

Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security
October 2014, Security Council Chamber

Statement by Mr. Ahmed Khan, Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the United Nations

I thank you, Madam President, for having convened this very important debate today. We also express our appreciation to this morning's briefers for their thought-provoking presentations. We are touched by the courage and determination of refugee women leader Ms. Suaad Allami. Her story indeed demonstrates how women can rise to the challenge of armed conflicts by taking charge of their own lives and leading the struggle against violence to restore sustainable peace and security.

I also add my voice to those of previous speakers in agreeing that, as a vulnerable group, women and young girls bear the brunt of armed conflict. The trauma of violence and the travails of camp life are felt the hardest by women and girls. Displacement from their homes exposes women and girls to sexual violence, rape and molestation — often used as a deliberate instrument of war. Camp settings make women and children vulnerable to trafficking, with stateless and separated women being the most susceptible.

But that is just one side of the story. Women and girls are not merely the victims who suffer the most; they are also the most potent agents of change in situations of armed conflict. The involvement of women in peacebuilding can make a real difference in efforts to contain a conflict and ensure a speedy return to peace and security. With a little support from the international community, women can play that crucial role at every stage of conflict resolution, including in peace negotiations, peacebuilding and peacekeeping, and in transitional justice systems.

Let me say that over the past 14 years, the Security Council's engagement with the agenda on women and peace and security has laid down a normative structure and yielded positive results. Despite that commendable achievement, however, more must be done to ensure its effective implementation on the ground. The sharp increase in the refugee population, coupled with the emergence of various types of extremism, has worsened the situation for women and girls in several parts of the world. The international community's efforts should therefore focus on converting commitments into concrete and action-oriented measures through preventive strategies, robust responses and effective solutions, as part of an integrated global strategy for women's empowerment and gender equality.

We support the Security Council's agenda on women and peace and security as outlined in its mandate — a mandate aimed at preventing sexual violence in armed conflict and promoting women's participation in post-conflict peace processes, with a view to maintaining international peace and security. The focus should therefore remain on resolving armed conflicts and preventing relapses into conflict. Multidimensional peacekeeping and its missions, with relevant mandates, play an important role in protecting women and combating sexual violence. As a leading participant in peacekeeping, Pakistan has contributed to that global effort. Pakistani women continue to serve as police officers, doctors and nurses in various missions in Asia, Africa and the Balkans.

The agenda on women and peace and security should also include the crucial aspect of women's participation in conflict resolution. An effective strategy should pay adequate attention to the four pillars of protection, relief and recovery, participation and conflict prevention. Women's participation at all stages of a post-conflict recovery must be visible and meaningful, and women must be encouraged to take leadership roles in the drive towards ending conflict and restoring sustainable peace in their societies. Ultimately, we hope that those crucial aspects of the agenda on women and peace and security will be part of the debate at the 2015 high-level review of the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).