

**Security Council**

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*Provisional***Statement by the Representative of Qatar, Ms. Al-Thani:**

I am pleased to express my appreciation to you, Sir, for convening today's important debate. We thank Ms., Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General, for her important statement this morning, as well as Ms. Pramila Patten, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual violence in Conflict, and Ms. Razia Sultana, representative of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, for their briefings today.

Today's meeting is an important opportunity to renew our commitment as the international community to addressing crimes of sexual violence and supporting States that face challenges in conflict and post-conflict settings, as well as to follow up on the measures taken by the Security Council since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, in order to end such heinous crimes. We cannot deal with the issue of women and peace and security without addressing the suffering inflicted on women and their vulnerability in conflict situations, or without meaningful, coordinated efforts to protect women and girls.

To achieve that, national and international legislation must be implemented, without discrimination, to ensure the judicial prosecution of criminals who commit crimes related to sexual violence. The State of Qatar has spared no effort in tackling the tremendous challenge of providing the necessary support for promoting and protecting women's rights, empowering women economically, socially and politically and working towards the achievement of gender equality. That would contribute to the fight against sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations, in line with resolution 2106 (2013). We are aware of the existing link between trafficking, sexual violence, terrorism and the transnational organized crime, as stated in Security Council resolution.

Consequently, the State of Qatar has taken all the necessary legislative and executive actions to deal with this issue, and we have intensified cooperation and coordination internationally to that end. Based on our position on the need to address the root causes of conflict that trigger sexual violence as a result of poverty and unemployment leading to violent extremism, terrorism and conflict, the State of Qatar pays great attention to supporting States and regions that suffer from poverty and face conflicts. That is done through our foreign development and humanitarian aid programme, which contributes nearly \$2 billion annually to address such issues. Furthermore, in September 2017, we concluded a memorandum of understanding with the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism and the Silatech Institution in the

State of Qatar with a view to boosting youth capacity in Arab and Islamic countries, providing rehabilitation and launching projects to protect youth from violent extremism.

Sexual violence is used as a tool of war and terror in various regions. We are deeply alarmed by those practices being used against women in Syria, where they suffer as a result of forced marriage, sexual slavery, rape and torture. The State of Qatar expresses its deep concern over those inhumane practices against the brotherly Syrian people, in the absence of accountability pertaining to grave violations to international humanitarian law and international human rights law in Syria.

Given the gravity of these crimes, which are tantamount to war crimes and crimes against humanity, the State of Qatar renews its commitment to support the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011, established by the General Assembly. It includes specialized experts in the field of sexual violence.

In conclusion, I would like to express my appreciation to the Secretary-General for his efforts in fighting sexual exploitation and abuse in the United Nations system. That has led to the voluntary agreement to end sexual exploitation and abuse. The State of Qatar signed the agreement as an important step towards achieving the desired goal of ending sexual exploitation and abuse in the United Nations system. I renew the call of State of Qatar for strengthening the rule of law.