

**Security Council**

Seventy-third year

8234th meeting
Monday, 16 April 2018, 10 a.m.
New York*Provisional***Statement by the Deputy Secretary-General, Amina Mohamed:**

The Deputy Secretary-General: Let me begin by commending Peru and His Excellency Ambassador Gustavo Meza-Cuadra for convening this important open debate on sexual violence and conflict. I also very warmly welcome Ms. Razia Sultana here today to amplify the voices of the Rohingya community and to offer an account to the plight of women and girls systematically targeted due to their religion or ethnicity.

This year in Myanmar, and in many other conflict situations, the widespread threat and use of sexual violence is once again being used as a tactic to advance military, economic and ideological objectives. Once again it has been a driver of massive forced displacement. Let me be clear: both genders endure the horrific brutality of sexual violence in conflict. Sexual violence is also a very common method of torture of detainees, and in many conflicts most detainees are men and boys. But overall women and girls are disproportionately affected. Gender-based discrimination is the invisible driver of most crimes of sexual violence. The lower one's status in terms of wealth, health and education, the greater her vulnerability and exposure to harm.

Last year, I travelled with Special Representative of the Secretary-General Pramila Patten to Nigeria and to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In both nations, the consequences of sexual violence are profound and enduring for survivors, their families and their communities. Survivors are forced to live with the untreated physical and psychological trauma, the social stigma and unwanted pregnancies. The children born of rape are often ostracized and relegated to the margins of society. That serves yet again to highlight the fact that, in the end, sexual violence has consequences for all affected women, girls, men and boys. It is a deliberate tactic to humiliate and disempower and undermine social cohesion. Our responsibility must be to bring justice, recognition and reparations to the survivors of those horrendous crimes — not only justice in the courtroom but also social justice and economic empowerment.

We should recognize and support the resilience of the many survivors who are working as agents of change. If we are to prevent these crimes being repeated, we must ensure accountability and deterrence. In that context, I welcome the continued engagement by those parties listed by the Secretary-General in his reports on conflict-related sexual violence. For example, the signing of a unilateral communiqué by a coalition of armed groups in Mali in July 2017 and the development of a

joint communiqué implementation plan by the Iraq Government last month are both very encouraging. Let me also highlight the increased vigilance being shown by peacekeepers in protecting women, girls, men and boys from sexual violence as part of their protection-of-civilians mandate.

Last month in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo, a female engagement team of 16 soldiers from the United Kingdom, South Africa and Nepal supported a civilian mission to one of the country's most remote areas in response to reports of abductions and sexual violence inflicted on hundreds of civilians. This shows the value of alert networks and the importance of women in peacekeeping to better address conflict-related sexual violence.

Women's protection advisers deployed to United Nations peace operations also have a leading role to play in supporting Government counterparts in implementing their commitments. Those commitments include engaging all parties to the conflict to prevent sexual violence and ensuring that survivors and civil society organizations can voice their concerns about security, protection and limitations in service provision and that they can help shape inclusive new policies and laws.

Resolution 2106 (2013) calls on all actors — the Security Council, parties to armed conflict, Member States and United Nations entities — to do much more to combat impunity for those crimes. Let us intensify our efforts to end the horrific litany of sexual violence in conflict so that our women, girls, men and boys have no less burden to bear as they work to rebuild their shattered lives.