

**Security Council**

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**Letter dated 1 July 2026 from the Permanent Representative of
the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the United Nations
addressed to the Secretary-General**

I have the honour to inform you that the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in its capacity as President of the Security Council for the month of July 2026, will convene a high-level open debate on “Honouring the promise of international law to survivors of conflict-related sexual violence”, in connection with the item entitled “Women and peace and security”.

The high-level open debate will be held on Thursday, 8 July 2026, at 10 a.m. To facilitate the discussions, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has prepared a concept note (see annex).

I would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Zénon **Mukongo Ngay**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative



Annex to the letter dated 1 July 2026 from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: French]

Concept note for the Security Council open debate on conflict-related sexual violence, on the theme “Honouring the promise of international law to survivors of conflict-related sexual violence”, to be held on 8 July 2026 at 10 a.m.

I. Background

More than 25 years have passed since the adoption of Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#). That resolution was followed by the adoption of resolution [1820 \(2008\)](#), in which the Council recognized conflict-related sexual violence for the first time as a security issue in its own right. In 2009, the Council unanimously adopted resolution [1888 \(2009\)](#), in which it established an integrated institutional framework to combat conflict-related sexual violence, including by appointing the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict to serve as a spokesperson for the United Nations and a high-level political advocate for preventing and combating this scourge, as well as to provide coherent and strategic guidance to support relevant efforts across the United Nations system. The work of the Special Representative was to be supported primarily by the inter-agency initiative entitled “United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict”, the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict and the women’s protection advisors deployed in United Nations entities in a number of relevant countries. The Council has continued to strengthen its normative framework on conflict-related sexual violence, including by adopting resolutions [1960 \(2010\)](#), [2106 \(2013\)](#), [2122 \(2013\)](#), [2242 \(2015\)](#), [2331 \(2016\)](#) and [2467 \(2019\)](#).

The 2026 open debate will focus on the theme “Honouring the promise of international law to survivors of conflict-related sexual violence”. It will be aimed at examining the specific steps taken by Member States and regional organizations to prevent conflict-related sexual violence, bring perpetrators to justice and address the specific needs of survivors. It will also seek to identify strategies to ensure that survivors are full partners in developing solutions, as well as measures to promote their leadership, effective participation and influence in policymaking and decision-making processes in this area, in accordance with resolution [2467 \(2019\)](#).

In 2025, in a global context characterized by the intensification and proliferation of armed conflicts, the worsening of humanitarian crises and the cumulative impact of climate and food crises, survivors of conflict-related sexual violence faced growing obstacles in gaining access to health services, justice and reparations, making the full implementation of the normative framework established by the Security Council more urgent than ever. The number of cases verified by the United Nations has risen sharply; these cases are all too often characterized by extreme brutality and disproportionately target women and girls. However, these cases likely represent only a fraction of the actual number due to chronic underreporting, which is perpetuated by the stigma, fear of retaliation, lack of appropriate services and social exclusion faced by survivors.

As these patterns intensify, survivors face increasing medical, psychosocial, legal and socioeconomic needs that require rapid, comprehensive and survivor-centred responses, while children born as a result of rape continue to be exposed to intersecting forms of stigma, discrimination and exclusion.

Combating impunity and ensuring access to justice and accountability for survivors

Ensuring access to justice and accountability for survivors remains an essential element of the response to conflict-related sexual violence, and the rights to legal assistance and effective remedies are broadly guaranteed under international humanitarian law, international criminal law and international human rights law. Despite the progress made in some contexts, many challenges remain in implementing a survivor-centred approach in legal processes, including by establishing transitional justice mechanisms and transformative reparations. Moreover, persistent obstacles to investigation and prosecution continue to hinder prevention and deterrence efforts, as well as compliance with international norms.

