

Note on the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons' address to the Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security – Displaced Women and Girls: Leaders and Survivors

On 28 October 2014, the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Chaloka Beyani, participated in a Security Council open debate on “Women, Peace and Security – Displaced Women and Girls: Leaders and Survivors”. The Special Rapporteur briefed the Council at the invitation of Argentina, who held the October Council presidency, alongside representatives of States and other experts, including the Assistant Secretary-General of Peacekeeping Operations, Edmund Mulet, the Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, and the representative of the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, Suaad Allami.

Mr. Beyani thanked States for their increasing cooperation with his mandate mentioning his recent visits to Kenya, Azerbaijan, Côte d’Ivoire, Haiti and Ukraine; these missions are significant in that they provide an early warning system to the international community on the actual causes, conditions and situation of displacement. 2014 saw an unprecedented peak of persons forcibly displaced within their own countries due to armed conflict, generalized violence or human rights violations. In many countries, persons are also forcibly displaced by natural disasters, further compounding existing vulnerabilities. Women and girls account for some half of the world’s IDP population.

Since the 1990s, greater attention has been paid to the rights and needs of women and girls in emergency and post-conflict situations, and to promoting gender-sensitive approaches in humanitarian, development and early recovery response, including in a wide range of resolutions, policies, gender-mainstreaming efforts and targeted programmes. However, according to Mr. Beyani, responses to internal displacement still do not adequately address the specific concerns and roles of women and girls. In his experience as mandate-holder, women and girls continue to be targeted as a means of armed conflict, to destroy and humiliate communities, to manipulate demographic composition of communities, for sexual slavery and sometimes suffer forced sterilisation. In addition, displaced women often have to assume new gender roles that further expose them to gender based violence, including physical violence, as illustrated by the testimony of internally displaced women: “if we let our husbands and male children fetch firewood, food or water, they will be killed whereas we may be raped but spared death”.

Mr. Beyani stressed that in order to respond to these intricate problems with far-reaching consequences, more must be done to respond adequately to the specific protection concerns of internally displaced women and to find long term solutions. First of all, data should be collected disaggregated by sex, age, location and other key indicators to enable effective advocacy and the development of programmes to respond to the specific needs of internally displaced women at all stages of displacement. Secondly, a more preventive approach to sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) is essential and in this regard gender-sensitive training should be provided more systematically to police and military forces, judiciary and social workers. Thirdly, ensuring access to justice and accountability mechanisms is key when addressing internal displacement with a gender lens. Therefore, in addition to taking all measures to combat impunity for SGBV and provide survivors with access to appropriate support, States should also consider how internally displaced women’s concerns can be addressed through transitional justice measures such as truth and reconciliation commissions as well as reparations. In addition, donor accountability for gender equality programming for IDPs is also essential and should entail more effective integration of gender issues into donor practices. Last, involvement and leadership of internally displaced women in finding durable solutions that address their very specific concerns is critical and they must be able to participate in the

development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of laws, policies, programmes and activities that affect their lives at all stages of displacement.

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Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons on the situation of internally displaced women (2013)

http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/23/44

Security Council resolution 1325 (2000)

<http://www.un.org/en/sc/documents/resolutions/2000.shtml>

Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (1998)

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/IDPersons/Pages/Standards.aspx>