



Security Council

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Letter dated 20 January 2022 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council

I have the honour to refer to the 8949th meeting of the Security Council convened on 18 January 2022 under the agenda item “Women and peace and security — Protecting participation: addressing violence targeting women in peace and security processes”. The interventions of the in-person participants will be published as an official record of the Security Council (S/PV.8949).

In accordance with the understanding reached among Council members for the 8949th meeting, the following delegations submitted written statements, copies of which are enclosed: Colombia, Guatemala, Lebanon, Myanmar, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Peru, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, South Africa and Ukraine. These statements will be issued as an official document of the Security Council in accordance with the procedure set out in the letter dated 7 May 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council (S/2020/372), which was agreed in the light of the extraordinary circumstances caused by the coronavirus disease pandemic, and reference to the official document will be made in the official record S/PV.8949.

(Signed) Mona Juul
President of the Security Council



Annex I**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Colombia to the United Nations**

[Original: Spanish]

We appreciate the convening of this open debate highlighting the importance of women's participation in conflict-resolution processes.

Gender equality is one of the key achievements of this Government. The implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) has been achieved by integrating its guidelines into policies to ensure its comprehensive and ongoing implementation, in particular the women's equity policy and the policy of peace with legality. As a result, the country has a women and peace and security agenda that includes the gender perspective and women's involvement in peacebuilding, women's political empowerment, a policy to prevent any form of violence against women, the greater participation of women in the security forces and the key issue of economic empowerment. A woman with economic autonomy has the possibility of exercising her rights and, at the same time, represents the most effective means of preventing violence. We highlight seven actions.

First, 57 per cent of the gender indicators of the framework implementation plan have been fulfilled or are well advanced in the implementation of the peace with legality policy. I would highlight that more than 25,000 women have been beneficiaries of land reform, being 44 per cent of the total. In terms of financial inclusion, more than 680,000 women have had access to credit, being 36 per cent of the total. And 45 per cent of women ex-combatant beneficiaries of the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace in Colombia participate in productive projects that receive technical assistance, financing and support from the Government.

Second, a year ago, the Congress adopted a reform to the electoral code that establishes mandatory parity lists and includes a definition of political violence against women. That is a historic milestone that creates a level playing field for women's participation in elected office and recognizes that, by action or omission, their political rights can be undermined in the electoral process.

Third, a national political training school for women was established. This Government is convinced of the importance of training women to the highest standards in order to increase their participation in elected office. The school has trained nearly 5,000 women throughout the country.

Fourth, for the election of representatives to the House of Representatives in the 16 special transitional electoral districts for peace for victims for the periods 2022 to 2026 and from 2026 to 2030, specific measures were included for women's civil society groups to nominate women candidates. To ensure that right, a validation procedure was established by the Presidential Council for Women's Equality and the National Registrar's Office.

Fifth, the protection of women social leaders and human rights defenders is fundamental to strengthening democracy. In December, a public policy on respect and guarantees for human rights defenders was issued for the first time, which is particularly significant for women, as it includes guidelines with a gender focus and definitions of women human rights defenders and leaders. It also incorporates good practices from the Comprehensive Programme of Guarantees for Women Leaders and Human Rights Defenders, which has been internationally acknowledged by organisations such as the Kroc Institute.

Sixth, acknowledging women victims of the conflict, the implementation of the national plan for comprehensive victim support and reparation was strengthened, with a differential and gender focus. That 10-year public policy includes 50 specific commitments to ensuring support and attend to and reparations for women victims of violence.

Seventh, there is a policy to promote gender equality in the security forces and prevent violence. Gender units have been set up and improved, and women's participation in that area has increased by 38 per cent. A training programme in cybersecurity and cyberdefence for women is also being implemented given the strategic nature of that issue in developing a national security policy.

Closing gender gaps to achieve greater participation of women in politics, implementing effective strategies to guarantee rights and prevent violence against women social leaders in partnership between the Government and civil society, recognizing the rights of victims through a gender-based approach, developing equality programmes to increase women's participation in the security forces and promoting more legal economic opportunities are central pillars of the policy to strengthen peace and security. That is how we are moving forward in Colombia.

Annex II**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Guatemala to the United Nations, Luis Lam Padilla**

My delegation thanks Her Excellency Anniken Huitfeldt, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Norway, as well as Ambassador Mona Juul, Permanent Representative, and the Norwegian team for convening this very relevant open debate. We also extend our appreciation to the briefers.

