



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

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

THIRD COMMITTEE

GENERAL DEBATE

STATEMENT BY MYRIAM OEHRI, FIRST SECRETARY

PERMANENT MISSION OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Chairperson,

“Promot[ing] and encourag[ing] respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all” is one of the purposes of the United Nations. While human rights and fundamental freedoms have been clearly defined in international law, to this date their enjoyment is limited across the globe. The COVID-19 pandemic has further undermined the respect for human rights and has exposed and exacerbated profound injustice as well as inequalities between and within States.

Liechtenstein remains concerned about the negative impact of measures taken to counter the pandemic on the full enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to education, civil and political rights, as well as gender equality. Discrimination, racism and xenophobia as a result of the pandemic continue to be deeply disturbing. Women and girls in particular have been deprived of their rights and have experienced shadow pandemics – as frontline health and unpaid care workers, as home schooling teachers, as well as victims and survivors of domestic and sexual and gender-based violence, online harassment and femicide, among others. This year, Liechtenstein celebrated the 25th anniversary of the ratification of the Convention Against the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. This anniversary was

accompanied by a series of articles in local media and a video clip about CEDAW, which was produced jointly with our National Human Rights Institution.¹ This video clip was inter alia distributed in local schools to raise awareness of this important convention among girls and boys and young women and men in Liechtenstein. Even more timely is another important event for the protection of women's rights in Liechtenstein: Tomorrow, on 1 October 2021, the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) will enter into force in Liechtenstein. Both conventions are essential tools to protect women's rights and to achieve gender equality, in line with SDG 5.

Chairperson,

The pandemic has had devastating effects on the right to education. The closure of schools and universities has interrupted learning processes, and many children have faced multiple inequalities as a consequence. Early estimates predict, for instance, that ten Mio. more girls will be out of school than before the pandemic once all schools reopen.² While these are worrisome trends, we should not forget that even prior to the pandemic access to education was utopic for 258 Mio. children. Attacks on schools have continued throughout the pandemic, and school closures as a consequence of the pandemic have furthermore led to an increased risk of military use of schools, with additional devastating impacts on conflict-affected children.³

These developments underline the importance of the Convention of the Rights of the Child – the most widely, while unfortunately not universally, ratified human rights treaty in history. The third Optional Protocol to the CRC in particular is an important tool to empower children, as it allows them to bring a complaint regarding a violation of their rights if their national legal system has not been able to provide a remedy. We hope that many others will join us in ratifying this and all

¹ «CEDAW kurz erklärt - die UNO-Frauenrechtskonvention und Liechtenstein», <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sh0czKnPLmg>

² <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/44/39>

³ https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/76/231&Lang=E&Area=UNDOC

other protocols as well as the CRC and in effectively implementing them.

Chairperson,

We remain concerned about ongoing human rights violations in the Syrian Arab Republic and in Myanmar. Sexual and gender-based violence, arbitrary detention, torture and extrajudicial killings remain a sad reality. More than 350'000 individuals have been killed during the 10-year conflict in Syria.⁴ In Myanmar, the military junta has murdered more than 1'000 people, arbitrarily detained more than 8'000, and forcibly displaced more than 230'000 civilians.⁵ Religious minorities, especially the Rohingya people, have suffered the most. We will continue to advocate for the plight of the Rohingya to be addressed and support ongoing legal action before the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court.

It was particularly timely and meaningful that the Special Envoy on Myanmar briefed the Assembly in February this year, on the basis of the mandate negotiated in this Committee. We welcome that the Assembly expressed grave concerns about the actions taken on 1 February and thereafter and called upon all Member States to prevent the flow of arms into Myanmar, when adopting its own resolution on Myanmar in June.

It is essential for this Assembly to keep a focus on the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic. National reconciliation and sustainable peace in Syria will not be possible without justice and accountability for the most serious crimes committed during the conflict, and the work of the IIIM is crucially important to this end.

Persisting impunity for human rights violations remains a reason for deep concern. Ensuring accountability is a necessary precondition for justice and peace, and it has also an important prevention component. We continue to fully support the work by the accountability mechanisms established by the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council, as well as the International

⁴ <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=27531&LangID=E>

⁵ <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=27515&LangID=E>

Criminal Court, with its mandate to investigate and prosecute the most serious crimes under international law, irrespective of the affiliation of the perpetrators. It is disappointing that the Security Council continues to ignore calls from States, the UN system and victims for referrals to the ICC in situations such as Syria and Myanmar.

In order to ensure the full protection of human rights, we need to invest in the rule of law. Trust in institutions is a cornerstone of democracy and people-centered decision making is indispensable for the full enjoyment of all human rights by all. Inevitably, the fulfillment of human rights and peace and security go hand in hand, in line with the spirit of the 2030 Agenda.

Chairperson,

The rapidly deteriorating security situation as well as violations and abuses of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Afghanistan are alarming. We call for full compliance with international law, including the obligations under international human rights and humanitarian law and relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular UNSC 2593 (2021). We call upon those who effectively exercise control to fully respect women's and girl's rights and freedoms, particularly the rights to quality education and work as well as freedom of movement. We applaud the brave human rights defenders who fight for human rights for all. At least 45% of the Afghan population is below the age of 15,⁶ and the United Nations must pay special attention to the situation of the children of Afghanistan who continue to be at enormous risk, including those affected by forced displacement.⁷ Liechtenstein has hence supported the humanitarian activities of UNICEF and UNHCR in Afghanistan with two contributions of CHF 100'000 each, and calls upon others to also answer the Secretary-General's flash appeal for Afghanistan.

⁶ <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/2021/08/afghanistan-children-have-suffered-enough-un-officials-call-to-uphold-the-rights-of-children-including-through-global-action/>

⁷ According to the UNHCR, 60% of the newly displaced people in Afghanistan this year are children, and 40% of the refugees that have crossed the borders into Tajikistan are children.
<https://reporting.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/Afghanistan%20appeal.pdf>

Chairperson,

The fight against modern slavery and human trafficking remains a core priority for Liechtenstein. Historical levels of underemployment or unemployment, loss of livelihoods and uncertain economic perspectives are some of the complex consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and have increased the risk of and vulnerability to slavery and trafficking.⁸

The “Finance Against Slavery and Trafficking” (FAST) initiative initiated by Liechtenstein places financial institutions at the heart of the fight against these crimes – in the areas of compliance, responsible investment and financial innovation. We invite all interested States and the UN system to join us in our effort to disseminate and implement the FAST blueprint in order to make progress on an important part of the 2030 Agenda. We look forward to the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on Trafficking in Persons later this year and to adopting a strong political declaration that is value added in our common fight against these horrific crimes.

Chairperson,

Liechtenstein places a particular emphasis in this Committee on the importance of self-determination – a cornerstone of the UN Charter, and a prerequisite for the full enjoyment of human rights, in accordance with Common Article 1 of the twin human rights covenants and General Comment 12 of the Human Rights Committee. Accordingly, this Committee has a collective responsibility to consider ways to best uphold the right to self-determination both between and within States. Liechtenstein has long been concerned with the relationship of internal conflicts to questions of self-determination, and produced a “Handbook on the Prevention and Resolution of Self-Determination Conflicts”, which aims to address such situations by emphasizing the human rights of minority communities, and through an exploration of autonomy and self-governance arrangements where appropriate.

⁸ <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=26246&LangID=E>

I thank you.