

Security Council Open Debate on Women, Rule of Law and Transitional Justice in Conflict- Affected Situations, October 18th, 2013, Security Council Chamber

Statement by Mr. Doujak, Permanent Mission of Austria to the United Nations

Austria is grateful to Azerbaijan for convening today's open debate on women and peace and security, and would like to thank all the briefers for their very interesting presentations. We appreciate the broad range of issues covered in the Secretary-General's report (S/2013/525), as well as the continuing use of indicators that allow for a more accurate and precise assessment of the progress made in implementing resolution 1325 (2000).

Austria aligns itself with the statement made earlier on behalf of the European Union.

We agree that the nexus between the rule of law and women and peace and security needs our further attention. In the aftermath of conflict, transitional justice mechanisms must be victim-centred and gender-sensitive in order to ensure that the rights of victims, in particular women and children, are fully respected. Legal, institutional and social obstacles to women's access to formal and informal justice systems must be more energetically addressed, and in that context gender-sensitive reforms should receive more attention. Reparation programmes for gross human rights violations contribute to the reconciliation of divided societies, in which financial reparations potentially have an important impact on enhancing the economic security of women, including war widows, in the aftermath of conflict. Reparations should also be targeted to victims of sexual and gender-based violence.

The Security Council has clearly recognized its own role in ending impunity for serious violations of international humanitarian and human-rights law, and has acknowledged the full range of justice and reconciliation mechanisms, including in resolution 1894 (2009). In that context, we would like to stress the important role of the International Criminal Court and other international criminal tribunals in the fight against impunity, and we welcome the first investigations of cases of sexual violence before those courts.

A central element of our understanding of the rule of law is that it not only guarantees women's equal rights but necessarily implies women's equal participation in political and public life, as well as their economic empowerment. While the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in all conflict prevention, resolution and peacebuilding efforts is at the heart of resolution 1325 (2000) and should be self-evident 13 years after its adoption, there is no reason for complacency.

We call on the Security Council to make the best use of the time frame leading up to the high-level review of the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) in 2015 and to mainstream measures to enhance women's participation in its work, including in the mandates of peacekeeping and political missions. Our immediate concern must be to increase the number of women in police and military contingents in United Nations peacekeeping operations. In that regard, we welcome today's adoption of resolution 2122 (2013) and its references to the deployment of women in United Nations peacekeeping operations as well as more regular briefings in the Security Council.

Austria appreciates the Security Council's increased attention to violence against journalists in situations of armed conflict. As the Secretary-General's report rightly points out, female journalists often face gender-specific risks of violence and intimidation. Our initiative on the safety of journalists in the Human Rights Council acknowledges those specific risks and calls for a gender-sensitive approach when considering measures to address the safety of journalists.

Also, I would like to take this opportunity to give a short update on our national measures to implement resolution 1325 (2000). On the basis of our revised national action plan adopted last year, we have continued our efforts to enhance the gender-expertise of civil and military staff in peacekeeping operations. Together with the Austrian Study Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution, Austria has developed a training curriculum that fully incorporates both resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1894 (2009) on the protection of civilians. After a pilot course held last year, the first regular course with the new curriculum will be held in early December.

Austria has also continued its efforts to support the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) in other forums,

including the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Together with Finland, Turkey and Kazakhstan, we have proposed a draft text for an OSCE-wide action plan on women, peace and security to assist participating States in implementing resolution 1325 (2000). We hope that those efforts will soon lead to a positive result.

In concluding, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, all for your efforts in advancing the women and peace and security agenda and express the hope that we will see significant progress in that area in the lead-up to the 2015 review.