

On the occasion of the 25th anniversary of UNSC resolution 1325, we are confronted with a **devastating reality**, the alarming prevalence of gender-based violence (GBV) in conflict, post-conflict, and humanitarian settings. This is not just a human rights issue, it is a critical peace and security imperative. The CEDAW Committee stands resolute in its commitment to addressing these challenges, now more relevant than ever.

Tragically, during times of war and crisis, violence against women and girls and their diversity escalates devastatingly. Sexual violence is weaponised as a tactic of war, and perpetrators also exploit chaos to commit forced marriage, torture, femicide, and human trafficking. We see this horrifying reality unfolding across the world. Even after conflicts cease, this violence often spikes. Statistics are stark. Conflict-related sexual violence has surged with women and girls comprising an overwhelming majority of victims. Beyond physical violence, GBV devastates women’s socio-economic well-being, hindering access to livelihoods, education, and healthcare.

A **pervasive culture of impunity** allows perpetrators to escape justice, fostering deep fear and silence. In humanitarian crisis, healthcare systems collapse, exacerbating conditions for pregnant women and limiting essential services. The staggering rise in demand for GBV service, coupled with severe underfunding for women-led organisations, highlight an acceptable gap in our collective humanitarian response. The heartbreaking reality that many women endure these **heinous crimes in silence**, paralysed by pervasive stigma and fear of their communities. Therefore, a pivotal part of our response must be to actively engage communities to dismantle stigma and to design support programmes and genuinely facilitate survival, social and economic reintegration.

Our understanding of conflict-related sexual violence must continue to evolve. We have moved **from restrictive interpretation to survivor-informed approaches**. Recognising a broader spectrum of sexual violence, crucially, we now acknowledge conflict-related reproductive violence as a distinct category, a direct violation of reproductive autonomy. These advancements have led to significant legal strides and landmark convictions at the ICC affirm a woman’s right to personal and reproductive autonomy. These advancements are also firmly rooted in the comprehensive human rights framework of CEDAW and its general recommendations have consistently clarified that. Most importantly, General Recommendation No. 30 (GR30), which was led by Ms. Pramila PATTEN on women in conflict-stressed states, demands a zero-tolerance policy for all forms of GBV. In this regard, Ms. Nahla HAIDAR is glad to share that the CEDAW Committee will soon issue an addendum to GR30 based on existing norms and will seek feedback



from stakeholders. **New and complex challenges continuously emerge.** We see the weaponization of artificial intelligence, algorithmic bias in military targeting, and AI-fuelled digital violence like deepfakes. Unilateral sanctions disproportionately impact vulnerable women by exacerbating poverty and limiting access to healthcare.

To **combat persistent impunity**, the CEDAW Committee advocate for survivor-centric justice, recognising sexual violence as torture, and prosecuting gender persecution as a standalone crime. Fact-finding missions established by the UNHRC are indispensable for documenting cases and preserving evidence for accountability and reparations, including for transgenerational harm. We must also move towards collective community-based reparations. Furthermore, the UNHRC has a critical role in **reinforcing adherence to relevant treaties**, such as the CEDAW, but also the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Mine-Ban Treaty, and the Convention on Cluster Munitions specifically highlighting the gendered impact. The systematic perpetration of sexual reproductive and other forms of gender-based violence demands our immediate and unwavering collective action. We must relentlessly pursue prosecution at both national and international levels, underscoring the critical importance of **universal jurisdiction**.

Drawing to a close, Ms. Nahla HAIDAR stresses that the eradication of GBV in conflict and humanitarian setting requires the imperative to enforce zero-tolerance policies and ensure accountability; elevate survivor-centred justice and support; strengthen legal framework and prosecute gender-based crimes; bridge the funding gap for women-led organisations; enhance data collection and documentation for accountability; promote adherence to treaties, including Mine-Ban Treaty, the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the CEDAW; address emerging threats from technology and sanctions; and implement convention-compliant Women, Peace, and Security National Action Plans.

Ms. Clara SANDOVAL, Director of Programmes, Global Survivors Fund (GSF)

The **Global Survivors Fund** was launched in October 2019 by Dr. Denis Mukwege and Nadia Murad, Nobel Peace Prize laureates, to enable access to reparation for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence. Before the UNHRC, Ms. Clara SANDOVAL calls on the audience to act on the right to reparation for every woman and girl silenced, violated, discriminated against, and stigmatised by conflict-related sexual violence and reproductive violence.

Reparation is not merely a word. It is a physical and mental rehabilitation following deep trauma. It is a promise that what a survivor went through will not be suffered by their descendants. It is the means through which livelihoods and educational opportunities can be accessed following the most devastating of violations. The right to reparation is embedded in human rights and humanitarian law frameworks and is part of the WPS Agenda as shown by UNSC Resolution 2467 (2019). Nevertheless, victims of conflict-related sexual violence are denied access to reparation. Year after year, promises are made by survivors, but survivors continue to wait and some will wait their whole lives.

Legal frameworks alone do not heal. Action does. When the states uphold the right to reparation, they acknowledge that what has happened was wrong, that it was not the victim's fault and that it cannot happen again. It is a preventive tool. Such decisive action allows trust to be built and healing to begin. Often, we focus on what reparation can deliver, compensation,



rehabilitation, satisfaction, restitution and guarantees of non-repetition, but we forget how it must be delivered. The process is as vital as the forms of reparation itself. It needs to be **survivor-centred**, prioritising the rights, needs and wishes and ensuring that they are always treated with dignity and respect. The Global Survivors Fund stresses its approach grounded on the so-called **co-creation**. Survivors must be given the opportunity to meaningfully contribute to every stage of the reparation process. They need to feel that they are truly at the centre, that they are provided with safe and trusted spaces and that they are accompanied through the journey.

A year ago, Ms. Clara SANDOVAL met Assa, probably aged 16 at the time, in Adri, a refugee camp in Chad for those who have fled Sudan. She had been raped various times on her way from Al Janina to **Chad**. She could not lift her eyes to meet mine. She shook. She could not speak. When finally words came out from her mouth, these were the words – *I am dead. I feel empty. I have no value*. Fear and stigma prevented her from using humanitarian services in Adri. Her silence, her chain, her shattered sense of self were permanent obstacles to accessing urgent support and healing.

