

**Security Council**

Seventy-third year

8234th meeting
Monday, 16 April 2018, 10 a.m.
New York*Provisional***Statement by the Representative of Kuwait, Mr. Alotaibi:**

At the outset, I would like to thank you very much, Sir, for convening today's debate on this important topic. I thank the Secretary-General for his useful report (S/2018/250), as well as Ms. Amina Mohammed, Ms. Pramila Patten and Ms. Razia Sultana for their valuable briefings. Our discussion today focuses on preventing sexual violence in conflict by empowering women and ensuring gender equality and access to justice.

In that regard, I would like to mention three main issues: first, the links among sexual violence, conflict, violent extremism and terrorism; secondly, addressing the root causes of sexual violence in conflict; and, thirdly, the importance of ensuring justice for survivors of sexual violence during conflicts.

First, with regard to the links between sexual violence, conflict, violent extremism and terrorism, this year marks the tenth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1820 (2008), which acknowledges that conflict-related sexual violence is a threat to international peace and security and requires an international response.

It also acknowledges that sexual violence is being used as a war tactic. The report of the Secretary-General confirms that once again by documenting the continuation of the targeting of victims on the basis of their ethnic, religious or political affiliation with the aim to forcibly displacing them, which is tantamount to ethnic cleansing.

The report also mentions instances of such acts being perpetrated in Congo and the Central African Republic, and elsewhere against the Rohingya. Based on resolutions 2231 (2015) and 2253 (2015), and taking into the account the Council's acknowledgement that sexual violence in conflict is a war tactic and a tool used by some terrorist and extremist groups, such violence also constitutes an element of the political economy of terrorism that is used in recruitment and financing.

The Security Council should hold accountable all perpetrators of such crimes and end their impunity. It should also further include in the mandates of peacekeeping and political missions tasks related to the empowerment of women in conflict and on holding the perpetrators of crimes of sexual violence accountable following the end of conflict, including referring such crimes, which amount to war crimes or crimes against humanity, to appropriate tribunals.

Secondly, with regard to the root causes of sexual violence in conflict, last year we all witnessed a retreat by extremist and violent terrorist armed groups, which led to new challenges in the areas that had been liberated from terrorism, including the need to hold to account those responsible for sexual violence and to reintegrate survivors. Sexual violence is still used as a means to force people to leave their land and to sexually exploit women and girls. It is perpetrated even by those responsible for refugee camps and by refugee smugglers. In such circumstances, the impunity enjoyed by perpetrators prevents displaced persons and refugees from returning to their homes and places of origin in safety and dignity. It also exacerbates and prolongs crises.

We agree with the Secretary-General that the best way to prevent sexual violence is to protect basic freedoms and human rights, support economic empowerment and fair political participation, build national capacity and provide assistance to the survivors of sexual violence, in particular women and girls who are marginalized or economically disadvantaged.

At the regional level, the State of Kuwait hosted the International Conference for Reconstruction of Iraq, where it announced its contribution of \$1 billion in the form of loans and investments. We did so because we believe that the areas liberated from the terrorist Da'esh organization must be rehabilitated and provided support for comprehensive development in order to achieve sustainable development for women and girls, as well as national reconciliation and social justice.

Thirdly, with regard to sexual violence in conflict, the State of Kuwait attaches particular importance to addressing the consequences of sexual violence on survivors by providing them access to justice. We now have in place a robust normative framework that enables States to address sexual violence in conflict, beginning with resolution 1820 (2008), as well as other related resolutions, such as resolution 1988 (2011), which established the position of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and led to improved coordination among relevant entities, as well as resolution 1960 (2010), which established a mechanism to monitor and report on sexual violence in conflict.

We support the close cooperation between Member States and United Nations Action against Sexual Violence, aimed at compensating survivors, providing access to justice, respecting their culture and affording them the psychological, physical and social assistance they need. The root causes of sexual violence in conflict are numerous, as are its forms and victims. Ensuring justice is a multidimensional issue that requires a multidimensional response to address the short- and long-term psychological, physical, economic and social consequences of sexual violence.

We stress the importance of treating survivors and their children as victims first, as opposed to viewing them as being loyal to armed or terrorist groups. The national capacities of the Member States in dealing with such crimes must be reinforced.

In conclusion, while we speak of the importance of ensuring justice for the survivors of sexual violence, we would be remiss if we did not commend the steps taken by the Secretary-General in the implementation of the zero-tolerance policy towards sexual exploitation and abuse. We take note of the special measures taken with regard to protection from sexual exploitation and abuse mentioned in the

Secretary-General's report. The United Nations commitment to those measures will enhance its credibility and promote wide-ranging efforts to eliminate sexual violence.