



Permanent Mission of the Republic of Kenya  
to the United Nations, New York

UN SECURITY COUNCIL  
ANNUAL OPEN DEBATE ON WOMEN AND PEACE  
AND SECURITY

STATEMENT BY AMB. MARTIN KIMANI,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE

26 OCTOBER 2023

I thank His Excellency Ambassador Mauro Vieira for convening this important debate on the anniversary of resolution 1325.

I also thank the Secretary-General and the other briefers for their insights.

The role of women in peace and security is determined daily, as evident in the frequent gendered violence that countless girls and women face, especially in armed conflict where sexual assault is often weaponised.

**Excellencies and distinguished colleagues,**

The current crisis in Israel and the Gaza Strip is only the latest example of such gendered impacts. The terrorist attacks by Hamas have severely harmed Israeli women in ways too distressing to detail here. Our deepest sympathies go to the victims and survivors of such violence. We unequivocally condemn this terrorism and acknowledge Israel's right to defend its citizens against Hamas's actions.

UN agencies on the ground in Gaza report an extensive humanitarian emergency. The Population Fund estimates that

50,000 women in Gaza are presently pregnant, with 5,500 anticipated to deliver next month. Alongside other civilians, these women face significant hardships due to ongoing military operations. They are often deprived of safe birthing services, vital supplies, and essentials like protection from airstrikes, food, and water.

Immediate, unhindered humanitarian access is imperative to address the pressing needs of girls and women in Gaza.

As the crisis escalates, it's essential for the voices and stories of mothers and daughters to be heard and valued. Women are too often portrayed in media mainly as victims, sidelining their roles as leaders or decision-makers. This very marginalisation spurred the creation of Resolution 1325 nearly twenty-five years ago.

The WPS agenda can champion the inclusion of women's perspectives in national and global dialogues concerning security, reconciliation, and justice. Such an approach fosters unity in recognising the shared challenges girls and women encounter across divisive boundaries. There's a pressing demand for forums that promote dialogue, education, activism, and

policy-making. These spaces can bolster collaborative networks that accentuate women's voices, paving the way for their impactful roles in justice, accountability, peacebuilding, and decision-making in both Israel and Palestine.

**In conclusion, Mr President,**

The war between Israel and Hamas disrupts a status quo that was unacceptable to Kenya which understands the Palestinian yearning for independence and sovereignty. It was unacceptable to us who sympathise with Israel's constant vigilance against existential threats. The path forward requires a renewed dedication to a peace process that rejects terrorism as an acceptable form of resistance and steers to a two-state solution.

Without women's insights and interests at the core of discussions with Israel, Palestine, and primary regional and global stakeholders, we jeopardise the potential for enduring peace, and risk further calamity. Thank you.