

Security Council Open Debate on Sexual Violence in Council, April 2014, Security Council Chamber
Statement by Mr. Khan, Permanent Mission of Indonesia to the United Nations.

Allow me to begin by commending you, Madam President, on convening today's debate on the very important subject of sexual violence in the context of armed conflict. Indonesia also wishes to thank the Secretary-General for his report on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2014/181), containing some valuable recommendations, the implementation of which will strengthen the prevention and elimination efforts against this deeply troubling challenge.

Indonesia would also like to associate itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Viet Nam on behalf of the member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

While we applaud the evolution of a global normative framework on sexual violence in armed conflict, not least through the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, resolution 1325 (2000) and others, it is a tragic fact that citizens, particularly women, in large numbers continue to be victimized in conflicts. Being softer targets, women and children are particularly exploited as tactics in combat, becoming casualties too many times with impunity. With its multifold health, social, cultural and economic impact armed-conflict-related sexual violence not only affects the victims, but imposes long-lasting disarray on their families, communities and societies at large.

As a country that places high priority on providing conditions for its citizens in which they can live freely without fear and develop, Indonesia strongly believes that the first endeavour should be to build a culture of peace and tolerance and prevent armed conflict itself. For us, that means that the international community should also put a greater premium on the peaceful resolution of disputes while enhancing and sustaining support particularly to those countries that lack capacities and resources. But if the conflict erupts, there must be full adherence to the international humanitarian and human rights laws relating to citizens, and all vulnerable groups, including women and children, must be safeguarded effectively.

Indonesia stands for zero tolerance of sexual violence against all citizens — women, children and men — in armed conflict. To that end, the effort should not be limited to focusing on improving the prosecution and elimination of impunity against cases of sexual violence in conflict. It has to be a comprehensive undertaking with the United Nations system entities playing a more active and supporting role, coupled with an equally meaningful participation and cooperation by all Member States. Foremost in that respect is upholding the rule of law at both international and national levels I reiterate the significance of the United Nations role in that regard.

Since the primary responsibility falls on the nation State itself, there should be appropriate domestic law enforcement and justice mechanisms dealing with sexual violence in conflict with well-resourced and equipped institutions that can provide the needed care. There must be vigorous and continuous wholesome measures to build an environment and infrastructure in societies that strengthen the respect and protection of women and human life under all conditions.

We believe that the development of the United Nations civilian capacities initiative, along with the advancement of other relevant United Nations and non-United Nations programmes, can enable greater capacity-building in the area of safeguarding women and their rights in conflict-affected countries. While taking such steps, it is also vital that women be seen not just as victims, but also as peace enablers in conflict.

History has proven their credentials in creating peace. The policies of the United Nations system and outside it should therefore promote extensive measures to ensure the greater participation of women at all stages from conflict prevention to resolution, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Indonesia supports not only a larger number of women in United Nations peacekeeping missions, but a larger number of women in the leadership of peacekeeping missions as well as related offices in New York and elsewhere.

At this juncture, Indonesia has deployed female peacekeepers in several missions, including the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, and it is committed to increasing the number of its female peacekeepers. Our emphasis on preventing sexual violence in conflict is also evident in our having an adequate personnel capacity on the subject and in our protection of civilians in implementing mission mandates. We fully support the continuation of mandatory training on addressing sexual violence for all peacekeeping personnel. That is why the Indonesian Peacekeeping Centre has included training on the issue and will ensure the continuation of this exercise, based on the standards and materials provided by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

In conclusion, I want to underline the importance of the empowerment of women. Effective policies backed by action to accord them their due rights and equal opportunities will be critical to bolstering the overall work on preventing sexual violence against women and other citizens in conflict.