Despite the advances in women's representation in decision-making processes over the past decade, progress towards achieving gender parity in political and public life has been slow. The data presented in the Secretary-General's report (S/2021/827) shows that women hold just 25.5 per cent of parliamentary seats worldwide, and the proportion is even lower in conflict and post-conflict countries. Globally, women constitute 36.3 per cent of local-level elected positions, and 25.9 per cent at the local level in conflict-affected countries.

Those numbers show the necessity in all countries to rethink internal policies in terms of the opportunities provided to women to participate as important actors in all aspects of life. Another relevant point is the protection provided to them in the areas where they develop their work. All too often, women have been affected by persecution and violence and their human rights are subject to constant abuses and violations.

Guatemala supports the above-mentioned Secretary-General's report, which states that women and peace and security is one of the overarching priorities of the Action for Peacekeeping initiative, which includes commitments to the full participation of women in peace and political processes. As set out in resolution 1325 (2000), the systematic integration of the women and peace and security agenda into all stages of planning, implementation, analysis and reporting will ensure a greater representation of women in all peace operations.

Guatemala gives special priority to the participation of women in peacekeeping operations. According to recent data provided by our Ministry of National Defence, a total of 300 women have been deployed as staff, military and civilian personnel in different missions. Women peacekeepers have proven that they can perform appropriately under the same difficult conditions as men. It is an operational imperative that our countries recruit and retain female peacekeepers, for they have made a positive impact in peacekeeping environments, including by supporting the role of other women in the field and contributing to the protection of women's rights.

Guatemala further encourages all Member States to strengthen the participation of women while creating safe and enabling environments for them, especially for their participation in civil society, including in situations of armed conflict, as mandated in resolution 2493 (2019). Ensuring an enabling environment, preventing threats and hate speech, intimidation and attacks, and developing immediate responses when such attacks do occur is necessary to reach our shared goal of women's full, equal and meaningful participation in all phases of international peace and security.

Women's direct participation and influence in peace and security processes, as well as in decision-making mechanisms, increases the probability that protection measures will be more gender sensitive. Therefore, it will ensure that needs at the local level are better reflected, and gender concerns will be adequately included in prevention mechanisms in post-conflict situations. Their important role remains crucial, and awareness must be raised in that regard.

Finally, allow me to say that Guatemala is a multicultural, multilingual and diverse country and the laws instilled in our Constitution allow for equal rights of men and women. Guatemala reiterates that without meaningful and inclusive participation of all women societies cannot succeed.

Annex III

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations, Amal Mudallali

Allow me at the outset to congratulate Norway on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of January and for organizing this important debate on women and peace and security under the theme “Protecting participation: addressing violence targeting women in peace and security processes”. I also would like to thank the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, and the women civil society representatives for their insightful interventions.

I wish to warmly welcome the incoming non-permanent members of the Security Council — Albania, Brazil, Gabon, Ghana and the United Arab Emirates — and congratulate the outgoing members — Estonia, the Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia and Viet Nam — on their successful tenure.

I seize this opportunity to commend Norway on its leadership in the United Nations on the women and peace and security agenda.

Lebanon attaches great value to its continuous cooperation with Norway at the United Nations, especially on topics pertaining to human rights, women’s rights and human rights defenders. In that arena, Lebanon is proud to be, for the second time, the first co-sponsor of the biennial resolution on human rights defenders led by Norway in the Third Committee. Our co-sponsorship testifies to the importance that Lebanon attaches to this topic.

We welcome the participation of women civil society briefers in today’s open debate, and we stress that their participation is crucial to reflect the realities on the ground.

Unfortunately, as highlighted in the 2021 report of the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, Ilze Brands Kehris, on cooperation with the United Nations, its representatives and mechanisms in the field of human rights (A/HRC/48/28), the trend of reprisals against women victims and human rights defenders because of their cooperation with the United Nations has continued unabated. We need to continue providing our civil society with an open, inclusive and safe space for interaction without fear of threats, intimidation or reprisals.

Women and girls are traditionally portrayed as victims of conflicts. However, they should be seen as active agents of change in peacebuilding and peacekeeping, as part of civil society, as human rights defenders and as journalists.

Still in 2022, violence against women continues unabated. According to the United Nations, it is estimated that one in three women experiences sexual or physical violence in her lifetime.

For women activists, leaders, journalists and human rights defenders, the odds are worse. This was demonstrated in the 2021 report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security, in which he stressed that: “Across regions, violence has been used to silence women leaders and prevent them from running for office and carrying out their duties in any position they hold” (*S/2021/827, para. 56*).