We hear that **reparation is unaffordable**, but the cost of inaction and reparation is far, far greater. Leaving the most vulnerable traumatised populations without the means to rebuild their lives means that cycles of violence and trauma persist across time and across generations. Without reparation, the work we are all currently doing on peace building, reconstruction and transitional justice loses its meaning and an ability to be sustainable over time. It is an injustice to say that reparations are unaffordable when the essence of perpetrators and those who enable conflicts flow around the world in the form of property, jobs, fast cars and football teams. For survivors like Assa, holistic reparation can really be transformative.

In **Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)**, the Global Survivors Fund works with more than a thousand survivors showed the impact of its holistic co-creation approach. For four years, trained facilitators, many of them survivors, accompanied participants through the project with great empathy and care. The impact was clear. Quality of life scores tripled, their physical and mental health vastly improved and survivors reported high confidence, self-esteem and family acceptance. After the abuse she suffered, one survivor, for example, stopped talking. She did not speak for almost a year. The Global Survivors Fund's project helped her through this. She is now interacting with family members and moving forward. This is what reparation means.

The **right to reparation is also possible in humanitarian contexts**. In such context, we need to start by preparing the ground for reparation, connecting humanitarian actors with survivors themselves is absolutely crucial. Survivors trust each other and know best how to meet their needs. Assa had not sought healthcare or services other than food assistance, but she knew other survivors who were there for her when her family rejected her. Connecting them creates unique opportunities for the delivery of health, education, livelihood or other services that can serve as reparative measures. This is not just meeting an urgent need, it is fulfilling a right. Services can also be enhanced to address some of the most urgent harm survivors have experienced, like trauma or physical injuries such as fistula.



The **time to act on reparation is now** and the UNHRC has a pivotal role to play. It can ensure independent monitoring of the implementation of the right to reparation in UN member states, including for survivors of conflict related sexual violence and reproductive violence through the work of country and thematic Special Procedures. The UNHRC can review systematically the status and implementation of the right to reparation of UN member states through the universal periodic review process. The UNHRC can drive forward a resolution and coordinate international action to secure the freezing, confiscation and repurposing of the assets belonging to the perpetrators of human rights violations and linked crimes for the benefits of victims and survivors. Further, it can organise a second high-level full-day discussion in 2026 on the right to reparation of survivors of conflict-related sexual violence with a specific focus on financing reparation.

REPLIES AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

Ms. Grace ACHAN explains that the persistent existence of gaps recalls the imperative of holding perpetrators accountable. A lot is being done already, but there is still more that needs to be done. States must ensure that there are mechanisms in place to follow up interventions and give urgent and holistic reparations to survivors. Otherwise, it can be too late to restore the lives of survivors of sexual violence. Laws must be effectively be used through the existing channels such as the religious leaders, traditional leaders, and other leaders to ensure that laws are enforced. Finally, the need to follow up interventions to ensure that they are serving their intended purposes.

On how to address existing gaps, **Ms. Nahla HAIDAR** laments the decreasing development aid and increasingly armament spending; competition over natural resources and the mining sector; and the prevailing impunity. To do better, the UNHRC is in a leading position to bridge the gap with the UNSC resolution 1325 and **overcome the Geneva-New York divide** on the human rights side. Ms. Nahla HAIDAR stresses the positive joint work between the CEDAW Committee and the Office of the Special Representative, who is very present before the UNSC, while regretting that not every entity is able to interact.

Turning to good practises, Ms. Nahla HAIDAR emphasizes the **genuine participation of women in every step of the way**, thereby referring to CEDAW General Recommendation No. 14, which calls for gender equality, in particular, in peace processes. Women should be really an integral part of all processes to be able to influence also the preventive part. Looking at Ireland, the Good Friday Agreement is probably a good example that one should go back to how women were integrated.

Ms. Clara SANDOVAL emphasizes that **reparation is a form of justice and a precondition of justice**. Without reparation, victims cannot seek and contribute to justice efforts. To effectively fight impunity, reparation must be provided because otherwise victims are not in a position to be able to contribute to it as they could. On now to enhance the relationship between the UNHRC and the UNSC, Ms. Clara SANDOVAL believes that coordinated action is needed in relation to specific countries where the participation of women is at stake, not only in one moment, but across the whole peace-making process, which also includes transitional justice. Countries such as Sudan, Ukraine, Nepal, and Syria, among others, should be the priority.

Co-creation is also a meaningful form of participation. The Global Survivors Fund has been working on co-creation in over 26 countries, showing that participation is absolutely worth it, that



it really produces transformative changes for the lives of survivors. In this regard, Ms. Clara SANDOVAL draws the Council's attention to the **experience of Colombia** that has also included important participation methodologies, not only during the peace-making process before the peace process happened in 2016 and with the peace agreement in 2016, but also during the implementation of the transitional justice mechanisms. The Colombian experience deserves to be looked at. It reminds us that when dealing with women, peace and security, we need to **extend the reach of the WPS agenda** to also cover the role of women, girls, and others during the **implementation of transitional justice processes**.

Ms. Clara SANDOVAL highlights the **experience of Ukraine** as a key example showing how the participation from different sectors, even before a peace process really happens, has shown the work of women. GSM has put in place a pilot project to implement **urgent interim reparation in Ukraine**, which has been possible because of the key inclusion of women from government leaders, including Ms. Olena Zelenska, the High Commissioner for Gender Policy in Ukraine, together with a survivor's movement network in Ukraine, other survivors, the Global Survivors' Fund, and civil society organisations. Participation processes have to be transformative to ensure the full realization of the right to reparation in societies.

Ms. Pramila PATTEN, UNSG Special Representative, stresses that this moment of crisis is really the true test for our resolve. While political dynamics and funding decisions may change, the rights and the needs of the women and girls, of the survivors, remain. Since taking office in June 2017, she has made of **survivors her moral compass**. In her very first declaration upon taking office in 2017, she highlighted that the mandate was **created for the survivors and as the face of the survival**. 15 years down the line, we know so much. We have a strong normative framework. We know what are the red lines. We know what are the needs of the survivors. But it is about translating resolutions into solutions on the ground. We also know what works when there is political will backed by adequate financial resources, we see a result. The Office of the Special Representative is **reaching out to thousands of survivors** who once were invisible through projects funded by the multi-partner trust fund through UN Action Network, comprising 26 UN entities. Ukraine is a concrete example of this. The Office is doing tremendous work thanks to the political will and the necessary funding to do its work.

