

**Security Council**

Seventy-third year

8234th meetingMonday, 16 April 2018, 10 a.m.
New York*Provisional***Statement by the Representative of Côte d'Ivoire, Mr. Tanoh-Boutchoue:**

I would like to commend your country, Peru, Mr. President, for including this important issue of sexual violence in conflicts around the world on our agenda during its presidency. The delegation of Côte d'Ivoire would like to thank Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed for her briefing on the report of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2018/250). We also thank Ms. Pramila Patten, Under-Secretary-General and Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, and Ms. Razia Sultana, Senior Researcher of Kaladan Press, for their briefings. We thank Ms. Sultana for the important information she provided on the situation of women in Myanmar.

The issue before us this morning offers the Security Council the opportunity to debate, once again, the issue of the important role of women in the peace and security agenda around the world. My country shares the view of experts that the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war represents a serious attack on the physical and moral integrity of its victims and is serious breach of society's moral values.

Women and girls living in areas of instability are affected in an alarming way by sexual and gender-based violence. Such violence, which is usually perpetrated with the clear aim of impacting the identity and dignity of its victims, has disastrous consequences for them physically, psychologically and economically, as well as repercussions for peace and social cohesion.

As noted in the report of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2018/250), sexual violence is used by the warring parties as a strategy of war and terrorism against communities. It is increasingly a lucrative activity, fueling conflicts and terrorism. Unfortunately, rape, which is often collective, sexual slavery, forced prostitution and many other forms of sexual violence are tactics to force people or entire communities to flee their place of residence, leaving behind them their property to the benefit of their aggressors. That worrisome situation, which seriously undermines human rights and international humanitarian law, has justified the international community and the Security Council taking robust measures to deal with that challenge.

In that regard, it is important to underscore the relevant provisions of resolution 1820 (2008), which recognizes that sexual violence is a tactic of war that demands an appropriate security response. It is also worth recalling the provisions of resolution 2331 (2016), which links human trafficking, sexual violence and terrorism and, at the same time, calls for psychological, medical and legal measures, *inter alia*, as part of the reparations to which victims are entitled.

Côte d'Ivoire remains convinced that an appropriate response to the problem of conflict-related sexual violence includes the increased participation of women in collective research and peacebuilding efforts, since, as resolution 1325 (2000) underscores, women significantly contribute to peacekeeping in their community and nation. In that connection, it remains essential to increase our efforts for the inclusion, leadership and protection of women with a view to ensuring social cohesion and lasting peace.

Following the post-election crisis in 2010 and 2011, in March 2012 Côte d'Ivoire was listed in the annex to the report of Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2012/33). It was delisted on 15 April 2017 in the light of the positive developments in the country with regard to stability and peacebuilding. That outcome is the result of the significant efforts of the Ivorian Government, which, since the end of the crisis, has made the fight against sexual violence a priority by implementing a national strategy to combat gender-based violence, in addition to the existing legal mechanisms.

In order to fight against this scourge, a national committee to combat conflict-related sexual violence was set up by decree. The committee seeks to strengthen the legislative framework by establishing a specific provision for the repression of rape. In the same way, the ownership of such efforts by the Government at the highest level of the ranks of the Forces de Côte d'Ivoire clearly demonstrated its relevance in fighting against the scourge. Such ownership has led, among other things, to the higher ranks making specific commitments to train their staff on the issue of sexual violence. Issues of sexual violence, both in times of peace and of conflict, have now become an integral part of the training modules of training centres and military academies in Côte d'Ivoire. The revised code of conduct of the Forces armées de Côte d'Ivoire also places a particular emphasis on crimes related to sexual violence.

In addition, the recruitment of women to positions of responsibility in areas previously reserved for men, in particular the defence sector, has contributed to the effectiveness of the steps taken by the Government with regard to the scourge. Thus, following the implementation of the Government's strategy and other initiatives, such as the many awareness-raising and training sessions, the number of documented cases of sexual violence decreased from 478 in 2012 to 30 in 2014, 3 in 2015 and none in 2017.

My country welcomes the synergy of action between the Ivorian Government and the United Nations system, brought about by the establishment in 2015 of the joint mechanism of the Forces armées de Côte d'Ivoire and the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire to follow up on human rights violations. In addition, that comprehensive cooperation has also resulted in technical assistance being provided by the United Nations Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict as part of the action plan of the Forces armées de Côte d'Ivoire, whose implementation led to, inter alia, the establishment of specialized police units. Thanks to all those efforts, today the Forces armées de Côte d'Ivoire are the first and only entity to have been delisted from the annex to the report of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence.

Moreover, our national social cohesion programme, which was implemented in 2012 and includes a gender dimension, resulted in the establishment of six posts between 2015 and 2017 dedicated to the role of women in peacebuilding in the western and central western regions of the country, which were

affected very harshly by conflict in the past. That approach has had a major impact in terms of the provision of psychosocial support for victims of sexual violence and conflict. Notwithstanding the important progress achieved, my country remains aware of the remaining challenges with respect to the sensitive issue of reparations for sexual violence committed during the post-electoral crisis.

Côte d'Ivoire would like to reaffirm its determination to conclude investigations into cases already identified and to support the victims, especially through actions undertaken and led by the Ministry for Women, Child Protection and Solidarity. Furthermore, in the context of preventing and deterring the new forms that sexual violence might take in times of peace, the Ivorian Government intends to continue those efforts and to make them a priority. That includes retaining the zero-tolerance policy currently in place in the Ivorian security and defence forces.

I cannot conclude my remarks without reiterating the gratitude of my country to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and her team for their excellent work and efforts to support the Ivorian Government in its fight against this phenomenon. Côte d'Ivoire reaffirms not only its full readiness and willingness to share its experience but also to take up lessons learned from successes achieved elsewhere, with a view to strengthening the resilience of its people as well as existing legal and institutional frameworks, including better addressing issues related to gender-based sexual violence. In that regard, my country welcomes next June's experience-sharing and lessons-learned mission to Colombia, supported by the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, with a view to taking inspiration from the successful experiences of that country with regard to victim compensation and reparations for victims of sexual violence in conflict.