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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

H.E. Ban Ki-moon
Secretary-General of the United Nations

16 September 2013 No 1-10/609

Excellency,

The Permanent Mission of Estonia has the honour to invite you to the side-event "Enhancing Accountability for Sexual Violence in Conflict" on 26 September 2013, at 3:00 – 4:30 pm in UN Dag Hammarskjöld Library Auditorium. Please find attached the invitation and concept note of the event.

Estonia highly values your leadership on this issue and your attendance would be highly appreciated.

Please accept the assurances of my highest consideration.



Margus Kolga
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

SC4/08/008; COM/11/001





Mission of Estonia to the United Nations

Permanent Mission of Estonia to the United Nations

invites to a Panel Discussion on

Enhancing Accountability for Sexual Violence in Conflict

Thursday, 26 September 2013, 3:00 – 4:30pm

UN Dag Hammarskjöld Library Auditorium

Panelists:

- H.E. Mr. Urmas Paet, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Estonia
- H.E. Mr. William Hague, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom
- H.E. Ms. Tiina Intelmann, President of the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court
- Ms. Fatou Bensouda, Prosecutor, International Criminal Court

Moderated by:

Ms. Brigid Inder, Executive Director, Women's Initiative for Gender Justice and Special Gender Advisor to the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court

The panel will focus on the importance of national capacity and expertise to investigate and prosecute acts of sexual violence committed in armed conflict and how international judicial mechanisms, such as the International Criminal Court, can complement national efforts.

Following the panel, attendants will be provided an opportunity to share statements.

For further information and RSVP by 23 September please contact Ms Victoria Chisholm, Mission of Estonia to the United Nations: +1 646 514 0086, victoria.chisholm@mfa.ee.

Concept Note

Although there has been increasing international attention to sexual violence in conflict, gender based crimes remain an enduring part of most armed conflicts. As long as perpetrators of sexual violence continue to enjoy near complete impunity, it will continue to be used as a tool in conflict to terrorize and control civilian populations.

Background

The international criminal tribunals for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and Rwanda (ICTR) developed groundbreaking international jurisprudence on rape and sexual violence during war. Investigating and prosecuting gender based crimes has also been an integral strategy at the Special Court for Sierra Leone. The Rome Statute, the founding treaty of the International Criminal Court (ICC), further built upon the recognition of sexual violence as a serious international crime and expanded its scope by specifying a greater number of gender based crimes and acknowledges that these crimes can be committed against both men and women. Importantly, these inclusions have been translated into practice at the ICC and have resulted in charges for gender based crimes being brought in cases in six of the eight situations.

In addition, the Rome Statute incorporated broad measures to empower victims. Victim participation in proceedings, the right to legal representation, and the right to request reparations are all important components of the Statute. Likewise, the ICC Trust Fund for Victims has been doing important work to alleviate the suffering of victims in countries where the court is conducting investigations. Among other activities, it is providing assistance to the victims of rape and to children born as a result of rape.

ICC prosecutions will not, however, be sufficient to ensure complete accountability. Rather, to end impunity for sexual violence, it is essential that the Rome Statute's gender provisions are translated into national prosecutions.

Rationale for the event

The international community has put in place a framework for responding to conflict-related sexual violence through Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1960 (2010) and 2106 (2013), the latter of which calls for more consistent and rigorous investigation and prosecution of sexual violence crimes as a central aspect of deterrence, and ultimately prevention. However, the focus and efforts of the international community to address sexual violence have failed to translate into thorough investigations and prosecutions of perpetrators. Sexual violence in conflict still affects millions of people today but accountability for these crimes remains rare.

Objectives of the event

- Draw the attention of high-level policy makers to the fact that accountability for sexual violence and gender based crimes remains an exception rather than the norm, despite efforts made thus far;
- Outline why accountability is crucial to deterrence and victim empowerment;
- Encourage States to incorporate the ICC's provisions into their own legal systems to facilitate prosecutions based on national and international law; and
- Discuss how States, international and non-governmental organizations can assist States in adopting legislation to investigate and prosecute sexual and gender based crimes.