

Security Council Open Debate on Sexual Violence in Conflict, June 24th 2013, Security Council Chamber

Statement by Mr. Germanas, Permanent Mission of Lithuania to the United Nations.

I would like to start by congratulating the United Kingdom presidency of the Security Council for the month of June for holding this important debate.

Lithuania associates itself with the statement to be made later by the observer of the European Union.

In my national capacity, let me express Lithuania's full support for the recommendations contained in the latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2013/149). Let me also commend the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Zainab Bangura, for her personal dedication and commitment.

To tackle impunity, sustained comprehensive efforts are needed at the national level to guarantee the prosecution of conflict-related sexual violence and support for survivors. The Council could make a major difference by supporting the early establishment of national reparations programmes as well as developing a more robust monitoring and reporting system.

National action plans on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) are an important tool that should be fully utilized. Lithuania's national action plan, adopted in December 2011, contains a variety of measures aimed at women's empowerment through literacy, education, networking and the development of skills. It has direct linkages with Lithuania's development cooperation programmes, which include a strong gender element.

All pre-departure training for Lithuanian military and police personnel participating in international missions includes specific training on gender issues. Lithuania strongly supports the inclusion of gender-based violence and violence against women and children among the mandatory assessment criteria for arms exports in the international Arms Trade Treaty.

The disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and security sector reform processes, including stringent vetting of personnel, provide an important window of opportunity for effective justice for victims of sexual violence in conflict. Security sector reforms must include provisions on the personal accountability of the police and the military, all the way up to the leadership.

Establishing effective oversight, transparency, and human rights and gender training for security sector personnel is instrumental in countering the culture of impunity. My delegation welcomes the Secretary General's recommendation that blanket amnesties should not be applied where conflict-related sexual violence is in question. My delegation strongly supports the implementation of the zero-tolerance policy towards sexual misconduct in the United Nations peacekeeping ranks, including the relevant provisions in all peacekeeping mandates. We call on the Security Council to use the tools at its disposal in a more systematic way, including the setting-up of commissions of inquiry, individual targeted sanctions and referrals to the International Criminal Court.

We must show iron-clad determination and political will to stamp out impunity for sexual crimes as a tool of war. Statesmen, political and religious leaders, women's groups, community elders and human rights defenders must join forces to generate global consensus on the need to end impunity and pursue accountability at all levels. By doing so, we shall give restore the voices of the victims of sexual violence in conflict and create a powerful deterrent for all those who may be tempted to resort to sexual crimes as a tactic of war.