

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

Statement by Mr. Ibrahim, Permanent Mission of Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations.

At the outset, I would like to thank the Secretary-General, the Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom, Ms. Zainab Bangura, Ms. Angelina Jolie and Ms. Jane Adong Anywar. I would also like to thank you, Mr. President, for holding this open debate on sexual violence against women, an issue of great interest to Member States in general, and one that has recently acquired a special dimension in view of the levels of violence being perpetrated against women in my country, particularly since the documented number of cases of rape committed by armed terrorist groups is about 37,000 in Damascus and its environs alone, according to the estimates of Syria's national reconciliation committee, and the number of women who have been kidnapped has reached about 1,000 to date.

My country has sent several official letters to Special Representative of the Secretary-General Bangura detailing documented information on the responsibility of armed terrorist groups for acts of rape, sexual violence and murder against women in Syria. Armed groups continue to kidnap women and girls and use them as spoils of war and sex slaves for the pleasure of terrorists, while the sponsors of such groups, thugs of war and sexual perverts, some of whom reside in Gulf sheikhdoms, continue to issue edicts blessing such crimes under the so-called sexual or fornication jihad. All this deviant moral and social behaviour has been met with an unjustified and objectionable silence on the part of many of the specialized United Nations agencies. That continued suspicious silence is no longer acceptable.

I would also like to address some of the statements that have been made in this meeting, particularly the total and deliberate omission of any mention of the crimes committed by those terrorist groups — some of which are affiliated with Al-Qaida — to the extent that some Member States look as if they are supporting and protecting this kind of terrorism and justifying the acts committed by the terrorists, such as cannibalism in the wake of their slaughter of their victims. In a meeting such as this, we believe that it would be proper to say that such an attitude cannot put an end to such horrible practices and appalling forms of violence against women.

It is truly shameful for the apartheid Israeli regime to speak of women's rights and combating violence against women while its soldiers and settlers continue their daily aggression against Palestinian women, men and children, in addition to the violence practiced in its detention centres and prisons, tantamount to the worst forms of human rights violations. Before 1948, Israeli gangs were guilty of several massacres; they later formed the so-called Israeli Defense Forces, which has perpetuated the approach of those terrorist gangs, committing murder, destruction, rape, displacement and other crimes that are an affront to humankind. None of those crimes have been curbed; they continue to this day.

Palmach, Haganah, Irgun — these were all Jewish terrorist organizations active before 1948, and they formed the nucleus for the so-called Israeli Defense Forces. Those were terrorist gangs that committed collective massacres, displaced Arabs — Muslims and Christians alike — desecrated Muslim and Christian holy places and committed hundreds of massacres, such as in Deir Yassin, Balad Al-Shaykh, Al-Dawayima, Al-Tantura, Sa'Sa', Arab Al-Mawasi, Saf Saf, Haifa, Jaffa, Al-Husayniyya and scores more. All those violations continue to this day at the hands of the Israeli army and its settlers.

As for the statement made by the representative of Turkey, I would say that before he calls on the Syrian Arab Republic to grant access to the United Nations — whose agencies are active in Syria to this day — his regime should allow the United Nations and other international organizations to enter

and visit the many training camps on Turkish territory where hundreds of terrorists reside and train in order to eventually go to Syria and commit their murderous crimes.

I would also like to address the crimes that have been perpetrated against Syrian women and girls displaced to neighbouring countries. Their rights have been violated, and those who support terrorist groups like Al-Nusra — a group affiliated with Al-Qaida that commits the most heinous crimes against civilians, including women — answer to the Qatari regime, which continues to arm and finance terrorists and provide them with a propaganda smokescreen to cover up their crimes against women and girls. They appear daily on satellite television channels, issuing fundamentalist and destructive fatwas blessing the commission of horrible crimes that violate human rights and international humanitarian law.

The Syrian Arab Republic continues to believe in the peaceful settlement of the conflict on the basis of a comprehensive national dialogue, an end to the terrorist campaign against Syria and the restoration of peace and security in my country, which is a land of tolerance and brotherly love.