

# CROATIA

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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**STATEMENT BY  
JELENA GRČIĆ POLIĆ  
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA**

**IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL**

***OPEN DEBATE ON WOMEN AND PEACE AND SECURITY***

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820 Second Avenue, 19<sup>th</sup> Floor, New York, NY 10017  
tel. (212) 986-1585, fax (212) 986-2011, e-mail: [croatia@un.int](mailto:croatia@un.int)  
[www.un.int/missions/croatia](http://www.un.int/missions/croatia)

It is my pleasure to thank the Permanent Representative of Namibia H.E. Mr. Martin Andjaba for organizing this open debate on women and peace and security. Indeed Sir, you should be commended for using your presidency to bring the spotlight to the issue that often lies at the core of success or failure of the domestic, regional and international efforts directed at conflict prevention, peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace-building, including post-conflict reconciliation and reconstruction. Having participated last May in the adoption of the historic Windhoek Declaration and the Namibia Plan of Action on 'Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Multidimensional Peace Support Operations', Namibia's leadership on this issue comes as no surprise, but rather, as a natural extension of your country's well deserved reputation for fostering gender equality.

Mr. President,

The principles of gender equality and mainstreaming of gender perspective in all dimensions of societal interaction lie at the core of democratic societies. Without an active support for these principles, no society, no institution, the UN included, can hope to master the policies of inclusion in general, and in the area of peace and security in particular. The maintenance of peace and security requires contribution from neither some nor half of the world's population, but all. Equally importantly, if such a contribution is skewed and reflects either only men's or women's perspective, it remains seriously impaired. Likewise, if we were, for example, to direct our attention predominantly or exclusively to the impact of conflict and armed conflict on women and girls alone, we would be doing a disservice to the required comprehensive approach to the overall impact of such conflicts. Although the latter concern for such an exclusivity remains highly theoretical for the time being, it is from this fundamental premise, Mr. President, that the Croatian delegation would like to share its views during today's debate.

At the outset, we would like to recognize the evolving body of policy statements and other contributions made already to today's topic by the Secretary-General, Security Council, General Assembly, ECOSOC and various other organizations and bodies within the UN system. We would also like to recognize a growing body of related policy statements and actions taken by the Security Council such as on the protection of civilians and children in armed conflicts, humanitarian assistance to refugees and others in conflict situations, post-conflict peace-building and reintegration of former combatants. In the area of UN peace operations, we would like to note the pioneering contributions made by the Windhoek Declaration and the Namibia Plan of Action and Mrs. Graca Machel's Review Document on the impact of armed conflict on children and women. We also wish to highlight the final document of the Beijing + 5 Conference (A/S-23/10/Rev.1, esp. sec. II.E, paras. 48, 86), the Brahimi Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (S/2000/809) and the most recent follow-on implementation proposal by the Secretary-General (A/55/502).

Nevertheless, precious little research has been directed so far to the issues addressed by the documents mentioned, mainly for the lack of recognition of the

importance of the issue and hence institutional funding. In this regard, we hail the accomplishments of Ms. Colleen Lowe Morna of South Africa, Ms. Louise Olson of Sweden, Professor Judith Hicks Stiehm of USA, Ms. Maggie Patterson of Canada, Col. Festus Aboagye of Ghana and Col. Mislav Burdjelez of Croatia, to name a few pioneers in the field. The staff members of the DPKO's Lessons Learned Unit have also made a contribution to the field, and will hopefully continue to do so.

So, what have we learned from their research? We have learned that in recent conflicts -- from El Salvador, via Bosnia-Herzegovina and East Timor to Sierra Leone -- women and girls are overwhelmingly the principal victims of deliberate rape, maiming, abduction, and displacement. Women and children constitute an estimated eighty- percent of all internally displaced persons and refugees. We have also learned that women and girls are treated differently from men and boys as soldiers or ex-soldiers, prisoners or ex-prisoners, as well as survivors of rape and mutilation. What can we do, here and now? The least we can do is impress upon the Security Council to call upon parties to the conflict to take special measures to protect this vulnerable population.

Of course, within its prerogatives of determining mandates for peace operations the Security Council can do much more. It can request that special mechanisms be established for reporting on all forms of sexual violence and exploitation of women, and provide adequate resources for the institutionalization of monitoring and enforcement mechanisms for peacekeeping personnel. Next, the Security Council can and should require that all mission staff receive pre-deployment or early post-deployment training in gender sensitivity and mainstreaming. Also, it can ensure that planning for DDR, all mines-related activities, as well as for public information outreach campaigns take into account the different needs and different priorities of men and women. Last, but not least, the Security Council must do its utmost to ensure the implementation of the existing international humanitarian and human rights law. To remind, it was only after the diabolic record in Bosnia-Herzegovina that rape was recognized as a war crime, and only recently that such crimes as forced pregnancy and sterilization have been sanctioned by Article 16 of the Statute of the International Criminal Court.

Mr. President,

In the post-conflict period, there is also ample space to support local women's peace-building activities, to strengthen their precarious economic situation, including access to jobs in weak economies with high unemployment rates, and access to counseling and human rights expertise, to name a few. Most importantly, if the Security Council were to require the mandatory participation of women in all of the implementation mechanisms of peace settlement, with a view to their sustained participation in the political, economic and social life onwards, it would drastically increase the prospects for sustainable peace. Needless to say, the same approach applies to conflict prevention, mediation and resolution, where women must be adequately represented at all levels of the policy-making and decision-making process.

Of special importance in this regard are the contributions made in the UN field operations. The efforts and accomplishments of women staff members of such multidimensional UN peace operations as UNTAES, UNTAET and especially UNMIK are absolutely precious, because they were instrumental in both conceiving and implementing creative approaches to gender inclusion policies within the host environment and gender mainstreaming within the peace operation. As always, the support of the respective SRSGs and the UNHQ figured prominently in their prospects for success or failure. Although in some cases today, and certainly in a perfect world of tomorrow, an SRSG's gender should not and would not matter, we must recognize the fact that so far very few women have performed as Secretary-General's personal envoys, RSGs and SRSGs. In fact, unless I am mistaken, today we have no Dame Margarets and no Elizabeth Rehns; no woman is currently heading a UN peace operation, serving as a special envoy or special representative of the Secretary-General. Some argue that no qualified women may exist for such posts or other senior posts; others point to an informal roster that suggests otherwise. During her UN press conference last June Ms. Elisabeth Rehn advanced the following bold proposal: When Member States are submitting candidatures for senior UN posts they should always present the Secretary-General with two equally qualified candidates, a man and a woman.

Mr. President,

The Security Council has called in the past for women to play an equal part in the maintenance of peace and security (SC/6816). So did the Secretary-General's strategic plan of action (A/49/587), as well as. Arguably, more can be done at the international level in concrete practical terms, but the issue also clearly rests with the Member States and their domestic policies. Hence a survey of comparative States' practices on a set of issues and topics addressed in today's debate may prove a useful step towards institutionalizing reporting mechanisms, within various brackets, of women's participation and gender mainstreaming in peace and security matters.

Thank you Mr. President.