

**Mrs. Meslem Si Amer** (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to extend to you, Mr. President, our warmest congratulations on the Kingdom of Spain's accession to the presidency of the Security Council for this month. We thank you for organizing this very important discussion. I also thank the Secretary-General, the Executive Director of UN-Women, and the representatives of civil society for their briefings. I should also like to extend the greetings of the President Abdelaziz Bouteflika of Algeria, who asked me to deliver this statement on his behalf.

Fifteen years ago, the Security Council adopted resolution 1325 (2000) to highlight the harmful effects of armed conflict on women and girls. The resolution was the outcome of effective campaigning by women's groups at the international level following the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, as well as of the resolve demonstrated by political leaders at that time.

Yet, despite the efforts of the international community to establish a normative and legal framework, including Security Council resolutions, sexual violence in conflict is on the rise and becoming more complex. Sexual violence is still used as a weapon in war in order to subjugate and humiliate opponents in conflict. With the appearance of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham and Boko Haram, collective public rape, sexual enslavement, the selling of women and girls under 14 years of age, along with the ensuing pregnancies and abortions have become signs of the present age of terror and injustice.

This high-level review of resolution 1325 (2000) gives us an important opportunity to implement the women and peace and security agenda and to abide by certain ambitious agreements. Within this framework, I should like to emphasize the following three points.

First, we must reinforce the participation of women and mainstream the gender perspective in conflict-resolution and peacekeeping operations. We must provide the necessary training for the mediators and envoys who participate in mediation and ceasefires and in achieving peace and preventive diplomacy. We must ensure that peace agreements include provisions to strengthen the role of women in conflict-resolution, such as the Algiers Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali.

Secondly, we must break the silence and raise awareness so as to prevent sexual violence, protect victims and provide them with the opportunity to be reintegrated into their societies. We must also work to reinforce the legal arsenal to protect the victims and punish the perpetrators of such violence. In addition, we must encourage civil society to work to change the mentality and improve the economic and social conditions that lead to an increase in sexual violence.

Thirdly, we have to reinforce anti-terrorism activities at all levels. Extremist terrorist groups continue to commit terrible sexual violence that violates human rights, especially those of weaker groups. We also have to support dialogue and combat violent extremism, as confirmed at the conference held in July.

In many countries, the victims of sexual violence have limited recourse. Until we remedy that situation, the perpetrators will continue to commit these crimes and justice will be out of reach. We therefore emphasize the importance of reporting, protection and prevention by women's groups, leaders of society, religious leaders, and mass media working in human rights. We must support the efforts of the Organization to reinforce the capacities of these groups.

The fight against sexual violence is not limited to the United Nations. At the regional level, the African Union has adopted its own solidarity initiative to promote international consultations on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa. At the national level, Algeria, under the able leadership of President Abdelaziz Bouteflika and in implementation of his programmes, has been working hard to reinforce its legal system and to review its laws on the protection and promotion of women at all levels, based on our belief in the effective role of women in achieving peace, promoting social equality and combating all forms of violence and inequality. Thanks to the Government's belief in the effective role of women, Algerian women have made great strides within Algerian society. They participate in decision-making and in the political process. Algerian women currently represent 30 per cent of members of the Algerian Parliament and over 40 per cent of our judges. The chief justice of one of our most important courts is a woman. Algerian women also fought against colonialism and played a major role during the 1990s — the dark years — when they also contributed to reconciliation. They have also participated in the implementation of numerous development projects in my country.

Algeria supports the need to take into account incidents of sexual violence in conflict situations and has incorporated such considerations in all of its special political and peacekeeping missions, as well as in the investigational framework and other mechanisms.

The issue of sexual violence must be taken into account at every level, especially within those groups and committees that are responsible for the follow-up the implementation of Security Council resolutions. We must work for peace and security in order to create a better world. That will not be possible if we do not eradicate all forms of violence and discrimination directed against women. I am especially thinking of sexual violence in conflict situations. As members of the international community, let us recall that we

cannot ignore the fact that poverty and ignorance are often two factors that spur on terrorism and extremism. We must eliminate those scourges by using all available means, in particular by empowering women and bettering their condition.