

**Security Council**

Seventy-third year

8234th meeting
Monday, 16 April 2018, 10 a.m.
New York*Provisional***Statement by the Representative of the Holy See, Archbishop Auza:**

The Holy See would like to thank the Peruvian presidency for putting a needed spotlight on conflict-related sexual violence and on how it can be prevented and effectively addressed.

Since the Council adopted resolution 1325 (2000), the international community has developed a strong framework to facilitate women's increased role in peace and security and has achieved important results and made substantial progress, in spite of the increasing challenges and complexities of the international security landscape. On the side of the victims of conflict, however, women still suffer far too frequently, in particular from sexual violence perpetrated during conflict. Collective national and international efforts are greatly needed if the fight to minimize and end violence against women — in particular sexual violence — is to be won.

First, ever-greater resources and focus must be dedicated to conflict prevention. The Holy See supports the efforts of the Security Council, within the limits of its mandate under the Charter of the United Nations, to actively encourage Member States to settle their disputes through dialogue and negotiation. There is no better means to protect women from violence during conflict than by preventing the eruption of conflict itself. Attention must be given to ensuring that women's voices are heard and their effective participation is availed of throughout the whole process.

Secondly, the prevention of every form of violence against women in conflict and the protection of their legitimate rights and interests should be an integral part of peacekeeping operations. The importance of integrating women in peacekeeping missions can also be seen from that perspective. Host countries should be helped to prioritize the prevention of violence against women during conflict, while ensuring the inclusion and active participation of women in all stages of peace processes.

Thirdly, heightened attention and efforts to prevent violence against women should be sustained in post-conflict situations, which, more often than not, remain chaotic, lawless and dangerous, and are therefore environments that enable and facilitate violence against women and failure of prosecution. With the goal of eliminating the root causes of conflict, the international community should actively help post-conflict countries rebuild and ensure that the dividends of peace and development benefit the entire population. With regard to access to education, the Catholic Church has a long and proud history of placing great emphasis on providing young women and girls with access to quality education. Young women and girls today constitute the majority of students in Catholic educational institutions at every

level throughout the world. That is particularly true in regions where women and girls still suffer discrimination and in areas where there are ongoing conflicts. For instance, almost 80 per cent of the students of Bethlehem University, a Catholic institution, are young Palestinian women. They become educators and professionals who contribute greatly to peace and harmony in families and societies.

Survivors of violence in conflict should receive comprehensive assistance to ensure that they are able to recover fully from such violations and reintegrate into their societies. States should maximize their efforts, at both the national and international levels, to ensure the prosecution of the perpetrators of these crimes. The International Criminal Court plays a key role in that regard by judging crimes that have been recognized by the Rome Statute as war crimes and crimes against humanity, including those that may constitute crimes of genocide.

Women and girls suffer many forms of violence not only in situations of conflict but also in what we call normal daily situations. However, as Pope Francis said during his visit to Puerto Maldonado in Peru:

“Violence against women cannot be treated as normal, maintaining a culture of machismo blind to the leading role that women play in our communities. It is not right for us to look the other way and let the dignity of so many women, especially young women, be trampled upon.”

The Holy See is working with the rest of the international community to continue pursuing the goals of women and peace and security. Their role must be recognized and valued and their participation assured. Without the input and specific skills of women, the most comprehensive understanding possible of the causes of conflicts and the most effective solutions to end them and build peace cannot be attained, and the effective prevention of conflict-related sexual violence against women could hardly be achieved.