

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

The recent report of the Secretary-General (S/2014/181) once again illustrates the alarming increase in sexual violence, which is often used as a method of warfare. With the adoption of resolution 2106 (2013), the Council has provided us with important tools to end that abominable practice. Nevertheless, we continue to face a major gap in the actual implementation of those measures. A lack of prioritization, capacity, adequate training, services — and ultimately resources — are the main reasons.

Liechtenstein was therefore pleased to be among the 144 States that endorsed the Declaration of Commitment to End Sexual Violence in Conflict initiated by the United Kingdom. The Declaration sends a clear message that we all must redouble our efforts in that regard. We sincerely hope that the upcoming summit in London in June will help bring about increased impetus and better implementation.

A major barrier to the effective protection of women from sexual violence is the continuing culture of impunity. We welcome the focus of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) on the fight against sexual violence in her work. Crimes of sexual violence play a role in nearly every case under investigation. That speaks both to the startling prevalence of conflict-related sexual violence and to the ICC's commitment to holding perpetrators of those crimes accountable.

Nevertheless, justice for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence continues to be the exception to the rule, and holding perpetrators accountable has proven to be exceedingly difficult. Generally speaking, it is crucial that evidence be professionally collected at the earliest possible stage. That process may be assisted, inter alia, by the Justice Rapid Response initiative. Survivors of sexual violence also only rarely receive reparations. In that context, we particularly commend the work of the ICC Trust Fund for Victims, which adopts a gender perspective across all its activities and assists survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. Protection issues are crucial, but we need the same level of emphasis on participation. The Secretary-General reports that sexual violence is also specifically being used as a method of curtailing the participation of women and girls in public life. That is a very worrisome development. Indeed, the voices of survivors, especially of sexual violence, are rarely heard. We must do more to ensure that survivors and their representatives and organizations are at the table when we work towards ending sexual violence. We are convinced that such an approach will have a strong impact on the willingness of the relevant actors to bring about change.