

Security Council Open Debate on Sexual Violence in Council, April 2014, Security Council Chamber
Statement by Mr. Cherif Permanent Mission of Chad to the United Nations.

I thank you, Madam President, for having convened this debate on such an important issue. I thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2014/181). I thank Ms. Bangura, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, and Ms. Rhoda Misak for their statements, and I welcome their tremendous work in the fight against sexual violence.

Women are routinely subjected, to different degrees in various societies, to physical, sexual and psychological violence, and are even further victimized in situations of conflict to all sorts of brutal aggression. Despite several years of intensive action on the part of the international community, whose commitment and determination to fight sexual violence I welcome, women unfortunately continue to be victims of such violence the world over, wherever conflicts occur. The number of countries cited in the report of the Secretary-General is tangible proof of this.

States must uphold their obligations to prosecute those who perpetrate such violence and ensure that the victims of sexual violence enjoy equal protection under the law and access to justice. There can be no place for impunity within frameworks seeking to achieve lasting peace, justice, and national truth and reconciliation. When national judicial systems fail, the perpetrators of sexual violence should be subject to prosecution under international criminal justice, the jurisprudence of which when it comes to such violence represents a major step forward. Chad believes that all States are obligated to implement the principle of zero tolerance when it comes to sexual violence against women and girls. In this regard, we would like to welcome the stringent zero-tolerance policy applied by the United Nations regarding cases of sexual violence perpetrated by members of peacekeeping contingents.

The repercussions of sexual violence for women and their loved ones are enormous, and the victims are changed for life by what they have suffered. Not only do they often find themselves left alone with no medical or psychosocial assistance, but they are obliged to remain silent in the face of threats against them and any witnesses. The fight against sexual violence in conflict requires victims and witnesses to be protected so as to allow them to report the perpetrators of these crimes. Likewise, efforts should incorporate information, training and awareness-raising to enhance the prevention of sexual violence through capacity-building for States and other relevant stakeholders. In this regard, Chad welcomes the crucial role played by the United Nations and civil society, and encourages them to strengthen their warning systems and their cooperation with regional and subregional organizations with a view to fine-tuning a comprehensive response to issues related to sexual violence.

The wake-up calls issued by the adoption of the various resolutions of sexual violence marked significant progress that must be further strengthened by the effective implementation of all of the measures they provide for. Chad recognizes the central role women can play in efforts towards peace and security in situations of conflict. Their active participation at all levels of decision-making and in the prevention and settlement of conflicts, in brokering peace and in post-conflict peacebuilding is of great importance.

In conclusion, I must underscore that the ongoing struggle towards peace and security to build a better future for the world can attain its goals only if all forms of violence against women in general, and sexual violence in conflict in particular — which are war crimes and crimes against humanity — are eradicated.