

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

Thursday, June 19, 2008

Statement by H.E Mr. Vitaly Churkin, Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations

In conflict as in peacetime, sexual violence is a detestable crime that requires condemnation and strict sanctioning. We are especially concerned about situations in which that phenomenon is widespread and systematic. It is also unacceptable for violence and sexual exploitation to be committed by the personnel of peacekeeping operations, that is, by the very people called upon to protect civilians.

We must also consider this issue in a comprehensive manner and in the context of all the other complex problems that arise in the process of conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction.

We should not forget that women and children continue to be the victims of deliberate attacks, including terrorist acts, indiscriminate and excessive violence and violations of international humanitarian law. Given the various types of violence involved, we must pay attention to all the categories. The issue of women and peace and security should not be reduced to that of sexual violence alone. That balanced approach is at the heart of resolution 1325 (2000), which is an important point of reference in terms of protecting women and ensuring their rights in conflict situations.

The issues of violence and of women in conflict situations must be discussed in the Security Council as well as in the General Assembly, the Peacebuilding Commission, the Human Rights Council and many other bodies. It is a priority for the United Nations to respond to widespread and systematic violence against women and children. Those goals are all part of the gender component in the reports of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on the subject of today's meeting, and also of the annual thematic reports on women and peace and security, the protection of civilians in armed conflict, children and armed conflict, and others.

The situation is hardly optimal when we ask the Secretary-General for a report on sexual violence only to find that the same request has been made by a body other than the Security Council. In particular, we have asked him for a report on women and peace and security. We must recall that the General Assembly adopted resolution 62/134 — on eliminating rape and other forms of sexual violence in all their manifestations, including in conflict and related situations — which also required an appropriate report of the Secretary-General on the issue of sexual violence.

Women's full participation in peace negotiations and post-conflict recovery efforts is an important precondition for the elimination of violence against women. In those processes, we must consistently implement the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and similar instruments in the area of human rights. Ensuring the social and economic development of States is a main factor in preventing conflict and violence.

In conclusion, I should like to emphasize that the delegation of the Russian Federation shares the understanding on today's topical issue of sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations. We therefore support the draft resolution to be adopted today by the Security Council.