



THE PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC
OF RWANDA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Statement by

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Security Council Open Debate

on

Women and Peace and Security : Sexual Violence in Situations
of Armed Conflict

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Madam President,

My Delegation welcomes this opportunity to participate in this Open Debate on 'Women and Peace and Security' and wishes to express our appreciation to the Delegation of the United States for organising this debate. We also commend the Secretary General, Deputy Secretary General, H.E. the Liberian Foreign Minister and Major General Cammaert for briefing us.

Madam President,

Throughout history, gender-based violence and in particular violence against women has been an integral component of armed conflict. In Rwanda the 1994 Genocide was marked by horrific forms of violence particularly against girls and women. An estimated 500,000 girls and women were victims of rape by the Interahamwe, and up to two thirds of these victims were also infected with HIV by perpetrators carrying the virus. It is now evident that rape was part of the genocidal plan and part of the systematic degradation of women and of girls. This plan was then exported by the Ex-FAR/Interahamwe across our borders into the Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and continues to be exacted by the Ex-FAR Interahamwe's successors the FDLR, RUD-Runana and other militias on the women and girls of the Eastern DRC. 14 years on, survivors of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda continue to live with the effects of this legacy.

Therefore, addressing the specific protection needs of women in armed conflict remains a critical matter for the UN system. My delegation, therefore, reiterates our support for the continued implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa.

Madam President,

It is within this context that my government has set out to elaborate a National Policy on Gender based Violence and Violence against Women. The development of this policy is situated within a national, regional and international context and is linked to peace-building and economic development and growth. The Rwanda Genocide Law, Article II stipulates that Gender Based Violence, Violence against Women and Sexual Violence be dealt with in the First Category in accordance with

Article I as a crime of genocide or crime against humanity punishable under the Penal Code Article IXV with a maximum term of Life imprisonment.

Rwanda as one of the major Troop Contributing Countries to United Nations Peacekeeping Operations has a vested interest in ensuring the protection of women in situations of armed conflict. Gender Based Violence and Violence against Women is therefore considered by the Rwanda Defence Forces as a key component of the Security Threat. In this respect the Gender Desk at Rwanda Defence Headquarters devises training programs with the support of UNIFEM to raise awareness of Gender Based Violence and Violence against Women in the Armed Forces. Awareness and Training on responding to Gender Based Violence and Violence against Women has now been mainstreamed into the curriculum of all Rwanda's Military Schools and Training Institutions and is integral to the preparation of all Rwanda Defence Forces Battalions preparing for peace missions abroad. The leadership of the Rwanda Defence Forces has also undertaken Gender Based Violence and Violence against Women as Command Responsibility.

Madam President,

My delegation, therefore calls upon the United Nations System to take concerted action on addressing the plight of women in armed conflict through enforcing Security Council Resolution 1325, rejecting impunity through the support and strengthening of national jurisdictions and providing support to victims of sexual violence. We also strongly believe, that in order for the United Nations System to respond in a more coordinated, coherent and effective manner, urgent attention needs to be placed on strengthening the UN System's work on gender.

I Thank You