



Statement on Women's rights and non-state terrorist groups

Background

Violence against women has been used in conflicts throughout the known history of man. In modern times, it has often been met with denial and silence. It has seldom been mentioned in our history books. Slowly, it is being brought to light.

The United Nations has created understanding of the need to protect women and girls during conflict and post-conflict situations, and of the role women must have in conflict resolution and peace-building. The UN Security Council 'Resolution 1325 on Women and Peace and Security', adopted in 2000, was an important milestone.

The United Nations depends on the support and actions of its Member States.

Non-state extremist and terrorist groups create new conditions. They move between countries and act across national borders. UN reports, including those of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sexual Violence in Conflict, inform the international community of an increase in the abduction, rape and selling into slavery of women and girls in conflict areas. In these situations, violence against women is used to degrade, humiliate and dehumanize people and to actively displace them.


The so-called "Islamic State", ISIS, is a unique challenge. It is well-run, disciplined and controls considerable territory. It combines a narrow and selective interpretation of religious rulings with sophisticated use of information technology.

ISIS not only uses violence against women as a tactic of terror and as means of economy but makes it part of ideology. Violence against 'infidel' or 'heretic' women and girls is presented as a justified act.

Statement

The international community must join efforts to stop the systematic violation of women's human rights perpetrated by ISIS and other non-state actors. It is not only a women's issue but also a complex emergency and a growing threat to international peace and security.

Expressing concern and condemning the use of sexual violence as 'tactic of war' is not enough. It takes strong commitment and willful action.



Zonta International is an organization pledged to empower women at the global and local levels, and to promote justice and universal respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Zonta International calls on the United Nations and its Member States to commit to stop violence against women in conflicts, and to find effective short-term and long-term working methods. Those may include to

- support nations and regions with the will and capacity to stop the territorial expansion of extremist and terrorist groups
- mobilize humanitarian aid to refugees, counteract stigmatization of survivors of violence and help them rebuild their lives
- develop response to violent forces in cooperation with moderate religious leaders who understand the issues
- prevent recruiting of group members through information and education, and through social and economic initiatives, directed at those at risk
- find ways to block the groups' income sources such as oil, natural gas, minerals and antiquities
- hold perpetrators accountable for their crimes
- involve affected countries in serious efforts to solve conflicts
- strengthen the political will for implementing Security Council resolutions.

Zonta International

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