

Security Council Open Debate on Sexual Violence in Council, April 2014, Security Council Chamber
Statement by Mrs. Nusseibeh, Permanent Mission of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations.

I should like to thank you, Sir, for convening this important meeting of the Security Council to highlight one of the most serious challenges threatening international peace and security. We also welcome the report of the Secretary-General (S/2104/181), which provides important information that reflects the enormous challenges impeding the global containment of this scourge.

Sexual violence in conflict is a crime that has harmed far too many people for thousands of years. It knows no borders or age limitations and is not related to any specific culture or ethnic group. This crime is perpetrated without punishment and is used as a tactic of war to destroy the fabric of society and deprive it of the ability to heal and rebuild.

The United Arab Emirates expresses its grave concern over the continued use and spread of this heinous crime, which targets not only women and girls, but also men and boys, and stresses the need to develop an international response within the context of the relevant Security Council resolutions on this issue. While we strongly commend the notable efforts made by Ms. Zainab Bangura, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, the Team of Experts Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict and the 13 United Nations entities to build the resilience of countries to such violence, we reiterate our support for the international protocol, to be launched in the United Kingdom at the forthcoming Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict, on the documentation and investigation of sexual violence in conflict in a manner commensurate with the practical measures that the United Kingdom has taken to address this issue and which have received the strong support of our Foreign Minister, His Highness Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

Today we have the political will and a clear international framework which allows us to move from simply condemning this crime to confronting it within the framework of three main pillars.

First, legal deterrence has been actualized in the establishment of the tribunals of Yugoslavia and Rwanda, as well as the Special Court for Sierra Leone, as a practical and first international step towards strengthening global compliance with international criminal law and preventing impunity for those who commit criminal behaviour during conflict. We therefore call for strengthening the jurisprudence of criminal law as well as existing international legal and judicial mechanisms, including the role played by the International Criminal Court, to identify gaps and develop a robust legal framework for preventing sexual violence during conflict.

Secondly, national authorities must be strengthened in the areas of legislation and security sector reform, to ensure their ability to meet the requirements necessary for preventing a culture of impunity and the promotion of the culture of deterrence, accountability and achieving justice and the rule of law. That should lead to a perception of women as agents in the campaign against sexual violence, not only as victims.

In that context, we call for increasing the resources and capacities of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to strengthen her mandate to provide assistance and to build resilience, not only in countries suffering from conflicts but also in neighbouring countries and refugee camps to which conflict may spread. We hope that the open meeting of the Security Council to be held on Monday on security sector reform will deliberate on this subject, and in particular on the promulgation of military codes of conduct, including in peacekeeping operations.

Thirdly, there is a need to develop an international mechanism for providing adequate protection and support at all levels to the victims of this crime in order to reintegrate them into their communities.

The United Arab Emirates strongly condemns the use of sexual violence as a tactic of war in Syria, and declares its support for all efforts being made to collect data on these crimes in the pursuit of justice at a later

stage. We will continue to provide financial and psychological support to affected Syrians in refugee camps in order to guarantee their reintegration and rehabilitation.

In conclusion, we will support all efforts and initiatives undertaken to strengthen international debates about this dangerous phenomenon and in finding practical solutions for preventing the recurrence of this crime. To achieve this purpose, we must innovate and work across borders to extract the price of justice. The United Arab Emirates is committed to playing a key role in that important endeavour.