

Security Council Open Debate on Women, Rule of Law and Transitional Justice in Conflict-Affected Situations, October 18th, 2013, Security Council Chamber

Statement by Mr. Ja'afari, Permanent Mission of Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations

At the outset, allow me to express my gratitude to Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka for introducing the report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2013/525), which we read and followed attentively. We wish Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka success in her new post as Executive Director of UN Women.

I also would like to congratulate Azerbaijan on assuming the presidency of the Council for the month of October. We wish its delegation every success.

My country, Syria, has long been among the fairest countries in the Arab and Islamic world in securing all the necessary provisions and environment for enabling women to enjoy equal rights with men, free from the ignorance, blindness and social and intellectual shortcomings that prevail elsewhere. A woman serves as a Vice-President in my country at a time when other countries ban women from driving cars.

Regrettably, the current crisis in Syria has evoked a strange and inhumane phenomenon that runs contrary to the values of the Syrian people and all the legal instruments that Syria has signed and acceded to in its efforts to support the rights of women and children. The current situation runs contrary to the principles of the Islamic religion and Arab chivalry. That change came about with the arrival of mercenaries and *takfiris* who are openly recruited from all parts of the world to impose unjust *Wahhabi* ideas that degrade women and turn them into concubines.

All this has taken place with arming, support and financing from Qatar, Saudi Arabia and France. Those States have spent countless sums on influential media and invidious sectarian incitement to halt Syria's socioeconomic, security and judicial development. They work to undermine its independence, its national decision-making and its rejection of those who exploit religion. Most prominent among the fatwas that affect women is the fatwa of sex as struggle, which allows fornication under the guise of jihad. Published by some irresponsible minds and financed by the Gulf regimes, the fatwa encourages Islamic women to commit adultery in the name of religion. My delegation has sent a detailed letter on that diseased fatwa and the mentalities that promote it to the Secretary-General (A/68/487, annex). We urge all those present and those who are concerned for human rights to study it.

The Syrian authorities are eager to bring to justice all those who commit such crimes, and we are documenting those grave violations. Syria arrests the perpetrators and subjects them to accountability under Syrian national law. On the other hand, we must work together to remove the root causes of crimes against women and girls and to combat impunity by immediately putting pressure on the regimes that seek to promote terrorism in Syria to halt their financial support and the provision of arms, as well as to end the media coverage they give to terrorist groups that violate women's basic rights. We call for the accountability of the regimes of both Qatar and Saudi Arabia for their support for and the media coverage they provide to the crazy, irresponsible minds that encourage the rape of innocent Syrian women.

We cannot but express our deep concern about the deterioration of the situation in the refugee camps of our Syrian brothers, where Syrian women and girls face insecurity and are being trafficked, raped and subjected to forced marriage, all of which has been documented in international reports. Although slow and delayed, Western media reports, most recently that of Germany's RTL television, have documented the tragedy of Syrian refugees younger than 14 who have ended up in slave markets, where petrodollars turn them into concubines in the name of religion. Those who exploit the tragedy of the Syrian refugees do so deliberately in order to create a ghetto of Syrian victims and exploit them in a manner that degrades Syria and its people.

Syria has notified all the specialized organs of the United Nations system, especially the Security Council and the General Assembly, through a number of official communications and reports. Regrettably, the United Nations remains less engaged than expected, despite the important role it could play to achieve justice, to hold perpetrators accountable and to put an end to such an inhuman and immoral phenomenon.

We hope that Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngucuka will actively seek to put an end to that phenomenon and that she will pressure those foreign Powers that seek to intensify the bloodshed in Syria to cease their interference in my country and their violations of international law and the United Nations charter. We also look forward to her active participation in protecting the rights of Syrian women under the Israeli occupation in the occupied Golan Heights and in improving their living conditions.

The permanent representative of France spoke about my country in a manner that lacks the diplomatic finesse expected from the representative of a permanent member of the Council. It would seem that the French regime — through its extremism and its continued disregard for its responsibilities as a permanent member of the Council, along with its bloody interference in the affairs of several member States, including my country — has lost the legitimacy to maintain its status in the Council. By encouraging, arming and protecting regimes that refuse to attend the Geneva conference and that continue to kill Syrians from Paris and elsewhere, the French regime, through its irresponsible and childish interference, has become a threat to international peace and security and is no longer a member to be trusted with maintaining international peace and security.