

**Permanent Mission of India
New York**

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**Innovative Strategies to Ensure Access to Life-Saving Services and Protection for
Survivors of Sexual Violence in Conflict Zones**

Statement by Mr. Eldos Mathew Punnoose, Counsellor & Charge d'Affaires
19 August 2025

Mr President,

India thanks Panama, as the President of the Security Council for holding today's open debate. I also thank the briefers for their presentation.

2. Perpetrators of heinous acts of Conflict-related sexual violence must be condemned in the strongest possible terms and brought to justice. Sexual violence in conflict zones not only destroys individual lives but tears apart the very fabric of societies, leaving lasting scars on communities for generations. A multi-faceted approach is essential to address this crime and offer support to its survivors. This includes prosecuting and deterring such crimes in conflict situations, ensuring no impunity for perpetrators and adopting a survivor-centric approach in prevention and response mechanisms. UNSC Resolution 2467 of 2019 has been instrumental in highlighting the need to provide victims access to national relief and reparations programmes, healthcare, psychosocial care, safe shelter, legal aid and facilitate rehabilitation and reintegration efforts to bring a semblance of normalcy to their lives.

Mr President,

3. The Secretary-General's Trust Fund in Support of Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse is an important resource which should be further strengthened. India was among the first nations to contribute to this Fund and remains committed to support such victims. Our dedication to the cause can be seen from the fact that in Nov 2017, a voluntary compact was reached between UN Secretary-General and the Government of India on commitment to

eliminate sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping, humanitarian and development work. Underlining the seriousness attached to the issue by India, Prime Minister Modi joined the Circle of Leadership on the prevention of and response to sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations operations.

4. In our experience, the Female Engagement Teams that India deployed in peacekeeping missions across conflict zones, have been tremendously successful in connecting with local communities, addressing gender-sensitive issues, engaging with victims and enhancing the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations. In 2007, we were the first country to deploy an all-women Formed Police Unit (FPU) to the UN Mission in Liberia. Today, we have successfully deployed female contingents in MONUSCO (Democratic Republic of the Congo), UNISFA (Abyei), and UNMISS (South Sudan), with the objective of addressing conflict-related sexual violence.

5. Building on this experience, the Centre for United Nations Peacekeeping (CUNPK) in Delhi conducts specialized courses to increase participation of women in peacekeeping operations, including targeted training to prevent and address sexual and gender-based violence in armed conflict. India is ready to share this expertise and experience with interested Member States through our comprehensive training programs. These initiatives were further discussed during the Conference of Women Peacekeepers from the Global South held in New Delhi in February 2025.

Mr. President,

6. India has implemented a comprehensive domestic strategy for women's safety. It could offer insights for ensuring access to life-saving services and protection for survivors in conflict situations.

- **Dedicated Resources:** India established the Nirbhaya Fund, a non-lapsable fund with approximately \$1.2 billion for women's safety. It is dedicated towards ensuring safe environments for women, supporting effective implementation of legislation, and

creating comprehensive infrastructure for swift justice and crisis support. Member States could consider creating similar dedicated resources.

- **Response Mechanisms:** India operates a pan-India Emergency Response Support System through emergency number 112 for women's safety issues. Sakhi-One Stop Centres, established at each district headquarters provide comprehensive services including police assistance, medical care and legal aid, among others and offer protection and rehabilitation with shelter and economic security. Member States could consider replicating this model.
- **Justice Delivery:** Comprehensive training programs have been developed for investigation and prosecution, and for medical officers to ensure forensic evidence collection withstands judicial scrutiny. Fast Track Special Courts dedicated to women's safety have revolutionized justice delivery through swift case disposal.

Mr President,

7. Before I conclude, I would like to briefly address the baseless allegation raised by the delegate of Pakistan. The utter impunity with which the Pakistan army perpetrated heinous crimes of gross sexual violence against women in erstwhile East Pakistan in 1971 is a matter of shameful record. This deplorable pattern continues unabated and with impunity to this day. Rampant abduction, trafficking, child early and forced marriages and domestic servitude, sexual violence and forced religious conversions of thousands of vulnerable women and girls as weapons of persecution towards religious and ethnic minority communities are reported and chronicled including in the recent OHCHR reports. It is ironical that those who perpetrate these crimes, are now masquerading as champions of justice. The duplicity and hypocrisy is self-evident.

Mr President,

8. Allow me to once again reaffirm India's unwavering commitment to root out sexual violence in armed conflict and support and assist survivors of such heinous crimes.

I thank you, Mr. President.
