

**Statement on behalf of the Republic of Lithuania at the United Nations Security Council  
Open Debate on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence “Identifying strategies to ensure access  
to life-saving services and protection to survivors of sexual violence in conflict zones”**

**August 19, 2025**

**New York**

Thank you, Mr. President.

Lithuania aligns itself with the EU statement.

Lithuania thanks Presidency of Panama for organizing this important open debate on conflict-related sexual violence. We also convey our profound appreciation to Mrs. Pramila Patten, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and her Office for their important work. Lithuania strongly supports the need to strengthen the mandate of the Special Representative in the light of ongoing UN80 process.

Mr. President,

We note with deep concern the significant increase in United Nations-verified cases of conflict-related sexual violence. This alarming 25 percent rise underscores the urgent need for strengthened prevention and accountability measures worldwide, including in Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, Palestine, Myanmar, the Syrian Arab Republic, and elsewhere.

We strongly condemn all cases of sexual violence perpetrated in the context of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. It is critical to recognize that sexual violence affects not only women and girls, but also prisoners of war—many of whom, due to stigma and trauma, suffer in silence and are unable to come forward and report these horrific crimes.

Allow me to highlight key facts when it comes to sexual violence against Ukrainian prisoners of war (POWs). Three years after the 2022 invasion of Ukraine, the United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission and other credible sources within the UN community have documented the systematic use of torture and ill-treatment, including widespread sexual violence, against Ukrainian prisoners of war and civilian detainees by Russian authorities. Ukrainian POWs were subjected to abuse at all stages of captivity, while civilians endured sexual violence from the point of detention through to confinement. Perpetrators were primarily members of the Russian armed forces, the Federal Penitentiary Service and the Federal Security Service. These violations occurred in at least 50 official and 22 unofficial detention sites for POWs, and in 32 official and 40 unofficial facilities detaining civilians, both within temporarily occupied Ukrainian territories and the Russian Federation. In some cases, especially in occupied areas, sexual violence was used alongside killings, particularly following rape. Monitoring and verification efforts have been severely hampered by the Russian Federation's ongoing denial of access to UN observers, who

could only interview survivors after release. The scale and systematic nature of these abuses indicate potential war crimes and crimes against humanity, underscoring the urgent need for international accountability and survivor-centered justice.

Therefore, it is unacceptable that in the fourth year of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, the armed forces of the Russian Federation remain excluded from the annexes of the Secretary General report. This omission constitutes a serious shortcoming, failing to acknowledge substantial evidence of violations and risking the erosion of the credibility and effectiveness of international accountability frameworks. Full and impartial inclusion is imperative to ensure justice for victims and to hold Russia accountable for all international crimes it continues to commit.

Mr. President,

Having this opportunity, Lithuania, as one of the donors, would like to encourage all Member States to maintain and strengthen their support for "UN Action"—the sole system-wide coordination platform that effectively connects the humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding pillars in addressing conflict-related sexual violence. This collective mechanism enables a coherent and integrated response, facilitates long-term support for survivors, and advances efforts to tackle the underlying drivers of such violence with the aim of ensuring it is never repeated.

Lithuania has recently adopted its third National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security for 2025–2029. The NAP places particular emphasis on zero tolerance for sexual and gender-based violence and includes gender-responsive support measures for survivors of sexual violence in Ukraine. The needs of all people, especially those who have faced such brutal sexual violence and inhumane tactics of war, must be acknowledged and addressed to achieve just and inclusive peace.

Thank you.