

## Speech: “Ending sexual violence in conflict is central to peace building, conflict prevention and reconciliation.”

Thank you Minister, Mr President, for convening this important open debate.

And I would like to begin by welcoming both Amina and Adama back to the Council and to thank them for their very important briefings this morning. And I would like to pay particular tribute to Mina Jaf for sharing her powerful testimony with us, and for bringing the unique and valuable perspective of civil society into this Security Council Chamber.

It's a perspective that we need to hear more of, more often. This Council works best when we are informed by the women and men most affected by the issues we discuss in this room. And sexual violence in conflict is no exception to that.

As we've heard today, ending sexual violence in conflict is central to peace building, conflict prevention and reconciliation. This is a message that should not need repeating in this Council. We've heard it many times before on our visits to South Sudan, Lake Chad, most recently Colombia.

We cannot forget the stories we heard in that dusty IDP camp in northern Nigeria. Stories of women whose daughters had been abducted by Boko Haram, likely forced into marriage and sexual slavery.

And yet, as the Secretary-General's report clearly shows, those messages are not getting through. Not enough is being done. Women and girls, men and boys are still being subjected to sexual violence every day. In Mali, where survivors are forced to withdraw complaints so that the perpetrators can escape justice. In Syria, where not a single person has been prosecuted for Da'esh's vile acts. In South Sudan, where we see the continuing abhorrent use of rape as a sickening means of punishing communities.

We know what needs to happen. We need to make ending sexual violence a key part of ceasefire deals. We need fewer women at kitchen tables and more women at negotiating tables. And we need even more women serving in uniform – because for too many survivors a man in uniform is someone to fear, not someone to trust. This is a lesson that needs to be heeded by governments, by armed forces, and yes, by the UN and its peacekeepers too.

We cannot though be deterred. We must all play our part and do everything within our power to ensure these crimes are reported, that survivors are cared for, and that perpetrators, whether terrorists or state actors, are held to account.

And that's why the United Kingdom, in partnership with the UN Team of Experts and Justice Rapid Response, is running a campaign to tackle the stigma that so often surrounds survivors of sexual violence. It's why we worked with over 200 civil society experts to produce the International Protocol that helps document these crimes. And it's why we're now developing the Principles for Global Action to be launched at the General Assembly later this year. This is a new tool, developed again with civil society, but also with UN agencies and member states, to help policy makers and international organisations tackle stigma through their own work.

Ultimately, Mr President, if we want to address the appalling use of sexual violence by terrorists, and indeed by state actors, we need to look bigger; we need to look broader. We need to recognise that terrorists and state actors are enabled to carry out these sick acts when peace and security has broken down, when this Council has failed to uphold our duties enshrined in the UN Charter.

What happens in this Council, whether votes in favour, or vetoes against, has a very real bearing on that insecurity.

So let us make sure that tackling sexual violence is not something we talk about only once a year at this debate, but in every single Security Council item where it is relevant, starting with the upcoming Al-Qaeda sanctions regime review.

Nor can we shy away from the fact that these appalling acts are the direct result of gender discrimination and inequality. Until women are treated equally, paid equally, respected equally, we will have failed, not just to address this issue, but also to deliver the Global Goals that we all agreed less than two years ago.

I'd like to close, Mr President, by paying tribute to the former Special Representative, Zainab Bangura, for all her tireless efforts and exemplary leadership on this important issue. I wish her the best for the future and I look forward to working with her successor, Pramilla Patten.

---

## [Labour's NHS pledge is pie in the sky.](#)

This week Labour pledged an additional £37 billion of NHS funding, which sounds to me, as Shadow Health Secretary, like poorly-thought-out, pie in the sky policy.

You can't solve the crisis in our NHS and social care services by simply imposing more top-down targets on staff and plucking numbers out of thin air.

The Liberal Democrats are the only party with a fully costed plan to deliver £6bn more per year for the NHS and social care by putting a penny on income

tax.

We are the only party that are prepared to be honest with the public that giving the NHS and social care the funding they need will mean us all chipping in a little more.

A group of 26 leading health experts, including the former chief executive of the NHS David Nicholson, have all backed our plans on the NHS in a letter to the Observer today.

To add your voice to theirs and back our plan to save the NHS and social care:

---

## Be a voter: young people must make their voice heard

[According to the Electoral Commission](#), almost 90 per cent of those eligible to vote in Scotland are registered. But for people aged 18 to 34 more than a quarter of those who can vote are not registered.

---

## Constituency profile: East Lothian



**Constituency:** East Lothian

**Candidate:** Martin Whitfield

**About the candidate:** Martin lives in East Lothian and teaches in Prestonpans Primary School. He is a community campaigner, and has been involved in causes like the Grace's Sign Campaign for people with hidden disabilities and has campaigned to improve local train services.

**The choice at this election:** Labour's Iain Gray won the equivalent Scottish Parliament constituency seat in 2016, and at the 2017 local government election Labour beat the SNP and the Tories. It will be a close fight and every vote will count. ***Only Labour can beat the SNP here. The Tories aren't at the races.***

**Martin said:** *"I'm delighted and honoured to stand for the East Lothian constituency, where I live and work."*

*"I love East Lothian and know that it has been let down time and again by the SNP. My promise in this campaign is simple. I will always stand up for East Lothian and always put its interests first.*

*"On June 8 we can send a powerful message to Nicola Sturgeon that we do not want another divisive independence referendum, but instead a fair share for our schools, hospitals and other local services. Only Labour can beat the SNP in East Lothian, and it's time for an MP who is focused on this county not another referendum."*



---

## [£45m Welsh Government funding to support Wales' national cultural heritage](#)

The 2017-18 investment will see Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales, the National Library of Wales and the People's Collection Wales digital heritage programme build on their excellent offering, helping fund exhibitions, events and programmes as well as caring for Wales' irreplaceable cultural heritage.

Economy Secretary, Ken Skates said:

"I'm delighted to announce this significant funding, re-affirming the Welsh Government's commitment to our national institutions who play such an important role in bringing our history and culture to life.

"The coming year will see some incredibly exciting projects open to the public. Some of the highlights, for me, include the completion of significant elements of St Fagans, a new Dinosaur exhibition at the National Museum Cardiff and the redevelopment of the National Library's family learning area.

"People's Collection Wales will offer local communities support in capturing local culture and heritage on-line as well as opening up digital collections to all. And, of course, the organisations will also be supporting our Year of Legends, Fusion and Cymru'n Cofio / Wales Remembers programmes, providing a full range of exciting and thought-provoking activities and events for people of all ages.

“These organisations are treasures which are enjoyed by millions from across the world. They protect, educate, inform and entertain and this year’s funding will allow this invaluable work to continue.”

David Anderson, Director General, Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales said:

“The funding is very good news for Amgueddfa Cymru and will help us build a more sustainable future for the organisation. With this kind of support from the Welsh Government, we can provide greater job security for staff, protect expertise and maintain a world class national museum service for the people of Wales and its visitors.

Linda Tomos, Chief Executive and Librarian, the National Library of Wales said:

“We are grateful to the Welsh Government for its continuing support to ensure that the National Library is able to develop new innovative digital services making more of the national collections available to all.