Across the globe, women who dare to speak up are silenced, stigmatized, harassed, attacked, marginalized and sometimes even killed. Perhaps the most flagrant example is Afghanistan, where women live in “a climate of constant fear” as the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, Mary Lawlor, describes it, adding that threats against women include beatings, arrests, enforced disappearances and killings.

We reiterate the call of the Security Council in paragraph 6 of resolution 2493 (2019), in which it

“[s]trongly encourages Member States to create safe and enabling environments for civil society, including... community women leaders, women peacebuilders, political actors, and those who protect and promote human rights, to carry out their work independently and without undue interference ..., and to address threats, harassment, violence and hate speech against them”.

For my country, Lebanon, this year is an important one in terms of women’s participation in political life. Today, as we look forward to the upcoming parliamentary elections in May, the meaningful participation of women, especially young women, as both candidates and voters, is essential to ensuring that the elections will be more inclusive and representative. Their active participation today is crucial, especially given that Lebanese women have been granted the right to vote and run for elections since 1952. Their increased presence in parliament will contribute to shaping a more equitable and inclusive society.

Within the framework of our national action plan on women and peace and security, we strongly believe that the full, meaningful and equal political participation of women is an essential requirement for gender equality and for an inclusive, healthy and functioning democracy. Along these lines, we welcome the call of the Secretary-General’s Special Coordinator for Lebanon, Ambassador Joanna Wronecka, for women and youth to step forward in the registration process for candidates.

More than 20 years after the adoption of the landmark resolution 1325 (2001), on women and peace and security, we are still witnessing a backlash against women activists, women journalists, women human rights defenders, women peacebuilders, women leaders and other women civil society actors. Today, we must act to protect all women, including those at the heart of the women and peace and security agenda, and to ensure that they can continue their work free of violence, threats, reprisals, harassment and abuse.

As the 2021 Nobel Peace Prize laureate journalist Maria Ressa reminded us in her acceptance speech: “Now it’s time to build, to create the world we want...We have to make it happen. Please, let’s hold the line, together.”

Annex IV

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Myanmar to the United Nations, Kyaw Moe Tun

I wish to thank the presidency of Norway for organizing the open debate on this crucial topic. I also thank the briefers for their statements.

Two decades after the Security Council's adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, the realization of the vision of the women and peace and security agenda is far from adequate, even though there have been some improvements. Women are still very much globally underrepresented in peace processes, Governments and public administrations. Violence targeting women is still pervasive. The coronavirus disease created a shadow pandemic of domestic violence and further exacerbated the challenges. Gender-based violence against women and children are mounting, particularly in conflict situations. We are of the view that the international legal framework fails to sufficiently protect women and girls, as well as civilians, mainly because those who are supposed to abide by international laws are brazenly violating them with near total impunity.

Advancing the meaningful inclusion and participation of women in peace and security processes will be possible only when their personal security and human rights are protected in the first place. Women peacebuilders, civil society and community leaders, and human rights defenders must be able to raise their voices and concerns without any fear of intimidation and violent reprisals. Their perspectives, input and experiences need to be given due consideration in conflict prevention, resolution and peacebuilding processes. Structural capacity and cultural barriers that undermine their representation at the decision-making level must be addressed in order to harness their full potential in building peaceful societies.

In Myanmar, after the military perpetrated the illegal coup on 1 February 2021 by detaining democratically elected civilian Government leaders, women were on the front lines of daily demonstrations against the coup, despite imminent risks of deadly brutalities. They are still the leading figures of widespread opposition to the military rule. Women and girls in Myanmar —including teachers, nurses, civil servants, factory workers, human rights defenders and students — were attacked, detained, tortured and sexually abused by the security forces for their participation in peaceful protests and the civil disobedience movement.

Since the military coup, the rule of law has been effectively diminished, as evidently shown by the recent sham convictions of elected civilian Government leaders. Access to justice for women and girls and effective remedies for their suffering are now practically non-existent. For instance, a female journalist who was seriously injured when a military vehicle was intentionally rammed into the protesters, on 5 December 2021 in Yangon, was not allowed to meet with her lawyer until yesterday. As military air strikes and disproportionate and indiscriminate attacks, including the burning of houses and massacres, have displaced hundreds of thousands of civilians across the country, displaced women, girls and children, especially in ethnic areas, have been widely affected. They are at greater risk of all forms of violence by the unaccountable military, which employs sexual violence as a tactic of war, as documented by the United Nations.

