



SLOVENIA

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Statement by Ondina Blokar Drobič

chargé d'affaires, Deputy Permanent Representative of Slovenia to the United Nations
at the Security Council Open Debate on
"Sexual Violence in Conflict"
in connection with the agenda item on "Women and Peace and Security"
New York, 23 April 2019

Mr. President,

I wish to thank German presidency for organizing this debate and the invited speakers for their briefings and testimonies. Slovenia aligns itself with the statements delivered earlier by the European and would like to make some additional remarks in its national capacity.

We once again welcome the report on Sexual Violence in Conflict. We are outraged by the persistent and widespread occurrence of sexual violence in armed conflict and join others in condemning these violations.

Regarding the resolution 2467 we regret the fact that the agreement could not be reached on the issues of crucial importance, including providing sexual and reproductive health services to all survivors of sexual violence in conflict. Ensuring comprehensive assistance to all survivors of these heinous crimes is in the heart of survivor-centred approach.

We must seriously increase our efforts to do three important things: (i) prevent such heinous crimes from ever happening again, (ii) bring those responsible to justice and (iii) provide victims with all the assistance and help they need and deserve. All of these, regardless of whether a situation is on the Security Council's agenda or not.

Mr. President,

In the past decade an important paradigm shift has been made – conflict related sexual violence is itself understood as a threat to international peace and security. It especially impedes women's participation in peace and political processes, including post-conflict

reconstruction and reconciliation. In most cases sexual violence in conflict occurs where there is systemic discrimination against women and girls. Therefore we must promote efforts to eliminate discrimination against women and girls in law and in practice.

Again, sexual violence in contemporary conflicts is not a side effect, but rather a front-line consideration and a horrifying tactic of war, means of repression, terror and control, used to humiliate and injure victims, their families and entire communities.

All survivors, regardless of their gender or age are traumatised and stigmatised for life. Entire generations and communities are affected for decades to come.

Ensuring accountability and ending impunity is of paramount importance. The primary responsibility to protect civilians and to bring perpetrators to justice always resides with States. Ensuring accountability remains a major challenge. In this regard, the role of international criminal justice has been recognized, in particular the International Criminal Court. Slovenia supports different international mechanisms for investigation and prosecution of such crimes.

Mr. President,

We express our support for the recommendations of the Secretary-General in his report to fully integrate the issue of conflict-related sexual violence into the work of its sanctions committees and include sexual violence as the explicit designation criteria for sanctions as well as to include measures to prevent conflict-related sexual violence in security sector and justice reform initiatives.

Approach to sexual and gender-based violence must be survivor-centred and awareness-rising activities must be added in parallel to victim's assistance to fight stigmatization of the survivors and children born as a result of sexual violence and to challenge negative perceptions and misunderstandings that prevent survivors to rebuild their lives.

Mr. President,

Slovenia is addressing the correlation of conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence in its second National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security for the Period 2018-2020 adopted in November 2018. Among others, the Action plan contains several activities regarding prevention of and accountability.

In June of 2018 Slovenia also joined the Call to Action on Gender Based Violence (GBV) in emergencies and committed to step up engagement in prevention and response to GBV. Last year we allocated financial contribution for the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The education and training on women, peace and security, which were systematically, introduced throughout the Slovene Armed Forces area also an important domestic achievement.

Mr President,

Let me conclude by once again confirming our strong support for UN action against conflict related sexual violence. We call on all parts of the United Nations to continue prioritizing this important issue and further call on the Security Council to strongly, systematically, consistently and promptly respond to all violations in situations of armed conflicts. Neither silence, nor tolerance or impunity is an option. This is a message that should clearly emanate from this Security Council.

I thank you