

Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security, (Conflict Related Sexual Violence)
23 February 2012, Security Council Chamber

Statement by H.E Mr. Tarar, Permanent Representative of Pakistan

Spawned by misanthropism, sexual or gender-based violence in any form and in any society is reprehensible. Such crimes assume a more sinister dimension when employed as tactics of war and tools of humiliation during armed conflicts. All parties to a conflict have the moral and legal responsibility to ensure due protection of all vulnerable groups, including women, children, the elderly and the disabled.

Pakistan welcomes this opportunity to have an open and frank discussion on the important topic of sexual violence in armed conflict. We have listened carefully to the remarks made by Special Representative of the Secretary-General Wallström. We are also grateful to Under-Secretary-General Ladsous and to Ms. Megheirbi. Pakistan's commitment to the United Nations agenda of peace and security needs no elaboration. For more than half a century,

Pakistanis have served in United Nations peacekeeping operations in challenging circumstances. We have noted the Security Council's enhanced emphasis on addressing violations of the human rights of children and women through new mechanisms, such as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict. Employed properly and in cooperation with concerned States and other relevant actors, such tools have the potential for good.

We are supportive of the work that the Special Representative of the Secretary-General is doing, and would like to encourage her to continue to focus on the core of her mandate, that is, situations of armed conflict or occupation. Having carefully read the report of the Secretary-General (S/2012/33), we have some questions and comments on its specifics.

Ideas such as the inclusion of elections, political strife or civil unrest under "other situations" go beyond the mandate of the Security Council. They run counter to paragraph 8 of resolution 1960 (2010), which clearly confines the whole debate to the implementation of resolution 1888 (2009), that is, situations of armed conflict. That is what the report should focus on, not situations that are neither armed conflict nor post-conflict or that threaten international peace and security. It is a matter of concern that some members of the Council, while arguing for a binding nature of Security Council resolutions, paradoxically condone deviations from mandates authorized by those very resolutions. The report should also not deviate from the established notion of sexual violence in situations of armed conflict

As paragraphs 1 and 3 of resolution 1960 (2010) affirm, the mandate of taking action against specific parties is restricted to those situations that are on the agenda of the Security Council. However, in paragraph 116 of the report, the Secretary-General recommends that the Security Council take specific actions, including the use of targeted measures by sanctions committees, against all parties named in the report, instead of those mentioned in the annex. We would appreciate clarification of that anomaly.

The report also mentions the development of a framework for early warning indicators specific to conflict-related sexual violence, with the aim of integrating the analyses yielded by the framework into existing and emerging early warning and prevention systems to facilitate a rapid response. It should be ensured that such a mechanism works strictly within the mandate and under the guidance of the Security Council to obviate politicization.

Let me conclude by saying that, our questions notwithstanding, Pakistan attaches the highest importance to and supports this important mandate. We would like to stress the need to strengthen the rule of law through a focus on national judicial systems, better training for peacekeeping troops and local police forces, and the increased participation of women in all peacemaking, peacebuilding and peacekeeping processes to help end sexual violence in situations of armed conflict. We are also supportive of the recommendations made by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the need to take steps for the legal, medical and psychological rehabilitation of the victims of sexual violence, as well as efforts to strengthen institutional safeguards against impunity for perpetrators.