

**Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security (Sexual Violence)**  
**23rd of February 2012, Security Council Chamber**

*Statement by UN Mr. Karev, Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations*

We wish to thank you, Mr. President, for having convened today's meeting. We are grateful also to Ms. Wallström, Mr. Ladsous and Ms. Megheirbi for the useful information they presented today.

The very nature of violence during armed conflict requires that due attention be paid to all of its manifestations. The issue of women, peace and security should be addressed through a comprehensive approach, as set out in resolution 1325 (2000). Sexual violence is a particular manifestation of violence that clearly requires firm condemnation and severe punishment. The careful investigation of all incidents and the punishment of perpetrators is a guarantee of success in combating this egregious crime. Of particular concern are situations where sexual violence is widespread. However, sexual violence is far from being a root cause of an outbreak of conflict; it is, rather, a symptom of the impunity that prevails during armed conflict. Some of those situations, as we know, pose a threat to international peace and security, and it follows that they require the intervention of the Security Council. But attempts to artificially impose on the Security Council the duty to address the issue of sexual violence in all of its aspects will lead not only to imbalances in system-wide coherence but to an erosion of the legitimacy and importance of Council decisions on grave, complex and urgent issues. Let us not forget that the issue of countering sexual violence is, in the framework of existing mandates, taken up not only by the Council but also by other United Nations bodies, in particular the General Assembly, the Human Rights Council and the Commission on the Status of Women.

We would like to recall once again that sexual violence is but one of the crimes committed in armed conflict and post-conflict situations. We are convinced that focusing our efforts on combating sexual violence means that we must also pay due attention to other crimes committed in time of conflict. Civilians continue to be the victims of crimes such as premeditated attacks, including terrorist attacks, as well as the indiscriminate or disproportionate use of force. In our view, the Council must evaluate such cases in an impartial and principled manner and ensure that the perpetrators do not go unpunished. We have carefully studied the report (S/2012/33) of the Secretary-General. We note that the document is rich in factual data, which reflects the credible and comprehensive work being done to combat sexual violence in armed conflict. Much of what has been done is welcome. We can see clearly that progress has been made as a result of the efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. However, the reliability of some of the accounts contained in the report is questionable. We believe that taking an unbiased approach to this delicate issue on the basis of objective and reliable information is the key to promoting confidence in the activities undertaken in this respect. We disagree with the broad manner in which the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict has interpreted her mandate. We would draw attention in particular to the fact that the issue under consideration today is conflict related sexual violence. Unilateral changes in the scope of an issue dealt with by a special United Nations mechanism established as a result of intergovernmental processes and enshrined in Security Council resolutions are inadmissible and could have an adverse impact on our ability to resolve the issue of sexual violence. Accordingly, we call on the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, in carrying out her activities, to strictly comply with her mandate, according priority to those situations on the agenda of the Security Council, where sexual violence is one of the basic issues in the framework of the protection of civilians. With respect to the need to comply with the mandate of the Team of Experts, established by resolution 1888 (2009), we see similar requirements. The Team provides assistance to host countries on strengthening the rule of law in situations of particular concern. In that vein, we are puzzled by the fact that the Secretary-General's report contains an arbitrary interpretation of the mandate that sets out the basic task of the Team of Experts as monitoring situations of sexual violence in conflict worldwide, as well as developing country dossiers on the basis of information received. I wish to underscore that what I have just said in no way detracts from the success and efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the Team of Experts in the framework of their mandates. We are not convinced of the advisability of establishing a special mechanism to monitor respect by parties to a conflict for their responsibilities to combat sexual violence. It would seem that strategic leadership should be harmonized and that the effectiveness of existing systems and mechanisms should be enhanced by improving coordination among them. Indeed, that would be in line with founding Council resolutions and is at the core of the activities of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict. We continue to believe that the Security Council must address those issues that fall within its purview. The issue of the sexual violence should

be considered by the Council exclusively under the agenda item “Women and peace and security” and insofar as it is linked to the maintenance of peace and security. In conclusion, we express the hope that the observations and proposals put forward by Council members today will serve to further improve the activities of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and other United Nations structures and bodies concerned with combating sexual violence in armed conflict within the framework of their mandates.