

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

Statement by Mr. Mulet, Assistant Secretary-General for United Nations Peacekeeping Operations

I am very pleased to brief the Security Council today, as the topic of this debate is central to our work on peace. We remain determined to protect women and girls and to promote their role in all aspects of peacekeeping operations.

Women always bear the brunt of any protracted conflict, especially in displacement. Displaced women are frequently subject to heinous human rights violations, including sexual violence. These criminal acts destroy community identity and tear apart traditional ways of life, leaving women alone to face the challenge of providing for their families. During displacement women and girls are most at risk to sexual and gender-based violence, especially in overcrowded sites with little privacy and security. Uprooted from their environments, they struggle to access support networks and health services.

We know that the most effective and appropriate ways of preventing violence towards internally displaced women and girls is to intensify protection mechanisms, while at the same time increasing support for women's participation in political processes and in governance. Peacekeeping missions advocate for the political participation of women. The mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic emphasizes consultation with women on issues related to political participation in that country. Recently, the Mission organized a high-level women's advisory group meeting with Mission leadership to discuss the inclusion of women's voices in political dialogue and national reconciliation processes. In South Sudan, advocacy by the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) has resulted in an increase in representation and election of women as traditional leaders in Eastern and Equatorial States.

Structural obstacles continue to exacerbate the risks for women in camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs). In the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, we have attempted to promote the voices of women in order to identify what structural obstacles are in place and to reduce the direct threats to women's security. In Haiti, the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti has increased its strong uniformed presence in IDP camps and high-crime areas where women and girls are most at risk of sexual violence. In South Sudan, the rapid increase of women and girls who sought shelter in United Nations bases created a strain on camp logistics, leading to increased vulnerability of women and girls. UNMISS therefore advocated with the camp management committees for a gendered approach to camp logistics and protection, resulting in the establishment of separate facilities for women and men and the appointment of women as camp managers. Likewise, in the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, a women's protection network was established for residents of IDP camps around Zalingei to discuss with women strategies to better protect and promote their participation in the peace process.

We must recognize that the best way to protect and support women IDPs is to help women help themselves by giving them a voice in decision-making and the socioeconomic resources to empower

them. We need to do more to support States in developing gender-sensitive policies, particularly in the justice and security sectors, that both protect and encourage women's participation in all peace and reconciliation efforts. It is critical for the international community to sustain all efforts to address and remove critical obstacles that impede women's full participation in peace and security. By doing so, we will make sure that women are leading actors and champions of peace.

We have a responsibility to better protect women, but protection cannot exist without genuine understanding of women's rights and acceptance of their full participation, as demanded by resolution 1325 (2000) and all subsequent Security Council mandates on women and peace and security. The protection of women, be they settled or displaced, is possible only when women can themselves define, shape and influence the course of their lives and ultimately the course of peace.