

Security Council Open Debate on Sexual Violence in Conflict, June 24th 2013, Security Council Chamber

Statement by Mr. Zagaynov, Permanent Mission of Russian Federation to the United Nations.

At the outset, we thank the Secretary-General and the briefers who have been invited to the Council for their statements and useful information on combating sexual violence in armed conflict.

The Security Council, over the past five years, has repeatedly considered the topic of sexual violence in armed conflict. The Russian stance was fully laid out during a similar Security Council open debate in April this year (see S/PV6948), under the Rwandan presidency. For that reason, today we would like to simply touch on some key points.

The diverse nature of violence in armed conflict requires us to pay particular attention to all of its manifestations. We should base our consideration of the issue of women, peace and security on a comprehensive approach, as stipulated in resolution 1325 (2000). Sexual violence is one such manifestation of cause, warranting firm condemnation and harsh punishment. Painstaking investigations of all cases and punishment for the perpetrators are the keys to success in combating that heinous practice.

We believe that attempts to expand the interpretation of the relevant scope pertaining to armed conflict and post-conflict situations that has been agreed in intergovernmental processes and laid down in resolutions of the Security Council are unjustified. We consider that such an approach could have a negative impact not only on the work of the Security Council and the United Nations as a whole, but also and more practically on the effectiveness of combating sexual violence.

It is important for all structures involved in the matter to avoid excessive bureaucracy, which replaces the real fight against sexual violence in armed conflict. We consider that it is not possible to combat sexual violence in armed conflict without the active involvement of national authorities in the process. The work of the representatives of the United Nations system on the ground and cooperation between United Nations missions and country teams and non-State armed groups should be carried out with the consent of and in close cooperation with the Governments of the affected States. They should also be consulted on providing assistance or services.

It is important that the primary responsibility in protecting civilians in their territory be borne by Governments. Respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Member States is a fundamental and indivisible principle of the United Nations work. These principles will be vigorously upheld when they can foster the development of effective international cooperation in combating sexual violence.