In closing, Ms. Pramila PATTEN warns that we do not have the luxury of looking away. We do not have the luxury of reciting words of condemnation and moving on when survivors lack the support that they need to move on with their lives. Unfortunately, what we see on the ground is that **women and girls are paying the price of impunity, militarism, and weaponised misogyny**. They are shouldering the burden of care and the weight of history in the face of funding cuts that undercut international security and cooperation. Everywhere we are seeing that **for women war is not over when it is over**. Its effects really echo long after the final battle and far beyond the battlefield. We see this in the eyes of survivors, in the children born out of rape, in the hospitals reduced to rubble, in ruined and fractured families, and in the sprawling refugee camps where civilians languish. Beyond delivery of relief, we must really **foster long-term resilience** in order to break the vicious cycle of violence, impunity and risk and replace it with a virtuous cycle of recognition, reporting and response.



INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE

Views Expressed by State Delegations

Australia notes with concern that 25 years since the unanimous adoption of the UNSC resolution 1325, sexual and gender-based violence remain a deliberate tactic of war. Grave human rights violations continue, entrenching gender equality, tearing apart communities, undermining the realisation of human rights, and obstructing peace, recovery, and development. In 2023, UN-verified cases of conflict-related sexual violence rose by 50%, with nearly one-third involving girls. Women and girls remain disproportionately affected, while also recognising the growing harms to men, boys, and others. This violence is a product of entrenched gender inequalities that exist in all countries. Combating these inequalities requires systemic changes across institutions, policies, and social norms. Australia is committed to working in partnership to build a future where justice, dignity, and human rights prevail. Access to justice, accountability, and comprehensive support services, including sexual and reproductive health care services, must be guaranteed, as well as gender equality in participation, leadership, and decision-making.

Azerbaijan reaffirms the importance of upholding women's and girls' rights in times of conflict, promoting accountability and advancing the implementation of the WPS Agenda. More than 300,000 Azerbaijanis, including women and girls, were forcibly expelled from their ancestral lands as a part of a campaign of ethnic colonising. This month's displacement represents one of the most under-addressed gendered consequences of conflict in our region. These women and girls continue to be denied their right to return, a clear violation of international human rights and humanitarian law. Many continue to suffer the long-term effects of displacement and conflict-related trauma. Azerbaijan advocates for a peaceful and just return in accordance with international law. Women's voices are at the forefront of this call for dignity, justice, and reintegration. On the occasion of the 25th anniversary of UNSC Resolution 1325, states must reaffirm their collective commitment to protecting women in conflict, preventing gender-based violence, and empowering women as agents of peace and reconstruction. Azerbaijan calls on the UNHRC and all relevant UN mechanisms to address this historical injustice and support their right to return as a vital component of post-conflict recovery and peace.

Bahrain on behalf of the Arab group reiterates its commitment to protecting and promoting the rights of girls and women and to gender equality and to female empowerment and to combating violence against women. The Arab group stresses the important role of women in society. Armed conflicts aggravate inequalities which exist which are gender-based inequalities and expose women to all forms of violence. The Arab group calls upon all states to take the necessary measures to protect women and girls and shelter them from violence. Furthermore, it condemns the ongoing aggression and attacks on Gaza, which have led to the death of more than 28,000 women and girls since October 2023 and the widespread hunger and disease now rampant.

Belgium on behalf of the Benelux countries points out that the implementation of the peace and security agenda remains deeply uneven with growing risk of stagnation and even regression. Despite two decades of global commitments, men continue to dominate decision-making spaces related to peace and security, while women's participation remains limited and often symbolic. The increasing number and complexity of conflicts alongside the erosion of democracy



worldwide are exacerbating gender-based violence and discrimination against women and girls, undermining WPS commitments. Technology-facilitated gender-based violence and disinformation are being used to silence women and girls and prevent their equal and meaningful participation in leadership positions and public spaces. These trends, rooted in broader misogyny, threaten not only gender equality but also democracy and peace. Meanwhile, climate change poses a security threat globally, impacting disproportionately women and girls, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. Integrating WPS principles into climate security is essential for effective resilience building. The situation in Afghanistan is also relevant in this context. The rollback on Afghan women's rights continues and stands as a test for the international community's commitment to the WPS agenda.

Canada notes that women and girls are disproportionately affected by sexual violence and when a conflict starts, it is often women and girls who pay the highest price in conflicts worldwide. Their bodies become a theatre of war. Girls are married by force, they drop out of school, and rape is used as a weapon of war. Women are assaulted, adolescents are abducted, and whole families are destroyed. This is not just collateral damage, this is a deliberate strategy. Combating violence means that we must act now and focus on survivors by providing reparation measures which guarantee access to sexual and reproductive health services that are comprehensive and also access to psychosocial support and legal protection. Assailants also must be brought to account and tried. For this imperative, Canada continues to support international justice processes as well as efforts to document crimes on the ground. Gender-based crimes must be combated and punished through its foreign policy and its feministic international agenda. Canada continues to recall worldwide that as long as this violence exists, our fight will be tireless.

China welcomes the annual discussion on women's rights recalls that the elimination of violence against women is one of the 12 priorities set in the Beijing Declaration Platform for Action. In China, through legislation, judicial measures, law enforcement, policymaking, and awareness-raising, elimination of violence against women and girls is the biggest progress moving towards gender equality and women's empowerment since the Beijing Conference. China condemns all forms of gender-based violence against women in armed conflicts and underlines timely and comprehensive investigations into these violations of international human rights and humanitarian laws. It is imperative to prosecute the perpetrators in accordance with the law and ensure victims' access to justice and their dignity. The elimination of gender-based violence still requires the international joint and long-term efforts. China stands ready to work with all to continue its contribution to the elimination of gender-based violence worldwide with concrete action and to achieve the zero-violence target.

Colombia before the real threat of setbacks and more conflicts in the world, the priority of States must be to protect what has been achieved and recognise that in multilateral dialogue the potential for the guaranteed rights of women and girls, especially in these contexts. Women and girls continue to be the victims of many forms of violence in armed conflicts and post-conflict settings. At the same time, they are examples of how, as peace builders, they are successful worldwide. Colombia has a plan of action for the implementation of the WPS Agenda under Resolution 1325, built with an inclusive and intersexual approach, focussing on the life-free violence against women and girls in their diverse diversities as a basis. Furthermore, in the context of our transitional process stemming from the 2016 peace agreement, the Special Court



Jurisdiction for Peace has addressed the special specific cases of sexual violence and armed conflict conditionally. Colombia recently adopted a law which recognises the rights of women who search for victims of enforced lesbianism as a subject of constitutional protection and peace. In closing, the country will continue to recognise that women are fundamental players in constructing peaceful societies.

