

**Video Message from H.R.H. the Grand Duchess Maria Teresa of
Luxembourg**

Geneva Women Peace and Security (July 28, 2025)

Recorded on June 18, 2025

This session will focus on taking stock of the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda since the adoption of UN Security Council resolution 1325 in 2000. Women Speakers and Presidents will share information and views on progress and persisting challenges. They will also share experience and solutions on stepping up the leadership of women in peace and security, addressing the gendered effects of conflict on women and girls, and paving the way for inclusive and sustainable peace for the whole of society. They will reflect in particular on their role as women leaders of parliament in advancing the women, peace and security agenda.

Distinguished Speakers,

Honourable Presidents,

Dear Friends,

It is a great honour to address you today at this timely and urgent summit. Under the theme “Leading for inclusive and lasting peace”, we are reminded of our shared responsibility to redefine peace and security. This is a call to action. True peace can neither be inclusive nor lasting as long as women continue to be targeted in conflict.

In every conflict around the world, women and children pay the highest price. They lose homes, loved ones, and far too often, they lose their dignity to one of the most brutal and invisible weapons of war: rape.

Sexual violence is not collateral damage. It is strategic, systematic, and intended to terrorize communities, destroy families, and break spirits.

As Pramila Patten, the UN Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, reports, in only two months, between January and February this year, over 10,000 rapes were reported in refugee camps in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Among the victims, one in three was a child.

In Afghanistan, 28 million women are living as walled up alive.

In other crisis zones, such as Somalia, Ukraine, and Sudan, rape continues to be used as a weapon of war,

leaving women's bodies marked by violence and impunity.

And unfortunately, even on the migration route, 9 out of 10 women are victims of rape or sexual violence during their path to exile. This must stop! A subject that Stand Speak Rise Up has decided to tackle by supporting refugee women in Luxembourg.

We can no longer look away from this reality. There can be no lasting peace without justice for survivors.

There can be no inclusive peace without their active participation.

That is why I founded Stand Speak Rise Up! 6 years ago: to denounce rape as a weapon of war, to prevent its use, and to support survivors. We accompany them on every front: psychological, legal, economical, and social.

Our guiding principle is clear: "Nothing about us, without us."

Survivors must not only be heard. They are leaders, they are experts, and they must be central to the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

As parliamentarians, as women leaders, as decision-makers, as UN Global Champions for the fight against sexual violence in conflict, we have a duty to ensure their voices, to fight impunity, to invest in Survivor-centred support.

Together, we can and must create a future where no one is a weapon of war, where no one is condemned to live in terror and pain. Women's bodies must never be used as battlefields.