



Oral Statement
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The impact of conflict and insecurity on women, girls and children

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Today, I will share with you Zawadi's story. Zawadi is a mother of 9. But she doesn't know the father of her 8th child. She was raped by rebels while fleeing clashes in her village. For fear of reprisals, she never told anyone what happened. The perpetrators were 3 unidentified armed men.

Every year, millions of women around the world, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, fall victim to armed conflict. These violent conflicts, sometimes linked to extremism, do not spare women, young girls and even young children.

The women we accompany are victims of arbitrary executions, arrests, rape, sexual assault and many other gender based violence. Others are caught up in sexual slavery, enrolled in forced displacement. Sexual violence against women, young girls and even children is widespread in conflict situations, and is used as a tactic of war. Globally sexual violence is used as a weapon of war and a political weapon.

Many actions are being taken around the world, but the majority of actors are working on the consequences of war rather than on the prevention and root causes of conflict. The worldwide silence surrounding these atrocities, these war crimes and crimes against humanity, the silence in the face of these women, these young girls and even young children who lose their dignity and whose lives are often shattered, is unimaginable and unacceptable.

Today we call on the UN and member states to take urgent action, to collectively mobilise their resources to put an end to the conflicts and violence that are destroying the lives of women and girls, and tragically reinforcing inequalities between men and women.

We cannot wait until tomorrow. Tomorrow may be too late.