

Security Council Open Debate on Sexual Violence in Council, April 17th 2013, Security Council Chamber

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

At the outset, Mr. President, allow me to express our appreciation for your initiative to convene today's meeting. Our appreciation also goes to Ms. Zainab Hawa Bangura, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, and Ms. Saran Keita Diakité, representative of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security.

Our meeting today is very timely in that it comes nearly one month after the adoption of the agreed conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women, which reflects the international community's firm stance against all forms and manifestations of violence against women and girls in all contexts, settings and circumstances, including crimes of sexual violence in conflict.

The report of the Secretary-General, entitled "Sexual violence in conflict" (S/2013/149), which was presented by his Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, highlights several concerns emerging this year, including the perpetration of sexual violence against men and boys as a tactic of war or in the context of detention or interrogation, children born as a result of rape in wartime, and the practice of forced marriages by armed groups. It also draws attention to the nexus between sexual violence and the illicit extraction of natural resources, the displacement of civilian populations, the inadequacy of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and security sector reform efforts, and the challenge of sexual violence being universally underreported for reasons that include the risk of reprisal.

The report responds to those emerging concerns through a set of important recommendations that include ensuring the deployment of women's protection advisers in United Nations peacekeeping operations and special political missions, thereby systematically responding to sexual violence in conflict in all the relevant situations. In that regard, my delegation would like to express its appreciation for the efforts exerted by Ms. Bangura and her team in the preparation of the first report since she assumed her responsibilities, which took into account the concerns expressed by Member States last year regarding the mandate of the Special Representative.

Sexual violence in conflict represents one of the most serious forms of violation of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. Such violations cause a lifetime of pain that cannot be healed. In that regard, Egypt stresses the importance of implementing policies of zero-tolerance for sexual violence, ensuring that all perpetrators be held accountable, whether they be the ones who committed, ordered or condoned such crimes, and that all perpetrators be pursued by any and all possible means. Despite the Security Council's unique ability to impose targeted sanctions on perpetrators as an important part of deterrence, Egypt emphasizes the importance of adopting preventive measures to address the spread of sexual violence in conflict as a priority. There is an urgent need to support the Member States concerned in preventing sexual violence, in ensuring zero tolerance for it and in prosecuting its perpetrators.

Egypt also believes that it is of importance to address sexual violence issues in the early phases of peace processes, in mediation efforts and in ceasefire and peace agreements, particularly in provisions on security arrangements, transitional justice and reparations. Increased attention must be paid to the survivors of sexual violence in conflict situations as an integral part of States' obligations towards them, including by setting up mechanisms aimed at preventing the recurrence of such crimes and by providing them with all the services and assistance they need, including rehabilitation and reintegration support.