

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

I should like to thank the Secretary-General for his statement and Ms. Zainab Bangura, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, and Ms. Rhoda Misaka for their comprehensive briefings. Serbia aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the delegation of the European Union. In my statement, I shall add a few remarks on behalf of my country.

Serbia supports the fight against all forms of violence, especially against sexual and gender-based violence in all circumstances. Sexual violence in armed conflict presents one of the most serious forms of violation and abuse of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. In recent years, prevention and suppression and an adequate response to sexual violence in conflict has been the subject of intensive deliberations in the Security Council. We welcome the efforts made to that end. We support the activities undertaken by the Secretary-General and have followed the actions of Ms. Bangura very closely.

Significant efforts have also been made by Member States, civil society and non-governmental organizations in preventing and fighting this crime. However, much more must be done in order to fully eliminate sexual violence in conflicts. My country believes that the prevention of conflict-related sexual violence is of the utmost importance. We support the efforts invested within the United Nations to engage with State and non-State parties and obtain commitments to prevent and respond to conflict-related sexual violence.

We also support the recommendation of the Secretary-General to include the prevention of conflict-related sexual violence in the mandates of peacekeeping and special political missions, as well as to continue with the deployment of women protection advisers in peacekeeping missions and the training of all United Nations peacekeeping personnel using the innovative tools developed by United Nations Action against Sexual Violence partners.

The victims of sexual violence in conflicts are by and large non-combatants, in particular vulnerable population groups such as women and children. We are deeply concerned that refugees and internally displaced persons are at increased risk of sexual violence in conflicts. In some cases, that has led to human trafficking and sexual slavery. All victims of sexual violence must be provided with psychosocial, economic and legal assistance and non-discriminatory health care, including appropriate services for children and male survivors.

We firmly believe that international activities aimed at addressing sexual violence in conflicts must be coordinated among Governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations based on valid information and measurable results.

Proceeding from resolution 1325 (2000), in 2010 Serbia adopted its national action plan for the 2010-2015 period concerning the implementation of the resolution.

In addition, Serbia also implements its national strategy for the prevention and suppression of violence against women in the family and intimate partner relationships, adopted in May 2011.

By signing the Declaration of Commitment to End Sexual Violence in Conflict in September last year, 144 States, including Serbia, pledged to do more on the prevention of sexual violence in conflict and to better support the victims. In that way, a strong message was sent that sexual violence in conflict is unacceptable and that those responsible will be brought to justice, prosecuted and punished appropriately. We believe that it is necessary to work towards preventing these crimes precisely by raising awareness that they cannot go unpunished. The role played by Governments and by international criminal justice in that regard is very important.