



## United States Mission to the OSCE

# International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

As delivered by Ambassador James S. Gilmore III  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
November 26, 2020

In commemorating the *International Day on the Elimination of Violence Against Women*, the United States reaffirms its strong commitment to gender equality and eradicating gender-based violence. The elimination of violence against women and girls is not just an issue of individual security, it is a matter of national and global security.

Several UN Security Council resolutions call on us to prevent sexual violence towards women and girls in conflict. Our message from June bears repeating: the United States stands with the victims of sexual violence in conflict, many of whom are stigmatized for actions beyond their control. The perpetrators must be brought to account. Civilian and military commanders must condemn and oppose all such crimes.

The United States is committed to UNSCR 1325 and the inclusion of *Women, Peace and Security*, which we have enacted in our national legislation. At the OSCE, we are proud to be a strong supporter of the organization's *Women, Peace, and Security* work through the "WIN for Women and Men" Extra-budgetary project. As this project takes shape, the OSCE will help women in conflict zones strengthen their mediation skills to be a part of solutions. The project also will contribute to advancing gender parity in security sector reform processes.

The global progress we have made in recent years in advancing the *Women, Peace, and Security* agenda, and in achieving gender equality, is fragile and easily eroded. We have seen an alarming rise in domestic violence and violence against women and girls this year in response to restrictions enacted around the world to protect public health and stem the spread of the coronavirus pandemic. Victims of domestic violence have had to shelter in place with their abusers, and many support services have been put on hold.

We stand with the victims of gender-based violence. We also are committed to ensuring that women are equally part of the solution. Women should be at the forefront of our global response to the coronavirus pandemic and its economic consequences. That is why Secretary Pompeo and the U.S. *Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues* Currie spearheaded the *International Call to Action on Women's Economic Empowerment*. On October 23, we were proud to join a network of 31 countries to champion economic development to offset the economic downturn caused by the pandemic.

Mr. Chairman, domestic violence and violence against women and girls are barriers to full gender equality. Words and commitments have the power to guide our actions. The OSCE is at the forefront of developing regional norms and assisting participating States to uphold their commitments. Practical support for *Women's Resource Centers* in Tajikistan demonstrates this

Organization can provide expertise to participating States as they shape policies and design remedies. This is the United States' statement today on this important topic

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.