

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

Statement by Sheikha Al-Thani, Permanent Mission of Qatar to the United Nations

I would first like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for October, and to thank the Permanent Representative of Australia for his leadership of the Council last month. I am also grateful the Secretary-General and the Executive Director of UN Women for their contributions this morning.

Thirteen years after the adoption of the historic resolution 1325 (2000), the culmination of a long process concerning women and international peace and security, the Security Council is still considering the issue. Our debates, however, reveal shortcomings in the area of the rights of women, which are being terribly violated, particularly in the Arab world. The Security Council has established several criteria for women's contributions to settling conflicts and their role in conflict and post-conflict situations. Those criteria should be implemented, in conformity with Security Council provisions, in order to achieve the goals of women's participation in conflict resolution and the reconstruction of society in the aftermath of conflict. Women should be integrated into peace negotiations and into social reconstruction. Their participation at every level is still incomplete. Their access to transitional justice systems must be facilitated, including in relation to crimes committed in conflict, especially since women and children are victims of particular types of crime and subject to discrimination, and they face social and cultural impediments that hinder their access to justice mechanisms.

The State of Qatar understands the importance of the rule of law and of strengthening women's participation and promoting women's and girls' rights in post-conflict reconstruction and conflict resolution. Their participation should be strengthened in order to enable them to function in the political arena, particularly through a collection of initiatives enabling their comprehensive inclusion.

We cannot talk about women and peace and security without discussing the causes of their vulnerability. There are several aspects of this that should be strengthened, first and foremost through laws that protect women in conflict without discrimination. We should call on all parties concerned to take measures to protect women and girls against gender-based and sexual violence in times of conflict.

We are very concerned about the situation of women in armed conflict. Because of violations of their human rights, women shoulder the heaviest burden of conflict. In Palestine, they suffer the unjust effects of the Israeli occupation, which affects the entire population in the occupied territories, particularly in Gaza. It is women who have to deal with the difficulties resulting from Israeli practices and the blockade. The mobility of Palestinian women continues to be hindered by checkpoints, and women are subjected to practices that contravene all international and moral principles.

In Syria, women are being targeted for violence more than others. Under orders from the regime, acts of physical and psychological violence, rape, sexual violence, degradation and torture have been committed by members of the Syrian armed forces against their own families. Those are all war crimes and crimes against humanity. The Syrian regime bears full responsibility for sexual exploitation and trafficking in women; it is a regime that has killed thousands, making women into widows and children into orphans, and displacing people within the country and beyond its borders.