

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's Statements

Statement

Secretary-General's Statement to the Security Council Open Debate on Sexual Violence in Conflict [as delivered]

New York , 2 June 2016

Il m'est agréable de me joindre à vous aujourd'hui à l'occasion de ce débat sur les violences sexuelles commises en période de conflit.

Partout dans le monde nous sommes les témoins d'un nombre effroyable d'actes de violence sexuelle commis en temps de guerre. Nulle région n'échappe à ce fléau, qui continue de frapper les femmes, les filles, les garçons et les hommes.

Cependant, un élan politique sans précédent a permis de faire des progrès manifestes dans la lutte contre ces crimes.

La communauté internationale a finalement brisé le silence et le tabou qui entouraient ce problème. Ladies and gentlemen,

Sexual violence is widely recognized as a deliberate strategy used to shred the fabric of society; to control and intimidate communities and to force people from their homes. It is rightly seen as a threat to international peace and security, a serious violation of international humanitarian and human rights law, and a major impediment to post-conflict reconciliation and economic development.

This Council has played a significant role in ushering in this change, in particular through several landmark resolutions that confirm sexual violence as a war crime, a crime against humanity, and a constituent act of genocide.

The designation of 19 June as the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict is a further sign of heightened engagement and commitment.

Mr. President,

Over the past decade, I have sought to do whatever I can to end sexual violence in conflict and uphold the rights of women and girls everywhere.

I launched my UNite campaign to end violence against women, and created the post of Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict.

Through the work of my Special Representative, the United Nations has agreed Frameworks of Cooperation and Joint Communiqués with governments and regional bodies.

The deployment of women protection advisors to peacekeeping and political missions has strengthened monitoring, analysis and reporting of conflict-related sexual violence and engagement with parties to conflict -- vital steps towards accountability.

The United Nations will continue our own efforts to ensure that peacekeepers uphold the highest standards of integrity towards the people they serve.

Today, we and our partners are supporting thousands of survivors we were not reaching a decade ago with practical measures, ranging from reporting hotlines to community-based care. These policies not only help survivors; they enable societies to begin their own recovery.

International jurisprudence has also been developed around sexual violence in conflict, leading to landmark cases against political and military leaders. The recent conviction of Jean-Pierre Bemba Gombo by the International Criminal Court was the latest sign that the era of impunity for sexual violence as a tool of war is over.

Mr. President,

The past decade has shown that progress is possible, even in the most difficult and intractable situations.

However, we still face serious challenges. My latest annual report covers 19 situations of concern and lists dozens of parties who systematically commit these crimes.

One extremely disturbing aspect is the use of sexual violence as a tactic of terrorism. Daesh, Boko Haram and other extremist groups are using sexual violence as a means of attracting and retaining fighters, and to generate revenue. It is estimated that the Yezidi community gave Daesh up to \$45 million in ransom payments in 2014 alone.

Abducted women, men, girls and boys suffer the most terrible trauma through brutal physical and sexual assault, child and forced marriages and sexual slavery on a massive scale.

The abduction of more than 200 girls from Chibok in Nigeria more than two years ago is one of the most horrific examples of the use of sexual violence as a tactic of terrorism. I call for the immediate release of all those taken captive, and for the care and support of those who return, who can suffer from social isolation and depression.

Women and girls with children may need special medical and psycho-social support, and this must extend to the children themselves, who can suffer complete rejection.

The shame and social stigma faced by these women and children should be redirected towards the brutal perpetrators of violence.

Mr. President,

We must continue to speak up for the women, girls, men and boys whose bodies for too long have been considered the spoils of war.

I look forward to a strong and unified response from this Council to the concerns raised in my report.

Thank you.

Statements on 2 June 2016