Moreover, intense and sustained armed violence, including air strikes by the State Administration Council, is now occurring in numerous locations in Kayah state, Kayah state, Chin state, Magway region and Saigang region, triggering the displacement of thousands of civilians. Even in this difficult situation, the National Unity Government is trying its best to provide necessary assistance to people in need, including women and girls in conflict areas.

In its resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions on women and peace and security, the Security Council emphasized the responsibility of all States to end impunity and prosecute those responsible for atrocity crimes, including those relating to sexual and other violence against women and girls. The Council also expressed its readiness to take appropriate steps to address widespread or systematic sexual violence in conflict situations. We have learned with satisfaction that when the Security Council has employed its tools to ensure accountability for situations of atrocity crimes, it has contributed to the long-term improvement of those situations. We believe that addressing violence against women needs to start with ending impunity and ensuring accountability and justice for past and present atrocity crimes, especially sexual and gender-based ones.

In Myanmar, the perpetrators of massacres, rape and other forms of sexual violence in conflict areas remain unaccountable. As the domestic justice system has collapsed, a united response from the Security Council is urgently needed to prevent further military atrocities against civilians, women and girls in Myanmar. As such, on 17 July 2021, the National Unity Government made a declaration, under article 12 (3) of the Rome Statute to the International Criminal Court, accepting the jurisdiction of the court with a view to bringing the perpetrators to justice. There is no protection of women's participation when they are under constant threat and when they are being violently attacked, arbitrarily detained and sexually abused in detention just for exercising their fundamental rights. Ending impunity and ensuring the rule of law will certainly help protect the participation of women in nation-building and the peace process, as well as in the transitional justice system.

In conclusion, we look to the Security Council to live up to its expressed determination to address violence targeting women. At the same time, we also look forward to the recommendations of the Secretary-General in his next report regarding better protection of women, including appropriate measures that need to be taken to ensure justice for them and accountability for the perpetrators of systematic and widespread violence in situations such as that in Myanmar.

Accordingly, the people of Myanmar wish to witness effective, timely action from the Security Council to protect people, including women and girls, from the atrocities and heinous crimes committed by the Myanmar military.

Annex V**Statement by the NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security, Irene Fellin**

I thank you, Madam President, for the opportunity to address the Security Council on the occasion of this open debate on protecting the participation of women in peace and security processes. The women and peace and security agenda remains essential to all efforts to safeguard freedom and security — and therefore a crucial aspect of all that NATO does. Our commitment to gender equality — shared by all NATO allies and so many of our partners — is built on principle and must be realized in practice. Participation is one of the pillars of the women and peace and security agenda for good reason — we cannot expect sustainable peace and security if more than half of our people are not involved. Women's participation is paramount. And when it comes to ensuring that women are able to contribute to peace and security, we need not only for the principle to be in place — legally ensuring that women are permitted to participate — but also to ensure that their participation is physically possible and does not entail undue risks to them and their families.

We know that women are disproportionately affected by violence in situations of conflict and instability. We are actively working to reduce the threats women face in these contexts — this is why NATO has adopted policies on conflict-related sexual violence, as well as sexual exploitation and abuse. But we also know that women who seek to participate in political processes or contribute to peace and security processes often face targeted violence. And we know that there are practical ways of addressing this, including as part of the training we provide in support of our partners. By recognizing the risks that women face, security providers can take steps to ensure the immediate protections needed, for example during electoral processes.

We also need to keep in mind that the kinds of violence that impede women's participation in peace and security are not limited to physical violence and intimidation, but are also rampant in cyberspace. Women are far more likely to be the targets of online bullying.

In order to protect women's participation, therefore, we need to understand the risks women face and the value that their contributions adds to peace and security. We can also take steps to address the underlying impediments to gender equality through communications and education efforts. This makes an important difference in not only enabling participation in the moment, but also in shifting momentum over time. And for that reason, helping our partners build capacity, improving the education and training we provide internally and to partners, and enhancing communication around gender equality are all important elements in NATO's new action plan on women and peace and security.

Women are essential to sustainable peace and security, and we all have a role to play in ensuring that they are able to participate fully in these processes and in all the institutions on which our societies are built. NATO is committed to working as part of the international community — with our allies and partners, with the United Nations and with civil society — to ensure that women's participation in peace and security is protected and that we continue to move towards a more gender-equal world.

