

**PRESS RELEASE**

---



# **DJIBOUTI**

---

**Statement by**

**H. E. Mr. Mohamed Siad Doualeh  
Ambassador, Permanent Representative  
Of the Republic of Djibouti to the United Nations**

**Before the Security Council**

**on  
Sexual Violence in Conflict**

**Tuesday 23 April 2019**

**CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY**

**Mr. President,**

D'emblée, Djibouti condamne avec véhémence les attaques terroristes coordonnées qui ont ciblé des lieux de culte et des hôtels au Sri Lanka provoquant le massacre sanglant de nombreux innocents au Sri Lanka. Nous réitérons notre solidarité au Gouvernement et au peuple du Sri Lanka.

Djibouti expresses its appreciation to the Delegation of Germany for convening this important discussion on the scourge of conflict related sexual violence, its impact on international peace and security and ways to strengthen accountability.

We are grateful for the continued effort and commitment of the Secretary General as reflected in its annual reports on the implementation of resolutions 1820, 1888 and 1960.

We value the work undertaken by the Office of the Special Representative of Sexual Violence in armed conflict and the team of experts on Women, protection advisers in their efforts to prevent and address all forms of sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations.

**Mr. President,**

A few days ago, we commemorated the 28<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Rwandan Genocide with our brothers and sisters in Rwanda. The prohibition of rape is one of the oldest rules of war having been prohibited in the first modern code of war, the Lieber code of 1863 in the 1949 Geneva Conventions. It was only in September 1998 in the case of Jean-Paul Akayesu before the Tribunal of Rwanda, that a Tribunal handed down a conviction for rape as a crime against humanity. The Tribunal stated unequivocally that “rape and sexual violence constitute one of the worst ways of harming the victim as he or she suffers both bodily and mental harm”.

Building on this jurisprudence the development of the Statute of the ICC was seen as many as significant milestone in the prosecution of conflict-related sexual and gender based violence. Article 8 of the Rome Statute of the ICC includes “rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, or any other form of sexual violence” as war crimes on both international and non-international armed conflict.

Many others, including the remarkably brave 2018 Nobel Peace Prize Laureates Ms. Nadia Murad and Dr. Denis Mukwege Mukengere continue to bring conflict-related sexual violence and gender-based violence to the world's attention. Djibouti thanks them for their presence in our midst today and for their contribution.

**Mr. President,**

Despite the progress made, sexual and gender-based violence continue to mar conflicts today. It remains uniquely concealed and distinctively difficult to prosecute. I would like to focus on the importance of addressing the silence around these crimes. As Dr. Denis Mukwege Mukengere has explained, staying silent about sexual violence has granted impunity to the perpetrators and increased its proliferation. "What is keeping rape in our society is silence. The silence is really a strong tool for rapists so they can go on destroying girls and women. If she stays silent she can be raped again and again and she can't protect others".

The United Nations and its members must endeavor to help survivors report their experiences concerning their conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence and thereby increase accountability.

We should all seek to reduce the stigma around sexual and gender-based violence. We should find creative ways to raise awareness including through the use of community-radio, theater community and religious leaders and billboards. We need long-term communal strategies to change underlying behavioral norms that somehow do not condemn sexual and gender-based violence as the atrocious crimes they are.

The UN should help community-based first responders to better document sexual and gender-based violence. Healthcare providers play a critical role in providing urgent care and immediate clinical care to survivors. In addition to this moral imperative, they could help hold perpetrators accountable. It has been convincingly demonstrated that victims who report rape and medical providers who document their accounts support the justice process by conducting the forensic medical equipment , recording findings in any final medical report collecting evidence from a survivor's body and testifying in court. Providing adequate training in these areas is therefore critical.

Finally, Djibouti supports the establishment of commissions of inquiry and fact-finding missions to address rape and other sexual crimes in their investigations of Human Rights violations in war zones.

**Thank you Mr. President**