



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY  
TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE GIRL

Delivered by Ambassador Anne-Kirsti Karlsen on behalf of Andorra, Canada, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Monaco, San Marino, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom at the Permanent Council, Vienna, 19 October 2023

Mr. Chair,

I am delivering this statement on behalf of Andorra, Canada, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Monaco, San Marino, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and my own country, Norway.

On October 11<sup>th</sup>, we observed the International Day of the Girl. This is a day dedicated to recognizing the rights of girls, while also shedding light on the inequalities and injustices countless still face.

As we mark this day, it becomes impossible not to reflect on the plight of girls affected by conflict and war. For this is not just a day to take stock of progress, but one to acknowledge how far we are from realizing a safer, and more equal future for all girls around the world.

In Ukraine, children have experienced significant hardships due to Russia's war of aggression, with hundreds killed, and millions displaced. At the same time, we know that girls and boys are affected by conflict differently. Girls are at greater risk of becoming victims of sexual violence and exploitation, and they are often bypassed in reintegration programmes. We must not let the girls of Ukraine become forgotten survivors. Our thoughts are also with Israeli and Palestinian children; the children of Nagorno-Karabakh; and those in other conflict areas, who are innocently subjected to unacceptable suffering. All children have a right to live in peace, security, with dignity and without fear.

As we look back on this year, it becomes apparent that the strength and courage of girls cannot be underestimated. Around the world, girls have confronted power, and demanded their basic human rights be respected. From Iran to Afghanistan, girls have fought against oppression; for their right to live full and dignified lives. Earlier this

month, the Norwegian Nobel Committee awarded the Nobel Peace Prize to Narges Mohammadi for her tireless efforts to promote the rights of women and girls in Iran.

This is a testament not only to the crucial role of women and girls in advancing peace, but also our duty to amplify their voices, and respond to their calls for change. This is also a stark reminder that our current efforts are inadequate, and that too many girls within and outside the OSCE region live in fear of retribution for demanding equal rights. It is our duty to safeguard girls' rights and safety of girls.

Mr. Chair, dear colleagues,

We *cannot* accept that girls are attacked, violated, abused, or silenced. Our future depends upon it. Our future depends on promoting and respecting girls', their rights, and on strengthening their voices, recognizing their leadership, and ensuring that they can grow up in an environment of peace and stability, to which they are entitled.

Thank you.

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