

47th Session of the Human Rights Council

Statement by the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg

Item 3

Madame President,

It is my pleasure to deliver this statement on behalf of the three Benelux countries, Belgium, Luxembourg and my own country the Netherlands.

Violence against women and girls and domestic violence is a sad reality around the world. Women and girls are often exposed to serious forms of violence, such as domestic violence, intimate partner violence, sexual harassment, rape and online violence, which constitute a serious human rights violation and a major obstacle to the achievement of gender equality.

We deeply regret that Turkey, the first member State to ratify the Istanbul Convention by an unanimous vote at their Grand National Assembly, has decided to withdraw from this Convention. The Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence is the most far-reaching legal instrument to prevent and combat gender-based violence, as well as to ensure protection for victims and to bring perpetrators to justice. It has had a documented positive effect on the lives of women, children, families and entire communities. We cherish the fact that such international human rights instruments help ensure that all human rights, including women's rights, are guaranteed.

We call on all signatories of the Istanbul Convention to accelerate steps towards ratification of the Convention and benefit from its standards as well as from the tailor-made recommendations, scrutiny and support offered by Group of experts on action against violence against women and domestic violence. We also call on non-signatories of the Convention to sign up to it, as it is open for signature to all countries in the world and not just one regional group

We have to jointly fight all forms of violence against women and girls with all our strength in the most comprehensive and sustainable way possible.

Ms Simonovic

How can Member states, UN actors and regional mechanisms best work together to ensure that international standards regarding the qualification of rape as a human rights violation and a manifestation of gender-based violence are fully incorporated at the national level globally? Thank you, Mme President.