

Poland in the UN Security Council debate “Women and Peace and Security”

“The crimes we witness in conflict-affected areas in Africa or Middle East, call for our immediate action” stressed Ambassador Bogusław Winid at the Security Council open debate.

In his speech Permanent Representative of Poland to the UN, Ambassador Bogusław Winid, underlined the necessity of combating sexual violence against women in conflicts as well as providing support for the victims. He also emphasized that the perpetrators of these acts must be held accountable by the State authorities and, if needed, face responsibility before international criminal institutions like ICC. Ambassador Winid referred also to Polish history, recalling Queen Salote – Queen of Tonga, who was the first foreign leader to officially oppose German invasion of Poland on 1st of September 1939. He also highlighted growing role of women in peacekeeping operations and congratulated Ethiopia, South Africa and Ghana as leaders among countries with the highest percentage of women peacekeepers. Permanent Representative of Poland expressed also his respect to Jamaica and other CARICOM states for the prominent role they played in commemoration of the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade, with this year’s thematic focus on “Women and Slavery”.

The debate was organized by Jordan which holds presidency of the Council in April.

Statement of Ambassador Bogusław Winid:

Madam President,

Let me thank you for convening today’s debate. We also thank Ms. Zainab Bangura, Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict and Ms. Hamsatu Allamin of Nigeria for their statements. Poland aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union. I would also like to add some remarks in my national capacity.

Madam President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Poland attaches great importance to the topic of today’s debate. This Monday, April 13th 2015, President of Poland, Bronisław Komorowski ratified the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, adopted in Istanbul in 2011.

I would like to refer to the topic just mentioned by the delegation of Nepal – role of women in peacekeeping. In this regard I would like to congratulate Ethiopia, South Africa and Ghana for having the highest percentage of women peacekeepers.

Let me also express our respect to Jamaica and other CARICOM states for the prominent role they played in commemoration of the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade, with this year's thematic focus on "Women and Slavery". We also commend the Department of Public Information for the exhibit at the UN Headquarters in New York under the title "Women and Slavery" which was part of the Remember Slavery Programme.

Madam President,

In the past Poland was a victim of many foreign aggressions and suffered from violent conflict consequences. In this respect I would like to highlight the role of some heroic women who were leaders, with vision, dedication and courage to stand up against aggression. Let me use one example from the history of my country and a country that is far away of Poland – Tonga. The brave Queen of Tonga, Queen Salote, was the first foreign leader to officially oppose German invasion of Poland on 1st of September 1939. She can be a great example for us even in the 21st century.

Madam President,

Nowadays, women continue to be the victims of sexual violence during conflicts across the world. The widespread occurrence of sexual violence in conflict is a threat to peace and security and it diminishes the prospects for reconciliation and peacebuilding.

Fight against impunity and providing support for the victims - these are our very concrete duties towards those who suffered from sexual violence. We shall support the judiciary on the national and international level, as well as support those affected through the Trust Fund for Victims, to which Poland is a proud contributor.

Madam President,

Although the international organizations play a pivotal role in combating sexual violence in conflicts, the primary responsibility to protect their nationals relies on states. In this context the grass roots approach is a must: changing behavior patterns and inscribing in their citizens' minds a red line of what is not acceptable under any conditions. Unfortunately, in many countries, the victims are resistant to report a crime as it may lead to a social stigma.

Furthermore, a citizen must trust that the perpetrators of these acts will be held accountable by the State authorities and, if needed, that they will face responsibility at the international level – namely the International Criminal Court (ICC).

The International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), have played a historic role in the prosecution of wartime sexual violence.

Madam President,

As my Colleague from the European Union Delegation underlined earlier, we welcome the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty. I also appeal to all members of the Security Council to ratify this treaty. Without your support, the ATT will not have the impact it should have.

In conclusion, *Madam President*, yesterday, April 14th, marked the first year since the abduction of Nigerian schoolgirls by Boko Haram. Despite the efforts of the national authorities and the international community the fate of most of the girls remains unknown. This terrible crime, as well as other that we witness in conflict-affected areas in Africa or Middle East, call for our immediate action. We cannot leave them unpunished.

I thank you or your attention.



Ambassador Bogusław Winid during his speech