

ISRAEL

SECURITY COUNCIL

Statement by

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Permanent Representative

Open Debate on “Women and peace and security”

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Mr. President,

At the outset, allow me to congratulate you for your able stewardship of the Council this month, and thank you for convening this open debate on “Women and peace and security”. It is an important debate that reflects our commitment to the United Nations’ founding ideals of peace and security for men and women alike.

As for myself, it is both a privilege and an honour to be addressing this august body on behalf of my government as Israel’s first female Ambassador to the United Nations.

Mr. President,

This year, we mark the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights — a document that set out a noble vision for the world and reaffirmed the equality of both men and women.

The last 60 years have witnessed substantial progress for women around the world. I come from a country that has had many women actively involved in the political process and public affairs from its establishment to the present day. Today, Israel features women in significant and meaningful positions of influence and authority, including the Foreign Minister and Vice Prime Minister, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, the Speaker of the Knesset, to name just a few. In Israel, we continue to witness increasing numbers of women in all walks of public life, including in peace negotiations and diplomacy.

Mr. President,

All over the world, much more needs to be done. A recent presentation by the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, stated that such violence “persists in every country as a pervasive and universal violation of human rights”. The United Nations and its various entities have an important and leading role to play in the protection of women rights worldwide and the promotion of women in national and international public affairs.

However, the commitment of the United Nations on this issue does not diminish the primary responsibility of national governments and institutions to protect women, promote their equality, and ensure their participation in all spheres of society.

Israel believes that women must play an equal role in all aspects of state and civil society, and we remain committed to the principles and goals of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, as well as the principles outlined in the Outcome Document adopted at the summit in 2005.

Mr. President,

On a local and national level, Israel remains committed to the principles of the landmark Security Council Resolution 1325 that calls for an increase in the participation of women at decision-making levels in conflict resolution and peace processes. Israel amended its Women's Equal Rights Law in the spirit of this resolution, mandating that the Israeli government include women in any group appointed to peace-building negotiations.

On a regional level, and just as this resolution calls for, Israel is proud that Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni is leading our peace negotiations with the Palestinians.

Mr. President,

As part of our engagement on an international level, Israel contributed its first peacekeeper — a female police officer — to a UN peacekeeping mission in Georgia.

In addition, Israel's international aid agency offers courses around the world in women's leadership, as well as on capacity building of women's organizations across the developing world. Those are only a few examples of Israel's commitment to the implementation of the Security Council's resolution.

Mr. President,

While resolution 1325 addresses women's participation in public life, the issue of violence against women remains a critical component of any such debate regarding women's peace and security.

Israel co-sponsored resolution 1820 of the Security Council which signals that violence against women — in particular rape and sexual violence as instruments of warfare — are not only despicable acts, but should be classified as war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Sadly, across certain parts of the world, we witness violence and continuing discrimination against women. In some countries, women and girls are subject to stoning, rape, and violent repression. The international community should always and consistently confront and condemn such violations of basic human rights.

Mr. President,

It is my hope that our words *and* our actions will offer hope to women across the globe. Today's discussion reflects our common vision for a better world and our commitment to the founding and noble principles of the United Nations.

Thank you, Mr. President.