

STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR ASOKE KUMAR MUKERJI, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE AT THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL OPEN DEBATE ON “SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN ARMED CONFLICT” UNDER THE AGENDA ITEM “WOMEN AND PEACE AND SECURITY”, ON APRIL 15, 2015

Madame President,

My delegation would like to thank you for organizing this debate. We have read the concept note circulated by your delegation, and reviewed the progress made in the implementation of the relevant Security Council Resolutions on the subject of this debate. We would like to thank our briefers this morning.

Madame President,

We are in strong agreement with the view that sexual violence in armed conflict is not incidental, but integrally linked with the strategic objectives, ideology and funding of extremist groups. This is equally worrisome, when the list of perpetrators of armed conflict, mentioned in the Secretary General's report, has increased to include 45 parties that commit egregious and heinous crimes, including sexual violence against women, girls, men and boys, who use sexual violence as a “tactic of terror”.

We also take note of that the list of perpetrators of sexual violence in armed conflict includes mainly non-state actors who act beyond the pale of law. This strengthens our view that we should extend more support to national governments in their efforts to deal with this challenge. These efforts include ownership and capacity-building to adopt progressive legal frameworks and legislation to implement zero-tolerance for sexual violence. National governments should be encouraged to realize their primary responsibility for leadership and responses in dealing with sexual violence through social sector reforms and establishing rule-of-law based systems. Reintegration of survivors of sexual violence needs to be facilitated by providing a safe, secure and enabling environment, free from fear from stigmatization and reprisals.

Recourse by the Council to international punitive mechanisms should only be considered as a matter of last resort.

Madame President,

The impact of armed conflict on women and girls, and their role in peace operations, remains a central issue in conflict situations, as outlined in the landmark UNSC resolution 1325 (2000). Mainstreaming of gender perspective in peace operations is a

prerequisite to achieve the ultimate goal of gender equality, women empowerment, sustainable development and sustainable peace and security.

We concur with the report, which calls on us to take cognizance of, and reinforce the need for, deployment of more Women Peacekeepers, Women Protection Advisors and Gender Advisers in peace operations. We support the development of a gender resource package and training materials. More women at high decision making positions in multi-dimensional peace operations is undoubtedly essential.

Madame President,

On our part, India proudly stands committed to assist the UN in the maintenance of international peace and security with nearly 180,000 troops having served under the blue flag so far, the largest from any country. This includes the 103 strong Indian female FPU in UNMIL, which has been commended both by the national government of Liberia, and by world leaders.

Our women peacekeepers have helped to reduce conflict and confrontation by imbuing a greater sense of security to local populations and inspiring women and girls to push for their own rights and participation in the peace process. We continue to lay emphasis on gender sensitive pre-deployment training and are willing to increase our contribution to peace operations.

Madame President,

We would like to reiterate our principled position that SC should focus on issues related to the mandate specifically given by the Council. We could urge caution in going beyond the mandates in reports submitted to the Council and not stray into sweeping generalizations of “other settings of concern”, including “counter-terrorism” with regard to sexual violence being perpetrated in context of an increase in violent extremism.

It is useful to remind ourselves here that the women and peace and security agenda evolved from the imperative to address the disproportionate impact of armed conflict on women, including the abhorrent practice of sexual violence against women as an instrument of war.

Madame President,

The international community should address this emergent and worrisome challenge in a spirit of compassion, solidarity and burden-sharing. I would like to reaffirm India’s commitment to our collective efforts to find durable solutions to the issues of women and peace and security, within the overall framework of international peace, security and stability. We also look forward to the Global Review on Sexual Violence in October, at

the occasion of 15th Anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) and the 70th anniversary of our United Nations.

I thank you.