



**Permanent Mission of the United Republic of Tanzania
to the United Nations**

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**STATEMENT BY
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PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**AT THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL
OPEN DEBATE ON THE AGENDA ITEM:
WOMEN AND PEACE AND SECURITY**

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STATEMENT BY H. E. DR. AUGUSTINE P. MAHIGA PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA DURING THE SECURITY COUNCIL OPEN DEBATE ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY: SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN SITUATIONS OF ARMED CONFLICT.,

NEW YORK, June 19, 2008.

Mr. President,

Allow me to congratulate you for organizing this open debate on women, peace and security. By focusing our discussion on sexual violence, the Security Council will be sending an authoritative message of condemnation to those parties that are perpetrating or condoning such acts in conflict situations as well as a message of hope to the victims. This debate is also contributing to defining an international code against sexual violence in conflict situation.

I thank the President of the General Assembly, the Deputy Secretary General and all the presenters for their animated presentations on this subject.

Mr. President,

The concern for protection of women and girls against sexual and gender based violence has been reflected in various Security Council documents. It is unfortunate that despite the numerous calls to protect women and girls, there has been an escalation of systematic and brutal acts of sexual violence and abuses as calculated instruments of war against civilians especially women and girls. The Security Council, with the support of Member States, needs to take bold measures to stop this trend. It is, therefore, our expectation that the discussions in this open debate will lead to recommendations that would enable the Security Council to respond effectively to the use of sexual and gender-based violence in conflict situations and crystallize international concerted action against such crimes.

Mr. President,

It is high time we recognize sexual violence as a pervasive criminal act in conflict situation with global manifestations. These targeted acts of violence add new dimensions to regional and international peace and security. We call upon all parties to conflict to end these barbarous acts and to take measures to protect civilians, including women and girls.

The Security Council needs to send a clear message to parties in armed conflicts that sexual violence in any manifestation is not condoned and that stern measures would be taken against the perpetrators so as to end impunity. We thus call upon Member States to comply with their obligations for prosecuting perpetrators as well as to support the work of the International Criminal Court in this regard.

Mr. President,

It is unfortunate that civilians, and in particular women and children, are increasingly targeted in the current warfare; humanitarian law is blatantly being violated and its perpetrators escape with impunity. There is thus an enormous challenge to the international community as a whole and to peacekeeping missions in particular, to ensure that civilians are protected. We are encouraged that sexual violence is included in some peacekeeping - protection of civilian mandates; these mandates need however, to be matched with political resolve and resources, doctrine and guidance. In the same vein, the national defense policies of troop contributing countries need to be explicit and emphatic on protection of civilians, including women and girls, in training their troops for peacekeeping missions. Equally national laws must be robust in dealing with those responsible for such acts.

Mr. President,

Sexual violence in conflict situations needs to be addressed holistically. In this regard, efforts to encourage women to report when they are attacked, as well as mechanisms to assist the victims need to be in place. In addition, programs to strengthen the rule of law need to be implemented, so as, to end impunity and provide justice to the victims. In the longer term community-based interventions to address the health, psycho-social and educational needs of children and adults, including men and boys, affected by and implicated in the violence need also to be in place. This means that interventions need to be carried out during and after the conflict. While we believe that national governments have the primary responsibility for the protection of their nationals, the support of the international community as appropriate, is critical in addressing sexual violence in conflict situations.

Mr. President,

Let me conclude by reiterating that the government of the United Republic of Tanzania strongly condemns any act of sexual and gender based violence in all its manifestations. It is in this regard that Tanzania co-sponsored the General Assembly resolution 62/134 entitled "eliminating rape and other forms of sexual violence in all their manifestations, including in conflict related situations" and has co-sponsored the resolution to be adopted today. We are willing to work with the international community to end sexual and gender based violence as well as to end impunity.