

**Security Council Open Debate on Sexual Violence in Council, April 17<sup>th</sup> 2013, Security Council Chamber**

*Statement by Mr. Marn, Permanent Mission of Slovenia to the United Nations.*

It is my great honour to address the Security Council today on behalf of the Human Security Network, a cross-regional network that consists of Austria, Chile, Costa Rica, Greece, Ireland, Jordan, Mali, Norway, Panama, Switzerland, Thailand, the Republic of South Africa as an observer, and my own country, Slovenia. Let me thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, his Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Zainab Hawa Bangura, and Ms. Saran Keita Diakité of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security for their comprehensive statements. On behalf of the members of the Network, I should also like to express our great appreciation to the presidency of Rwanda for convening this very important open debate. The Human Security Network has traditionally been engaged in these debates, since women's full enjoyment of all human rights has been at the core of our group's agenda from its inception.

I should like to commend the regular interaction among the Security Council, UN-Women and the Office of the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict. We deem that interaction to be of paramount importance. We also strongly encourage more direct information sharing between the Special Representative and the relevant Sanctions Committees and associated expert groups, similar to the practice that has been developed on children and armed conflict.

Our group remains greatly concerned about certain facts provided in the Secretary-General's report on sexual violence in conflict (S/2013/149) that indicate systematic and widespread sexual violence used to punish, intimidate and subjugate women, men and children. In addition, the report highlights the increased use of sexual violence as a means of displacing populations, which represents a worrying trend.

The report also refers to two highly problematic trends that were noticed by the independent international commission of inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, namely, the occurrence of sexual violence during house searches and at checkpoints and the perpetration of rape and torture in the context of detention. We call on all parties to cease such violations and any other sexual-violence-related violations and, in accordance with resolution 1960 (2010), to make specific and time-bound protection commitments in that regard. We also call upon the members of the Security Council to consider using all the other means at its disposal to address sexual violence in conflict, including making referrals to the International Criminal Court and other relevant actions.

All the necessary steps, including targeted measures, must be taken to protect individuals, hold perpetrators accountable and provide remedy for victims. It is essential that amnesty provisions not be applicable to crimes of sexual violence in the context of conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction. Ending impunity for perpetrators and those responsible in chains of command is also imperative, including personnel within the United Nations. At the same time, the Network believes that we have to place equal importance on addressing the root causes and the enablers of sexual violence in conflict, as well as on strengthening grass-roots women's organizations and additional networks that can provide assistance to victims of sexual violence in conflict. Only when those victims are treated with dignity and respect and given the necessary tools, treatment and care to enable them to protect themselves can they become real agents of change.

In that regard, the Network believes that applying a more people- or victim-centred lens to the issue would help. Moreover, we support the availability of reparations as a form of transitional gender justice. Reparations can deliver redress and acknowledgement of crimes suffered, and can contribute to the fight against impunity and to post-conflict reconstruction and the reintegration of survivors of

sexual violence.

The Human Security Network notes the report's recommendation regarding the adoption of sanctions and other targeted measures against individuals and entities by the relevant Sanctions Committees. In that regard, the exchange of information among United Nations peacekeeping missions, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and the Security Council's Sanctions Committees will be of great importance.

Let me briefly touch upon the already mentioned United Nations zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse for United Nations personnel. The Network takes note of the failure to include such a policy in the relevant resolutions, and therefore calls upon all the relevant actors to make more use of references to the zero-tolerance policy.

Noting the Council's creation of several tools with considerable potential for having an impact on the women and peace and security agenda on the ground, we remain concerned over its lack of implementation in some of the already mentioned areas.

In conclusion, even though it is not at the forefront of our discussion today, I should like to reiterate our group's commitment to promoting and enhancing the role of women in peace processes. While it is crucial to today's agenda that we maintain momentum in the fight against sexual violence, we would again like to underline the importance of women's empowerment as part of the solution. We need to see, and enable, women more and more as agents of change. Women's participation at decision-making levels in conflict resolution and peace processes cannot be overemphasized. Women's participation in establishing effective prevention and protection strategies can contribute to combating sexual violence in conflict and promoting gender equality. We also remain strong supporters of women protection advisers, who can positively contribute to facilitating and coordinating the implementation of Security Council resolutions on sexual violence in conflict within United Nations peacekeeping and political missions.

We also avail ourselves of this opportunity to highlight the importance of the recent adoption of the agreed conclusions on the prevention of sexual violence at the fifty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women, which, among other goals, seek to ensure that in armed conflict and post-conflict situations the prevention of and response to all forms of violence against women and girls, including sexual and gender-based violence, are effectively addressed. We must all strive towards enabling more protection for women and girls in conflict situations and encourage the empowerment of women and their systematic inclusion and meaningful participation at all levels.