Côte d'Ivoire commends panellists for their relevant contributions on the fundamental rights of women in the global context whose hallmark is protected on conflicts. Women, adolescents, and girls are victims of all forms of sexual violence. Rape is all too often used as a weapon of war to humiliate, dominate, or break up social cohesion. Widespread sexual violence is also endemic in post-conflict settings where it perpetuates cycles of anxiety and constant fear. Côte d'Ivoire ratified CEDAW in 1995, and Côte d'Ivoire has made violence against women one of its national priorities. Thus, Côte d'Ivoire has launched several reforms, including the 2021 amendment of the Criminal Code, which explicitly criminalises all forms of violence against women. The country reaffirms its commitment to the WPS Agenda, in particular UNSC resolution 1325. Côte d'Ivoire recommends the creation of institutional and lasting protection for the fundamental human rights of women and girls before, during, and after conflicts.

Cyprus on behalf of the core group composed of Albania, Chile, Cyprus, Iceland, Malawi and Panama, and a cross-regional group of states, recalls that femicide is the most extreme manifestation of violence against women and girls, constituting a grave violation of their human rights, including their right to life. Although the majority of femicides are perpetrated by an intimate partner or family member, they also take place in many contexts beyond the domestic sphere, including by strangers, during armed conflicts, through gun violence, human trafficking and organised crime. Femicide is driven by gender-based discrimination, unequal power relations between women and men, gender stereotypes and deeply rooted patriarchal and harmful social norms. The fact that one woman or girl are killed every 10 minutes is deeply disturbing and unacceptable. Although there have been positive developments, real change remains slow. Cyprus encourages states to take effective, comprehensive and timely measures to prevent, investigate, prosecute and punish femicide in a manner that is commensurate with the gravity of the crime. Adequate psychosocial support and accessible legal aid should also be made available for the families of victims. Strengthening data collection and reporting is essential for the establishment of preventive measures. Moreover, it is important to enhance international, regional and bilateral cooperation, including through technical assistance, capacity-building and the sharing of good practises.

Ghana on behalf of the African group expresses its deep concern over the increasing incidence of violence against women and girls in situations of conflict, post-conflict, and humanitarian crisis. Across the African continent, violence takes various forms, including sexual assault, structural discrimination, and impunity, and is often used as a weapon of war, severely violating IHL and IHRL. Aware of this reality, the African Union has strengthened its commitment through several key initiatives. The policy framework on post-conflict reconstruction and development and strategy of gender equality and women's empowerment and the Makoto Protocol are essential instruments to prevent, sanction, and remedy these violations. The African Union Peace and Security Council has integrated a gender perspective into its work, while the network of African women mediators plays a crucial role in mediating the peace building. On the 25th



anniversary of the UNSC resolution 1325 (WPS Agenda), the African group reaffirms its support for the full participation of women in peace processes, reconstruction, and transitional justice. Commending African states' efforts in adapting legal frameworks and regional strategies to implement this resolution, the African group calls for strengthening its international cooperation to prevent such violence and to support survivors

Greece emphasizes that the phenomenon of gender-based violence in these settings remains one of the most egregious yet persistent violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. Worldwide, women and girls continue to be deliberately targeted with sexual and gender-based violence, used as a weapon of war, a tactic of terror, and a tool for forced displacement and dehumanisation. In May 2025, as President of the UN Security Council, Greece placed the protection of civilians in conflicts at the centre of its agenda, emphasising also the inexorable link between the protection of civilians and the peace and security agenda. Greece firmly believes that protection is incomplete without recognising the unique risks faced by women. Risks including gender-based violence, exclusion from decision-making, and limited access to vital services. Gender-based violence in conflict is not inevitable, it is preventable. Greece reaffirms its unwavering commitment to addressing the rapid causes for gender violence and advancing the rights, agency, and safety of women and girls everywhere.

Iran explains that during the last 12 days, the Iranian people were under massive blind and intimidating attacks by occupied Israel and its complicit United States, with human rights as highest trumpets and safety and well-being of women and children as biggest sacrifice. During the invasions, over 400 innocent people, including 54 women and children, were retired, among them a pregnant woman and a two-month baby. Residential areas, hospitals, welfare centres, Red Crescent aid workers, and vital infrastructures severely targeted. While negotiations were poisoned and invaders were instigated, Iran responsibly and committedly defended its land, responded its people, and responded forcefully and proportionately. Iran will not let its people, mainly women and children, be attacked during a still midnight bombardment. Iran calls on the UNHRC to push harder for the cause of Palestine and those women and children who have sacrificed all their lives for freedom from occupation. Supporting pro-Palestinian activists who have arbitrarily detained and tortured should be the utmost priority.

Kuwait is committed to the protection of women's rights, as per its constitution enshrining equality among citizens without discrimination. Empowerment of women is one of our priorities. According to our new Kuwait Vision 2035, in line with SDG 5 in particular, the country has established a National Committee that comprises a representative of the government and the civil society. With a view to implementing UNSC Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security, the Committee has launched a number of initiatives to promote the participation of women in security and military sectors. Kuwait also attaches great importance to the combating violence against women and girls through the establishment of the National Committee on the Protection from Domestic Violence and the allocation of a specialised general prosecution. Strongly committed to the promotion of the rights of women, Kuwait will continue its efforts to provide an environment conducive to the empowerment and effective participation of women in all spheres.

Malawi points out that UNSC resolution 1325 and many resolutions on women, peace, and security remind us of the disproportionate impact of conflicts on women and their pivotal role



women should play in conflict prevention, conflict management, and sustainable peace efforts. Sadly, cases of violence against women and girls in situations of conflict, post-conflict, and humanitarian crisis continue to rise. Our collective action against such violence has to be guided by the four pillars introduced by resolution 1325, namely participation, protection, prevention, and relief and recovery. In that regard, Malawi calls for the adoption of robust legislative policy and institutional frameworks at domestic, regional, and international levels which would not only seek to prevent such violence against women but also ensure effective remedies and accountability for victims and survivors. Malawi urges the enhancement of international cooperation to ensure accountability against perpetrators of violence against women and girls in conflict and humanitarian settings.

