



**Statement delivered by Special Adviser,  
Eva Dröfn Hassell Guðmundsdóttir, at the 87<sup>th</sup> Joint Meeting  
of the OSCE Forum for Security and Cooperation and  
the Permanent Council, Vienna, 8 March 2023.**

*Thank you, distinguished Chairs of today's meeting,*

Iceland thanks the Bosnia and Herzegovina FSC Chairpersonship and the North Macedonia OSCE Chairpersonship for convening this meeting on Women, Peace, and Security as well as the Secretary General and the speakers for their valuable contributions.

*Chairs,*

Russia's war has caused tremendous destruction and suffering for Ukraine's population. Iceland remains appalled by reports of brutal violence committed against civilians by Russian troops in occupied regions of Ukraine, including conflict-related sexual violence. The true scale of this violence is yet to be known. Russia must and will be held to account for its actions.

The women of Ukraine are actively and courageously participating in the defence of their country, demonstrating their leadership, determination, capabilities, and resilience. In Ukraine and all over the world, women are building peace every day, fighting for their rights, lives and even their countries.

Yet, women are still today too often excluded and WPS and gender equality commitments placed on hold during crises and conflicts. This is despite ample

evidence that gender equality is essential for sustainable peace and conflict prevention, and that the participation of women in peace processes produces better, longer lasting results.

The cycle of women being targeted during war, and then being excluded from political and peace processes, must stop. This includes all accountability and justice efforts.

*Chairs,*

Today's meeting is an important opportunity to stress the message of the WPS agenda: That gender equality goes hand in hand with stability and peace.

The full implementation and realization of the WPS agenda also requires ensuring the full enjoyment of human rights by all women and girls. Progress is slow and today we are facing a frightening pushback on hard-earned gains in women's rights. Much more needs to be done to ensure that there is peace and security for women including in their homes and everyday lives.

The road to security, peace, and cooperation in our region, as well as the world, is paved with gender equality, women's empowerment, participation, and leadership.

We must urgently act on our promises, place the WPS agenda at the heart of our work, and work together towards comprehensive security and sustainable peace, with equality, inclusion, and justice as our compass.

*I thank you.*