

Resolution 46/1

Release of women and children taken hostage, including those subsequently imprisoned, in armed conflicts*

The Commission on the Status of Women,

Recalling its resolutions 39/2 of 31 March 1995, 40/1 of 22 March 1996, 41/1 of 21 March 1997, 42/2 of 13 March 1998, 43/1 of 12 March 1999, 44/1 of 2 March 2000 and 45/1 of 17 March 2001,

Recalling also the relevant provisions contained in the instruments of international humanitarian law relative to the protection of the civilian population, as such,

Taking into account the International Convention against the Taking of Hostages, adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 34/146 of 17 December 1979, which also recognizes that everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person and that the taking of hostages is an offence of grave concern to the international community,

Welcoming the adoption of the Beijing Declaration¹ and Platform for Action² adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women, as well as the final outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century",³ including the provisions regarding violence against women and children,

Recalling Commission on Human Rights resolution 2001/38 of 23 April 2001 on hostage-taking, adopted at the fifty-seventh session, of the Commission,⁴

Expressing grave concern at the continuation of armed conflicts in many regions throughout the world and the human suffering and humanitarian emergencies they have caused,

Emphasizing that all forms of violence in areas of armed conflict committed against the civilian population, including taking women and children hostage, seriously contravene international humanitarian law, in particular as set out in the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949,⁵

Concerned that, despite the efforts of the international community, acts of hostage-taking in different forms and manifestations, inter alia, those committed by terrorists and armed

* For the discussion, see chap. III.

¹ *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

² *Ibid.*, annex II.

³ General Assembly resolution S-23/3, annex.

⁴ See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2001, Supplement No. 3* (E/2001/23), chap. II, sect. A.

⁵ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, Nos. 970-973.

groups, continue to take place and have even increased in many regions of the world,

Recognizing that hostage-taking calls for resolute, firm and concerted efforts on the part of the international community in order, in strict conformity with international human rights standards, to bring such abhorrent practices to an end,

Expressing its strong belief that the rapid and unconditional release of women and children taken hostage in areas of armed conflict will promote the implementation of the noble goals enshrined in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”,⁶

1. *Reaffirms* that hostage-taking, wherever and by whomever committed, is an illegal act aimed at the destruction of human rights and is, under any circumstances, unjustifiable, including as a means to promote and protect human rights;

2. *Condemns* violent acts in contravention of international humanitarian law against the civilian population, as such, in areas of armed conflict, and calls for an effective response to such acts, in particular the immediate release of women and children taken hostage, including those subsequently imprisoned, in armed conflicts;

3. *Also condemns* the consequences of hostage-taking, in particular, torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, rape, slavery, and trafficking in women and children for the purpose of their sexual exploitation, forced labour or services;

4. *Strongly urges* all parties to armed conflicts to respect fully the norms of international humanitarian law in armed conflict and to take all necessary measures for the protection of the civilian population, as such, and to release immediately all women and children who have been taken hostage;

5. *Urges* all parties to armed conflicts to provide safe and unimpeded access to humanitarian assistance for these women and children;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General and all relevant international organizations to use their capabilities and efforts to facilitate the immediate release of civilian women and children who have been taken hostage;

7. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to prepare, taking into account the information provided by States and relevant international organizations, a report on the implementation of the present resolution for submission to the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-eighth session;

8. *Decides* to consider the question at its forty-eighth session.

⁶ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-third Special Session, Supplement No. 1 (A/S-23/13), resolutions S-23/2, annex, and S-23/3, annex.*