Mexico restates its commitment to the elimination of all forms of gender-based violence in conflict and humanitarian settings. As thematic organisers on victim assistance under the Convention on Cluster Munitions, Mexico recognises that gender-based violence in conflict, post-conflict, and humanitarian settings often is exacerbated by the prevalence and use of weapons, including cluster munitions. The social norms of similar attachments mean that there is exposure to risk and disproportionate effect on victims and survivors too. They have less access to medical attention, mental health, and psychosocial support through protection and socio-economic inclusion. Assistance for victims and survivors, as well as the defence of human rights, can contribute to combat violence of sexual and gender-based violence, which affects especially women and girls and persons with disabilities. It is therefore relevant to promote true dovetailing between gender equality public policies and international human rights and disarmament instruments. In this context, the resolutions and recommendations of the UNHRC, especially the UPR and Special Procedures, play a crucial role in tackling the impact of conflicts and weapons on women and girls by promoting the disaggregated data gathering, guaranteeing significant participation in all processes that affect them.

Mexico stresses the crucial importance of implementing concrete measures that guarantee their substantive, safe, and equal participation of women in the world peace process. Welcoming achievements through initiatives such as the Compact on WPS in Humanitarian Action, Mexico makes an urgent appeal for CEDAW General Recommendation No. 40 to be implemented in all peace processes. Nationally, Mexico in 2021 adopted its National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security and has submitted three follow-up reports. Mexico stresses the need to mainstream feminist and decolonising approaches in peace construction strategies, as well as to tackle cultural and systemic barriers which women face in all their diversity. Now is the time for women to act. Mexico will continue to make progress to ensure that women can live a life free of violence.

Monaco reasserts its full commitment on this matter and to firmly condemn all violence against women and girls in humanitarian crisis and in conflict situations. Monaco welcomes the increasing efforts to implement UNSC Resolution 1325 and to strengthen the investigative mechanisms into sexual and gender-based violence in conflict situations and humanitarian crisis. As a serious violation of IHL and IHRL, Monaco calls upon all countries and organisations to combat these phenomena at all levels. Monaco deplores the lack of data available, mainly due to the stigmatisation which persists for victims in certain communities, and further regrets the slow progress made in terms of prevention, protection and support and reparation.



Norway on behalf of the Nordic-Baltic countries stresses that sexual and gender-based violence in conflict, post-conflict and humanitarian settings remains a serious concern. It is a violation of human rights, often exacerbated by violence. The international human rights framework provides a comprehensive foundation for preventing violence, protecting survivors and promoting equality. It reinforces the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda by emphasising accountability, inclusion and survivor-centred approaches as essential to lasting peace. Efforts to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence must be sustained. Regrettably, we are instead witnessing increasing gender backsliding and significant cuts in funding. We must retain a strong commitment to invest in eliminating SGBV. To prevent such violence in the future, it is imperative to ensure access to services, legal protection and the full, equal and meaningful participation of women and girls in all aspects and phases of peace processes.

Panama recognises that violence in conflict areas often is exacerbated by the prevalence and use of weapons, including cluster munitions. The social norms of CCM means that there is exposure to risk and disproportionate effect on victims and survivors too. They have less access to medical attention, mental health, and psychosocial support, rehabilitation, and social and economic inclusion. Assistance for victims and survivors, as well as the defence of their human rights, contribute to common patterns of sexual and gender-based violence, which affect especially women and girls and persons with disabilities. That is why it is relevant to promote true dovetailing between gender equality, public policies, and international human rights and disarmament instruments. In this context, the resolutions and recommendations of the UNHRC and the Special Procedures play a crucial role in tackling the impact of conflicts and weapons on women and girls by promoting disaggregated data collection, guaranteeing their significant participation in all processes that affect them.

The **Republic of Korea** stresses how far we have come at the 25th WPS anniversary and yet how far we still have to go to protect the rights of women and girls in conflict and ensure their full, equal, and meaningful participation in peace processes. Over the past 25 years, the path toward implementing the WPS Agenda has never been without setbacks. It is a journey that requires resilience, courage, and our shared commitment to human dignity. This is a moment to renew that commitment. The Republic of Korea is firmly committed to this cause. Through its Women and Peace Initiative, Korea has supported women peace builders and survivors of sexual violence in conflict zones around the world. It has also hosted annual WPS conferences in Seoul for the past six years to amplify their voices and to channel their perspectives into their work. With the historical experience of women and girls victimised as comfort women, the WPS Agenda resonates deeply with Korea. The country will continue to work to restore the honour and dignity of the comfort women and to help heal their psychological wounds.

Romania reaffirms its strong commitment to the full, equal, and meaningful participation of women in all efforts related to peace and security, both nationally and internationally. As a result of national efforts to integrate gender-perspective international security policies and to promote women's leadership in peacekeeping, conflict prevention, and post-conflict recovery, Romanian women are increasingly represented in peace missions, civil protection structures, and decision-making positions within the security sector. As a neighbouring country to Ukraine, Romania has witnessed firsthand the impact of conflict. From the onset of the war, Romania has prioritised a



gender-sensitive humanitarian response, national authorities working alongside civil society and international partners to establish safe spaces for women and girls fleeing conflict, and to ensure access to protection, health services, and support for survivors of gender-based violence. Romania calls on all member states to uphold their international obligations to prevent and respond to gender-based violence against women and girls in all circumstances.

Rwanda speaks from a place of hard-earned experience, having seen how gender-based violence, especially in times of conflict, disproportionately targets women and girls and leaves generational wounds that affect entire communities. It is important to note that women and girls that have survived gender-based violence may carry visible and invisible wounds. In response, Rwanda made a deliberate choice to eliminate gender-based violence. Rwanda's progress today stands as a testimony to the power of development, when all citizens, particularly women, are not only invited to the table but fully empowered to lead. While reflecting on the rights of women in conflict and humanitarian situations, Rwanda is reminded that silence and inaction in the face of gender-based violence amounts to complicity. Rwanda urges the international community to accelerate the implementation of the UNSC resolution 1325 and all subsequent resolutions under the WPS Agenda, and invites the panel to reflect on this.