Annex VI**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Peru to the United Nations, José Manuel Rodríguez Cuadros**

[Original: Spanish]

At the outset, I would like to thank the Norwegian presidency of the Security Council for the invitation, and especially Minister for Foreign Affairs Anniken Huitfeldt for having taken the initiative to convene this meeting on the theme “Protecting participation: addressing violence targeting women in peace and security processes”, as such violence is a threat to the maintenance of peace and every effort must be made to ensure the protection and full participation of women in these processes.

Peru prioritizes the gender equality and women’s empowerment agenda and the protection and defence of women’s rights as central elements of its Government policy. Within this framework, we are committed to the United Nations women and peace and security agenda, which includes women’s empowerment, non-discrimination and combating violence against women, the unequal assignment of roles and functions, and discriminatory sociocultural patterns.

For gender equality to be achieved, women must be able to participate fully and meaningfully in the various decision-making bodies and processes at all levels in our societies, both in the structure of the State and in the private sector, and especially in all aspects related to peace, international security and the processes of transition to sustainable development in areas that have previously been in conflict.

In particular, I reaffirm Peru’s ongoing commitment to complying with the provisions of resolution 1325 (2000), of October 2000, which is a fundamental milestone in that it recognizes women as relevant actors on an equal footing in building international peace and security, in an environment that allows them to fully exercise their rights and freedoms, without exclusion or discrimination of any kind.

In this regard, I endorse the Secretary-General’s proposals in his most recent report on women and peace and security (S/2021/827), which assesses emerging trends and issues, such as advancing gender equality and the meaningful participation of women in peace processes and political transitions; advancing gender-responsive peacekeeping and peace operations by promoting the participation and leadership of women in their communities; protecting and promoting the human rights and leadership of women in conflict settings and in the context of humanitarian emergencies; increasing women’s participation in political life; their involvement in economic recovery processes and access to resources in pandemic and conflict settings; their participation in initiatives to ensure justice, whether as survivors, activists or professionals; their integration into the agenda against violent extremism and terrorism; and increasing their role in actions related to the environment and climate change.

With regard to the protection and promotion of women’s human rights in conflict settings, according to the aforementioned report of the Secretary-General, I note with deep concern that in 2020 there were 2,500 cases of conflict-related sexual violence across 18 countries and 35 cases of killings of women human rights defenders, journalists and trade unionists in seven conflict-affected countries, according to information from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. As an example, the report states that,

“In the Central African Republic, five times the incidents of conflict-related sexual violence were recorded in the first quarter of 2021 than in the last quarter of 2020.” (S/2021/827, para. 37)

The Government of Peru fully supports the actions being taken by the Department of Peace Operations, in accordance with the Action for Peacekeeping initiative and the women and peace and security agenda, to implement the uniformed gender parity strategy 2018-2028 in all operations, which involves providing clear and updated information on mechanisms to report and address cases of sexual harassment; relevant awareness and guidance in missions; the establishment of focal points to provide advice on women's specific concerns and facilitate the creation of networks of uniformed women in each mission; the introduction of mentoring programmes by female officers; the assignment of at least two female officers at mission team sites; and the improvement of housing conditions at sites to meet women's needs.

The importance of increasing the participation of women in peace operations is clear, as their greater ability to connect with vulnerable populations and their influence on the overall conduct of uniformed mission personnel have proven to be highly effective in fulfilling mandates. However, we are aware that the objectives of such an increase are undermined when acts of violence and intimidation continue to be committed against women in places where our main objective should be to achieve an orderly transition from conflict to peace.

Peru has reached 12.5 per cent female representation in its overall participation, with 28.57 per cent of mission experts and 10.29 per cent of female participation in military contingents — both above the United Nations targets of 18 per cent and 8 per cent respectively — and with 29 women assigned, out of a total of 232 Peruvian military personnel, and deployed in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, Abyei and Lebanon, as of November 2021. Likewise, in order to achieve an increase in the participation of women military and/or police personnel, specific projects are under way aimed at ensuring a gradual increase in the number of women in Peruvian contingents, taking into account the need for measures necessary to ensure their protection.

Finally, I wish to emphasize Peru's commitment to working jointly to rigorously and transparently investigate cases of sexual violence and violations of women's rights perpetrated in a context of organized crime and terrorism in those areas where peacekeeping missions operate. That means that trials must effectively sanction those responsible. In parallel, professional support must be provided that facilitates the rehabilitation and reintegration into society of the women concerned, within the framework of strict respect for human rights and the rule of law.

