

Mr. Khiari (Tunisia) (spoke in French):

I would like, first of all, to congratulate the Uruguayan presidency of the Security Council on having taken the initiative to organize this open debate on an issue that, regrettably, has become recurrent and topical, namely, sexual violence in conflict as a tactic of war and terrorism.

I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for the high quality of his report (S/2017/249), in which he makes some very relevant recommendations, after having provided a clear picture of the state of sexual violence, in particular in the context of displacement caused by conflict, the rise of violent extremism and terrorism, the trafficking in human beings for sexual exploitation and the use of women and girls as a tactic of war.

Tunisia is participating in this open debate in order to recall the particular interest it attaches to this issue and to renew once again its commitment to the need to protect vulnerable populations, to promote their rights, to raise awareness on the danger of the use of sexual violence in times of conflict as a tactic of war and terrorism and to reiterate its firm conviction that women are and will remain indispensable and active partners in any process of prevention, mediation and conflict resolution.

It is no coincidence that the Tunisian national strategy to combat extremism and terrorism, adopted in November 2016, which is based on four fundamental lines, namely, prevention, protection, follow-up and response, gives women a central role in the prevention of extremism, but also protects them as a vulnerable target who can be intimidated and subjected to violence. A review workshop was organized, on 3 May in Tunisia, at the initiative of the Ministry of Religious Affairs to discuss the various forms of polarization of women by terrorist groups, the need to protect women from indoctrination and harassment and their key role in preventing and combating terrorism.

The Security Council, in its resolutions adopted since 2008, including resolutions 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1960 (2010) and 2106 (2013), has judiciously considered sexual violence to be a tactic of war and an obstacle to maintaining and restoring of international peace and security, by exposing the most vulnerable, especially women and children, to the worst forms of abuse, hence the importance of our meetings today and tomorrow. There must be widespread and comprehensive mobilization.

Tunisia, in 2013, through the adoption of the Organic Law on Establishing and Organizing Transitional Justice, has made uncovering the truth and putting an end to impunity one of its main objectives in order to evoke, recognize and condemn all forms of violence and attacks against the most vulnerable populations. In that connection, the Truth and Dignity body, which was organized for that purpose, organized a public hearing devoted exclusively to women on 10 March 2017. This was a first, which broke the taboos and went beyond social and societal constraints and requirements.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate my country's readiness to pursue these efforts and initiatives in order to combat all forms of sexual violence against women.