Spain jointly with Australia, Colombia, Finland, Japan, Lebanon and a group of 60 countries recalls that 25 years ago, UNSC Resolution 1325 was a landmark as it recognised that there will be no sustainable peace without participation and leadership of women and the protection of their human rights. Today, it is unacceptable that women and girls in conflict and humanitarian emergency settings have to face growing SGBV civic space for human rights defenders and peace builders is shrinking, while noting with concern the ongoing under-representation of women in peace processes. The group of countries reaffirms their commitment to the full implementation of the WPS Agenda, most notably by tackling the structural causes of conflicts; guaranteeing accountability; and promoting the participation and leadership of women in peace processes. Women's organisations and movements need predictable and sustainable financing. The UNHRC plays a crucial role in this agenda and means that the human rights and voice of women occupy central role in the prevention and response to conflicts. The countries urge all states to scale up efforts to achieve gender equality and to shoulder their commitments to ensure that the WPS Agenda promise is a reality for women and girls worldwide.

Switzerland recalls that experience has shown us that where women's rights are protected and their full and equal participation is ensured, peace is more sustainable. The full enjoyment of the rights of women and girls is a legal obligation. It is a political responsibility and a vital precondition to peace. As its constant priority, Switzerland is highly concerned by the increase in gender-based violence, in humanitarian crisis and conflicts, and sexual violence being used as a tactic of war. Switzerland attaches great importance to prevention and providing safe and accessible quality assistance to all women and girls affected and in combating impunity. This is part of the fifth National Action Plan for the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325, which is currently being drafted. Switzerland continues to strengthen synergy between the different international instruments. The expertise of the treaty bodies and human rights mechanisms on the rights of women in Geneva should lead discussions on women's peace and security in New York, and they should feed into each other. Stressing the need to strengthen synergy between the WPS Agenda



and the CEDAW, Switzerland calls for the full respect and implementation of these instruments, these tools are available to ensure more inclusive and resilient societies.

Ukraine jointly with Lithuania and Poland (the Lublin Triangle) lament persistent Russian strikes on women and girls. Just the day before a brutal Russian missile strike on Kyiv killed nine civilians, including a mother and her child. The previous night, after another attack on Sumy, two 17-year-old girls were injured after attack on Kherson, two more women. The Russia's full-scale invasion now in its fourth year has killed over 3,800 women and 290 girls and injured thousands more in their homes, schools, hospitals. Sexual violence, including rape and torture by Russian forces, has been documented by the UN. As of June 25, Ukraine has verified 366 cases of conflict-related sexual violence, including 231 women and 19 children. These are not isolated acts, but part of a systematic tactic of Russian war. On the International Day of Women Diplomacy, the Lublin Triangle honours all women in service for their countries. Resilience of Ukraine is strengthened by over 70,000 women in armed forces and millions of civilians holding families, local communities, and the nation together under fire. The Lublin Triangle calls on states to ensure accountability for every act of violence and uphold UNSC Resolution 1335. Peace is impossible without women. Justice is incomplete if their voices are silenced.

Uruguay on behalf of the group of friends of women recalls gender-based violence continues to be an ongoing phenomenon, which is not spoken out against disproportionately affecting women and girls. The constant and serious violations of the UN mandate for women and children in office, so that girls are especially exposed to the risks of abduction and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence, including forced marriage, slavery and forced pregnancy. These violations are often not registered, which means that affected girls are excluded from protection mechanisms and integration programmes and accountability mechanisms. Structural barriers, such as limited access to social services and education, not only increase the risk of being exposed to violence in certain situations of vulnerability, but also they strengthen inequalities that have pre-existed and perpetuate cycles of marginalisation. As conflict increase in number, political will is crucial as well as the mandate of the UNSG Special Representative to raise visibility of these serious human rights violations, document them and promote accountability.

Views Expressed by intergovernmental Organizations and UN Entities

The **European Union** attaches great importance to prevention and elimination of sexual and gender-based violence. The EU recently condemned conflict-related sexual violence and stresses the need for an ambitious and transformative approach to addressing the root causes and risk factors of gender inequality, gender stereotypes, sexual and gender-based violence. Sexual and gender-based violence used as a tactic of war in conflicts has reached alarming levels. The investigation and prosecution of conflict-related sexual violence crimes is critical to ensure accountability. The EU will redouble its efforts to implement effectively the UNSC Resolution 1325 and its subsequent resolutions, and will also continue to promote the full integration of a gender perspective in peace and security initiatives by strengthening the full, equal, and meaningful participation and leadership of women and girls in peace processes. The continued to champion gender equality and the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights by all women and girls and their empowerment in line with international commitments.



UNICEF jointly with UNFPA and UN Women emphasizes that in a global context where both gender equality and child rights are increasingly under attack, these troubling trends are all converged on girls. Global research by UNICEF last year shows that one in eight girls experience rape or sexual assault before the age of 18, and these rates nearly double in conflict-affected contexts. Another 2021 study found that almost 70 percent of the armed forces and groups analysed were responsible for the sexual abuse and exploitation of girls. Furthermore, girls living in a fragile setting are nearly twice as likely to become child brides. The three UN entities issue a joint call on states to comply with the obligation to prevent and address gender-based violence against women and girls in conflict, post-conflict, and humanitarian settings, including by investing in specialised medical and psychosocial services for GBV survivors, ensuring that frontline service providers are equipped to meet the specific rights of girls, and leveraging technology to allow support to reach more survivors safely and effectively. They further urge states to ensure that DDR initiatives proactively address the needs of girls associated with armed forces and armed groups, and address the multiple forms of violence they face. Standing ready to support, UNICEF, UNFPA and UN Women call on states to ensure that every victim of gender-based violence has access to justice and to an effective remedy.

Views Expressed by National Human Rights Institutions

The **Global Alliance for National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI)** recalls this year's 25th anniversary of UNSC Resolution 1325 as a landmark document and the bedrock of the WPS Agenda 1325. Resolution 1325 clearly marks the disproportionate impacts of conflict on women and girls, and draws attention to the pivotal role that women can and should play in conflict prevention, management, and peacebuilding. GANHRI makes reference to CEDAW General Recommendation No. 30, which provides authoritative guidance to states on concrete measures to ensure that women's human rights are protected before, during, and after conflict, whether they are directly involved as combatants or impacted as civilians. Armed conflict exacerbates gender inequalities, placing women at heightened risk of various forms of gender-based violence from both state and non-state actors. GANHRI and all its members remain committed to advancing human rights approaches to conflict prevention, management, and peacebuilding, which centres the unique experience of women and girls in conflict and post-conflict settings. GANHRI will continue working closely with member states, civil society, and UN partners to promote inclusive policies that give women and girls a seat at the table in peace negotiations.

