

Mr. Elnour (Sudan) (spoke in Arabic):

At the outset of our statement, my delegation should like to express its appreciation to the presidency of Uruguay for organizing this open debate on sexual violence in conflict used as a tool of war and terror. I should also like to take this opportunity to express our thanks to the Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Amina Mohammed, as well as to Mr. Adama Dieng and Ms. Mina Jaf, for their useful briefings to us this morning.

I should also like to express our sincere thanks to Ms. Zainab Hawa Bangura for her efforts during her tenure in her post. Allow me to wish her, as well as her successor, Ms. Pramila Patten, every success. We remain prepared to cooperate with her Office.

My delegation condemns all forms of sexual violence against women or the use thereof as a tool of war or terror. The international community must join its efforts in order to confront this heinous crime and its root causes, and to prevent the trafficking in women and girls. As the Sudan is a transit country for this kind of crime, a law against human trafficking was drafted and adopted in 2014. In addition, a conference was held in my country on trafficking in Eastern Africa, at which the Khartoum declaration was issued and agreements were signed between the Sudan and a number of neighbouring countries to confront the groups that are violating human rights, particularly those of such vulnerable groups as women and children.

My delegation stresses that the Sudan is committed to making every possible effort to protect and promote women, particularly in areas of conflict. That commitment was demonstrated in a number of efforts that bore fruit in the adoption and implementation of a number of national strategies and plans. An independent commission on human rights was created, based on the Paris Principles and with particular attention given to the situation of women in camps for internally displaced persons. That was done in cooperation with the United Nations Environment Programme and the human rights division of the United Nations country team in the Sudan. Finally, in that vein, the Sudan has been committed to the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security.

As stated in the report (S/2017/249) of the Secretary-General, many positive legislative and executive steps have taken place in the Sudan recently. They are clearly and strongly related to combating violence against women and to fighting sexual and gender-based violence in conflict. They aim in particular at promoting the rule of law and the administration of justice through important steps in the implementation of resolution 1888 (2009). Hence, the mandate and terms of reference of the Attorney-General have been fully separated from the Ministry of Justice to ensure complete independence, confirming the judicial role of the Attorney-General. Furthermore, last year the National Council amended the penal code in order to confer new powers on the Attorney-General. The Sudanese penal code directly and clearly condemns the crime of rape. Furthermore, there has been an addition to define the crime of sexual harassment. The Attorney-General of the Special Criminal Court on the Events in Darfur also now includes the crime of rape.

My delegation should also like to make the following clarifications before the Council concerning a number of paragraphs and statements in the Secretary-General's report to the Council that are related to the situation in Darfur.

First, my delegation emphasizes that information in paragraph 64 of the report does not reflect the current reality of Darfur. Furthermore, it is not in line with resolution 2340 (2017), of 8 February. We believe this to be a clear contradiction, particularly as Darfur has recently seen a considerable improvement in its security and political conditions, with the subsiding of the conflict. Resolution 2340 (2017) and previous reports of the Secretary-General, as well as the reports of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, have all stressed over the past three or four years that there has been considerable improvement in the security and political conditions in Darfur.

Secondly, paragraph 67 of the report reflects the figures provided by my Government on cases of sexual and gender violence reported during the year 2016 — a total of 112 cases. The court considered 40 cases and issued 13 sentences, including two death sentences for violators. Let me state that detailed analysis of these cases, particularly the age groups and relationships between perpetrators and victims, shows that the vast majority of those cases reflect social problems unconnected with conflict-related sexual violence. Perhaps more factual figures could have been provided had there been more extensive consultations with the Attorney-General in Darfur.

Thirdly, there are direct accusations in the report of the involvement of Sudanese Armed Forces and other regular forces in sexual crimes in the province of Darfur. Let me stress that all our forces are fully committed to implementing specific national instruments on the subject as well as fulfilling all international human rights rules and international humanitarian law. Since they were established in the last century, the Sudanese Armed Forces have been very professional. They have fulfilled their duties with respect to the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), working to protect the Mission's members and equipment. In addition, numerous reports of the Secretary-General reports have borne witness to the fact that our forces have pursued and captured perpetrators of attacks against UNAMID.

The Government's armed forces, like those of all States in the world, are charged with fighting to restore the rule of law against armed groups acting under mere political slogans. In this regard, we need not delve into the perspective and practice of international law in relation to outlaw groups. However, reports of our Government forces' involvement of in the crimes we are considering here do not meet even the lowest level of evidentiary legitimacy.

The Government of the Sudan wishes to stress its eagerness to promote the rights of women and protect women from violence. In this context, we renew the expression of our wish to continue cooperating with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and all other bodies relevant to the issue. But once again, my delegation reiterates its call for more accuracy from the sources of information used in the Secretary-General's reports and for the sharing of such information with concerned States before it is included in a report.

My country believes that the treatment of this subject requires a careful comprehensive review of the pillars of peacekeeping as it is an essential component of combating these heinous crimes. We also see a need for preventive diplomacy and for confronting the root

causes of conflict. In most African conflicts, underdevelopment with all its economic, social and humanitarian consequences is often at the root of conflict. We also see a need to promote the role and status of women and to build capacity in States.

Each of us must make the intellectual effort required to confront the ideological root causes of sexual violence in conflict. We must intensify our efforts to combat terrorism and illegal migration because these phenomena are closely interconnected. Further, greater cooperation and coherence within the United Nations system is required to combat sexual and gender-based violence in conflict and to bring perpetrators to account for such heinous crimes. Moreover, victims must be compensated and assisted psychologically, physically, socially and financially so that they can be reintegrated into society, enjoy a livelihood and build their communities, societies and countries.