

Panel – Annual Day of Discussion on Women’s Rights

Panel on Accountability for Women and Girls in Humanitarian Settings

Center for Reproductive Rights

Speaker: Paola Salwan Daher

Thank you, Madam President,

This statement is delivered on behalf of the Center for Reproductive Rights, the Sexual Rights Initiative and Legal Action Worldwide. We thank the panelists for their interventions.

Human rights hold the humanitarian and development streams of work together and their fulfillment is the precondition to preventing violations from happening in the first place.

Women and girls in humanitarian settings face barriers when seeking justice and remedies for the violations they have endured. Disintegrating judicial systems in conflict areas, discrimination against refugee populations in host countries, fear of reprisals, and the stigma associated with sexual violence and with seeking sexual and reproductive health services all prevent women and girls from seeking justice and legal remedies.

This is why we must make rights-based accountability a priority.

Effective accountability mechanisms go beyond legal criminal accountability and require full, equal, effective and meaningful participation of women and girls and transparency as well as the ability to confer meaningful and effective remedies to victims and survivors of violations on a basis of non-discrimination.

All women and girls in humanitarian settings urgently need sexual and reproductive health care and services. The provision of sexual and reproductive health information and services are a crucial component of rehabilitation and reparations for victims and survivors and should not be overlooked. However, they are facing a wide range of barriers making it difficult for them to access these services.

Reparations should be transformative, meaning that legal and policy shifts are needed in order to prevent future violations. They should aspire, to the extent possible, to transform instead of reinforce pre-existing patterns of structural and intersectional discrimination and inequalities that are at the root cause of the violence that women and girls experience.

We therefore call on the Human Rights Council to continue its work on rights-based accountability for women and girls in humanitarian settings.

Thank you, Madam President,