



**PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
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SECURITY COUNCIL – OPEN VTC ON PEACE OPERATIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

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Madam President,

Liechtenstein thanks you for this timely debate. Respect for human rights and maintaining international peace and security are two of the purposes enshrined in the UN Charter. There is a particularly close and practical link between the two in the context of peace operations, as situations of armed conflict often jeopardize the enjoyment of human rights. And we continue to see alarming trends of parties to conflict increasingly violating or straight out ignoring international law, including international human rights and humanitarian law.

Human rights are universal and inalienable, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated. The failure to uphold these rights for the most vulnerable weakens the enjoyment of human rights for all. Accordingly, the mandates of all UN Peace Operations, one of the international community’s key tools for addressing and overcoming conflict, should systematically include clear human rights and rule of law components if they are to effectively contribute to sustaining peace, and thus fulfill the Security Council’s and the membership’s aspirations. In this context the wide divergence in mandates among different peace operations is concerning. In addition, in order to more effectively address human rights violations as part of its peace and security

mandate, the Security Council itself must better coordinate with the human rights machinery of the UN, in particular the Human Rights Council, relevant special mandate holders and OHCHR.

Madam President,

For mandates of peace operations to be successful, it is of utmost importance to employ personnel with relevant expertise and experience and to ensure appropriate training. It also requires ensuring sufficient resources for special advisors. This applies in particular to child protection mandates which have been at risk of being underfunded or cut despite the many human rights violations of children in armed conflict and post-conflict situations. In 2019 alone, grave violations against children in armed conflict amounted to around 25'000. The United Nations verified almost 500 attacks on schools in 2019, many of which were unprovoked. Schools continue to be used for military purposes, eroding their sanctity as safe spaces and exposing schools, teachers and students to attack. Such attacks violate the right to education and often constitute war crimes or crimes against humanity. Depriving children of access to education also has a devastating impact on sustainable development, in particular SDG 4, and inflicts irreparable long-term damage on children, families, communities and societies.

Sufficient funding and training is also necessary for gender expert mandates in peace operations. Liechtenstein is deeply concerned about the high occurrence of rape and other forms of sexual violence against women and girls, but also men and boys. Such violence is often underreported owing to fear of stigmatization and cultural taboos, in particular when perpetrated against men and boys, as also documented by the All Survivors Project.¹ A culture of silence continues to impede accountability and justice, and contributes to further cycles of violence and persistent harmful gender stereotypes. It is therefore key that the monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements on conflict-related sexual violence, including in the context of peace operations, focus more consistently on the gender specific nature of sexual

¹ <https://allsurvivorsproject.org/report/checklist-on-preventing-and-addressing-conflict-related-sexual-violence-against-men-and-boys/>

violence in conflict and postconflict situations against all affected populations in all situations of concern, including men and boys.

Peace operations themselves must be carried out in strict compliance with a zero tolerance policy for sexual exploitation and abuse, and accountability needs to be strengthened for crimes of that kind. In times of quarantines, lockdowns and other restrictions on movement caused by the COVID-19 pandemic it is particularly important to ensure that victims and survivors of human rights violations have access to reporting mechanisms and necessary services.

Madam President,

States have to comply with their legal obligations and standards enshrined in international human rights instruments. Where they fail to do so, justice must be served for the victims and survivors of human rights abuses. But, justice mechanisms, at both the national and international levels are not only there to ensure accountability – they are also there to prevent violations from occurring in the first place. Deterrence is a key preventive tool that must be harnessed and in this respect we reiterate that the International Criminal Court (ICC) remains the central institution in the global criminal justice system. In this respect, it is particularly important that the Security Council supports the work of the Court by ensuring full cooperation and enforcement, in particular of situations it has itself referred to the ICC. Such cooperation includes sharing information and assisting States in protecting witnesses and executing arrest warrants. In this regard, we recall that the UN-ICC Relationship Agreement provides a framework for cooperation between the UN, including this Council, and the ICC and regulates such cooperation. In addition, we commend the leaders of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) for their cooperation with the ICC to secure the arrest, surrender and transfer to the ICC of Mr. Ali Kushayb who is suspected of war crimes and crimes against humanity allegedly committed in Darfur, a situation which was referred to the ICC by the Security Council. This is a welcome development that also shows the immense potential the Security Council would have at its

disposal to advance justice and human rights, and thereby peace, if it put its mind to it.

I thank you.