Overall, the level of compliance by parties to conflict with international norms has remained low, despite the robust normative framework established by the Security Council. Currently, eight country-specific sanctions regimes include sexual violence as a basis for designation. Consistent consideration by Security Council sanctions committees of the persistent perpetrators listed in the annex to the report of the Secretary-General would help to combat impunity for conflict-related sexual violence. Incorporating specialized expertise on conflict-related sexual violence into the expert groups responsible for monitoring sanctions regimes is also essential to enable the relevant sanctions committees to receive pertinent information and to integrate survivor-centred considerations more effectively into their work.

Addressing protection gaps in the context of transitions and drawdowns of peacekeeping operations

The debate will also focus on ways to sustain efforts to prevent and combat conflict-related sexual violence during and after the transitions and drawdowns of United Nations peace operations, which can lead to significant gaps in security, assistance, monitoring and follow-up. In this context, consideration will also be given to the protection of front-line service providers, particularly healthcare workers, judicial actors, local women-led organizations and women human rights defenders, who face increased risks of attack, intimidation and reprisals in carrying out their protection and assistance work.

Lastly, the debate will cover ways to address the gaps resulting from the reduction in United Nations capacities in conflict settings, in order to support international and local actors in their efforts to mitigate the risks of conflict-related sexual violence and strengthen relevant responses. This includes monitoring and reporting, conducting investigations and providing assistance to survivors, including by deploying women's protection advisers in all relevant situations of concern, in accordance with resolution [2467 \(2019\)](#).

II. Guiding questions

- How can Member States strengthen compliance with international humanitarian law, international human rights law and relevant Security Council resolutions in order to prevent the use of sexual violence as a tactic of war, terrorism, torture or political repression, and support efforts to ensure accountability for these crimes? How can the Council strengthen accountability mechanisms to ensure that perpetrators of conflict-related sexual violence face consequences for their actions, while guaranteeing access to survivor-centred justice and promoting transformative reparations?

- How can Security Council sanctions regimes be further strengthened or used to prevent and deter incidents of conflict-related sexual violence? What role can other relevant multilateral or autonomous sanctions regimes play in strengthening and promoting the global fight against impunity?
- What specific steps should Member States, United Nations entities and international organizations take to ensure timely protection, assistance, reparations and long-term reintegration support for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence and for children born as a result of rape committed during conflict? How can protection be guaranteed for human rights monitors and service providers in conflict settings, and how can the risk of reprisals be mitigated?
- In the context of the current financial crisis, how can the United Nations strengthen its approach to preventing and responding to conflict-related sexual violence by providing survivors with comprehensive and essential services, including sexual and reproductive health services, particularly for women and girls?
- What immediate steps can be taken to increase the allocation of resources for prevention, protection and assistance for survivors, particularly by reducing military spending? In the context of the current financial crisis, how can Member States, donors and regional and international organizations address the chronic underfunding of efforts to prevent and combat conflict-related sexual violence? How can the fight against the illegal exploitation of and trafficking in natural resources be leveraged to end conflict-related sexual violence and help to provide funding for assistance and reparations for survivors?
- How can the Security Council and the international community strengthen political commitments and funding for the implementation of the mandate on conflict-related sexual violence, including by deploying women's protection advisers? How can support be strengthened for local women-led organizations, including those that work directly with survivors, in line with the women and peace and security agenda?

III. Format, briefers and participation

The open debate will be chaired by the Prime Minister and Head of Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Judith Suminwa Tuluka.

The following speakers will provide briefings to the Security Council:

- The Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict
- Women's civil society briefer designated by the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security
- Women's civil society briefer designated by the Permanent Mission of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the United Nations

Member States wishing to participate in person should inscribe their names on the list of speakers through the eSpeakers module of e-deleGATE. A letter addressed to the President of the Security Council, duly signed by the Permanent Representative or the Chargé d'affaires a.i., requesting to participate in accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure must be uploaded to the eSpeakers module of e-deleGATE. Inscription for said meeting will open on 2 July at 9.30 a.m.

In order to guarantee the participation of as many Member States as possible, statements should not exceed three minutes.