The **Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines** expresses deep concern over the widespread and harmful impact of gender-based violence, particularly in conflict, post-conflict, and humanitarian situations. In the Philippines, indigenous women, displaced populations, sorry, sounded too poor for interpretation, face heightened risks of sexual violence, exploitation, and intimidation. Despite these challenges, women play essential roles in community as responders, caregivers, peacebuilders, and leaders during humanitarian crises, which are often under-recognised and underestimated. Women are not simply victims, but are also agents actively working for the protection and promotion of human rights. The Commission plays a crucial role in investigating, documenting, and monitoring gender-based violence cases, promoting survivor-centric approaches, sensitive to vulnerabilities, and strengthening legal frameworks, ensuring protection, accountability, and meaningful participation of women and girls. The Commission urges the government of the Philippines and the international community



to strengthen collaboration and place gender-responsive initiatives at the very heart of their action, ensuring that the rights and dignity of women and girls are central to these endeavours in accordance with applicable international human rights instruments.

The President of the **National Institution for Women of Benin** wishes to contribute to the audacious initiative aimed at accelerating and promoting feminine leadership and effectively combating all forms of discrimination and violence against women through a dedicated state institution. That National Institution for Women, under the authority of the President of the Republic, was created in 2021 as the operational arm of the state to combat violence against women and girls. It is mandated to appear in the courts alongside victims and to make sure there is free access to justice for women and girls who do not have an income and do not have the means to defend themselves. With its team of lawyers, social assistants, and psychologists who are staff members, the National Institution supports women and girls throughout the whole of the territory through a network which has 12 departmental branches, 77 communal focal points, and also branches and focal points in schools, universities, and training centres. Between January and May 2025, 1,800 complaints were lodged and 200 judicial decisions were passed down. These concerns sexual attacks against minors.

The **National Human Rights Committee of Qatar** welcomes national and international efforts in eliminating all forms of discrimination against women. While acknowledging achievements by Qatar and across the globe, the Committee recognises the persistent challenges that continue to hinder women's empowerment, chief among them climate change, armed conflict, high rates of migration and displacement, in addition to the unethical use of emerging technologies that deepen gender-based violence, discrimination and the digital divide. To tackle these, the Committee encourages Qatar to integrate the principle of equality into legislation and public policies and to adopt temporary special measures to enhance women's participation across all sectors, support conflict-affected countries in activating national action plans related to UNSC Resolution 1325 in order to ensure the effective participation of women in peace, security, recovery and reconstruction efforts in line with CEDAW General Recommendation No. 30. In closing, the Committee emphasises the importance of women's participation in policy-making and decision-making processes in line with the principle of inclusiveness and to ensure that women have a meaningful role in shaping the future of their communities.

Views Expressed by Non-Governmental Organizations

The **International Federation for Human Rights Leagues** speaks on behalf of French-speaking feminist allies and decolonising intersectional solidarity-based initiative to develop the adoption of UNSC Resolution 1325. The commitments made for women, peace, and security remain broadly insufficient. Conflicts are often fuelled by post-colonial dynamics, such as in the Diaspora of Sudan, or prolonged occupations such as in Palestine, where genocide is underway, are fertile ground for SGBV. These violence, forms of violence, are used as an act of terror accumulation, demographic control, and ethnic purification, flouting international law. Women become tyrants and spoils of war with dramatic consequences. Due to conflicts, institutions become weaker and lack the ability to provide for sexual and reproductive health care for women. Strong response of the UNHRC is more than ever needed. The Federation asks the UNHRC to focus particularly on what is happening in these conflict areas, ensure that intersectionality is



addressed at all levels, and encourages all states to strengthen their support to civil society organisations which work in these areas and which play a key role in the prevention of violence, supporting survivors, providing justice, and defending the rights of women.

The **Centre for Global Non-Killing** states that the WPS Agenda must be fully implemented, not selectively. It must encompass not only the prevention of violence and participation in peace processes, but also trauma management and long-term support for survivors. In many settings, women who have experienced sexual violence carry their trauma without care, without justice, and without a voice in reconstruction. Healing is not only personal, it is political. Survivors have repeatedly stated that justice and accountability are vital to their healing. When perpetrators walk free, when non-state actors are not held accountable, when stigma silences survivors, the cycle of harm continues. Accountability must be pursued not just for deterrence, but as a form of dignity restoration. Trauma is not an afterthought to be addressed post-conflict. It is a central human rights concern and a barrier to sustainable peace. Survivor-centred, trauma-informed responses must be integrated into peace-building, humanitarian aid, and justice mechanisms. Community-based approaches, long-term mental health care, and the political will to address immunity are not luxuries. They are obligations under human rights law.

The **Advocates for Human Rights** and additional signatories who are members of the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty pay a closer look at countries such as Iraq and Syria where overly broad definitions of terrorism can implicate women who have done nothing more than provide food or shelter to family members accused of supporting Daesh. Some courts have sentenced women to death for these purported offences. Women should never face the death penalty for the conduct of family members. Sexual and gender-based violence during armed conflict may lay the foundation for women and girls coming into conflict with the law. The breakdown of law and order may lead survivors to conclude that they cannot rely on authorities to provide safety or accountability. Additionally, Save the Children reports that girls affected by conflict are 20% more likely to be married than their counterparts in peaceful areas. On a global scale, many women on death row are survivors of child marriage or other forms of gender-based violence. Yet, the Cornell Centre on the Death Penalty worldwide reports that trial courts around the world largely fail to take into account gender-based violence as a mitigating factor to reduce sentences, even in the context of child marriage, thereby erasing the role of domestic violence in cases of female minors who kill their abusers. The Advocates for Human Rights encourage participants in UN member states to raise awareness about and to take concrete measures to combat the tendency to criminalise survivors of gender-based violence, including in post-conflict situations.

