

REPUBLIC OF RWANDA



Statement

By

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United Nations**

At the

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Peacekeeping Operations (C-34)

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Thank you, Chair, for giving me this opportunity to share Rwanda's perspective as the committee embarks on deliberations for this year's recommendations on peacekeeping.

At the onset, Rwanda aligns itself with the statement made by Morocco on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement; thus, this statement is issued in a national capacity.

Mr. Chair,

This debate is taking place while the UN is downsizing its missions as a response to the liquidity crisis. The debate also follows the just-concluded Contingent Owned Equipment Working Group (COEWG), a quadrennial event that reviews and updates policies related to COE. The 2 mechanisms are complementary and enablers to peacekeeping, the unique multilateral tool for the maintenance of global peace and security.

Much as both mechanisms seek to achieve good performance, the downsizing itself was done amidst the complications of the global security environment, characterised by fading international order, complexity of the asymmetric threats to peacekeepers, and the hate speech that complicates the primary task of protection of civilians in peacekeeping Missions. As if these challenges were not enough to warrant an increase in capabilities, unfortunately, the missions' capabilities were reduced.

Both the COEWG process and the way the downsizing was carried out showed that operational efficiency and effective mandate delivery were treated as secondary to budget efficiency, whereas in practice, the latter should reflect and support the former.

Mr Chair,

In this regard, I will make 4 points.

First, Mandate. After downsizing, peacekeeping missions are delivered in a financially constrained context and continue carrying out the same tasks in the same Area of operations. People often ask whether they will achieve more with less or less with less, which undermines the principle of efficiency, and the guidance that a mandate must be supported by adequate, predictable and sustainable funding. The problem here is not the downsizing, but the way the plan was conceived.

Second. Addressing root causes and drivers of conflict. The UN charter recognises the peaceful settlement of disputes, and links peace to justice, human rights, economic and social development, among other things, which cannot take place before peace is obtained. It is therefore understood that addressing grievances of the population by peaceful means is not a second thought, as there is no enduring peace without a political process,

aligning UN activities to the primacy of politics, rather than chasing a military solution to the complex political problem.

Third. Hate Speech. Hate speech is a government project, and it precedes mass violence, crimes of genocide, and it emanates from a carefully instigated genocide ideology. It dehumanises the targeted minorities for who they are and provides a moral and political justification to destroy a group of people. Rwanda experienced an intensity of hate speech before and during the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi. I want to emphasise that hate speech should not be disguised as freedom of speech, and that the UN's deafening silence on this growing crime amounts to an endorsement of, or complicity in, mass violation and the denial of a group's identity. Rwanda commits to combat hate speech and urges Member States not to tolerate the violation of the very fundamental right - the right to life. It is a moral obligation that should be carried out within the framework of POC.

Fourth. Gender-Responsive Peacekeeping. We reaffirm the indispensable role of women at all levels of peace operations, from leadership to field units. Gender parity, gender-responsive training, and implementation of Women, Peace and Security commitments must advance with urgency and accountability. Peacekeeping without a gender perspective is peacekeeping without impact.

Mr Chair,

I cannot end my remarks without paying tribute to those who made the ultimate sacrifice in defending a noble cause and reiterating Rwanda's unwavering commitment to maintaining international peace and stability.

I thank you for your kind attention.