



**PERMANENT MISSION OF  
THE KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

235 East 45<sup>th</sup> Street, 16<sup>th</sup> floor  
New York, NY 10017

tel. (212) 519-9500

fax (212) 370-1954

[www.pvnewyork.org](http://www.pvnewyork.org)

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**STATEMENT BY**

**THE DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF  
THE KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**MR. PIET DE KLERK**

**Open Debate of the Security Council on  
"Women, Peace and Security: sexual violence in situations  
of armed conflict".**

**NEW YORK, 19 June 2008**

**Please check against delivery**

Mr. President,

In 2000, Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security was adopted unanimously by this Council. In 2002, the Rome Statute entered into force. In 2005, the Peace building Commission was established. And most recently, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon launched the Campaign to end violence against women by 2015. Despite all these developments, little has changed on the ground. Sexual violence against women in conflict continues unabated and is at unacceptable levels. Rape is on the increase.

Mr. President,

For the Netherlands Government women empowerment is a top priority. Women's rights are everyone's concern. The Netherlands is therefore taking a firm stand against the horrific violations of women's rights and human dignity in countries like the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sudan. This is the reason that The Netherlands supports the UN Trust fund regarding violence against women. Also, last December the Netherlands Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Defence and the Interior and 15 civil society organizations agreed on a National Action Plan on resolution 1325. An increasing number of member states are elaborating similar action plans. We need to focus on implementation. We need to join forces. What should we do?

Mr. President,

Firstly, we need to target men. Gender equality and women's empowerment cannot be achieved without the involvement of men. Men need to talk to men. And they have to speak openly to militia leader, gang leaders and sometimes the generals to be better role models. If we want sexual violence to end, we need to raise awareness among men about the consequences of their actions. In situations of conflict, boys and men are constantly confronted with models of violent masculinity. Discussions should take place between men and women, with boys and girls, within communities, also to start the healing process and break the cycle of sexual violence.

Secondly, acts of sexual violence should not go unpunished. We first and foremost owe this to the numerous victims. But also everybody should know that if they commit such a crime they will and cannot escape justice. Justice is imperative to ending impunity. Governments need to take vigorous actions. National judicial systems should be strengthened in order to ensure that these criminals are caught, tried, and effectively punished. If national systems fail to bring perpetrators to justice, the International Criminal Court comes into play. The Rome Statute clearly defines rape and other forms of sexual violence when committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack against civilians, as crimes against humanity. Fighting impunity is also one of the key elements of the resolution on all forms of violence against women which the Netherlands and France present in the UN General Assembly.

Thirdly, acts of violence against women are often committed by soldiers; the very people who are supposed to provide protection. The Netherlands Ministry of Defense invests in engendering the armed forces. Gender training is mandatory and is included in the curriculum of the School for Peace Operations. We believe that all peace keeping troops and police contingents should follow comprehensive gender

training before deployment. Moreover, gender awareness training should be mandatory for all persons in leadership positions in conflict and peace building situations, including civil, military and diplomatic representatives. Additionally, the UN should make an extra effort to appoint more women in senior leadership positions in peacekeeping missions. The UN should also vigorously implement its "zero tolerance" policy. Commanders should take their responsibility and arrest perpetrators. In this respect, I would like to highlight the recent report of Save the Children UK about widespread sexual abuse of children and women by aid workers, and above all, by UN peace keepers. It is intolerable that persons who should provide assistance or protection on behalf of the international community take advantage of the situation to sexually abuse women and children

Finally, Mr. President, women are not only victims. It cannot be repeated enough that women and women's organizations have to be included in peace and reconciliation processes. They also need to be involved in formulating justice and reparation programmes, including post rape care.

Mr. President,

The Netherlands very much welcomes this open debate and commends the US Presidency for its effort to put this heinous crime so prominently on the agenda of the Council. Sexual violence is linked to peace and security. The adoption of a resolution will be an important step in recognizing this link. We look forward to a report of the SG, which initiates a process to ensure follow up by the Security Council and to improve coordination of UN activities on the ground. Finally, we hope that this process also includes the monitoring of actions taken by parties to implement their responsibilities.

Mr. President, we cannot tolerate what is happening to mothers, daughters, wives or grandmothers. Sexual violence in armed conflict has to stop. It is my responsibility, it is your responsibility; it is the responsibility of all of us.

Thank you, Mr. President.