

Security Council Open Debate on Sexual Violence in Conflict
16th-17th December 2010, Security Council Chamber (GA-TSC-01)

Statement by Mr. Karev, Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations

We thank the United States presidency for organizing today's meeting.

Unfortunately, in spite of the existence of an entire arsenal of international instruments on human rights and international humanitarian law, civilian populations continue to be subjected to violence and to suffer in armed conflicts and in post-conflict situations. Sexual violence is, of course, a repulsive crime that requires decisive condemnation and severe punishment. We are thus especially alarmed at situations where this phenomenon is becoming widespread and systematic. It is becoming an instrument in armed conflict.

Recent events in the Democratic Republic of the Congo have shown how acute the problem can be. We advocate a thorough investigation of all incidents and punishment of the guilty. Only in this way can we put an end to the reign of impunity that criminals enjoy, in the overwhelming majority of cases, and thereby eradicate that reprehensible practice.

We are, however, of the view that combating sexual violence is one of the major components of all of the measures that can be used for settlement and post-conflict recovery. We are convinced that, in concentrating efforts on combating sexual violence, we must pay due attention to other abuses committed during conflict. Civilian populations — most of all, women and children — are still victims of other crimes as well, such as premeditated attacks, including terrorist acts, and indiscriminate or excessive use of force. Often, the criminals escape punishment here as well.

As we see it, the diverse nature of violence during armed conflict requires appropriate attention to all its categories. The issues of women and peace and security must be based on a comprehensive approach, which is the approach that is enshrined in resolution 1325 (2000), which is the fundamental document for the protection of women and which ensures their rights in conflicts. Moreover, we believe that women should not be perceived only as victims. We must remember that an important precondition for overcoming violence against women is their full-fledged participation in peace talks and in post-conflict peacebuilding.

We are grateful to the Secretary-General for his thematic report for today's meeting (S/2010/604). A number of proposals in the document to strengthen our fight against sexual violence have been embodied in a practical manner in today's resolution. We support the recommendation of giving the Secretary-General the right to make lists of parties suspected of sexual violence in conflict. Such an instrument, as we have seen in our Council experience with children's issues, is a very effective way of having an impact on violators. With respect to agreements on monitoring, analysis and accountability regarding sexual violence in conditions of armed conflict, that mechanism is undoubtedly extremely important. The timelines, accuracy, objectivity and reliability of its information will determine the effectiveness and usefulness of Council decisions to rectify the situation.

There are many different types of conflict around the globe. However, from the standpoint of the Council's purposes under the Charter, the Council's attention must be focused only on those conflicts which are a threat to peace and security. Consequently, the instruments adopted today, such as the practice of making lists of violators and agreements on monitoring, analysis and accountability, must also be used in that context.

I would also like to emphasize that the efforts of the international community will be in vain without the consent and active participation of national Governments, which have the major responsibility for handling the entire range of issues to care for and protect their people.

In conclusion, we would like to express our conviction that today's resolution will play an important role in dealing with the problems of violence against women in armed conflicts.