

Shared Commitments on WPS

Joint Press Stakeout on the situation of women in Sudan

We, the Security Council signatories of the Statement of Shared Commitments for the principles of Women, Peace, and Security (WPS), Albania, Brazil, Ecuador, France, Gabon, Japan, Malta, Switzerland, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, and the United States have come together to express deepest concerns regarding the dire situation of women and girls in Sudan.

Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) continues to plague many conflict-ridden regions across the globe and can amount to violations or abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law. Regrettably, Sudan is no exception. The ongoing conflicts in Sudan have resulted in an alarming increase in instances of conflict-related sexual violence, particularly affecting women, and children.

Reports of rape, including gang rape, sexual slavery, abduction, and sexual harassment have been prominent throughout the conflict. Women and girls, particularly in the Darfur region, are subjected to horrifying acts of sexual and reports of gender-based violence as a tactic of war to instill fear and control in the population and assert dominance over local communities.

We condemn in the strongest terms possible the use of SGBV during the ongoing hostilities and call for the immediate cessation of violence. We support the Secretary-General's call for mediators to help secure firm commitments from warring parties to cease all acts of conflict related sexual violence and urge the fighting parties to uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law and respect human rights.

The parties to the conflict must take full responsibility for preventing any acts of sexual and gender-based violence committed by their members and should issue command orders that prohibit sexual violence. Allegations of these crimes must be investigated, and perpetrators must be held accountable. Impunity for unconscionable acts lets new cycles of violence deepen and emboldens perpetrators.

It is imperative that survivors receive the necessary support to recover from such violence. This includes access to medical care, including sexual and reproductive health care, psychosocial support, legal assistance, reintegration, and protection from further harm. All parties to the conflict must refrain from targeting civilian objects, including those that are medical facilities, and we call on all parties to ensure that personnel providing essential, survivor-centered, trauma-informed support to survivors of sexual and gender-based violence have safe and unhindered access to all those in need.

We also emphasize the importance of ensuring the full, equal, meaningful, and safe participation of women and women-led organizations in all aspects of the peace process and decision-making. Their freedom to participate is not only a human right but also essential for building sustainable peace and ensuring the needs, perspectives and choices of women and girls are included in conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction efforts.

We stand united in our commitment to ending sexual and gender-based violence in Sudan, holding perpetrators accountable and improving the protection and redress of women and girls.