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For democracy. For everyone.

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Speech by Ms Anda Filip, IPU Secretary General

Regional Dialogue for Women Peace and Security: "Rebalancing Security: Institutionalizing a Gender-Responsive and Prevention-Oriented Security Approach in Europe and Central Asia"

15 September 2026

Dear colleagues and friends,

It is a great pleasure for me to address this important regional dialogue for Women Peace and Security, on 15 September, the International Day of Democracy. This is a fitting reminder that peace, security and democracy are deeply interconnected, and that inclusive institutions are essential to all three.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union was founded in 1889 to advance peace through dialogue. Back then, the IPU, like much of the world at that time, was a boy's club.

We have now come a long way.

I address you today as a woman and as the Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, an organization that has placed gender equality at the heart of its mission.

Just last year, at the 15th Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament, women parliamentary leaders gathered in Geneva reaffirmed that gender equality, inclusivity and women's leadership are essential foundations for sustainable peace and security.

I fully endorse their calls for putting the rights and empowerment of women and girls at the center of conflict prevention and recovery.

We cannot accept that all too often the bodies of women and girls continue to serve as battlefields.

Our priority is to have more women as mediators, legislators, community leaders and bridge builders, working alongside men as equal partners in building and sustaining peace.

But we know that effective leadership is not only about presence.

The IPU Plan of Action for Gender Parity in Parliaments provides a fundamental benchmark in this regard. It calls for parity in numbers, parity in influence and power, and for a culture of parity.

Parity in parliament is key so the institution can translate Women Peace and Security commitments into robust legislation, well-resourced national action plans, and sustained oversight.

Beyond numbers, we need women leading in foreign affairs and defense. And we need laws and policies that enable gender-responsive decision-making and respond to the security needs and lived realities of all people.

The Women Peace and Security agenda also requires engaging and supporting women-led organizations in early warning, prevention, support to survivors and recovery. For that they need access to decision-making, resources and protection from reprisals.

Dear friends,

Today's challenges demand a new, holistic and people-centred understanding of security that leaves no one behind. The human security approach recognizes that security is not only about protecting States and borders; it is also about protecting people and preventing insecurity before it becomes crisis.

A gender-responsive approach is an essential part of that shift. It puts gender parity and the rights of women and girls at the center, recognizing that building peaceful and resilient societies is a shared responsibility.

As we revive the Women Peace and Security agenda, let us build on General recommendation 40 by the CEDAW Committee which calls for parity in decision-making across sectors and at all levels, including in peace and security. The IPU was a proud partner of GR40 alongside UN Women.

Now is the time to transform these commitments into reality. The IPU can help parliaments translate this approach into legislation, budgets, oversight and stronger investment in prevention. We stand ready to help drive this shift forward.

Thank you.