

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

Statement by Ms. Lucas, Permanent Mission of Luxembourg to the United Nations.

I want to thank you, Madam President, for organizing this important open debate on the issue of sexual violence in conflict, an issue to which my delegation attaches great importance and which, unfortunately, remains very topical. I thank the Secretary-General for the presentation of his second annual report on sexual violence in conflict (S/2013/149). I also thank Ms. Zainab Hawa Bangura for her very committed statement and the remarkable work she has carried out as Special Representative of the Secretary-General, with the support of the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict. Finally, I would like to thank Ms. Saran Keïta Diakité of Mali, who delivered a strong message on behalf of non-governmental organizations on the need to combat sexual violence, in particular in crisis areas in Africa.

With resolutions 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009) and 1960 (2010), we have given ourselves the means to act in the fight against the scourge of sexual violence in conflict. Today's open debate is an opportunity to take stock of the implementation of those resolutions and the challenges that lie ahead.

I fully align myself with the statement soon to be delivered on behalf of the European Union.

The evidence is clear: sexual violence in conflict spares no one. It affects adults and children, men as well as women, as evidenced by the increasingly frequent acts of sexual violence against men and boys as a tactic of war or in the context of incarceration or interrogation. The violence documented in Syria, Mali and the Democratic Republic of Congo is the sad illustration of those facts.

The situations of sexual violence in conflict are varied and widespread. That is why it is important for the Security Council to choose, from the arsenal at its disposal, the tools most suited to the different situations.

The Council's actions set an example, and its responsibility in this area is essential. That is clear in the explicit references to the agenda on women and peace and security in the agreed conclusions recently adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women, whose main theme, as I recall, was the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women.

Less than a week ago, I am pleased to say, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Group of Eight in London adopted a declaration on preventing sexual violence in conflict, which explicitly seeks to carry forward resolution 1325 (2000) and its successors, and contributes to the normative framework of resolutions on children and armed conflict. That declaration rightly recalls once again that the promotion and protection of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of women and children are at the foundation of our fight against sexual violence in conflict.

The Council must be fully informed before acting, which is why it is so important to establish follow-up, analysis and information-exchange mechanisms within peacekeeping operations and political missions and to provide for the deployment of sufficient numbers of women protection advisers, who have a crucial role to play in the coordination of the implementation of Security Council resolutions on conflict-related sexual violence. Luxembourg will remain committed to ensuring that future mandates, as well as the renewal of existing mandates, take into consideration this important aspect. As the Secretary-General underscored this morning, it is important to constantly incorporate that aspect into mission planning and budgeting.

Once the perpetrators of sexual violence have been identified, the Council can and must, through the

adoption of targeted measures, step up pressure on those responsible so that they are brought to justice before a competent court and judged. The Council should be able to draw on such an instrument systematically, in our view, following the practices established by the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004), concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo for the inclusion on Sanctions Committee lists of those suspected of acts of sexual violence. Information provided by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General would be highly useful in that regard.

It is under national jurisdictions that perpetrators should primarily be tried, and we must therefore support national Governments in their fight against impunity. Based on the principle of complementarity, international criminal justice still has an important role to play, and we very much welcome the efforts undertaken in that regard by the International Criminal Court.

In that context, it is noteworthy that a second arrest warrant has been issued against General Bosco Ntaganda, incorporating the major accusations of crimes against humanity, rape and sexual slavery. Today, Bosco Ntaganda is in The Hague to be judged for his crimes. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all Member States that contributed to his transfer to the Court.

Every victory against impunity is a victory against sexual violence, for only the certainty that a crime will not go unpunished is a real deterrent. The fight against impunity is also the first step in reinstating the rights of victims. It is not the only step: it is also necessary to take measures such as granting compensation to repair, as far as possible, the consequences of the damage caused.

We know the extent to which crisis resolution and post-conflict situations are volatile and precarious. That is why it is important once again to ensure the involvement of women in peace processes so that peace and ceasefire agreements fully and systematically take into account the issue of sexual violence.

The fight against sexual violence must also be integrated into all security sector and justice reform processes worthy of the name. In that regard, Luxembourg has supported a number of workshops, including in South Sudan and Liberia, aimed at strengthening the contribution of United Nations peacekeeping operations to the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). In particular, they sought to ensure that women were better represented at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts.

Conflict-related sexual violence is not inevitable. But to bring it to an end, we must take into account the magnitude of this scourge. The alarming report before us today makes it clear that sexual violence in conflict, although it varies with context, is systematic and universally widespread. It is up to us all to take on our responsibility to bring it to an end.

In conclusion, we hope that today's debate, the Special Representative's briefings to the Council on specific situations, such as that on Syria tomorrow, as well as the discussions the Council will hold over the coming months on this topic will enable real results to be achieved. In terms of follow-up, it would be particularly worthwhile to establish, as proposed by the Secretary-General, a system that would better enable us to monitor the fulfilment of commitments undertaken to fight sexual violence by the parties to a conflict in implementation of resolution 1960 (2010).