

Security Council Open Debate on the Maintenance of International Peace and Security: War, its lessons, and the search for a permanent peace, 29th January 2014, Security Council Chamber

Statement by Mr. Mangaral, Permanent Mission of Chad to the United Nations

At the outset, I would like to convey my gratitude to you, Mr. President, for convening today's debate on such an important topic of concern to the entire international community. I would also like to express my appreciation to Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman for his briefing.

Every day, when we turn on our televisions or radios, we see or hear how conflicts ravage a great many countries, many of them to be found in Africa or in the Middle East. The consequences of those wars and conflicts are felt at many levels. In addition to the loss of human life and the destruction of institutions and economic and social infrastructure, we also have seen the impact on the cohesion of societies in conflict and the repercussions on the existence of States affected by those crises.

The conflicts of today have devastating effects on women and children in the form of killings, injuries, imprisonment, detainment against their will by armed groups and their exploitation for various purposes, including as victims of sexual violence and human trafficking. Conflicts tear families apart, destroy social fabrics and deprive States of their resources for a very long time.

What can the United Nations do in terms of the prevention of conflicts, faced with their widespread occurrence throughout the planet? What can rich countries do to assist poor countries, which often serve as the theatres for all types of conflicts, to better manage conflicts and restore lasting peace, so beneficial for all? Some conflicts can be predicted, others cannot. The international community will have to devote itself to preventive diplomacy. In regions where States are weak, racked by various ethnic quarrels and lacking the necessary resources to meet the basic needs of their people, there is, of course, a risk of conflict, especially when not all the various elements of the population are associated with or involved in managing the affairs of State.

A few years ago, Côte d'Ivoire was considered to be among the most stable of countries, yet war prevailed. In the Central African Republic all the communities were reportedly living happily side by side, but religious differences emerged and surprised everybody. Mali, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan are further examples, of which there are many throughout the continent. What is taking place in Syria and other States in the Middle East is also not grounds for optimism.

A great many countries of the South have not been spared by war because the conditions for lasting peace are not there. Poverty, unemployment, underdevelopment, socioeconomic fragility, injustice and marginalization are factors that lead to conflict. Wars in today's world do not produce winners and losers. All those who fight are losers, because war causes devastation and leaves a great many serious problems, in particular material as well as psychological problems. Preventive diplomacy is very promising insofar as it is a cost-effective way to avoid conflict. To restore peace, some demand justice — in other words, a peace based on who is right — whereas others give pride of place to reconciliation.

There is a need to merge both of those approaches, that is, justice for serious violations and reconciliation for all others. Reconciliation, which has been held up as an example for all in South Africa, shows that a country can play the role of a peacemaker. The international community must make greater efforts to propagate a culture of peace in the countries of the South by raising the awareness of the people regarding the problems of war and their collective and individual responsibility for grave violations of human rights under international humanitarian law, as well as for war crimes.