

Mr. Yaung Chan (Cambodia): Allow me to express my sincere congratulations to Uruguay, and especially to you, Sir, on your assumption to the presidency of the Security Council for the month of May, as well as to thank you for organizing this extremely important debate.

My delegation would like to thank His Excellency the Secretary-General for his report (S/2017/249) on conflict-related sexual violence, as well as his tireless efforts to improving the plight of victims of these international crimes.

My delegation shares the concerns expressed by many delegations in the Security Council today. We are troubled by the use of sexual violence as a tactic of war and terrorism. That is a despicable act. Yet that form of violence is on the rise globally and is well documented.

The Secretary-General's report notes that sexual violence is used strategically to terrorize populations into compliance, incentivize the recruitment of fighters and generate revenue as part of the shadow economy of conflict and terrorism. Those are troubling developments that cannot be tolerated by the international community. The Royal Government of Cambodia strongly condemn all forms of violence and sexual exploitation perpetrated by non-State armed groups against religious and ethnic minorities, especially women and children. The international community must pay careful attention to that disturbing tactic of terror used to do to dehumanize, humiliate and subjugate entire populations, particularly women and children. We must strengthen the existing legal instruments for the protection of women and girls in armed conflict. To that end, the reports of the Secretary-General, and other documents that make recommendations, should be based on clear, accurate, verifiable data, resulting in reports that will inform our understanding and actions and thereby help to strengthen the rule of law at the national and international level. Furthermore, in order to combat the victimization of women and girls, we must address the underlying causes of conflict. Conflict prevention is a prerequisite for sustainable peace and respect for human rights. Since the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security lies with the United Nations, the international community must address the root causes of conflict in a comprehensive, purposeful and determined way.

For its part, the Royal Government of Cambodia is deeply committed to fighting the spread of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and is cooperating with the Association for Southeast Asian Nations and the States Members of the United Nations, as well as United Nations agencies, sparing no effort to address threats to women's security. In order to contribute to global peace and security, my Government has participated actively in United Nations peacekeeping operations.

At times, regrettably, peacekeeping duties demand the highest sacrifice from those who serve. Most recently, as those here may be aware and as has been condemned by the Security Council, a United Nations convoy in the Central African Republic was attacked last week by armed elements, resulting in the deaths of four peacekeepers from Cameroon and one from

Morocco. My Prime Minister has said that non-violence should be at the heart of every human being, and has called for peace and strongly urged the Organization to consider measures that can ensure the protection of United Nations peacekeepers in conflict areas in Syria.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that Cambodia is resolved to protect vulnerable populations and their rights in situations of armed conflict. Eliminating sexual violence against men, women, boys and girls requires joint global action, and Cambodia is committed to that effort in order to end people's victimization by extremist groups and terrorist organizations.