

Security Council Open Debate on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Resolution 1888
Wednesday, 30 September, 2009

Statement by H.E. Mr. Mayr-Harting, Representative of Austria to the United Nations

I should like at the outset to thank you, Madam President, for your personal leadership in the fight against sexual violence in armed conflict. I should also like to thank Ambassador Susan Rice and the United States Mission in New York for the energy and determination they have demonstrated in conducting our work on this resolution in recent weeks.

We believe that this resolution will significantly contribute to strengthening the United Nations response to sexual violence in conflict situations. We see a particular need for the strategic leadership that a newly appointed Special Representative of the Secretary-General can provide. Her or his work will help us address this scourge on a systematic basis in each and every conflict situation where acts of sexual violence occur. With this goal in view, we also look forward to the upcoming proposals to be submitted by the Secretary-General on enhancing monitoring and reporting on sexual violence. I should like to add that we very much appreciate the personal commitment of the Secretary-General in this matter.

Today's resolution will, we hope, also pave the way for a much more systematic flow of information between United Nations peacekeeping missions and the sanctions committees of the Council on sexual violence in areas of conflict. Where necessary, the Council must ensure the accountability of those responsible for sexual violence in armed conflict, including through the establishment of commissions of inquiry, referrals to the International Criminal Court and the imposition of targeted measures.

At the same time, it is absolutely unacceptable that civilians, in particular women and girls, also continue to fall victim to sexual violence on a daily basis in conflict zones where United Nations peacekeeping missions have a key responsibility for their protection. The fight against sexual violence must therefore also be at the core of our overall civilian protection agenda. Austria thus pledges to take this work forward when the Council next considers the protection of civilians in armed conflicts during our presidency of the Security Council in the month of November.