

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
Thirty-sixth session
5 – 25 August 2006

The situation of women in the Middle East

Statement by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

1. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, during its 36th session, held from 7 to 25 August 2006, expresses its serious concern over the hostilities which have taken place in the Middle East and which have caused hundreds of deaths and injuries among civilians, which include women and children, extensive damage to infrastructure, loss of livelihood and the displacement of hundreds of thousands of persons.
2. The Committee has taken note of the statements of the High Commissioner for Human Rights of 31 July 2006 and 11 August 2006, as well as the extreme concern expressed by the Representative of the Secretary-General on human rights of internally displaced persons, as well as the statements of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing, and the Special Rapporteur on the right to food.
3. The Committee has further taken note of the resolution of the Human Rights Council of 11 August 2006 and of Security Council Resolution 1701 of 11 August 2006, which includes a call for a full cessation of hostilities. It welcomes the resolve of the international community to assist the Government of Lebanon with humanitarian and financial assistance to enable it to deal with the worsening humanitarian disaster, rehabilitation of victims, return of displaced persons and restoration of essential infrastructure.
4. Both Israel and Lebanon are long-time States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (3 October 1991 and 16 April 1997 respectively) and have, thereby, accepted the obligation to implement the provisions of the Convention. Both States have recently presented their periodic reports to the Committee.

5. The Committee calls upon all parties concerned to place special emphasis in all their current and future actions and activities on the respect for and protection of international human rights standards and norms, in particular those laid out in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which are inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights.

6. The Committee also calls upon all parties to comply with their obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and to also abide scrupulously by the provisions of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security, which have direct relevance for article 3, article 4, paragraph 1, and article 7 of the Convention. It encourages all parties to ensure women's full and equal participation in all aspects of peace, security and public life, and in particular to address the special needs of displaced women and children.

24 August 2006