

Speech by H.E. Mr Marc Pecsteen de Buytsverve, Ambassador,
Permanent Representative

at the United Nations Security Council

Briefing on the 1591 Sanctions Committee (Sudan)

New York, 17 January 2019

Mr President,

Thank you for organising this briefing. I would also like to thank my colleague, the Permanent Representative of Poland, for her detailed account of the activities of the 1591 Sanctions Committee. I commend the dynamism with which she leads the work of this committee.

In general terms, we can say that the situation in Darfur is showing a positive trend, although we need to remain vigilant. We are also concerned by the violence observed during recent demonstrations throughout the country. We deplore the fact that this violence has led to deaths, and call on the authorities to exercise restraint. We are also concerned about the possible impact of the political situation in Sudan on the Darfur peace process and call on all parties to join this process.

Mr. President, even as we reflect on a strategy for UNAMID's withdrawal, the report we have just heard reminds us that the suffering of the population is not over. Conflict-related sexual violence continues to affect women and girls in particular. We are deeply concerned by their lack of access to legal remedies and call on the Government of Sudan to strengthen its national capacity for legal, medical and psychosocial support for victims of sexual violence. In this context, we support the work of Special Representative Patten and look forward to continuing to work with her, in particular to hearing her speak at the meetings of the sanction committees. Belgium supports making sexual violence a separate designation criterion, which means that experts working for sanctions committees must be trained in this issue.

We also see the value of similar collaboration with the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict.

Other elements of the Expert Panel's report are also of concern to us. On the one hand, the persistence of armed groups outside Sudan. These combatants offer their services to the highest bidder, and their high level of mobility means that they pose a threat to the entire region, including Sudan itself. On the other hand, the circulation in the region of weapons originating in Darfur. Although it is possible that the weapons collection campaign organised by the authorities in Darfur has led some combatants to sell their surplus arms, efforts must be continued to curb this trafficking. The arms embargo in Darfur is one of the appropriate measures in this regard.

Lastly, we would like to acknowledge the valuable work of the panel of experts, which adds detailed and verifiable information and in-depth investigations to the vision this Council's members have of the situation on the ground. Their task is extremely important and their independence must be preserved so that this Council can receive the best possible information. We call on all parties, in Sudan and elsewhere, to cooperate sincerely with these experts and to allow them to carry out their mission without interference.

Thank you.