

STATEMENT ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY
FOR THE ELIMINATION OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN CONFLICT

Delivered by Ambassador Anne-Kirsti Karlsen at the Permanent Council
Vienna, 24 June 2021

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Madame Chair,

I am delivering this statement on behalf of Canada, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Mongolia, Switzerland, and Norway.

For as long as there have been violent conflicts, sexual violence has been a part of it. Sexual and gender-based violence is used as a cheap, brutal tactic of war to destroy individuals, their families and their communities. Where sexual violence results in pregnancies, the children become reminders of the conflict and the abuse for years and years. Making reconciliation almost impossible – and new conflicts more likely.

Sexual violence constitutes a violation of human rights. And used in conflict, it is a violation of international human rights – and humanitarian law, and it can be a war crime, a crime against humanity and an element of genocide.

As it, unfortunately, is unlikely to end sexual violence in conflict in the foreseeable future, we must, as an organisation and as participating states, do our utmost to help the survivors of this hideous crime. States must improve legislation and end impunity for perpetrators. A survivor-centric and trauma-informed approach should form the basis for these efforts, making sure that those who have been victims are not made to suffer again.

Sexual and gender-based violence affects everyone – and is not limited to any particular religion or culture. As a chapter VIII organisation under the UN Charter with a comprehensive approach to security, we, the OSCE, have an obligation to do what we can to end sexual and gender-based violence in our region. To do this, we need to gender mainstream our approach. People of different gender have different challenges and experience different hardships. Without recognising this, we will not be able to find the necessary solutions.

Thank you.

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