

Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security October 2014, Security Council Chamber

Statement by Mr. Khalek, Permanent Mission of Egypt to the United Nations

During the past 15 years, the Security Council has laid the foundations for a normative framework for the agenda on women and peace and security, starting with the landmark resolution 1325 (2000). Egypt noted with interest the Secretary-General's most recent report on women and peace and security (S/2014/693). Today's debate's focus on the situation of refugees, internally displaced persons and stateless women and girls is a good opportunity to follow up on specific commitments made across various normative frameworks relevant to this agenda. In that context, I would like to make the following points.

First, Egypt recognizes that women's economic, cultural, political and social empowerment is crucial to a life free of violence and a key element in sustainable development. Secondly, we are deeply concerned about the increasing rates and patterns of violence against women and girls, mass displacement flows and related humanitarian challenges that have occurred in many conflict and post-conflict settings in 2014, especially in countries bordering on Syria and in some parts of Iraq, Somalia and the Central African Republic. We agree with the Secretary-General's description of such violations as deliberate campaigns against women's rights. In that regard, we stress the indispensable role of justice and the rule of the law in protecting women's rights.

Thirdly, Egypt commends the serious investigations the United Nations has conducted in order to address violations and abuses of women's human rights committed by some United Nations peacekeepers and personnel. However, the investigations are still slow and inconclusive, and in that regard we highlight the significance of references to zero tolerance in the mandates of new field missions.

Fourthly, we see a gap between policies and standards and their implementation, with the biggest of these evident in the working methods of the Security Council. While we acknowledge that resolution 2122 (2013) on women and peace and security addressed some of those gaps, we believe that more systematic information-gathering, implementation and monitoring of implementation are still needed.

Fifthly, Egypt believes that the agenda for women and peace and security needs more financial resources directed to projects related to sexual and gender-based violence in conflict situations. We also stress the importance of strengthening the ability of the United Nations system to effectively prevent and respond, through early warnings and early action, to serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law.

The latest practices of the Israeli army in Gaza are clear violations of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of Arab women and girls under foreign occupation. According to the Secretary-General's report on Palestine contained in document S/2014/650, at least 2,104 Palestinians have reportedly been killed. That number includes at least 1,462 civilians, 495 of whom were children and 253 were women. In that context, Egypt expresses its regret that the Secretary General's report on women and peace and security (S/2014/693) is without a single reference to the atrocities committed against Palestinian women in the Palestinian occupied territories.

In that regard, we request the Secretary General and the field-based entities, particularly UN-Women and the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, to systematically include information on the situation of women and girls in the Arab occupied territories in their reports. We urge them to ensure that forcibly displaced populations are protected against any form of violence. Egypt reiterates its commitment to the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), in line with its international obligations, as well as its conviction that women could play a critical and indispensable role in resolving armed conflicts and post-conflict situations.

With regard to the reference made by the United States delegation to a rape incident in Cairo, although it is totally irrelevant to the theme of today's debate, I wish to state that all such incidents are being fully investigated and that perpetrators are duly prosecuted before the judiciary.

In conclusion, I also want to express my deep appreciation to the Argentine presidency for submitting an excellent concept paper (S/2014/731, annex) to the Council. It has already enriched the debate.