

The UK and partners call on countries to resist rollback and stand up for progress in advancing the human rights of all women and girls: UK-led Joint Statement at the UN Commission on the Status of Women General Discussion

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Statement by Ambassador James Kariuki, UK Chargé d'Affaires to the UN at the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

Madam Chair, I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of my own country, the United Kingdom and 30 other Member States of the United Nations, namely Australia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Japan, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Mexico, Moldova, Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Palau, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and Uruguay.

As we convene at the Commission on the Status of Women, we strongly reaffirm our unwavering determination that all women and girls have the right to live free from violence, discrimination, and oppression; to participate fully in their economies, politics, and societies; and to make the decisions which affect their lives.

While we welcome the Agreed Conclusions on access to justice that CSW members adopted on 9 March, we still have far to go.

In the thirty years since the Beijing Declaration, we have made significant progress towards gender equality around the world.

The share of women in parliaments has doubled; millions of girls have been educated; child marriage and female genital mutilation have fallen; maternal mortality rates have dropped, and millions more women have access to family planning.

This progress has been transformative in improving the lives of millions of women and girls, as well as building our societies and our economies.

Yet this progress is under threat.

We are witnessing a backlash.

A slowing, stalling, and even reversing of the gains we have made.

Women and girls are having their autonomy restricted, legal protections weakened, and continue to face violence and discrimination.

No woman or girl can access justice while they live under the threat of violence.

Together, we must do more to tackle the international emergency of violence against all women and girls, because that violence is not inevitable, but preventable.

As conflict and crises escalate around the world, we must work to prevent and respond to conflict-related sexual violence, support survivors, and tackle stigma.

And we must tackle new forms of online violence that cross borders, from online harassment to AI deepfakes.

No society can be just where women and girls do not have a voice in the decisions that shape their lives.

We must advance women's participation in politics, government and civil society; champion women's rights organisations and demand women's full, equal, and meaningful participation in building peace, while engaging men and boys as allies, who also benefit from gender equality.

Nor can a society be fair where women and girls cannot participate freely and safely in the economy.

We must secure more and better jobs for women, champion women's economic leadership and participation and support girls to access education.

Women and girls cannot access justice without the right to make decisions about their own lives and their own bodies.

We must ensure safe access to contraception, maternal care and essential health services for all women and girls, including the right to safe abortion.

We call on member states in every corner of the globe to resist this rollback and stand up for progress in advancing the full human rights of all women and girls, ensuring that equality is not just a list of commitments in an agreed text, but a lived reality.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/the-uk-and-partners-call-on-countries-to-resist-rollback-and-stand-up-for-progress-in-advancing-the-human-rights-of-all-women-and-girls-uk-led-joint>