

**Security Council**

Seventy-third year

8234th meeting
Monday, 16 April 2018, 10 a.m.
New York*Provisional***Statement by the Representative of Ethiopia, Ms. Guadey:**

We thank the Peruvian presidency for organizing today's open debate on the women and peace and security agenda relating to the prevention of conflict-related sexual violence. We express our appreciation for the Secretary-General's annual report on this topic (S/2018/250). I would also like to thank the briefers for their respective remarks.

Conflict-related sexual violence has indeed become rampant in various conflicts and postconflict situations. We note that the Secretary-General's report contains useful recommendations that could form an important basis for addressing this serious challenge. The recommendations will have particular significance in the consideration of specific conflict or post-conflict situations, and the Council could explore ways and means of ensuring their implementation. The Council should encourage or pressure, as appropriate, all parties to an armed conflict to fully comply with international humanitarian law, particularly in relation to the protection of civilians.

The implementation by Member States of relevant regional and international legal instruments for the prevention, punishment and eradication of all forms of violence against women would also contribute to the national, regional and international response to victims of sexual violence. We note that progress has been registered, including through the alignment of national legislation to international standards and implementation of joint communiqués and actions plans in several Member States, as indicated in the report of the Secretary-General.

This notwithstanding, sexual violence continues to be used by belligerent parties in conflict and post-conflict situations in different parts of the world. In particular, extremist and terrorist groups, such as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab, are using it as a tactic of war to terrorize civilian populations and achieve their strategic objectives. The stigmatization faced by victims of sexual violence and the challenges in their reintegration process, as well as the impunity that the perpetrators of this heinous crime enjoy, are indeed deeply troubling.

Therefore, there is need to redouble our efforts in preventing conflict-related sexual violence, providing the necessary support to victims and fighting impunity. In this regard, the three-pillar priorities identified by Special Representative of the Secretary-General Patten could serve as the basis. In addition, the recommendations of the Secretary-General to the Security Council contained in his latest report, particularly in relation to engagement with relevant parties to an armed conflict, exploring the use of

periodic visits to address the issue, as well as the possibility of accelerated deployment of protection advisers, could form part of a comprehensive framework for preventing and addressing conflict-related sexual violence.

The Council should also continue to attach the utmost importance to preventing and addressing the root causes of conflict. Furthermore, measures aimed at reducing the vulnerabilities of civilians, including by enhancing the capacity of peacekeeping missions, as well as the Council's using all the available tools at its disposal, will be critical. In this regard, the Council could explore the recommendation of the Secretary-General to include sexual violence as part of the designation criteria on a case-by-case basis, particularly in the context of the use of mass rape and other forms of sexual violence by extremist and terrorist groups.

In post-conflict situations, the Council could further strengthen its peacebuilding efforts aimed at rebuilding national capacity and institutions, particularly the capacity of security and judiciary services to prevent and punish conflict-related sexual violence and addressing its root causes. That will enable the Council to fight impunity and bring perpetrators to justice, as well as to ensure the non-occurrence of such grave crimes. We have noted from the report of the Secretary-General that some of the information concerns incidents of conflict-related sexual violence that are linked, or alleged to be linked, to Government-affiliated forces.

In our view, such information should be communicated to the relevant authorities in a timely manner with a view to investigating and verifying its objectivity, accuracy and reliability. That, we believe, would contribute to fighting impunity and providing the necessary assistance to victims of conflict-related sexual violence and their families. Finally, I would like to conclude my remarks by reaffirming the commitment of Ethiopia to working with all the relevant actors, including the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, in preventing conflict-related sexual violence and fighting impunity in this regard.