

Commemoration of the 20th anniversary of UNSCR 1325: UK statement

Thank you Chair

The UK would like to thank the Albanian Chair-in-Office for including the 'Commemoration of the 20th Anniversary of UNSCR 1325' at today's Permanent Council. We are delighted to welcome Melanne Verweij to the Permanent Council. We highly value her insightful contributions on the WPS agenda, and gender equality more broadly.

Today's commemoration of the 20th Anniversary of UNSCR 1325 follows a series of events on Women, Peace and Security over the last ten days. We have benefited from the many experiences that were shared, as well as the suggestions and recommendations for taking forward the WPS agenda. We need to build on this impetus and momentum in the OSCE, and focus our efforts on ensuring we fully implement UNSCR 1325. The forthcoming Ministerial Council offers an excellent opportunity to do this.

At yesterday's FSC on Women, Peace and Security, I delivered a statement on the essential contribution of women to achieving sustainable peace and security. I wanted to elaborate on one element of that statement today.

The UK is committed to amplifying the voice of women peacebuilders, who carry out their crucial work at great personal risk. The noticeable rise in reprisals against women peacebuilders across the globe was recognised in UN Security Council Resolution 2493 in 2019, which:

Strongly encourages Member States to create safe and enabling environments for civil society, including formal and informal 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, including in situations of armed conflict, and to address threats, harassment, violence and hate speech against them

This year, we have seen the situation worsen again, as the COVID-19 pandemic has distracted attention from protecting women peacebuilders, who are often amongst the first to respond in their communities.

We should all support and recognise the legitimacy of women peacebuilders and ensure that they can carry out their work free from threats and violence.

In this regard, the UK is supporting a 'Protection Framework for Women Peacebuilders' from the International Civil Society Action Network. This framework aims to address a number of threats that women peacebuilders face when carrying out their work.

The Framework will provide guidance and recommendations to states and multilateral organisations on how best to prevent and respond to reprisals. It will cover: building a legal and political safety net for women peacebuilders; prevention and mitigation of threats against women peacebuilders in the field; security for women peacebuilders at the peace table and in international spaces; and emergency relocation and assistance for women peacebuilders. The Framework will be officially launched tomorrow. We encourage all OSCE participating states to endorse the 'Protection Framework for Women Peacebuilders.'

In concluding, I would like to express my appreciation to Albania, Sweden, Slovakia, Finland and Germany, as well as to the OSCE Secretariat for keeping Women, Peace and Security high on the organisation's agenda over the last week or so. We also need to keep this high on our agenda every day, as we seek to fully implement UNSCR 1325, and as we approach the Ministerial Council. This is important in order to realise our aim of comprehensive security – which by definition means comprehensive security for all – in the OSCE region.