Jubilee Campaign draws the Council's attention to the concerning trend where criminal actors abduct and forcibly convert women and girls, sometimes with the assistance of state structures. Last year at the UNGA, this child-early and forced marriage resolution called upon states to strengthen prevention and protection measures for women and girls, particularly girls who are victims of or at risk of abduction, trafficking, and forced religious conversion by armed groups and other non-state actors. Jubilee Campaign welcomes this new language and urges states to make it a reality for Leah Sharibu, enslaved in Nigeria, and for countless other women and girls. In Pakistan, Nigeria, and Egypt, Jubilee Campaigns has observed trends of local authorities accepting forged birth registrations or forced marriage certificates, especially when the girl or



woman is from an already marginalised and vulnerable group, such as a religious minority. Local authorities have also, instead of persecuting the perpetrators, arrested the families for pursuing justice. They placed the survivor girls in foster homes rather than return them to their parents, maintaining the forced religious conversion even when the marriage is proven to have been forced. In Iraq, its national identity card law automatically registers Yazidi women's children as Muslim, perpetuating the genocide by denying their children the right to register as Yazidi, forcibly registering and converting the children to Islam. Jubilee Campaign urges Iraq to work to amend this law and work preventatively. The child early forced and forced marriage resolution must be implemented.

Humanists International laments that gender-based violence in post-conflict settings is not incidental, it is systematic. It is rooted in patriarchal norms, often reinforced by religious dogma and perpetuated with impunity. Misogyny and skewed notions of masculinity underpin the very nature of conflict, and these are often upheld by religion. The link between religion and conflict and the ways that women are in turn subjected to gender-based violence warrants further attention within the human rights framework. Under these prevailing notions of patriarchy and militarised masculinity, women are seen as legitimate targets within conflict zones when norms appear to be set aside. Rape is employed too often as a weapon of war against both enemy combatants and the civilian population. The experience of LGBTI plus individuals has also habitually worsened in times of war. Religious leaders also have an under-acknowledged role to play in conflict and humanitarian settings. They can facilitate engagement with and between armed actors. Humanists International has also witnessed religious leaders in non-state groups publish manuals justifying sexual slavery and the rape of women and girls. Therefore, Humanists International calls on religious leaders to acknowledge their position of influence within conflict and post-conflict settings, to facilitate greater respect for international humanitarian and human rights law, including doing everything in their power to prevent gender-based violence within their communities. The links between human rights and peace and security need to be further entrenched, for it is during times of conflict that human rights are most likely to be undermined. War can never justify the suspension of human rights, particularly the right to bodily autonomy. The UNHRC should continue its engagement on this issues and find synergies with other arms of the UN to ensure that these issues are high on the agenda everywhere.

Defence for Children International (DCI) gives the floor to the Chilean UN Youth Cohort who speaks on behalf of many girls and young women across the globe and standing by those whose voices remain unheard. Watching the news is becoming upsetting, as one are left with no option but to witness the struggles of women and girls and children living in conflict areas, and see how lives are being shattered. Conflict and humanitarian crises, and large unspeakable horrors. Women and girls are being raped and tortured. These are not just crimes against individuals, they are attacks on humanity itself. And all of these women and girls pay the highest price from risking their lives in search of food, to secure a place to sleep with their children. According to UN Women, in 2024, approximately 35% of women worldwide have experienced physical or sexual violence, and gender-based violence increases in conflict settings. DCI urges states to fund protection programmes and survivor services for women and girls in conflict areas, take active action holding perpetrators accountable with no impunity, and to find women's voices in recovery



and peacebuilding. This fight has no gender, this is everyone's voice, speak with one voice, stand up, speak out, and take action.

The **Global Network of Sex Work Projects** gives the floor to Tresha, a sex worker from Zimbabwe, and a mother of two. In addressing gender-based violence in post-conflict and humanitarian settings, the priority shall be given to one of the marginalised groups who are often ignored, female sex workers. Sex workers face compounded vulnerabilities, including stigma, discrimination, and lack of access to justice. Health and safety concerns are exacerbated in conflict with increased risk of violence, HIV, and other health issues. Human rights violations are rampant with the dignity and freedom from violence consistently disregarded. Comprehensive support services are needed, including mental health support tailored to our needs. Decriminalisation is crucial to reducing violence, improving access to services. The International Human Rights Framework offers a pathway to protection. The Network calls on the UNHRC to leverage this Framework to uphold women's rights, dignity, and empowerment. More attention shall be paid to the complexity, identities, and experiences of female sex workers, and joint efforts be deployed to create a world where the rights as sex workers are respected, their dignity is upheld, and their lives are valued.

The **Asian Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW)** emphasizes that conflict and humanitarian settings aggravate existing inequalities and dramatically increase gender-based violence, including sexual violence, denial of access to critical health care services, especially sexual and reproductive health services. It thrives where legal protection collapses and survivors face huge barriers, from trauma and stigma to lack of access to justice and essential health care services. Despite the international human rights framework, including CEDAW General Recommendation No. 30, the WPS Agenda and various UN resolutions providing for a clear roadmap for addressing these issues, the implementation remains uneven and accountability for survivors is insufficient. Violation of sexual and reproductive health and rights remains pervasive and largely unaddressed. Forced pregnancies, denial of safe abortion and contraception, and inadequate psychosocial support are gender-based violence that compound harm and humanitarian crisis and must be addressed as a matter of legal and moral urgency. ARROW urges countries and the UNHRC to ensure that gender-based violence, including violation of sexual and reproductive health and rights, are explicitly addressed within the peace process and transitional justice mechanism. Ensure equitable access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services, including emergency contraception and safe abortion, in all conflict and humanitarian responses in line with international human rights law.

The **Shanxi Patriotic Volunteer Association** advocates that patriotism must not harm the interests of others and commits to promoting international patriotic pact through peaceful dialogue across regions, races, and civilisations, aiming to alleviate conflicts. In conflict and humanitarian settings, women and girls are often the main victims of sexual violence, which violates their human rights and damages their physical and mental health and community recovery. Protecting them from such violence is key to international peace and security and social harmony. The Association calls on governments to take more proactive measures, improve laws, increase penalties for sexual violence, and establish specialised assistance agencies, enhance education and awareness, especially towards male adolescents, to foster gender equality awareness, encourage women and girls to participate in peace and reconstruction, ensuring their



voice and needs are expressed, and enhance international cooperation to support conflict areas in restoring social order, rebuilding the economy, and improving the living conditions of women and girls. Over 150 international patriotic pact organisations will join hands with others to contribute to eliminating sexual violence, promoting gender equality and women's development.

FACTS & FIGURES ON ID PARTICIPATION

26 State Delegations

2 Inter-Governmental Organizations and UN Entities

4 National Human Rights Institutions

9 Non-Governmental Organizations