Annex VII**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations, Alya Ahmed Saif Al-Thani**

[Original: Arabic]

On behalf of Qatar, I wish to congratulate Norway on its assumption of the Presidency of the Security Council this month. We commend you on steering the work of the Council in an exemplary manner. We also welcome Her Excellency the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Norway, who is with us this morning. In addition, I would like to congratulate the new members of the Security Council, Albania, Brazil, Gabon, Ghana and the United Arab Emirates. I wish also to thank Ms. Michelle Bachelet, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the briefers for their valuable contributions.

Qatar believes that the full participation of women in the political, economic and social fields is vital, as evidenced by the country's domestic and international policies. As an active global leader in the peaceful settlement of conflicts and disputes, Qatar maintains that the participation of women in peacemaking, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and sustaining peace is crucial and a prerequisite for the success of those endeavours. Not only is it important for women to participate in peace processes, but preserving the rights of women and girls and promoting the participation of women in society must be integral to the processes themselves.

On 20 January 2022, Qatar, in cooperation with Finland, Colombia and a number of United Nations bodies and civil society organizations, will organize the High-Level Global Conference on Comprehensive Peace Paths for Youth. The Conference, which will be held virtually, will focus on an array of topics related to the participation of young women in peace processes, thereby contributing to efforts to promote broad participation by women in peacemaking.

In support of the peace process and peace in Afghanistan, Qatar facilitated the participation of women in the peace talks hosted in Doha, devoting special attention to preserving the gains achieved by the Afghan people, particularly women. Since last August, Qatar has focused its efforts on supporting the rights of women and girls and drawing international attention to the rights and voices of Afghan women, in coordination with such international partners as the Group of Friends of Women in Afghanistan. Qatar has led the way in helping to evacuate Afghan nationals and others from Afghanistan, hosting thousands of evacuees in Doha, with a particular focus on evacuating women and girls at risk. In addition, it has worked actively to ensure that educational facilities in Afghanistan continue to operate and that girls in the country continue to receive an education, and facilitated United Nations humanitarian activities in Afghanistan aimed at improving the humanitarian situation of Afghans, and that of Afghan women in particular.

Promoting the participation of women in peace processes and clearing a path for them to do so will only be possible in a safe environment that is conducive to women's participation. It will not be possible to create such an environment as long as women who participate in peace operations are being killed and subjected to violence. Regrettably, such violations, which constitute some of the most serious deprivations of women's rights, continue to occur in many conflict situations and are on the rise according to the most recent report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2021/827). Those grave violations must be condemned in all their forms, wherever they occur under any pretext. The United Nations and the international community must address those violations and work to combat and prevent them.

In closing, Qatar will continue to partner with other States and international organizations to advance the rights of women, protect the security of women and promote their participation in all areas, particularly in peace and security processes. The participation of women is a crucial factor in the success of those processes and is, therefore, in the interest of all.

Annex VIII**Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations, Cho Hyun**

The Republic of Korea aligns itself with the statement delivered by Canada on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security, as well as the joint statement delivered by the representative of Switzerland on behalf of the Human Rights/Conflict Prevention Caucus (see S/PV.8949). My delegation is pleased to deliver its statement in our national capacity.

The Security Council has been highlighting the importance of the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in all aspects of peace and security since it adopted resolution 1325 (2000). To achieve that goal, it is imperative that women in peace processes be protected from reprisals, intimidation and violence of any sort, and be free from fear. Unfortunately, women peacebuilders and human rights defenders have been repeatedly targeted by violence in many different parts of the world, from Afghanistan to Myanmar.

That is why today's open debate could not be more relevant. My delegation would like to commend Norway for having convened this timely discussion on such a crucial issue. Against that backdrop, let me highlight three points.

First, we must fully implement resolution 2493 (2019), which encouraged Member States to create a safe and enabling environment for women peacebuilders, human rights defenders and civil society, and to accelerate our efforts. It is vital that all forms of violence against such women be addressed and prevented and that there be accountability for perpetrators.

Secondly, we strongly condemn reprisals of all kinds against and intimidation of women briefers. It is our responsibility to make sure that women briefers can participate in various United Nations meetings without fear of attacks or threats. It is important that women peacebuilders and civil-society members be heard more often at the United Nations, particularly in the Security Council. My delegation commends Norway for its attempts to expand civil-society engagement as President of the Security Council.

