

Statement by

Mr. Tim Mawe

Deputy Permanent Representative

at the

Open Debate of the Security Council

“Sexual Violence in Conflict”

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Madam President,

Ireland commends you for your initiative in scheduling today's debate. We thank the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Madam Zainab Bangura, whose work we highly appreciate, and Ms. Hamsatu Allamin, speaking on behalf of civil society, for their insightful briefings on this topic. Ireland associates itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union.

Madam President,

The Secretary-General's report makes for difficult reading. It details horrible and systematic violations of the rights of women and girls and to a lesser, but discernibly growing extent, boys and men. The confluence of crises in 2014 wrought by violent extremism has brought home once again how sexual violence, rape, forced marriage and kidnapping is employed as a *tactic* of terror by radical groups in Iraq, Somalia, Syria and Nigeria in order to dehumanise and repress their victims.

Nevertheless, 2014 saw some positive developments which are noteworthy. One highlight was the entering into force of the Arms Trade Treaty in December; the first treaty to recognise the links between the international arms trade and gender-based violence. We look forward to its effective implementation.

While progress made must be commended we cannot shy away from the reality that 2014 saw a resurgence of sexual violence in conflict. Faced with such horrors, how can we translate the concern voiced around this table into meaningful action on the ground? Today, I would like to focus on just three points: Deployment of Women Protection Advisers; better participation and empowerment of women in peacebuilding and greater accountability for sexual violence in conflict.

Madam President,

The Secretary-General's report notes the real difference being made by the deployment of Women Protection Advisers to UN missions. They have improved the quality of information and analysis received and have had a catalytic effect on the ground. However, of the 170,000 personnel deployed by the UN, just 20 are Women Protection Advisers. Ireland supports accelerated deployment of such Advisers as well as Gender Advisers to facilitate full implementation of all Women, Peace and Security resolutions. The number and roles of these

positions must be systematically assessed during the planning and review of each UN mission and the costs should be reflected in the regular budgets of UN missions.

Madam President,

As Ms. Allamin stressed earlier today, the full and equal participation of women in conflict prevention and peacebuilding is fundamental to any prevention and protection response including to threats posed by violent extremism. In line with Council Resolution 2122 we must step up efforts to support women's leadership and participation. We must listen to, invest in and build up the capacity of women-led civil society organisations. We need to eliminate legal and other barriers and proactively support the participation of women on an equal footing with men in economic and political decision-making from the household to the national and international level in order to transform the social norms underlying gender inequality.

We know that peace agreements are less likely to fail where civil society is included. And yet, in disregarding the role of women, we manage to omit a large segment of civil society. Women represent only 9% of delegates to peace talks and 2% of mediators. And this is in a context where over half of peace efforts fail to sustain peace. There must be a better way.

Ireland also calls for the inclusion of conflict-related sexual violence in mediation efforts and in ceasefire and peace agreements. We are encouraged by the Havana peace talks on the Colombian situation where a group of 60 survivors of sexual violence directly addressed the negotiations. As a result, conflict-related sexual violence has been raised in the negotiations by the stakeholders.

Madam President,

This Council has stressed on many occasions the importance of holding perpetrators of conflict-related sexual violence accountable, not only as an end in itself but to address the culture of impunity which threatens peace and security and post-conflict recovery.

We encourage the Council to use all means at its disposal to bring perpetrators into the spotlight including through referrals to the ICC, mandating commissions of inquiry and by explicitly condemning these violations where they occur. Targeted sanctions are another tool at the disposal of the Council and the Council needs to be more ambitious in their use.

Ireland strongly supports the recommendation in the Secretary-General's report, as echoed by Madam Bangura today, to fully integrate conflict-related sexual violence into the work of the Security Council sanctions committees, including the Al-Qaida Sanctions List as part of designation criteria.

Madam President,

Sexual violence in conflict can no longer be considered collateral damage or something that is "unfortunate". It is the direct result of decisions taken by parties to conflict. The history of denial must end. We must incentivise national leaders to adopt women, peace and security as *their* own agenda. We must tackle the root causes of sexual violence.

We must not stop until the barriers that exist for women are dismantled so they can claim their rights as equal citizens.

Thank you.