

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

*Statement by Ms. Murmokaitė, Permanent Mission of Lithuania to the United Nations.*

We welcome the Argentine presidency's convening of this open debate. We thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (S/2014/693) and its recommendations. We also commend the work and dedication of Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, the Executive Director of UN-Women, and her team, and thank all the briefers today for their valuable contributions.

More than 50 million people are currently displaced around the globe, the worst levels we have seen since the Second World War. Afghanistan, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia, the Central African Republic, Iraq, Sudan and South Sudan — and that list is not exhaustive — have all seen massive numbers of people flee for their lives. Syria, with its more than 6 million internally displaced persons (IDPs), is the worst humanitarian crisis of this century. And in the middle of Europe, forced displacements have also peaked owing to Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

Accounting for half of those displaced, women bear the physical and psychological brunt of conflict. For many of them, as they provide subsistence for their families, procure firewood and water and take care of basic sanitary needs, every step outside the displacement camps — and often even within the camps — is fraught with very real physical dangers, including sexual violence and rape and a heightened risk of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS. Early and forced marriages stunt the lives of many Syrian girls living in refugee camps. The horrendous practices of forced impregnation, human trafficking and sexual slavery are shattering lives in areas under the control of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant.

We are yet to see the release of the Nigerian schoolgirls kidnapped by Boko Haram. The illicit flow of arms through porous borders and in defiance of arms embargoes fuels violence and criminality and increases the vulnerability of refugees and IDPs, even in refugee camps and settlements. Women and children are the primary victims of such illicit flows, as recalled earlier today by Ms. Allami.

A number of important documents provide the basis for addressing the problem of displacement. The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement provide an overarching normative framework that applies international human rights and humanitarian law to IDPs. The Kampala Convention, the first of its kind in the world, binds Governments to provide legal protection for the rights and well-being of those forced to flee inside their home countries due to conflict, violence, other human rights abuses or due to natural disasters. Then there is the landmark resolution 1325 (2000), whose fifteenth anniversary will be marked next year, and its follow-up resolutions, including resolution 2122 (2013), which includes important references to forced displacement and its effects on women and girls. However, as our British colleague has reminded all of us, gaps still exist, and we need to work to close those gaps between existing legislation and the reality on the ground. We must continue working to improve gender mainstreaming by providing gender-awareness training

to peacekeepers, field staff and humanitarian actors, appointing gender advisors and developing concrete indicators to assess the implementation of gender-mainstreaming policies. Gender-disaggregated data is key to better decision making in terms of addressing the needs and concerns of displaced women, as Special Rapporteur Beyani said earlier today.

Even basic improvements, such as supporting on-camp provision of cooking fuel or water and integrating women in the design, implementation and review of distribution systems, can literally make a difference between life and death, by reducing their exposure to attacks. Developing leadership skills and the capacity of displaced women is essential to enabling their meaningful participation in decision-making processes at the community level, within camps, in non-camp and urban displacement settings, as well as in the broader political, security, peace and reconciliation processes. As the UN-Women Executive Director noted earlier today, in part women and girls are the best hope for sustainable development following conflict.

Existing good practices must be collected and made readily available, including on engaging displaced women in transitional justice processes.

Sexual violence in the context of displacement affects those already most vulnerable. Last week we heard a shocking account from the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Zainab Bangura, of her recent visit to South Sudan. Such crimes will continue unabated as long as those who commit them know they will walk free, no matter how many victims they leave behind.

The importance of bringing the perpetrators of sexual crimes against displaced women and girls to account under national and international law is paramount. The systematic collection of accurate, reliable and objective information by commissions of inquiry, fact-finding and human rights missions on the crimes committed against displaced women and girls is key to pursuing justice.

We note the significant advancement in international law made by the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), which includes sexual violence in the definition of crimes, in particular as a crime against humanity. The ICC continues to be an important mechanism in combating sexual violence in conflict and should be used vigorously to pursue accountability.

Greater interactions between the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Sanctions Committees, as well as the regular inclusion of violence against displaced women and girls, including sexual violence, as a sanctions-designation criterion would facilitate tackling impunity for such crimes.

Systematic and delicate work needs to be done on the ground to address the social stigma associated with such crimes and to create an environment in which victims of sexual violence will feel safe to speak out. Providing gender-sensitive training to local police, military forces and judiciary personnel, as well as health care personnel and social workers, in the particular context of displacement, is thus essential. The recruitment and training of female law and order officials and judges, and providing the necessary social and

psychological support mechanisms for displaced women and girls should be further advanced.

On the peacekeeping and field staff side, preventative measures must be part and parcel of predeployment training. A zero-tolerance policy regarding sexual violence and abuse must be firmly implemented. It is unthinkable that women and girls could suffer sexual abuse from those who are there to protect them. The recent allegations against personnel of the African Union Mission in Somalia are deeply troubling and must be properly investigated. We welcome the fact that the African Union has established a panel to this effect.

Finally, while discussing the situation of displaced women, we should also bear in mind non-conflict related displacement caused by natural disasters and climate change. We need to closely examine the gender dimensions of such displacement in order to identify specific vulnerabilities and good practices in gender-sensitive protection, assistance, adaptation, mitigation, relocation and reconstruction processes.