Last but not least, peacekeeping operations can play a positive role in protecting and promoting women's participation in peace and security processes. In that vein, my delegation highlights the role of gender advisers in peacekeeping missions. As host of the 2021 Seoul United Nations Peacekeeping Ministerial, we emphasized the need to advance the women and peace and security agenda, including by strengthening the role of women in peacekeeping. We were also delighted to see 23 Member States pledge, at the Ministerial, to increase the number of women peacekeepers. My Government will continue to expand our efforts in that regard and will also contribute to the Elsie Initiative Fund.

The Republic of Korea has always been a staunch advocate of the women and peace and security agenda. Last year, it established the third national action plan to implement resolution 1325 (2000) and held the third international conference as part of its Action with Women and Peace initiative. It was particularly significant that the third conference shed light on the role of women as active peacebuilding agents. As a candidate for a non-permanent membership on the Security Council for the term 2024-2025, we will continue to spare no effort in achieving the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in peace processes while ensuring a safe and enabling environment.

Annex IX

Statement by the Chargé d'affaires of South Africa to the United Nations, Xolisa Mabhongo

Allow me to begin by congratulating you, Madam President, on your presidency of the Security Council for the month of January and also for having convened this important debate related to the women and peace and security agenda. I would like to thank the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, and the civil-society briefers for their statements. Additionally, I would like to thank Ms. Anniken Huitfeldt, the Norwegian Minister for Foreign Affairs, for her attendance and remarks during this important debate.

The importance of women's participation in peace processes, conflict prevention and peacebuilding is no longer a question but a necessity. Investing in the participation of local women in peacebuilding and peacekeeping settings can help address the barriers to women's participation in such processes. Therefore, addressing the violence, intimidation and reprisals against women in peace processes is also crucial, which requires us to step up our efforts in that regard.

The protection of women peacebuilders, gender activists and human rights defenders in all conflict situations is imperative, both in finding solutions to ending violence and in ensuring a successful peace process.

In line with resolution 2493 (2019), which was adopted during South Africa's presidency of the Security Council, we continue to urge Member States and other relevant stakeholders to create safe and enabling environments for civil society, community women leaders and women peacebuilders and human rights defenders to carry out their work in advancing the women and peace and security agenda without threats or physical harm.

It is imperative that the protection of women in both armed and post-conflict situations remains an area that requires enhanced efforts from all relevant stakeholders.

The intimidation of women activists has, unfortunately, long been a feature affecting the participation of women in the political and peacebuilding environments. It is concerning to witness that in modern times, with the positive advances in technology and connectivity and especially our reliance on virtual platforms during the global coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, that intimidation and bullying has moved into the cybersphere.

In May 2021, the President of South Africa signed the cybercrimes bill into law, which will bring South Africa's cybersecurity laws in line with international standards. The act criminalizes a wide variety of cybercrimes, including crimes specifically associated with cyberbullying, and is aimed at curbing cyberbullying where there are direct consequences linked to sending electronic messages or social media posts that incite or threaten individuals with violence or damage to their property.

The adoption of internationally aligned domestic cybercrime laws is a concrete example of how Member States can address the online intimidation, threats and bullying faced by women participating in peace and peacebuilding processes and human rights defenders and ensures that perpetrators are held accountable for their actions. Such behaviour should not be tolerated and must be addressed with all the necessary tools, including through the enacting of the requisite legislation.

The Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) plays a crucial and unique advisory role in supporting post-conflict recovery and peacebuilding efforts in the countries

affected. With the adoption of the Peacebuilding Commission Gender Strategy, significant work has been done to advance the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda in post-conflict settings. While efforts are continuing to address the gaps identified in implementation efforts, it is concerning to note that persistent violence against and the bullying and intimidation of women involved in peace processes is an additional impediment to the crucial work they conduct at local level. That requires concerted efforts by the PBC, the Security Council and other partners to coordinate efforts to address that challenge.

We must also acknowledge the benefits that have resulted owing to the necessity brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic of engaging on virtual platforms. In that regard, there should be more investment in proper information and communications technologies infrastructure and facilities that would allow the broader participation of women in peace processes. However, such virtual interactions must not be used to exclude women in physical interactions. Greater availability and access to use virtual platforms has allowed for many more opportunities for greater interaction on the women and peace and security agenda, particularly at the grass-roots level.

Allow me to conclude by paying tribute to all the women peacekeepers, peacebuilders and activists and women involved in peace processes, negotiations and mediation. Without those courageous women, those most affected by conflict — women, girls and children — would be left unprotected and their voices unheard. We must all commit to doing all we can to ensure that such women are able to carry out their work without fear of threats, violence or intimidation.

