

**Security Council**

Seventy-third year

8234th meeting
Monday, 16 April 2018, 10 a.m.
New York*Provisional***Statement by the Representative of Germany, Mr. Heusgen:**

I thank you, Mr. President, for putting this item on the agenda. I would also like to thank you, Sir, for your statement and to highlight the good cooperation we have had with the African Union on the topics that I will mention later.

Conflict-related sexual violence is, as I think the Swedish Minister said earlier today, a security challenge. It is also a horrible, despicable example of a violation of basic human rights. Therefore, I am very grateful again that you, Mr. President, to have put it on the agenda. I would like to commend Special Representative of the Secretary-General Pramila Patten for her tireless work. I am very happy, having listened to all the remarks around the table for at least part of the discussion, that the Secretary-General's report (S/2018/250) and her presentation today, with just a few exceptions, have been commended by everybody.

Germany supports her work and will continue to do so. I would like to highlight the depressing findings about sexual violence as "a tactic of war" and about the change of demographics and so forth that were referred to in the report of the Secretary-General and in the remarks she made earlier today. Using sexual violence as an instrument to force people into submission is as grave as using gas for the same purpose. Let me focus on four points.

First, we must support the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and her team of experts in carrying out her mandate. Germany is committed to providing support. We have worked very closely, in particular on the issue of Iraq. I also appreciate the fact that the Iraqi Ambassador highlighted the good cooperation between Office of the Special Representative and Iraq. One of the most outrageous examples of sexual violence in recent decades, which has been discussed today, is the widespread use of sexual violence as a strategy to terrorize the Rohingya community. We urge the authorities of Myanmar to work very closely with the Special Representative to enter into structured dialogue with the United Nations to assist survivors and ensure accountability. When the Security Council travels to Myanmar, I urge it to put this item on the agenda and take up the proposal put forward by Ms. Sultana for the Council to meet with survivors of sexual violence. I believe that the Council would send a clear and important message if it met with people who suffered such crimes. I would like to highlight other activities of the Special Representative, such as work being conducted in the Sudan. There is a culture of silence surrounding sexual violence in Darfur, which is of

deep concern. We encourage the Sudanese Government to work closely with the Council to grant access to the survivors.

Secondly, I would like to address the issue of accountability. As the observer of the African Union just stated, sexual violence, zero-tolerance. It is very important to ensure accountability for all grave violations of human rights — that is key. We owe it to the victims. It is also very important to foster reconciliation and deterrence. I would like to reiterate what was highlighted earlier with regard to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where action was taken. Those who committed such crimes must be punished. If they have not yet been punished, for the rest of their lives they must look over their shoulder and fear being caught until they are apprehended. That covers current and past crimes. A representative today also mentioned the sexual violence that occurred in Europe during the wars in the former Yugoslavia. There was no accountability in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia or, in particular, Kosovo, for the tens of thousands of victims. The Security Council should include sexual violence as a designation criterion for sanctions regimes much more regularly. The Council should also refer cases of sexual violence to the International Criminal Court. In instances where prosecution is not yet possible, the collection and preservation of evidence of mass atrocities must be ensured. Germany supports the crucial work of the Commission for International Justice and Accountability in northern Iraq and Syria. Germany also supports the new International, Independent and Impartial Mechanism, which, inter alia, should focus on crimes of sexual violence.

Thirdly, we must adopt a survivor-centred approach. My French colleague referred to it as holistic support for survivors. It is important to provide them with medical and psychological care. Economic opportunities and legal protection should also be offered to them. Germany has received a large number of women and children who have suffered traumatic experiences in conflicts in Iraq and Syria. We fund projects in Iraq to enable comprehensive assistance to be provided. I have already mentioned our good cooperation with the Special Representative and the Iraqi Government. The survivor-centred approach links accountability with psychosocial and livelihood support. Many have mentioned that stigmatization must be fought. It is very important that we educate girls and enhance gender-balance efforts. With regard to stigma, I would like to highlight what our colleagues from Equatorial Guinea and Poland stated earlier today. They said that we must focus on the children conceived through rape, who continue to need our support because of stigmatization.

Fourthly, with regard to the sharing of experiences and best practices, the issue of empowering survivors was on the agenda of the annual meeting of the Women, Peace and Security Focal Points Network, which Germany, together with Spain and Namibia, hosted last week in Berlin. Special Representative Patten and others present today attended that meeting. It served as a platform for sharing experiences and best practices. My Spanish colleague already mentioned it and highlighted the fact that methods of improving accountability for crimes of sexual violence was one of the subjects discussed. Namibia, Spain and Germany will provide a briefing of the Focal Points Network meeting at the end of the month here in New York. We will extend invitations to those who are not yet members of the Network to join us. We also support the sharing of regional experiences through the African Women Leaders Network. The observer of the African Union already highlighted the important cooperation

already taking place in Africa, which is compelling and encouraging. My colleague from Kazakhstan mentioned that earlier today.

Once again, I thank you, Sir, for including today's subject on the agenda. Germany will remain committed to it. We are also committed to eliminating and preventing conflict-related violence. The issue of women and peace and security will remain a top priority for us.