

**Security Council**

Seventy-third year

8234th meeting

Monday, 16 April 2018, 10 a.m.

New York

*Provisional***Statement by the Representative of Argentina, Mr. Verdier:**

Argentina aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Canada on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security. We would like to share with the Council the following considerations in our national capacity.

First of all, I would like to thank the Government of Peru for taking the initiative of organizing this debate and for presiding over it throughout the day. We also thank the Deputy Secretary-General and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict for their briefings, and Ms. Razia Sultana for her courageous testimony on behalf of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security.

Argentina continues to strongly support the efforts of the Secretary-General and the Office of the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict. We also thank the Secretary-General for his most recent report (S/2018/250), and we fully endorse its recommendations aimed at preventing, combating and eliminating all forms of sexual violence in armed conflicts, with a special focus on addressing issues related to prevention, early warning, contributing factors and rapid responses in the face of the occurrence of such crimes.

Sexual violence in conflict is one of the most horrific and abhorrent violations of human dignity, and poses a singular and undeniable threat to international peace and security. We must therefore redouble our commitment to prevention, eradication and accountability with regard to such crimes. We must put the victims of such crimes at the heart of our actions and pool our efforts to address the structural and underlying conditions that increase the victims' vulnerability and risk.

The growing use and threat of sexual violence perpetrated by various State and non-State armed actors and groups against specific groups — women, children, minorities, people who have or are perceived as having a sexual orientation or gender identity other than that of the norm, among others — constitute the most serious international crimes and must be prevented and punished in strict compliance with the law by making use of available tools and mechanisms, including the sanctions regimes of the Council.

Preventing and combating sexual violence in conflict should be at the forefront of all prevention, peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts undertaken by the United Nations and by the international community, as a whole. One of the key ways to prevent the scourge is to address the risks and

underlying factors that make women and certain groups particularly vulnerable to sexual violence. Such factors include, inter alia, structural discrimination, gender-based violence and a climate of insecurity and impunity. Efforts and initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, in all their diversity, are also important.

With regard to access to justice and accountability for crimes of sexual violence, it is crucial to build documentation and investigation capacity and foster greater cooperation, information-sharing and good practices in the areas of investigation, documentation, location, assistance for the victims, extradition and legal aid in order to end the climate of impunity that contributes to the proliferation of such crimes.

With regard to crimes of sexual violence, we reiterate that victims must be at the core of our prevention, eradication and accountability efforts. It is therefore essential to protect, assist and reintegrate all victims of such violations by working with women's organizations and other civil society organizations to provide services, aid and gender-inclusive multi-sectoral and multidisciplinary support and compensation, meet needs and protect the dignity and human rights of the victims.

Those elements must be taken into consideration when designing the mandates of peacekeeping operations, special political and peacebuilding missions, pursuant to resolution 1325 (2000). The goal is to ensure the inclusion of women in equal conditions and their access to significant decision-making positions so as to secure their seats at the negotiating table. We must ensure that experts on gender, gender-based violence and sexual violence are included in the various United Nations missions and mediation teams. We must also include specific provisions and commitments when brokering peace agreements and ceasefires and ensure that more women participate in peacekeeping forces.

We believe that the development of national plans to implement resolution 1325 (2000) must be viewed as a tool for building peace and preventing sexual violence in all areas. That spirit encouraged our country to join the Women, Peace and Security Focal Points Network and the Group of Friends on Women, Peace and Security in Geneva. It also joined the Elsie Initiative on Women in Peace Operations, spearheaded by Canada, which aims to increase the number of women in peacekeeping operations.

Preventing sexual violence in conflict must begin by building more peaceful societies. That can be achieved only through equality. In keeping with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we can leave no one behind. There is no peace without inclusion or justice. Societies with a climate of impunity perpetuate violence. Argentina takes a comprehensive view of peace in which gender equity and equality permeate all public policy. It works to achieve social transformation geared towards gender equality, which is a sine qua non for strengthening democracy. Our priority for gender policy is the elimination of violence against women. In that regard, gender reforms have been implemented in the defence and security sector.

Argentina reiterates its commitment to the Organization's zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse, as well as its support for the measures adopted by the Secretary-General on the issue. Argentina, together with 80 countries, signed the voluntary compact on preventing and addressing sexual exploitation and abuse.

In conclusion, I would like to recall that General Assembly resolution 69/293 designates 19 June as the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict. We encourage all Member States, entities of the United Nations system and other international and regional organizations, as well as civil society and other relevant actors, to participate in the activities to mark the Day.