

**Security Council Open Debate on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Resolution 1820**

**Thursday, June 19, 2008**

***Statement by H.E Mr. Marty Natalegawa, Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations***

Today thousands of women continue to be suffer sexual violence in situations of armed conflict, in violation of their human rights and international humanitarian law — in violation, indeed, of our conscience and human dignity. These practices, wilful or wanton, horrify us and give us pause. They must be stopped.

We are grateful, therefore, to the delegation of the United States for convening today's debate on this critical topic. And we were pleased to see the Secretary of State presiding over this very important meeting. We also deeply appreciate the leadership of the Secretary- General and the Deputy Secretary-General on this issue.

This meeting serves not merely as a forum to condemn various forms of violence against women in armed conflicts. Likewise, it is more than a showcase of the strength and indestructibility of our determination to end impunity and protect women in situations of armed conflicts. This meeting is, first and foremost, about fulfilling the full potential of women in time of peace and in time of war.

It is from that broad perspective that Indonesia views this meeting. All States, all societies, have common interests, common core values and the common objective that women should and must be protected at all times, including in situations of armed conflict. It is therefore imperative that we, the international community, tackle these crimes with vigour and with iron determination. No shadow of ambiguity should cloud our action to end these atrocities. Indonesia believes that the international community has to continue to develop and implement a variety of comprehensive strategies to address this issue.

Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) is a guidepost for our actions. The resolution calls for parties to armed conflict to protect women from violence and to end impunity for war crimes. However, much remains to be done.

Rape and sexual violence are indisputably violations of the laws of war and constitute a crime under international humanitarian law. But another problem that women face as survivors of sexual violence is the existence of barriers to achieving justice through the courts or through more informal community-based mechanisms. Many survivors face a great deal of exclusion in their communities if they publicly reveal the sufferings they have endured. Women victims are frequently shunned and ostracized.

Furthermore, the judicial systems in many armed conflict areas are far from well functioning due to structural inadequacy. Thus, the legal capacity of national and local governments to act swiftly when reports or warnings come in must be strengthened. The judiciary plays the critical role of bringing to justice the perpetrators of sexual crimes in armed conflict and in ensuring reparations for the victims.

Security and police sector institutions play an important role in responding to sexual violence in armed conflict. Police sector reform should be considered in places where sexual violence is prevalent, and it should include an assessment of how police services can best assist victims and prevent and investigate these crimes, as well as of how police officers themselves can be made more gender- sensitive, how their activities can be regulated and how they can be punished for engaging in these types of crimes.

Peacekeepers also play an important role in protecting women and girls from sexual violence where they serve. More women should play key roles, including as military observers, civilian police and envoys and special representatives of the Secretary- General.

Many survivors of sexual violence suffer from grave long-term psychological and physical health consequences, even once the brutality is over. There is a great need for adequate medical services to meet the needs of this population.

The greater United Nations system has to target the needs of women for health care and treatment, as well as other indicators of development that not only help to treat the victims but also play a role in preventing the

worsening of a conflict and its ill effects on women. Identifying the perpetrators is also essential in order to shift the balance from victims living in shame to shaming the perpetrators. For this, it is crucial, as a part of a comprehensive attack against these heinous crimes, that United Nations missions conduct wide public awareness campaigns in their respective mandate areas.

The protection of women in armed conflict should be further strengthened; that much is clear. Ultimately, however, our aim should be the prevention of armed conflict itself. Here, the Security Council, in cooperation with regional organizations, should play its role in promoting the prevention of conflict and the maintenance of international peace and security.