

**Security Council**

Seventy-third year

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New York

*Provisional***Statement by the Representative of Ukraine, Mr. Fesko:**

Ukraine appreciates the initiative of Peru to hold this open debate, as well as your personal presence, Mr. President, at this time. We thank Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed and Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict Pramila Patten, and in particular Ms. Razia Sultana, for their useful briefings.

Ukraine aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union.

After almost two decades since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), the women and peace and security agenda remains as relevant as ever in the face of increasing violence, extremism and deadly conflicts. The alarming figures in the Secretary-General's report (S/2018/250) before us today — noting an increase in severity and scale of conflict-related sexual violence in numerous conflict situations around the globe — are nothing if not testimony to that. We note with deep concern that sexual violence has become a routine tactical element of war in many conflicts. Rape, sexual slavery, forced marriage and sexual torture constitute abhorrent violations of human rights and human dignity. In some instances, they surpass the level of war crimes and reach the scale of crimes against humanity or a genocidal slaughter. Victims of those crimes do not just deserve justice, they are entitled to it. It is a solemn duty of the Security Council as well as the rest of the international community to do everything in their power to deliver it.

In that context, Ukraine believes that the Security Council should continue to pay priority attention to the due implementation of existing women and peace and security resolutions, in particular to overcome the gaps identified in the 2015 global study on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). As a non-permanent Security Council member in 2016-2017, Ukraine did its best to contribute to that goal. We proceed from the conviction that any form of violence against women and girls is a major impediment to security, the restoration of peace, the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Concerted international efforts aimed at elaborating effective steps to address the issue of sexual violence will reduce the growing magnitude of violence against all women and girls, including sexual and gender-based violence, domestic violence and harmful practices. In that respect, we welcome the fact that the recent sixty-second session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women addressed the importance of rural women and girls victims of gender-based violence having access to justice and quality services. Ukraine considers the equal and full participation

of women in all activities in the areas of prevention and resolution of conflicts, peacebuilding and peacekeeping of the utmost importance.

In my country, the ongoing fulfilment of the 2016-2020 national action plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) is aimed at achieving greater participation by women in decision-making, in particular in matters of national security, defence and peacemaking, as well as ensuring the protection for women and girls, including preventing and responding to gender-based violence. The Government of Ukraine pays particular attention to the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). For that reason, due to the excellent cooperation with the UN-Women office in Ukraine, the effectiveness of the national action plan's implementation was assessed by international experts. Their contribution will be helpful in updating the national action plan in line with the evolving situation, as well as in taking into account the follow-up resolutions to resolution 1325 (2000). We will finalize that process by June.

A State programme on equal rights and opportunities, which was adopted by the Ukrainian Government just last week, will further strengthen the State's response to gender inequalities, with a specific focus on women and girls experiencing multiple forms of discrimination. The recently adopted State programme for the restoration and development of peace in the eastern regions of Ukraine until 2021 is another important element in overcoming the devastating humanitarian consequences of the Russian invasion carried out by the Moscow regime as part of its overall aggression against the democratic world.

It is well known that the conflict has hit hardest the most vulnerable segments of the population, particularly women in the currently occupied regions. It has resulted in widespread human rights violations, including sexual and gender-based violence in the war-affected areas of the country, as outlined in the relevant reports by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Those include a thematic report on conflict-related sexual violence in Ukraine that puts forward a number of recommendations to the Russian Federation and Ukraine.

Unfortunately, as of today, Russia continues to ignore that document, while the Ukrainian Government remains committed to addressing that challenge. For example, on our official request, the UN-Women office in Ukraine, together with the United Nations human rights monitoring mission in Ukraine, developed a strategy for preventing and responding to the conflict-related sexual violence in Ukraine. We intend to integrate that strategy, or at least some of its elements, into the 1325 national action plan. We would like to reiterate our request to the Secretariat to include a reference to the situation of Ukrainian women and girls affected by the Russian invasion in Donbas into all the relevant thematic reports of the Secretary-General.

Finally, let me underline that Ukraine will remain actively engaged in international efforts aimed at promoting women's rights, their participation in peace negotiations and post-conflict reconstruction and at protecting women from sexual and gender-based violence.