

Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security, (Conflict Related Sexual Violence)
23 February 2012, Security Council Chamber

Statement by H.E Faloub, Permanent Representative of Syrian Arab Republic

Syria stresses the importance of the item under consideration and condemns all forms of sexual violence, particularly in armed conflict. It stresses also the need to put an end to such acts and to bring their perpetrators to justice while avoiding selectivity.

My country has read the report (S/2012/33) of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence. It has also read the information provided by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict. Syria supports all efforts to end conflict-related sexual violence and to punish perpetrators and end impunity. However, we reject the allegations and claims made in the report with respect to my country, Syria. We request that caution and objectivity be exercised in addressing these important humanitarian issues.

We would have hoped that the authors of the report would have based the contents of the report on proof, evidence and facts instead of relying on allegations that could be traced to reports by media that are hostile to Syria and to its people. The Syrian Government is ready to address any case in that respect so that it can investigate it and punish anyone who has been proved to have committed a crime under Syrian laws.

The Special Representative mentioned my country in the report before us in the context of what she called sexual violence and in the context of elections, political strife and civil unrest, thereby exceeding the mandate entrusted to her by resolutions 1888 (2009) and 1960 (2010). Under those resolutions, she has the right to express concern and to draw the attention of the Security Council to forms of sexual violence committed only in the context of armed conflict or post-conflict situations.

Recent developments in Syria have shown that there is an unprecedented fierce and misleading political and media campaign against Syria that is aimed at undermining its stability and security. That campaign uses the lives of Syrians and their legitimate demands for reform as a means of implementing special foreign agendas that would not serve the Syrian people or promote their human rights. The campaign seeks to undermine centuries-old coexistence among Syrians and the Syrian State in favour of fomenting violence and promoting chaos and terror.

Western and Arab States have, unfortunately, provided generous financial contributions to arm the terrorist groups that are committing acts of violence of all kinds, including killings, against civilians, members of the military and public and private institutions. The Syrian Arab Republic would like to reiterate that the Syrian State, under the Charter, has exclusive responsibility for the protection of its people and for ensuring respect for human rights and guaranteeing those rights for all individuals residing on its territory and under its jurisdiction, as provided for in the provisions of international law, free from any foreign intervention.

My delegation addressed many official letters to the Special Representative, including documented information on the responsibility of armed terrorist groups for acts of rape and sexual abuse as well as the killing of Syrian women and girls. We also sent the Representative a DVD including the documented confessions of members of those groups, proving their responsibility for those crimes. Regrettably, the Special Representative ignored our attempt to provide her with that document and made only a passing reference to the documented crimes perpetrated by terrorist groups. The Special Representative chose to depend on reports that lack credibility and professionalism, so that she can hold the Syrian authorities responsible for the commission of acts of sexual violence without any credible evidence. That is supported by the Secretary-General, who states, at the end of paragraph

87 of his report, that the international commission of inquiry had not received sufficient testimony in connection with allegations of acts of rape or other forms of sexual violence.

The Secretary-General and his Special Representative adopted those allegations, while ignoring the responses of the Syrian Government and information already corroborated by public confessions. Such positions can be seen as indirect participation in misleading public opinion and disregard for the Syrian Government's position regarding events on its own territory. It is an irresponsible incitement of all sorts of acts of violence, providing international cover for international terrorist acts undertaken by terrorist groups against Syria, its interests and its people. We would have hoped that the Special Representative would try to be objective, neutral and non-political, and that she would not undertake work contrary to her mandate or take advantage of her post to cater to the interests of certain influential States Members of the Organization.

In conclusion, it is truly strange that the representative of the Israeli occupying Power — whose country has for decades committed all kinds of violations and crimes, including violence against girls and women in the occupied Arab territories in Palestine and in the occupied Syrian Golan — should accuse or lecture us even as Israel continues to commit all kinds of violence against women and girls who are still under the yoke of the Israeli occupation. They are killed, raped and abused. In the occupied Palestinian territories, a Palestinian woman gives birth or has a miscarriage at an Israeli checkpoint and can barely reach a hospital. That is all I have to say.