

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

Statement by Mrs. Carrion, Permanent Mission of Uruguay to the United Nations.

At the outset, I would like to join the many previous speakers who have thanked you, Sir, for having convened this debate. I also express our gratitude to all those, especially the women, who work every day to promote peace and security.

Since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), the women and peace and security agenda has made clear progress, expanding in both breadth and depth to occupy the important place it does today, supported by the legal instruments, political initiatives and practical activities of the Organization.

Despite that progress, however, we regret to note that reports from a number of conflict and post-conflict situations continue to point to increasing physical and emotional violence against women and girls, who are the primary victims of sexual violence and its negative consequences for their quality of life and future development. In that regard, we would stress the need to defend the human rights of the victims of serious violations. In our view, the United Nations system should continue to fight against impunity, bring to justice those guilty for such violations and strengthen national capacities, using regional capacities to promote international justice in the defence of women's rights.

Uruguay considers the issue of women and peace and security to be an essential part of a larger agenda that includes the situation of children in armed conflict as well as the protection of civilians in armed conflict; they are integral parts of the whole. It is therefore essential to make coordinated progress and to use all the instruments available to the Organization, particularly its capacities in the field.

One instrument in such efforts is peacekeeping operations, which in recent years have included mandates for the protection of civilians that pay particular attention to women and children. There has been significant progress. However, the periodic attacks against civilian populations, including in areas where the missions are deployed, shows the limitations that still exist against dealing with the perpetrators of these attacks — limitations for the local population as well as for the international community. Through resolution 1325 (2000), the Council has stressed the important role that women play in the prevention of conflicts and in peacebuilding.

Uruguay has been in the vanguard of incorporating women into the armed forces, and that can be seen in the number of women who are deployed in the armed forces as well as in the Uruguayan police and in the formed police units of peacekeeping operations. Those women volunteers have always played a key role, and they are also interested in returning to jobs in the field, which shows, I think, the commitment that they have to the goals of the missions. That is why I think it is important to reiterate the need to continue to promote the greatest possible participation of women in peacekeeping processes, because they provide undeniable qualitative advantages.

With regard to the implementation of the agenda of the protection of civilians in armed conflict, we would like particular stress to be given to women and children through the work that we do at Headquarters as well as through the work that is done by Blue Helmets on the ground. We would also like to stress the importance of having the broadest possible support for this agenda.