

Securing Justice for Women in Post-Conflict States

Opening remarks by Mr. Ivan Šimonović, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, at the panel discussion titled “[Securing Justice for Women in Post-Conflict States](#),” held at UN Headquarters in New York, 2 May 2011.

[Check against delivery.]

Excellencies
Distinguished Panellists,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

A warm welcome to this important and timely panel event on “Securing Justice for Women in post-conflict states,” a joint initiative of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and UN Women.

As you may be aware, this year the Security Council and the General Assembly will consider issues relating to rule of law and transitional justice. This will be the first time since 2004 these inter-governmental bodies have taken up, in a substantive manner, such issues. The UN Security Council requested the Secretary-General to provide a follow-up report to his 2004 report on “*The rule of law and transitional justice in conflict and post-conflict societies*.” The 2011 report will take stock of the progress made in respect to the implementation of the recommendations contained in the groundbreaking 2004 report, and consider further steps required with regard to the promotion of the rule of law in conflict and post-conflict situations. In addition, the General Assembly included an agenda item for its 66th Session that will cover rule of law and transitional justice in conflict and post-conflict situations.

Since 2004 there has been a growing understanding that transitional justice approaches must pay special attention to abuses committed against those most affected by conflict, particularly women and girls; as well as to the gender-dimension of the harm suffered; and the need for special measures to ensure that women receive adequate redress for conflict-related violations.

Women are also seizing the post-conflict moment to play a powerful role as advocates for gender equality more broadly, including by focusing attention on the role that transitional justice processes can play in furthering transformative justice for women. This is consistent with efforts of the UN Security Council to ensure women’s involvement in all aspects of post-conflict recovery and peacebuilding. But much more still needs to be done to include women’s voices in the design, implementation and evaluation of transitional justice mechanisms.

In order to complement the forthcoming inter-governmental processes, OHCHR and UN Women organized this panel event to reflect on the role played by women in

transitional justice processes, focusing on experiences in Latin America, Africa and Asia from both the perspective of victims and advocates for lasting change. The panel's objectives are specifically:

- To examine the nature of conflict-related violations and violence experienced by women and its impact on their lives,
- To examine women's empowerment/participation in the peace process & post-conflict governance and the inclusion of a gender-sensitive agenda in transitional justice processes,
- To explore the continuing challenges/obstacles women face in their search for truth, justice and reparations and how to strengthen the role of government and civil society, particularly enhancing knowledge of the legal and policy framework to effectively engage the TJ process; and to
- Provide recommendations for reforms to the transitional justice agenda and mechanisms with a view to ensuring full and equal access to justice for women — including in the types of violations redressed, mandates, composition, and nature of the processes themselves.

With a dynamic and outstanding panel of expertise from around the World, I look forward to a rich and inter-active discussion to further assist Member States during their discussions on this important issue. If I may now turn the floor over to my distinguished co-chair, [Ms. Lakshmi Puri](#), Deputy Executive Director of UN Women.