

**Security Council Open Debate on Sexual Violence in Council, April 17<sup>th</sup> 2013, Security Council Chamber**

*Statement by Mr. Rishchynski, Permanent Mission of Canada to the United Nations.*

Canada welcomes the Secretary-General's recent report and thanks the Secretary-General and his Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict for their briefings. Canada supports the Special Representative's activities to ensure the prevention of and response to conflict-related sexual violence and to ensure the health, security and dignity of survivors and their access to justice. Conflict-related sexual violence is of great concern to Canada. Canada places high priority on advancing women's full participation at all levels of society — a condition that is essential for maintaining the health, justice and prosperity of communities. Because of its devastating and enduring effects on the women and girls who are subjected to such crimes, as well as on their families and communities, rape and other forms of sexual violence in conflict remain a huge barrier to peace, security and development.

Following the harrowing accounts of sexual violence in Mali reported by the Secretary-General, Canada urges the Council to ensure that the Mali mission mandate specifically addresses sexual violence. The Council should ensure that preventing and addressing conflict-related sexual violence is included in all mission mandates. Perpetrators of sexual violence must be held to account. We support the prosecution of those who have perpetrated or who have a command responsibility for such crimes. We call on the Council to adopt a systematic approach to addressing reports of conflict-related sexual violence and to ensure that Sanctions Committees include criteria pertaining to acts of rape and other forms of sexual violence.

We welcome the recent agreement between the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Nations to strengthen efforts to tackle conflict-related sexual violence. We urge its implementation and look forward to seeing improvements on the ground very soon.

Canada's contribution to the prevention of sexual violence in conflict situations includes \$18.5 million over the next five years to support victims, as well as to contribute to investigations and prosecutions of perpetrators in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where rape has been used as a weapon of war. Canada has also supported special training investigators of sexual violence, who can be rapidly deployed to post-conflict areas around the world. On 11 April, Canada's Minister for Foreign Affairs, John Baird, announced an additional contribution of \$5 million towards tackling sexual violence against women and girls.

We welcome the Government of Afghanistan's efforts to implement a law on the elimination of violence against women. However, more must be done to increase understanding and awareness of the law and its application and to end practices that imprison victims of sexual violence while allowing perpetrators to go free.

In conclusion, allow me to reiterate that Canada is committed to working with the international community on preventing and responding to conflict-related sexual violence in all of its forms, including rape as a weapon of war and early and forced marriage, in order to advance human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, including women and girls. We call on the Security Council to strengthen its response in that regard as well.