



**PERMANENT MISSION  
OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS  
NEW YORK**

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NEW YORK, 14 APRIL 2021

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

SECURITY COUNCIL - OPEN DEBATE

**WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY**

**STATEMENT ATTRIBUTABLE TO H.E. AMBASSADOR CHRISTIAN WENAWESER**

PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Mr. President,

Thank you for focusing this debate on conflict-related sexual violence on victim's and survivor's assistance and access to services – a dimension that all too often remains neglected. Far too few victims and survivors receive the medical, legal and psychosocial services they so urgently need. Underreporting of sexual violence crimes due to stigma, fear of retaliation and weak rule of law institutions compound the situation. At the same time we can draw on decades of experience, lessons learned and best practices in supporting victims and survivors. The Security Council's Women, Peace and Security resolutions that specifically address conflict-related sexual violence<sup>1</sup> have helped further our understanding and better equip our response in this regard.

In the area of norm-setting, the Rome Statute of the ICC has played a pioneering role in establishing a comprehensive and victim-centered framework to expansively and efficiently respond to conflict-related sexual violence crimes. For the first time in history, it firmly established conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence as crimes against humanity and war crimes. Gender-based crimes can furthermore constitute acts of genocide. It also requires the ICC Prosecutor to appoint advisers with legal expertise on sexual and gender-based violence.

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<sup>1</sup> Security Council Resolutions 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1960 (2010) and 2106 (2013), 2122 (2013), 2242 (2015), and 2467 (2019)

The Court's victims and witnesses' unit include staff with experience in trauma related to sexual crimes. The Office of the ICC Prosecutor has placed a strong focus on expertise and commitment to prosecute sexual and gender-based crimes as evidenced in some of the best-known proceedings before the Court. The trial of Congolese warlord Bosco Ntaganda marked the first time a militia leader was charged with sexual and gender-based crimes. And LRA warlord Dominic Ongwen has also been charged with sexual and gender-based crimes, including sexual slavery. Moreover, the participation of victims in proceedings of the ICC is a key element of the Rome Statute. The Trust Fund for Victims created by the Assembly of States Parties in 2004 has provided assistance to many victims and survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. International civil society organizations such as Justice Rapid Response have also done groundbreaking work in ensuring that conflict-related sexual violence crimes are investigated promptly and professionally.

Mr. President,

Despite the legal and normative frameworks to prevent and eliminate sexual and gender-based violence, conflict-related sexual violence continues to be rampant including through its systematic use as a tactic of war and attacking civilian populations. The most recent report by the Secretary General documents rape, sexual slavery and other forms of sexual violence of comparable gravity perpetrated against women, men, girls or boys in a large number of conflict situations, many of which are on the Council's agenda.

In looking at country situations, we are particularly concerned about the numerous reports of serious forms of sexual and gender-based violence committed in North and Central Tigray during military operations since last November. Reports of over 100 relevant violations include cases of individuals forced to rape members of their own family, of women being forced by military elements to have sex in exchange for basic commodities, and reports of sexual violence against women and girls in refugee camps. Due to limited access to the affected areas, it is likely that sexual violence crimes have been underreported. We welcome the agreement by the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to conduct a joint investigation into the human rights violations and abuses by all parties, as a first

step of a much-needed accountability process.

We are furthermore alarmed by the situation in Myanmar where a culture of impunity, including for serious cases of sexual and gender-based violence, among the armed forces in particular has enabled the ongoing systematic attack against the civilian population. In particular Rohingya women and children in camps for internally displaced persons, and those who fled to Bangladesh, have remained at significant risk of sexual violence, including forced marriage and forced pregnancy. We call for full and immediate compliance with international human rights and humanitarian law and unhindered humanitarian access to conflict-affected areas to facilitate the delivery of assistance to sexual violence survivors. We furthermore call for immediate access for UN mandate holders, including the Special Envoy and the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar.

Mr. President,

Harmful gender stereotypes and abusive power dynamics are the root cause of sexual and gender-based violence which affect women and girls disproportionately – but the same stereotypes also impair men and boys as well as LGBTI+ people and often result in underreporting, as also documented by the Liechtenstein-based human rights organization All Survivors Project.<sup>2</sup> Security Council Resolution 2467 and its comprehensive survivor-centred approach is an important step forward for the Women, Peace and Security agenda. In times of quarantines, lockdowns and other restrictions on movement caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, it is particularly important to ensure that survivors of conflict-related sexual violence have access to reporting mechanisms and necessary services. In addition to ensuring implementation of resolution 2467, we call on the Council to include conflict-related sexual violence as a designation criterion in targeted sanctions regimes.

I thank you.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://allurvivorsproject.org/report/checklist-on-preventing-and-addressing-conflict-related-sexual-violence-against-men-and-boys/>