Annex X**Statement by the First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, Emine Dzhaparova**

Ukraine appreciates Norway's initiative in holding this open debate, which is timely and important for the United Nations membership in general and conflict-affected countries — including, unfortunately, my own — in particular.

While my delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union and by the representative of Canada on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security on this subject (see S/PV.8949), I would like to make a number of points in my national capacity.

Ukraine fully condemns all forms of violence, including threats, harassment, attacks and reprisals against women peacebuilders, human rights defenders and gender-equality advocates. For Ukraine, this issue is of paramount importance given the fact that for almost eight years it has been suffering from armed aggression on the part of the Russian Federation, with devastating humanitarian and gender-related consequences.

Women are often among the victims of war and hostages. Currently, 296 people, including 30 women, are still being held hostage in the occupied areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. Natalia Shylo, a Ukrainian school teacher, is one of them. She was detained in occupied Donetsk in July last year on suspicion of espionage. Owing to Russia's armed aggression, more than 900,000 women have been forced to flee their homes. That number represents 60 per cent of the total number of internally displaced persons — 1.5 million people, which puts Ukraine in ninth place in the world in that respect.

The people living in the occupied territories, who should enjoy the protection of international law, face intimidation, detention and ill-treatment, as well as physical and sexual violence. The occupied territories have become a haven for discriminatory practices and gender inequality.

As a party to the conflict, Russia has sought to destabilize Ukraine. At the moment, having amassed troops on Ukraine's borders, Russia is threatening to attempt a fatal assault on Ukraine's sovereignty.

Under circumstances involving intimidation and persecution, a large number of women human rights defenders have been forced to leave temporarily occupied Crimea and areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions.

Those who have chosen not to leave Crimea but to continue to stand up for human rights are in a particularly vulnerable position. Their activities are constantly hindered through the imposition of fines, citations and warnings. On 23 November, 10 women were detained upon their arrival in occupied Simferopol, where they had come to greet lawyer Edem Semedlyaev following his release.

The families of political prisoners — the wives, mothers, daughters and sons of those illegally detained — have been left alone and must deal with their circumstances. They must keep on leaving and earn their daily bread on their own.

In some Crimean villages densely populated with Crimean Tatars, so-called "women's streets" have appeared. Many children need long-term psychological rehabilitation because of the trauma inflicted during house searches and the arrests of their fathers.

Ukraine recognizes the importance of the full and equal participation of women in all endeavours aimed at preventing and resolving conflicts, in peacebuilding and in peacekeeping.

In that regard, my country is continuing its relentless efforts in the context of the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, in particular in the framework of the second national action plan for the years 2021-2025 adopted by the Government of Ukraine in 2020.

Ukraine's second national action plan focuses on achieving the greater participation of women in decision-making, in particular in the areas of national security, defence and peacemaking. It also aims in particular to address gender-based and conflict-related sexual violence.

Despite its continuous wartime struggle, Ukraine has made strides in that respect. One such indicator is Ukraine's significantly improved standing in the Women, Peace and Security Index, introduced in 2017, which ranks countries in terms of women's inclusion and access to justice as well as security aspects. Ukraine is currently ranked number 66 out of 170.

I must emphasize that Russia's aggression against my country was one of the key factors in the greater involvement of women in peacemaking processes. Many Ukrainian women have chosen to actively engage against armed aggression in defence of their country and their loved ones.

Since 2014, the participation of women in Ukraine's military has increased significantly. Today women constitute 15 per cent of Ukraine's armed forces. That number has increased more than sixteenfold since 2008 — from 1,800 to more than 31,000. Of those, 1,000 women are senior officers, including one who holds the position of Deputy Minister of Defence of Ukraine. Of those in active duty on the front defending Ukraine against Russia's aggression, more than 10 per cent are women. In addition, women volunteers provide substantial support on the front lines.

I would also like to highlight the fact that currently seven Ukrainian women personnel are involved in international peacekeeping and security operations, constituting 8.3 per cent of Ukraine's total contribution.

Among the priorities of the Government of Ukraine is the reintegration of veteran women because of the challenges that they face upon returning to a peaceful life. The difficulties they face range from finding employment and obtaining free medical care to overcoming negative stereotypes.

The Government of Ukraine is stepping up its efforts to ensure gender equality and women's empowerment and is focusing on providing appropriate support to women who have suffered sexual violence in the context of the armed aggression.

Ukraine is fully committed to continuing its efforts to raise awareness of and promote the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.
