



Statement by

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Deputy Permanent Representative and Chargé d'Affaires

**UN Security Council Open Debate**  
**“Women and peace and security”**

25<sup>th</sup> April 2014, New York

Mr. President,

Let me join the previous speakers in thanking the delegation of Nigeria for convening this open debate under its Presidency. I would also like to thank the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict for her statement.

Mr. President,

In times of conflict and post-conflict situations, attention should be paid to all forms of violence against civilians, especially sexual violence. Historically, sexual violence has been associated with the absence of peace and security. Conflict often creates family dislocations, shattered livelihoods and also sole breadwinners, with the resulting negative consequences. Single mothers are often the result of conflict, and in some cases, this increases vulnerability to sexual harassment, exploitation and violence.

The Government of Sri Lanka has implemented a firm policy on sexual violence and has taken firm action against reported cases of violence against women and girls during the conflict and the post-conflict period. Sri Lanka has deplored all violence against women and has a well-established policy against gender based violence and all forms of sexual abuse. During the conflict period (January 2007 – May 2009), 7 Security Forces personnel were reported as having been involved in 5 incidents of sexual violence in the Northern Province. This is out of a total of

125 persons accused in 119 incidents for the entirety of the Northern Province. In the post conflict period (from May 2009 – May 2012) 10 Security Forces personnel were reported as having been involved in 6 incidents of sexual violence in the Northern Province. This is out of a total of 307 persons accused in 256 incidents for the entire Northern Province. The involvement of Security Forces personnel as a percentage of the total accused stands at 5.6% in the conflict period and 3.3% in the post- conflict period. Any allegations supported by credible evidence will be dealt with firmly by the authorities.

It is interesting to note that the involvement of Security Forces personnel as a percentage of the total incidents of sexual violence is quite low both in the conflict and post- conflict periods. In a majority of the above cases, the perpetrators have been close relatives or neighbours of the victim. Therefore, against this background the Sri Lankan authorities reject the inferences made by certain organisations and reports that the presence of military contributes to the insecurity of women and girls in the former conflict affected areas.

Legal action has been taken by the Government in all of the above mentioned cases in which the Sri Lankan Security Forces personnel have been involved. The military has taken stringent action, including discharging offenders or imposing other punishments in accordance with the military and penal codes. Furthermore, charges have also been filed in normal criminal courts. Along with the application of the law to personnel in breach of the law, the Sri Lankan military continues to provide large scale human rights training with the assistance of the ICRC.

Certain organisations are involved in propagating false reports of sexual violence against the Sri Lankan military. A recent report was authored by Ms. Yasmin Sooka. Accusations, often with disturbing details, have been made in this report without providing sufficient details such as a time and place and the identification of victims, to enable investigations and prosecutions. These accusations are then repeated in other publications of different organizations, thereby contributing to forming an opinion which is propagated without evidence. None of these allegations have been substantiated by verifiable data in any of these documents. Significantly, no credible evidence has been directly brought to the attention of Government authorities by any of these parties. The Government has not been provided the evidence which is claimed to be in the possession of the authors of these reports in order to investigate and respond.

Mr. President,

I would like to also point out the other extensive measures the Government has taken to cater to women and girls and ensure that their wellbeing and security is protected. The Government has established Women and Children's Police Desks staffed with female police officers in police stations in the Northern and the Eastern Provinces. Specially trained police officers function at such desks which provide an enabling and protective environment for children, women and girls and their parents to report incidents of abuse and exploitation. This network is also linked to the National Child Protection Authority. Sexual and gender-based violence help desks are located in hospitals in the Districts affected by the conflict.

The Government has given special consideration to uplifting the social and economic status of war widows. Already bilateral assistance has been obtained to initiate a self-employment programme for war widows in Batticaloa in collaboration with the Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) based in India. A local NGO called the Parents of Servicemen Missing in Action and Association of War Affected Women educates soldiers, youth, and community leaders about international standards relating to war and promotes the economic and social development of women across conflict lines.

We observe that this year's Report of the UNSG on conflict related sexual violence contains references to the HRC resolution on Sri Lanka (HRC/25/L.1/Rev.1), accountability, and a comprehensive truth and reconciliation commission. We are disappointed that such issues which has no relevance to this issue, have been dragged into this report. The contents of the HRC resolution has been rejected and disputed by the Government. We would like to respectfully point out that the Government established an internal mechanism for dealing with causes for the conflict and to make recommendations. The report of this body (the Lessons Learned and Reconciliation Commission), offers detailed observations and recommendations based on international humanitarian law principles. The National Action Plan developed on the basis of LLRC recommendations is now being implemented. Sri Lanka will continue to take all necessary measures to heal the wounds of conflict on its own, as the internationalization of the reconciliation process, would only result in stymying the progress, particularly since it is a domestically developed process.

Mr. President,

My delegation hopes that international discussion of issues of this nature will facilitate a wider appreciation of the inherent challenges and practical outcomes based on ground realities. States should be consulted on all aspects of international actions to combat sexual violence in conflict, including the provision of assistance. In this process, respect must be maintained for the fundamental principle of sovereignty and territorial integrity of Member States.

In conclusion, let me reiterate that Sri Lanka will proactively continue with its efforts to enhance and develop protection mechanisms with regard to the protection of women and children.

Thank you, Mr. President