



**PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
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UN SECURITY COUNCIL OPEN DEBATE
WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. President,

It is my honor to address the Security Council today, on a topic that is particularly dear to me. The Women, Peace and Security Agenda, including the protection and support of victims and survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, is a priority of Liechtenstein's foreign policy, and I am personally committed to the cause. As a result of escalating violence, militarization and weakened rule of law protections, civilians bear the brunt of armed conflicts across the globe. Sexual violence is used as a weapon of war, to attack civilian populations, and to break societies, communities and families. Such violence is documented in virtually every conflict worldwide, including in Myanmar, Ukraine and Yemen. All these situations require the urgent attention of the respective accountability mechanisms. In the case of Ukraine, we will in particular be looking for expeditious investigations by the International Criminal Court. I also wanted to highlight our appreciation for the briefing this morning by Naw Hser Hser, which reflects her tireless advocacy on behalf of the women of Myanmar. We were pleased to see the Security Council pass resolution 2669 last December. Given the worsening situation on the ground, we believe that it is now time for the Council to seriously consider a follow-up text that will bring accountability for the crimes committed in Myanmar, including conflict-related sexual violence.

Mr. President,

All acts of sexual violence are not only morally repugnant; they are categorically prohibited under international humanitarian and human rights law. They constitute war crimes and may amount to crimes against humanity and genocide. Concrete, timebound preventive measures as explicitly outlined in Security Council resolutions 2106 and 2467 are necessary to bring an end to these atrocities. We reiterate our call on the Council to include conflict-related sexual violence as a designation criterion in targeted sanctions regimes. Such measures are in line with and complementary to the ACT Code of Conduct regarding Security Council action against genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes. The Code of Conduct is now supported by 129 States, including the majority of this Council's membership.

Although widespread and often systematic, sexual violence against men and boys remains underreported due to stigma, cultural taboo and lack of criminalization. As a result, male survivors of sexual violence are often unable to access legal remedies as well as medical and mental health services. The pioneering work by the Liechtenstein-based international NGO All Survivors Project has helped to advance awareness through tireless advocacy. Its work has informed Security Council Resolution 2467 which has paved the way for strengthened accountability in this regard. This Council should consistently call on States to live up to their obligation to investigate and prosecute conflict-related sexual violence, in line with the primacy of national systems. The international justice system must be engaged where national systems fail due to inability or unwillingness.

Mr. President,

International criminal justice mechanisms have significantly advanced our efforts to fight impunity. The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court – the 25th anniversary of which we celebrate on Monday – has played a vital role in ending impunity for sexual violence crimes. It is the first international criminal law instrument that explicitly recognizes forms of sexual violence, such as rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, and enforced sterilization, as distinct war crimes and crimes against humanity. It urges States Parties to appoint judges with special legal expertise on gender-based violence and requests the Court to provide special protection to victims, including with regard to age and gender.

In practice, the ICC has done pioneering work to hold perpetrators to account by establishing a comprehensive and victim-centered framework. It has firmly established conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence as crimes against humanity and war crimes. We commend the office of the Prosecutor for including charges related to sexual and gender-based crimes in many of their cases and for prioritizing these crimes as a matter of policy. The case of Bosco Ntaganda resulted in a milestone verdict as sexual violence crimes committed against males were held to the same standards as those committed against females. The ICC's judgment against Dominic Ongwen also succeeded in painting a comprehensive picture of sexual and gender-based crimes

suffered by victims and constitutes important precedent for future cases. Dedicated gender expertise in investigative teams, including our partners from Justice Rapid Response, is crucial for the ICC and other regional and international accountability mechanisms in this regard.

Mr. President,

No person should ever have to go through the terrifying and traumatizing experience of conflict-related sexual violence. We must therefore redouble our efforts to prevent its occurrence. At root, this means combating structural gender inequality and promoting the participation and leadership of women in public life. By ensuring women's rights to full, equal and meaningful participation, we contribute to the prevention of conflict-related sexual violence, and to the health of our societies as a whole.

I thank you.