

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

Statement by Mr. Ellinger, Permanent Mission of Czech Republic to the United Nations

I thank you, Madam President, for convening this important meeting. Last month, the Secretary-General reminded us in his opening speech (see A/69/PV.6) at the General Assembly that not since the end of the Second World War have there been so many refugees, displaced people and asylum seekers. It is a disturbing truth that makes it highly opportune to devote this Security Council meeting to the precarious situation of women and girls affected by displacement. In such situations, the increased vulnerability of women and girls is undisputable. We therefore greatly value the assistance that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is delivering to all in need, including women and girls, as well as the work of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons present in the Chamber today.

But the very fact that women and girls are displaced or have to leave their country means that the State concerned, the region in question and our international community have already failed — failed in preventing crises that force people to flee in fear for their lives and physical integrity. Therefore, the increasing focus of the United Nations on prevention is encouraging. Resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security was a visionary document in that regard, one that perfectly recognized the role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peacebuilding, peacekeeping, humanitarian response and post-conflict reconstruction. Now, 14 years after its adoption, we have the latest report (S/2014/693) of the Secretary-General in front of us, showing remarkable progress based on concrete indicators, but also gaps to be filled.

The important appeal of the report is the stress on direct interaction with civil society and women peacebuilders, as well as the recognition of the important role of women political leaders, media personnel and human rights defenders, including the recognition of the high risks they are running when engaging publicly. More support and attention must be given to those courageous women, such as Ms. Allami, who spoke earlier at this meeting, as they are peacebuilders and peacekeepers at least to the same extent as the members of the United Nations missions.

It is a sad reality that next to the well-known conflict and post-conflict situations that the Secretary-General examines in his report, we are faced with new situations where women are threatened with rape, torture and kidnapping, as well as forced displacement. That is happening in regions where, just a year ago, few would have expected such acts could possibly occur.

We have recently heard disturbing accounts of the lawlessness, violence and brutality of paramilitary forces in Crimea and eastern Ukraine that affect severely both women human rights activists and ordinary women and girls of Ukraine, many of whom choose to flee their homes. According to the UNHCR figures of 2 September, there were over 260,000 displaced persons in Ukraine escaping the violence in eastern Ukraine. Obviously, a large number are women, girls and children. We are thankful for the concern voiced by High Commissioner Guterres in relation to Ukraine.

At the same time, that deteriorating situation should not get notice only in relation to women internally displaced persons. Because of the high risk environment in which all women activists,

media workers and social workers now operate in eastern Ukraine, we believe it deserves the continued attention of the United Nations and the Security Council, when debating issues such as women and peace and security.