

Mr. Mikayilli (Azerbaijan):

We would like to express our appreciation to the Russian presidency for convening this open debate and to thank all the briefers for their valuable contributions.

The consequences of armed conflict and violence, as well as the erosion of respect for international humanitarian and international human rights law, continue to have a devastating impact on millions of women and girls across the globe. We are deeply alarmed by the current displacement crisis and the wide range of violations that displaced people are facing. Effective protection measures in situations of displacement are required. In that context, the importance of gender-responsive approaches to refugee and migrant movements, as advocated by the Secretary-General in his report (S/2016/822), cannot be overemphasized.

The growing spread of violent extremism and terrorism also causes unspeakable suffering to women and girls. As it was highlighted during the Security Council open debate (see S/PV.7704) on conflict related sexual violence held in June, sexual violence is now also used as a tactic of terrorism. Moreover, restricting women's rights in conflict settings through the misappropriation of religion has become widespread and is a very dangerous development. It is therefore crucial to integrate the gender perspective while putting in place strategies to counter terrorism and violent extremism.

Access to education in crisis situations is vital not only in addressing the gender gap in school enrolment, but also for the empowerment of women and girls. We are encouraged by the commitment set out in the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (General Assembly resolution 70/1) to provide all children with education within a few months of their arrival.

We strongly condemn all acts of violence against women and girls in situations of armed conflict. Parties to conflict should respect their obligations under international humanitarian and international human rights law and bring the perpetrators to justice to combat impunity and ensure accountability. In the same vein, we support ongoing measures to prevent and address cases of sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations peacekeeping operations.

We welcome the contribution that landmark resolution 1325 (2000) has made to an increased recognition of the plight of women and girls in situations of armed conflict. In particular, the inclusion of the protection of civilians in the mandates of peacekeeping operations; the incorporation of women- and peace- and security-related provisions to peace agreements; the appointment of women as mediators, special representatives, special envoys and heads of missions; the increase in the number of female military and police personnel in United Nations missions; the establishment of the post of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict; the adoption of national action plans on women and peace and security; and the mainstreaming of gender equality and women's empowerment in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development can all be highlighted.

The suffering of millions of women and girls cannot be alleviated without putting an end to armed conflicts. That is a reality that we are facing in Azerbaijan every day. As it is well-documented by the United Nations and the Security Council, Armenia has unleashed a war and used force against Azerbaijan, occupied almost one fifth of its territory, carried out ethnic cleansing and committed other serious crimes during the conflict. Hundreds of thousands of Azerbaijani forcibly displaced persons are still deprived of the right to return to their homes. Regular ceasefire violations and attacks

on Azerbaijani towns and villages have recently become more frequent and violent, resulting in the killing or injuring of many Azerbaijani civilians. The most recent large-scale attack by the Armenian armed forces took place in April and claimed the lives of innocent civilians within the population of Azerbaijan. The April escalation was a vivid reminder that the status quo is dangerous and has the potential to re-escalate at any time, with unpredictable consequences.

In that regard, we fully support the call of the Secretary-General to redouble efforts to prevent and resolve conflicts, allowing for the realization of a more peaceful world.